

INSPECTION REPORT

THORPE ACRE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Loughborough

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119957

Headteacher: Mr S Gourlay

Reporting inspector: Lindsay Howard
7336

Dates of inspection: 24-28 September 2001

Inspection number: 195955

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alan Moss Road Loughborough Leicestershire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Cherry
Date of previous inspection:	6 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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7336	Ms L Howard	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			Design and technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Music	How well are pupils taught?
			English as an additional language	What should the school do to improve further?
19491	Mr R Jones	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2021	Mr G Warren	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well is the school led and managed?
			Geography	
			History	
			Physical education	
			Special educational needs	
27990	Mrs M Sanger	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Information and communication technology	
			Art and design	
			Religious education	
			Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thorpe Acre Junior School is situated in Thorpe Acre, a local authority estate to the west of Loughborough. There are 246 girls and boys aged seven to eleven years on roll. The school is about the same size as other primary schools. About 14 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is broadly in line with the national average. There are 72 pupils with learning and emotional and behavioural difficulties on the register of special educational needs. This is above the national average. There are 10 pupils with statements of special educational need. This is well above the national average. There are 22 pupils with ethnic minority heritage. This is above the national average. Only one pupil is at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with national expectations, though many only just reach those expectations.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a well-managed, well-organised school. It is also an improving school and has the capacity to improve still further. It has had a long period of instability and inconsistent leadership. The standards pupils achieve in national tests for English, mathematics and science at age eleven are below or well below national averages. Attainment in most other subjects is in line with those nationally expected. Teaching is satisfactory or better in all lessons. The new headteacher has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school but has been in post too short a time to have addressed all the weaknesses he inherited. The school has effective strategies to promote educational inclusion and equal opportunities. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is strong and gives clear educational direction to the work of the school.
- The governing body is effective and has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
- The quality of the teaching of all the support staff is good and supports the learning of the pupils well.
- There are good relationships between all the groups in the school.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The school cares well for the personal development of the pupils.
- The implementation of the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies.

What could be improved

- Standards in all subjects especially design and technology and music.
- The behaviour of a significant minority of pupils in every class, especially in Year 6, and its effect on other pupils.
- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' academic progress.
- Opportunities in lessons for pupils to gain independence, develop concentration and to take initiative, interest and personal responsibility for their learning through better teaching.
- The provision for spiritual development in acts of collective worship and in lessons.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators and the induction of new staff.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1997 and found to have serious weaknesses. Following the inspection the school had a series of acting headteachers until the present permanent headteacher took up his post in January 2001. During that time the school was subject to amalgamation proposals. The key issues from the previous inspection were addressed during this time but the lack of continuity in leadership prevented consistent progress on all the issues. Recently the school has made good progress in addressing the key issues about pupil behaviour, the quality of teaching and standards of attainment, though there is still a need for further development in all these areas. The school has good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	D	D
Mathematics	E	D	E	E*
Science	E	E	D	D

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

Results of national tests for eleven-year-olds show that pupils' performance compared with all schools is below the national average for English and science. When compared with similar schools, results are also below average. Pupils' performance compared with all schools is well below the national average for mathematics. When compared with similar schools, results are in the lowest five per cent nationally. Trends over time show a small but steady improvement in English and science but less in mathematics.

The unconfirmed national test results for 2001 show good improvement in all subjects especially mathematics. Pupils met the targets set in mathematics and science, but not in English.

Attainment at age eleven is in line with expectations in English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology and physical education. Attainment is below expectations in design and technology and music. Attainment is slightly above expectations for religious education. Pupils' achievement is of a satisfactory standard but many could achieve higher.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory overall. Most of the pupils enjoy coming to school and want to learn. There are some pupils, mainly boys, who have negative attitudes to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory overall. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and helpful to adults and other pupils. In most classes there is a small group of pupils who do not behave well during lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils' personal development. All groups within the school relate well to each other.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has satisfactory strategies for monitoring attendance

Most pupils like school but they have too few opportunities in lessons to gain independence, develop concentration and to take initiative, interest and personal responsibility

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching in all 44 lessons was satisfactory or better. It is very good or better in nine lessons. Teaching is good overall for English and mathematics. Literacy and numeracy skills are well taught.

In good or very good lessons teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils, keep recalling them and check up on pupils' understanding of them at the end of the lesson. Teachers set a good pace to lessons and make sure that they give clear instructions so that no learning time is lost. In these good lessons teachers show good questioning skills that make pupils think hard and deepen their understanding of the work.

In other lessons teachers do not always stop the inattentive behaviour that occurs in nearly all lessons. At times this behaviour interferes with the learning of other pupils. The tasks set do not always engage pupils' interest sufficiently for them to make as much progress as they could. There are too few opportunities for them to make choices, select their own resources and develop independence. Key skills in design and technology and music have not been taught systematically over time. Assessment of pupils' academic progress is undeveloped. The school meets the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs and pupils for whom English is an additional language.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced but is not yet rich enough to keep pupils interested and improve their attitudes to learning.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The support given by all support staff enables pupils to make satisfactory progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Pupils quickly learn to speak English and are able to take part in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory because it is not promoted in collective worship or through the National Curriculum. It is promoted well through religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory. The school cares well for the pupils' welfare and their personal development. The procedures for using assessment to guide lesson planning and for monitoring the pupils' academic progress are unsatisfactory.

The school tries to work in partnership with parents. Parents support the school at assemblies, concerts and fundraising events. Few parents help in school. Many do not help with their own children's learning at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher give the school clear educational direction. The roles of the co-ordinators are under-developed. There is no planned induction programme for new staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors have a clear idea of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is at an early stage of monitoring and evaluating its own performance but has made a good start.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school uses all its specific grants for the proper purpose.

Following a long period with no consistent leadership, the school has a new headteacher with

clear educational vision who has begun to address issues from the previous inspection and rightly identify future priorities. Some staff are finding it difficult to take strong leadership and to work together. Subject co-ordinators do not have time to fulfil the monitoring aspects of their roles. There is no formal induction programme for staff new to the school.

The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources is satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value to a satisfactory extent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • The teaching is good. • The school is approachable. • Children work hard, achieve their best and become mature and responsible. • The information the school sends home helps them to know what their children are doing in school. 	<p>Some of the parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The poor behaviour of a small number of children to be better. • The school to work more closely with parents. • To have more consistent homework. • The school to provide more after school activities. • More information about children's progress.

The parents' meeting was attended by 14 parents and about a quarter of parents returned the questionnaire.

The inspection team agreed with some of the positive comments made by parents. However, inspection evidence does not support the views that children make good progress, work hard, achieve their best and become mature and responsible. Lesson observations show that though the quality of some of the teaching is good, half of the teaching is satisfactory.

The inspection team agrees that children's behaviour could be improved. When homework is given it usually supports the work done in class but it is not given consistently in each class, though the amount of homework rightly increases as the children get older.

The inspection team judges that the number of out of school activities is satisfactory for a junior school. Evidence shows that satisfactory information is given to parents about their children's progress.

The school provides many opportunities for parents to support their children, for example by attending assemblies. Whilst some parents do support the school, many do not. Therefore the inspectors do not support the view expressed by some parents.

The school has begun to address some of the areas that the parents would like to see improved. All of these are priorities for development during the next school year.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school was inspected early in the autumn term. Pupils' work for the whole of the previous school year was made available to the inspectors. Judgements on standards are made using national test results, samples of work seen in lessons and from the previous year, discussions with teachers and pupils, school documentation and teachers' planning.
2. The results of the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards are below national averages in English in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is below average. These results are slightly higher than for the last two years. In national tests, girls perform better than boys. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of pupils attain in line with nationally expected standards by the age of eleven. This is a better standard than pupils achieve in the national tests. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well. This has led teachers to expect more of their pupils and to identify and address weaknesses. The unconfirmed test results for 2001 show an improvement over previous years, though they did not meet the school's challenging target.
3. The results of the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards are well below national averages in mathematics when compared with all schools. Results are in the lowest five per cent nationally when compared with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is well below average. These results are lower than for the last two years. In national tests girls perform better than boys. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of pupils attain in line with nationally expected standards by the age of eleven. This is a better standard than pupils achieve in the national tests. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy well and this has led to an improvement in attainment. The unconfirmed test results for 2001 show that they met challenging targets. This is a good improvement over previous years.
4. The results of the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds show that standards are below national averages in science when compared with all schools and with similar schools. The number of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 is well below the national average. In national tests girls perform better than boys. Inspection evidence shows that the majority of pupils attain in line with nationally expected standards at the end of the key stage. This is better than pupils achieve in the national tests. The unconfirmed test results for 2001 show a good improvement over previous years. The results met the school's challenging targets.
5. Standards of literacy across the curriculum are satisfactory, though there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects such as history and geography. There are planned opportunities for pupils to speak in front of a range of audiences such as in class, in assemblies and at meetings. Though pupils reading skills are satisfactory few say that they enjoy reading. Few pupils read to themselves or to adults in school. Standards of numeracy across the school are satisfactory. Pupils have little opportunity to apply skills to other subjects such as science and geography,

though there are some opportunities in design and technology.

6. At the age of eleven standards in art and design, geography, history, information and communication technology, physical education in lessons observed are in line with national expectations. Standards in design and technology and music are unsatisfactory. Standards in religious education are slightly above the expectations set out in the locally agreed syllabus
7. In lessons, pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make at least satisfactory progress and often it is better. Over time they make satisfactory progress. Scrutiny of all pupils' work over a year suggests that the rate of progress is increasing. This is due to more focussed teaching. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress when skills are not taught systematically as in design and technology and music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning and work hard in their lessons. They are willing to contribute their opinions, ask questions and show an interest in things that are new to them, for example in a Year 5 religious education lesson on Sikhism. Parents confirm that their children enjoy coming to school and current attendance figures are well in line with national averages. The number of exclusions is low.
9. Similarly most pupils behave well around the school in activities such as dining and assemblies. They are polite and friendly and willing to talk about their likes and dislikes, for example, in reading. School property, including display, is treated with care and respect. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils relate well to each other playing sociably and, when given the opportunities, are able to work collaboratively, for example in a Year 3 English lesson preparing and presenting the script of a play to their class.
10. There is, however, throughout the school, but particularly among the older pupils, a small but significant number with less positive attitudes and standards. They are inattentive, at times truculent and maintain a pattern of low-level disruption that requires frequent checking by teachers. Their activities adversely affect the overall standards achieved by the school and, by taking up teachers' time, lessen the learning opportunities for other pupils and slow the pace of lessons. The school has introduced new policies for behaviour and parents and others indicate that behaviour has improved. However, the anti-social actions of some pupils remain an issue to be addressed.
11. Many parents express the view that the school helps their children to mature and become responsible. Inspection findings contradict this view but the school is aware of the need to develop this and provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. For example, a School Council, comprising elected representatives from every class, has just been set up. Some pupils participate in a road safety officers' scheme and a 'garden group' has been working to design a memorial garden. Pupils have a range of duties around the school as monitors but many of these initiatives are at an early stage and, partly because of the behaviour problems, pupils are not encouraged to be independent and to learn by experimenting and making mistakes.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. Overall, in the lessons observed during the inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory or better. Altogether 44 lessons were seen. Of these 20 were satisfactory, 15 were good, eight were very good and one was excellent. The overall satisfactory quality of teaching has led to most pupils making satisfactory overall progress in their learning. The scrutiny of work also showed that though there was clear progress in learning through the year, progress was greater from January onwards following the arrival of the new headteacher.
13. The quality of teaching ranges from excellent to satisfactory. In Years 4 and 6 about a third of the lessons seen the quality of teaching was very good. There was no very good teaching in Years 3 and 5, though one lesson in Year 5 was excellent. In nearly all lessons, teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and they sometimes share this with the pupils, displaying the learning goals for pupils to see and making reference to them during the lesson to focus their learning. Most teachers give satisfactory explanations and instructions for group work so that pupils understand clearly what they have to do, and learning time is not wasted. This was seen in a Year 4 science lesson when pupils settled down very quickly to discuss what solids they would choose for their experiment. In the better lessons in Year 6 teachers use skilful questioning techniques in English and science to provoke pupils' thinking and extend their learning. Teachers use subject specific language well in English, mathematics and science to help pupils' attainment. Summing-up sessions are used in some lessons to reinforce what the pupils have learned and move them towards the next stage of learning. For example in a information and communication technology lesson where the teacher's effective questioning led the pupils to review what they had learnt in a structured way. However, in other lessons, pupils tell what they have done, not what they have learnt.
14. Good attention is paid to teaching pupils the elements of writing from the National Literacy Strategy. There is an emphasis on teaching skills, which develop pupils' use of vocabulary and sentence structure. However, there is less emphasis on the way to plan, organise and amend writing for different purposes. This is particularly apparent in those classes where there is a heavy reliance on the exercises and worksheets from the scheme. Where worksheets to structure writing and teacher modelling of writing are used, pupils' make stronger progress. However, all pupils do not have the opportunity to apply their skills through planning, redrafting and evaluating their writing. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own work and progress.
15. The good relationships that exist between the teachers and their pupils enable pupils to contribute to lessons and improve their learning. There were many examples of teachers encouraging pupils, especially the more reluctant, to answer questions and make comments, and in all cases teachers valued their answers and responses. This good rapport that exists between most teachers and their pupils is contributes to the effective teaching. Pupils, in general, know the boundaries of behaviour expected of them but a few pupils, mainly boys, in each class, keep up a low level of disruption throughout the lesson. Teachers deal effectively with some, but not all, of this behaviour. This constant immature and truculent behaviour is very wearing for teachers and pupils alike and slows the pace of learning for all pupils. If pupils are to make the progress and to reach the standards of which they are capable teachers must deal with this behaviour much more firmly. Well-behaved pupils stoically endure the

immature behaviour of those who spoil their learning opportunities. They should not have to do this. The disruptive pupils tend to behave better when they are engaged in individual tasks. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson for lower ability pupils, those who worked well at individual tasks, finished them quickly and were given further tasks, were those pupils who did not cope at all well with the oral part of the lesson. During whole class teaching at the beginning and end of lessons these pupils find more opportunities to misbehave and to distract others. Teachers are following rigidly the time allocations and organisation for the different parts of the literacy and numeracy lessons. This does not best suit the learning pattern of the majority of pupils and should be reviewed.

16. Teachers plan too few activities that allow pupils to work collaboratively so that they do not learn to discuss and work in pairs or in small groups. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to be responsible for organising themselves. For example, teachers organise and distribute resources, leaving pupils waiting passively with time to misbehave. Teachers do not use the natural opportunities in such subjects as design and technology, art and design and science for pupils to decide for themselves how they will approach a task once they have been taught the necessary skills. For example in design and technology lessons in Years 3 and 5 every pupil made the same object the same size and the same way. This lack of choice restricts the learning
17. Teachers plan tasks carefully. In most lessons the tasks are well matched to the ability of the different groups. At times the work is too easy for the most able pupils, but teachers are quick to give these pupils more challenging work. Though teaching is always satisfactory and often good for pupils with special educational needs, in some lessons they get too much help. In one lesson a pupil had so much help that all he had to do was to copy the learning support assistant's writing. This does not help to make these pupils more independent and to take responsibility for their own learning. The tasks often do not interest the pupils. The rigid learning structure in the literacy and numeracy lessons does not promote the best learning for these pupils. Neither do the tasks provide interest, stimulate and make them want to learn and to succeed. Tasks that are richer, more relevant and that open the pupils' minds would promote learning more. These positive features were seen in a Year 6 class when all the pupils and the teacher dressed in Victorian clothes and activities such as registration and the physical education lesson were performed as if in Victorian times. This was the only lesson seen that had planned opportunities for pupils to undertake their own research from reference books. This is unsatisfactory.
18. Overall, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. In all these lessons teachers and support staff work hard to provide effective teaching for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and for whom English is an additional language. There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other lessons. Teachers are keeping rigidly to the format for lessons set out in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This is not always suitable for some pupils. For example, those who misbehave in lessons do so mainly during the whole class sessions at the beginning of each lesson. They find the sessions overlong and work better during group tasks. Teachers are now confident in the delivery of the strategies and need to adapt them to meet the needs of their class more exactly. Teachers do not feel confident enough to use information and communication technology in lessons. Therefore pupils do not practice the skills they have learnt in specific information and communication technology lessons in other subjects. This is unsatisfactory.

19. The work scrutiny revealed that the quality of marking of pupils' work varies considerably from class to class, and in some cases was minimal. It does not help pupils to know what they did well or what they must do to improve. There is inconsistency in the marking of writing. In some classes it consists of ticks and positive comments, for example '*good*', '*well done*,' '*brilliant*', but no pointers for improvement to help pupils make progress. In other classes there are useful evaluative comments about what was good and what to do next. Assessment and evaluation at the end of a lesson is not rigorous enough to accurately inform teachers' planning for the next lesson. That is why, at times, tasks are not well matched to the levels of pupils' prior attainment. At present this is slowing the rate of learning for all pupils. Although the school homework policy is not applied consistently in all classes there were a few examples of homework being given.

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

20. The curriculum for the school is satisfactory. A recent school review has ensured that it is balanced and provides time for skills to be effectively developed in all subjects. However it is narrow and lacks richness, stimulus and relevance for the pupils. The current organisation of the timetable results in some very short teaching sessions and the under use of valuable resources such as the hall and information and communication technology suite. The school successfully implements a policy for equal opportunities and all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, benefit from a full range of opportunity and access. The strategies for teaching both literacy and numeracy have been securely implemented. A new policy and curriculum for personal, social and health education, including sex education, is currently being introduced. Well-established links with the infant and high schools make a positive impact on the pupils' education. The recommended requirement for teaching to be at least 23½ hours a week is not being met.
21. The curriculum meets statutory requirements for all subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education and sex education. Sound policies and schemes of work underpin teachers' planning but their impact on standards of work has not yet been monitored. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are aware of the need to identify and strengthen opportunities for links between subjects, especially with regard to information and communication technology. Having a clear, albeit narrow, curriculum framework, the school is in a good position greatly to enrich the provision in order to provide further stimulus and relevance for pupils. Recent in-service training, on extending teaching styles to better meet the learning styles of all pupils, especially boys, is a good example of the type of training that will further improve teaching. The time allocated to teaching literacy and numeracy in the morning is resulting in some very short, twenty minute, teaching sessions. These short sessions do not allow sufficient time for effective teaching and learning. Another consequence of this organisation is the under-use of valuable teaching areas, such as the hall and the information and communication technology suite, during the mornings.
22. The school provides teaching of religious education for all pupils in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus. Parents have been informed about their right to withdraw their children. The school does not comply with the statutory requirement of

providing a daily act of collective worship. Whilst there is a daily assembly, the pupils are given no opportunity or guidance to reflect upon or worship the existence, worth or influence of a higher being.

23. The policy for promoting equal opportunities includes clear statements relating to anti-racist and multicultural issues. It is supported by policies for pupils with special educational needs. This policy can be seen in practice through the ethos of the school as promoted through daily assemblies, the daily routines around school, and within the organisation and management of teaching and learning in all classes. It relates to all members of the school and has been enhanced for staff through performance management. This area is a strength of the school.
24. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language meets the requirements of all pupils on the school's Code of Practice special educational needs programme. Assessments for these pupils are soundly used to support their learning. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to the progress made by these pupils.
25. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are 72 pupils on the special educational needs register, above the national average. These pupils are ably supported by good quality individual education plans that provide clear targets for improvement, what constitutes success, resource implications and even hints for parents, carers and the pupils themselves. They are very comprehensively written, purposeful and closely relate to the needs of the pupils. There are now, clear written criteria for identification of these pupils and these are understood by the staff. Although the policy is in need of review and rewriting given the new code of practice and a change of co-ordinator, this area of the curriculum is ably co-ordinated and remains a strength of the school.
26. Planning is generally sound, and for English and mathematics takes full account of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. These strategies are effective and as a result, pupils' attainment in the important skills of reading, writing and number work is steadily improving. However, the lack of assessment of the standards of pupils' work to inform lesson planning sometimes results in a mismatch of activities and a lack of challenge.
27. A new policy and curriculum framework for personal, social and health education is currently being implemented. This is a much-needed element of the curriculum, given the current underdevelopment of pupils' responsibility and independence, and the incidence of minor disruptive behaviour. The content of this curriculum, which covers sex and drugs education, uses the support of the nurse and the Leicestershire Life Caravan, and contributes to Eco Warriors, Healthy Eating and the Loughborough projects. During the inspection the first meeting of the School Council was held and representatives from each class contributed with maturity and confidence.
28. Displays around school are of good quality and add to the pupils' learning by giving information and asking questions. Achievement in art and design is well promoted through the display of pupils' work. However few displays promote pupils' achievements in other subjects, particularly literacy and numeracy, the exception being a high quality display of writing about the Crimea by Year 6 pupils.

29. Provision for out of school activities is satisfactory. Pupils take part in a residential visit to Beaumanor Hall. There is a good range of sports clubs providing opportunity for all age groups. These include football, short tennis, athletics, netball and country dancing. The school nurse runs a health club and a road safety group also meets regularly. Whilst there is a craft club, there are no other clubs for pupils to extend creative skills such as music, art or drama.
30. The school links with the community contribute to pupils' learning in a satisfactory way. Visits within the local community enhance the geography, history and religious education curriculum. Links with the Millennium project and the Thorpe Acre Trail have contributed to community developments. Visits from local artists, storytellers, theatre groups enhance the curriculum; and visitors, such as Keith Munro from the Soar Valley project raise awareness of the local community.
31. Links with partner schools are strong. Links with the infant school are very good, with shared governors and co-ordinators working together on policy and curriculum development and some shared in-service training for all teachers. Pupils experience many and varied opportunities to share experiences through, for example, visits to concerts, older pupils sharing reading with infant pupils and visits prior to transfer to the junior school. Similar good links are made with Garendon High School. These include visits to observe teaching in literacy and numeracy.
32. The provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
33. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. In religious education lessons pupils are able, through discussions, to begin to recognise that there are not always absolutes and to reflect upon their sense of self. They begin to understand the influence of higher beings upon the lives of people and to understand that not all things are within the control or understanding of humans. However, these opportunities are neither planned for nor built upon through the curriculum or through daily assemblies. The use of time for reflection in daily assemblies was limited, there was no element of worship or of higher beings. Acts of worship are not meeting the statutory requirements.
34. Provision for pupils' moral development is satisfactory. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and between pupils sound overall. Some teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and these are reinforced within daily assemblies, but other teachers are inconsistent in their expectations. Staff respond very sensitively to individual pupils' needs, especially those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils do have a clear view of right and wrong but need consistent expectations of them from all adults throughout the school. The new personal, social and health curriculum provides a range of opportunities to strengthen moral development. Its introduction is timely and meets with the new headteacher's vision of the school.
35. Provision for social development is satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher, through daily assemblies and through the life of the school are promoting responsibility, co-operation and teamwork. All staff are very positive towards pupils and work hard to raise their self-esteem. During the inspection the theme for the week was 'There is no I in team'. The headteacher has a very high profile around school reinforcing the social and moral aspects of school ethos. Achievement in work is

publicly praised through the merit assembly, to which parents are invited. Social skills were, however, not rewarded. In the better lessons pupils were overtly taught social skills and teachers had patience to guide and allow pupils to demonstrate their initiative. Pupils in these classes could make choices and work sensibly together in small groups. This is, however, not yet a consistent part of school life.

36. The provision for pupils' cultural development is, on the whole, satisfactory. In art and design, history, geography, literacy and religious education pupils learn about different cultures and civilisations. Music from various cultures is played in assembly. During the inspection week music from the Andes was played and reference made to a Peruvian group, currently performing in Loughborough. Through teaching in religious education, pupils develop a wide and well-understood knowledge and appreciation of Christian, Sikh, Hindu and Muslim faiths, helping them to consider attitudes to faith groups different from their own. Provision to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of life in a multicultural society is underdeveloped. There was little evidence of promotion of, for example, the richness and diversity of the multicultural and multi-racial communities of their own locality, the East Midlands, or of Britain.
37. Opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils are largely incidental, with the exception of the personal, social and health curriculum. This results in inconsistency and a lack of whole school direction.
38. Since the last inspection good progress has been made in the review of the curriculum, the development of schemes of work and the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. A personal, social and health curriculum has been developed and introduced. However, unsatisfactory progress has been made within the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

39. This is a caring school where welfare and personal support for pupils is given a high priority by all staff. This is about the same as at the time of the previous inspection. The school has effective strategies to promote educational inclusion.
40. There are effective policies and procedures to deal with child protection issues. The headteacher has personal responsibility for these and has received the necessary training. Appropriate steps have been taken to comply with the requirements of health and safety legislation. First aid and fire precaution arrangements are kept under review, risk assessments have been carried out and any necessary remedial measures, such as the recent patching of tarmac, are put in hand when hazards have been identified. Overall the school provides a safe and secure environment for its pupils, including ensuring that pupils do not have access to unsuitable Internet sites.
41. There are very good systems for recording and analysing attendance. Unexplained absences are followed up quickly by telephone calls and the school works closely with the education welfare officer when there are concerns.
42. Overall behaviour is unsatisfactory. This is the same as at the time of the previous inspection. However, since the new permanent headteacher took up post in January of this year, a number of initiatives have been taken to monitor and promote good behaviour. A behaviour policy has been introduced focussing particularly on a system

of rewards. The headteacher gives much needed support to teachers when they are dealing with incidents of bad behaviour. This has resulted in a decline in the numbers of these incidents, however, in nearly every lesson there is low-level disruptive behaviour that teachers do not deal with consistently. Much of the tracking of behaviour and personal development is based on the informal exchange of information between staff and class teachers have a key role in co-ordinating this. This is effective in the context of a relatively small school and is supplemented by more formal procedures for recording incidents involving aggression and ultimately devising individual behaviour plans when these are necessary. Pupils are encouraged to report any incidents of aggression which are dealt with promptly by all staff. This is having a positive effect on reducing these incidents. Visiting professionals, such as the school nurse, enhance the pastoral support for pupils. She makes a valuable contribution to health and sex education and runs a lunchtime health club.

43. Some pupils already receive good quality additional academic support, for example, in small group literacy work in Year 3 and in the ability sets for English and mathematics in Year 6. Recent changes mean that all pupils now take a range of standardised tests in English and mathematics, optional end-of-year national tests and a verbal reasoning test that helps identify any mismatch between expectations and performance. Data is recorded on a computer system that helps the tracking of pupils' progress. There has also been some strengthening in the recording of teacher assessments in other subjects using a local education authority scheme. However overall procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and monitoring and supporting their academic progress are unsatisfactory. Pupils in some classes have individual targets in some subjects but this is not consistent throughout the school. Where pupils have targets their attitudes to learning are better, they work harder and achieve more.
44. Marking, though satisfactory, is very variable throughout the school. At its best it tells pupils what they need to know to improve their work and how to do this. At its least helpful it is a tick, a smiley face or a comment such as 'good', 'brill', or 'well tried'. Teacher assessments or evaluations at the end of lessons are not used to inform adjustments to the plan for the next lesson. Though teachers recapped on pupils' learning at the beginning of lessons no mention was made of what they had done well or what could be improved. This is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. Parents have positive views of the school. However, their links with the school and their involvement in its work are not effective.
46. The school is aware of the need to strengthen the working relationship and has been taking a number of steps to improve the situation. The quality of information parents receive is satisfactory. Annual reports for parents give a clear picture of what progress the pupil is making in each subject and gives targets for the next year's work. A questionnaire has recently been issued seeking parental views about changes they would like to see. New eye-catching newsletters have been introduced, information on topics being studied is sent out and additional mini progress reports have been introduced. The headteacher and other staff are usually available at the end of the day to talk to parents on an informal basis. There is also now an extended programme of parents' meetings.

47. However, there is no active parents' association and parental support and involvement remains patchy. The impact of parents' involvement in the life of the school is unsatisfactory. A few parents do provide valuable help with practical activities and reading. Fundraising by parents has enabled the school to purchase additional equipment such as musical instruments. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at home and at school is unsatisfactory. Parents generally express positive opinions about the school but there is little evidence that reading records and other channels of communication such as homework diaries are being used to make a meaningful contribution to children's learning at home. The school provides many opportunities for parents to support their children, for example by attending assemblies. Whilst some parents do support the school, many do not. Therefore the inspectors do not support the view expressed by some parents that the school could work more closely with them
48. The inspection team agreed with some of the positive comments made by parents, for example, that their children like school and that the school is approachable. However inspection evidence does not support the views that pupils make good progress, work hard, achieve their best and become mature and responsible. The inspection team agrees that pupils behaviour could be improved. When homework is given it usually supports the work done in class but it is not given consistently in each class, though the amount of homework rightly increases as the pupils get older. The inspection team judges that the number of out of school activities is satisfactory for a junior school. Evidence shows that satisfactory information is given to parents about their children's progress.
49. The school has begun to address some of the areas that the parents would like to see improved. All of these are priorities for development during the next school year.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. This is a well-managed, well-organised school. It is led by a headteacher, in post since January 2001, who gives the school strong, purposeful and caring leadership with a clear educational direction. He is ably assisted in this by a hardworking and skilful deputy headteacher, who supports him admirably. The majority of staff respond positively to this new enthusiasm with a shared commitment to improve. A team approach is strongly fostered by the headteacher throughout the school, helping to promote a shared understanding of its aims and values and also promoting high standards in all aspects of school life, with a clear determination to improve behaviour in all situations. Some teachers find it hard to be part of a team, preferring to work alone. This makes it hard for the good practice in the school to be shared and for policies to be implemented consistently.
51. Office administration and financial control remain good, ably led by the extremely competent and efficient secretary/bursar who provides clear financial information for the headteacher and governing body. The office staff also provide comfort and care for troubled pupils on a regular basis.
52. Since his arrival the headteacher has been very instrumental in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education provided by the school and raising pupils' levels of attainment. This has been primarily through lesson observation by both the headteacher and deputy headteacher monitoring, mainly, numeracy lessons, but also

through the greater analysis of data, with test results featuring prominently. This system is in its infancy and there has been little time since the appointment of the headteacher for further initiatives and wider involvement of other key staff. As a consequence, the role of curriculum co-ordinators, with the notable exception of the mathematics and special educational needs co-ordinators, is very underdeveloped. Co-ordinators are not yet involved in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education in their area of the curriculum but are involved in writing schemes of work and policies. They have, since April this year, been allocated funding to support both local and national priorities and have been encouraged to write an action plan for their subject that enables priorities to be listed, in terms of both action and resources. This is a useful aid in the further development of each subject. Further measures recently employed include the monitoring of teachers' planning and work sampling. These useful strategies of monitoring and evaluation by the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been instrumental in improving the quality of teaching significantly since the previous inspection.

53. The priorities for improvement identified by the headteacher on his appointment are fully understood and shared by the governing body, and the financial implications are recognised and well documented. The knowledgeable and active governors, who are conscientious in discharging their responsibilities, support the headteacher well. The governing body makes a significant contribution to the raising of the quality of education through involvement in all areas of the work of the school. Governors are kept well informed of developments and gain first hand knowledge of the school's progress through regular reports and visits. Many governors are involved in classroom activities, and most have other roles in the school. They have decided that an improvement in school standards will come about through performance management, an improved learning environment and the monitoring of teaching. As a result the governors have agreed with the local education authority, a £25,000 overspend repayable over the next five years, enabling the governors to spend money now on enhancing the internal décor of the school as they passionately feel that teaching and communal areas need to be of a high quality. The governing body is quite clear how it will financially support all its development priorities. They are active monitors in the school and as a consequence are fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses and are firmly committed to continual improvement. They are becoming increasingly effective in their role and are determined to shape the future strategic direction of this school. They fulfil their statutory duties well, though they have not ensured that the acts of collective worship meet statutory requirements. They are fully aware of the challenges the school faces after the recent uncertainties, but are firmly determined to succeed. Governors have attended a variety of training courses and, largely through their experiences in their professional lives, have a good understanding of the principles of best value and apply them in the school's use of resources. The planned overspend provides a clear example of this.
54. The school is making every possible use of the resources it possesses. The recent falling role situation experienced by the school, combined with some changes to the local funding formula contributed to the very difficult budget situation that has resulted in the decision to have an agreed overspend of £25,000 being taken. Consequently, spending is very closely linked to the priorities identified in the School Development Plan that are concerned with the systematic improvement of the school. Earlier under-resourcing and lack of refurbishment and redecoration have now been addressed but have resulted in the need for this budget deficit. Governors do monitor this situation

extremely closely and all pupils are now benefiting from this bold, but controlled and monitored step. The school makes the utmost of all its resources in order to have a direct impact on attainment and realises that further investment is required to improve facilities even more.

55. A performance management system is in place, albeit in an embryonic state, and the governing body has set clear targets for the headteacher. Upon appointment the governors determined that the priorities for the headteacher would be to secure continued and systematic school improvement in achieving targets for pupils' attainment and progress; to provide strong leadership; to enable all connected with the school to work as a team towards shared and common goals; and to work in close partnership with the local schools in achieving and sustaining the confidence of parents and the local community. Inspection evidence would suggest these are appropriate targets and the school is making good progress towards achieving them.
56. Since his arrival the headteacher has restructured the senior management team to include management point holders and, on occasions, the bursar in order to improve communications and the overall strategic development of the school. This new management structure supports the headteacher in achieving the school's priorities and targets and contributes to the overall improvement.
57. The school has a good number of teaching staff whose qualifications and experience match the demands of the curriculum. These teachers are extremely well assisted by the support staff, paid for from the school budget or provided centrally for specific pupils, who are sensitively deployed across the school. The quality of the support given makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning, welfare and care, and to the life of the school in general. The new direction given by the headteacher has made staff more effective, supported by a shared commitment to improvement through professional development, in which all staff participate. The school provides a useful guidance document for supply teachers but as yet, procedures for the induction of new staff are inadequate.
58. School teaching bases are plentiful in number and the décor has improved recently due to the extensive refurbishment and redecoration. Classrooms have attractive displays of pupils' work. The library is attractive, if a little cramped, with an adequate book stock but the outside tarmac and play areas are in need of some refurbishment and are rather small and awkwardly positioned on this sloping school site. The information and communication technology room has been a recent development and now caters for a whole class. The toilets remain in need of refurbishment.
59. Additions have recently been made to the resources for learning, especially to numeracy, literacy, physical education, history and geography and these are now satisfactory. The uneven distribution mentioned at the last inspection has been addressed.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The headteacher, staff and governors should:
 - (1) Continue to raise attainment in all subjects, especially design and technology and music. (Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 6, 63, 64, 82, 91, 103 and 120)
 - (2) Significantly reduce the low-level, inattentive, attention seeking behaviour that

happens in every class, especially in Year 6. (Paragraphs 10, 15, 42, 74, 86, 106, 109, 124, 129 and 136)

- (3) Put into practice an assessment policy that covers such aspects as marking, addressing prior attainment, setting personal pupil targets and evaluating work done in lessons, that influences short term curriculum planning as well as tracking pupils' progress through formal testing and assessments. (Paragraphs 19, 26, 43, 44, 75, 88, 102, 111, 117, 121 and 138)
 - (4) Improve the quality of teaching to the level of the best so that all teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, set interesting tasks and provide opportunities for pupils to develop independence and show initiative. (Paragraphs 11, 16, 17, 96, 105, 110 and 115)
 - (5) Make better provision for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum and in the collective acts of worship, ensuring that they meet statutory requirements. (Paragraphs 22,33, 53 and 76)
 - (6) Develop procedures to ensure subject co-ordinators can fulfil their role, and for the induction of new staff. (Paragraphs 52, 57, 77, 102, 106, 111, 121 and 132)
61. Other issues which should be considered by the school:
- Continue to promote parents' role in school and in their children's learning. (Paragraphs 45 and 47)
 - Increase the number of teaching hours to those recommended. (Paragraph 20)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	15	20	0	0	0
Percentage	2%	18%	34%	45%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	246
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	71

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	22

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	30	31	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	16	22
	Girls	24	17	25
	Total	37	33	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (60)	55 (59)	89 (67)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	16
	Girls	18	10	18
	Total	29	22	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (47)	39 (66)	58 (63)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	22
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	218
Any other minority ethnic group	5

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.8
Average class size	30.8

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	199.25

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	487257
Total expenditure	495276
Expenditure per pupil	1898
Balance brought forward from previous year	11625
Balance carried forward to next year	3606

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.0
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0.0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2.0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

62. *Results of the survey of parents and carers*

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	246
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	42	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	47	45	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	55	12	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	59	14	0	1
The teaching is good.	44	50	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	44	12	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	22	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	35	50	14	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	53	42	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	49	1	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	32	27	3	10

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

ENGLISH

63. In the 2000 national tests for eleven-year-olds the school's results were below the national average. When compared with similar schools, results were well below. The percentage of those attaining a level above that typical for their age is below national expectations, and well below that in similar schools. However, unconfirmed results from 2001 show an improvement on the previous year. Evidence gathered during the inspection; through observing lessons, examining pupils' books and talking to pupils shows that standards are broadly in line with those typically found at the end of Year 6. The majority of pupils enter the school with attainment broadly in line with that typical for their age, although many only just reach those expectations. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall. The school is making good use of additional teaching groups to strengthen the progress of those pupils only just reaching national expectations.
64. In the 2000 tests for eleven-year-olds the school's results in reading and writing were below the national average. Generally boys' attainment is below that of girls, as is the case nationally. However some boys do reach standards above national expectations, especially in reading. There was some improvement over the 1999 results and this trend has continued in 2001 with stronger improvement, especially in writing. Despite this, the school did not reach its target for attainment in English. The National Literacy Strategy for developing pupils' skills in reading and writing has been established throughout the school. Evidence gathered during the inspection shows that this has strengthened the teaching, and is beginning to have a positive impact on the standards in English.
65. Smaller teaching groups in Years 3 and 4, known in the school as ALS (Additional Literacy Support) groups, are helping pupils with attainment just below national expectation, including some pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, to make good progress with the skills of reading and writing. Daily records are kept on pupils' achievements and these are used to help in planning the next learning steps. Good progress is made in Year 3, especially in extending the range of vocabulary and sentence formation; and in developing basic reading skills.
66. Progress in Years 4 and 5 is inconsistent, with some pupils making good progress, some making satisfactory progress, but some making unsatisfactory progress. Pupils make good progress when they are challenged with new learning that builds on what they know. More consistency is needed in assessing what pupils can do and then planning tasks to ensure new learning and progress. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are well supported by learning support assistants. Achievement in Years 4 and 5 is variable and relates to the inconsistency of progress, but is overall just in line with national expectations.
67. In Year 6 the pupils are grouped according to ability. The provision of an additional group, the booster group, has a strong impact on progress and attainment. All abilities have good access to learning, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. Work in each set is focused on the needs of pupils, and on teaching that shares clear expectations for pupils. Since writing standards are

below those of reading there is an understandable emphasis on writing. This is beginning to hinder progress and attainment in reading. Overall there is satisfactory progress throughout the school in English, including pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

68. In Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills are in line with the national standards expected. Frequent question and answer aspects of lessons, within literacy and in other subjects, encourage pupils to use and extend their speaking and listening skills. In the lower ability Year 6 set, pupils were encouraged to use descriptive language in an account of *'The Charge of the Light Brigade'* and responded with *'bespattered'*, *'force of the blast'* *'deeply suffering'*. Good opportunities for role-play and empathy were seen in Year 3 acting out *'a child asking their parent for a new pet'* and the play reading of *'The BFG'* in Year 5; also in the use of a lamp and darkened classroom to create atmosphere for a lesson on Florence Nightingale. These features add a richness and relevance to lessons and have a strong impact on raising attainment in spoken language. In Year 3 a learning support assistant worked with a group of pupils with special educational needs, extending single word responses into to simple sentences. Attainment in listening is hindered by a minority of pupils, who distract themselves and others in many classes. They interrupt the listening and concentration of **their** classmates and hinder learning. This disruption is the main factor depressing progress in this area of learning.
69. Pupils from all ability groups in Year 6 show attainment in reading is in line with that expected nationally from eleven-year-olds. Higher attaining pupils can talk about their favourite books, expressing a preference for fairy tales and magic for example, or a preference for an author such as Jacqueline Wilson. They can give reasons for choices and explain the plot and describe the role of characters in a story. They read accurately, fluently and with expression. Pupils with typical levels of attainment read accurately and with expression, and can explain what they are reading about and what they do if they don't understand a word, such as to *'look at other sentences and any pictures to try and work it out'*. They can find simple factual information from fiction and non-fiction; but their research skills, such as skimming for specific information are underdeveloped. They have difficulty in understanding how and why authors use language and include clues to readers. Less confident readers read accurately but do not self correct when they make a mistake. They can describe characters, but find it difficult to explain the plot of the story. They can use a simple index or table of contents, but have some difficulty in finding specific information on the page. Pupils with special educational needs have individual education plans that outline a detailed programme. They are supported by learning support assistants, and through class work. This enables these pupils to make satisfactory progress. Older and more able pupils enjoy reading and read frequently at home, whilst younger and less able pupils have less interest in reading. The teaching and promotion of reading is limited to introductory and teacher guided sessions within literacy lessons in many classes. The opportunity to borrow and read library books, whilst being regularly available, is not sufficiently used to guide and promote reading. Reading in other subjects is limited. Insufficient attention is being paid to developing research and interpretation skills in reading
70. Current standards in writing, and samples of writing from pupils in last year's Year 6, show that the attainment of the differing ability groups is broadly in line with national expectations. In a Year 3 class, all pupils but the lower ability write a play-script, with

the correct layout, independently. They write clear sentences with the correct use of verbs and punctuation. Pupils have targets, such as *'Remember to use capital letters for a name'*. Year 4 work showed that pupils learn to use and punctuate speech and to use a variety of verbs as an alternative to *'said'*. They use phrases to create interest for the reader, such as *'BUT, they were no ordinary spiders'* and are aware of a growing range of forms of writing. Pupils in Year 5 develop suspense through their choice of language, and use complex sentences. Attainment in Years 4 and 5 varies. It is higher in classes where there are opportunities to develop skills through short and extended pieces of writing, but lower where pupils complete separate exercises or worksheets with little opportunity to develop skills further. By Year 6, pupils are able to organise their writing according to its purpose and make choices about style and vocabulary. For example they can write a persuasive letter, use imagery to strengthen a description or attract a reader's attention through the use of question and suspense. They have a wider range of vocabulary and are able to use a variety of sentence structures. There is inconsistency in the marking of writing. In some classes it consists of ticks and positive comments, for example *'good'*, *'well done,'* *'brilliant'*, but no pointers for improvement to help pupils make progress. In other classes there are useful evaluative comments about what was good and what to do next.

71. Good attention is paid to teaching pupils the elements of writing from the National Literacy Strategy. There is an emphasis on teaching skills, which develop pupils' use of vocabulary and sentence structure. However there is less emphasis on the way to plan, organise and amend writing for different purposes. This is particularly apparent in those classes where there is a heavy reliance on the exercises and worksheets from the scheme. Where worksheets to structure writing and teacher modelling of writing are used, pupils' make stronger progress. However, all pupils do not have the opportunity to apply their skills through planning, redrafting and evaluating their writing. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to evaluate their own work and progress.
72. Pupils are taught the skills of joining handwriting in Year 3 but these are inconsistently taught and reinforced through the school. As a result there is little or no progress in handwriting, and the presentation of work is generally poor. Standards in handwriting in Year 6 are below those typical of eleven-year-olds.
73. Attainment in spelling is typical of seven-year-olds nationally when pupils enter school. They make satisfactory progress with weekly spelling lists to learn at home and focused work in class. The additional literacy support in Years 3 and 4 is having a very positive impact on the less able. In some classes teachers ignore common misspellings, pupils do not apply their spelling knowledge with consistency, and fail to secure progress. By Year 6 spelling is broadly in line with national expectations.
74. Overall, the quality of teaching observed in English lessons was good. In total eleven lessons were observed. Teaching was judged to be very good in three lessons, good in four lessons and satisfactory in four lessons. The teachers are successfully implementing the Literacy Hour. The lesson organisation and suggested teaching strategies are securely in place. However these do not always suit the pupils at Thorpe Acre. For example, seating Year 6 pupils on the floor around a 'big book' is uncomfortable, and maximises the opportunity to fidget and disrupt. Year 3 pupils are expected to sustain concentration through half an hour's listening and responding. Teachers should now feel confident enough to adapt their organisation and planning,

whilst retaining over all coverage, and to monitor the effect on pupils' progress. The good and very good lessons share many features of effective teaching, with good relationships and effective behaviour management, so that pupils are keen to learn. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and share these with them frequently. They know what their pupils can do, and match activities to their differing levels of attainment to challenge pupils and ensure good progress. They plan effective tasks that interest pupils, are relevant and promote independence. The pace is brisk in lessons with pupils making progress. Good use is made of interactive questioning and explaining so taking pupils' thinking and learning forward, for example, in a Year 6 lesson on Florence Nightingale pupils suggested '*mentally wounded*', '*split second*', '*comfort*' as words they could use about how a wounded soldier felt. Teachers model their expectations through, for example, lively and dramatic reading or shared writing. In a Year 5 lesson the story of '*Daedalus and Icarus*' was read with great feeling, pupils were highly attentive and tried to copy in their own reading. Learning assistants are clear about their role and provide good support, especially for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. In the satisfactory and some good lessons there were some less effective features. Teachers were unclear of what pupils could do, and tasks were given which lacked challenge with pupils making little or no progress. Teachers had low expectations, or did not share clear expectations with pupils. Low-level disruptive behaviour by a minority of pupils was not managed effectively, resulting in the pace of the lesson slowing and pupils losing interest and concentration. Tasks were undemanding exercises or worksheets, which did not take learning forward. Little or no opportunity was given for pupils to develop independence. In one lesson the learning support assistant provided the pupil with so much help that he only had to copy her work. In most classes pupils lack the responsibility of looking after their own books or equipment. Too little use is made of information and communication technology during literacy lessons.

75. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers are aware of the level of attainment of their pupils in reading and writing, but do not, as yet, have a clear understanding of what pupils can do and what they need to do to make progress. This is particularly apparent in some classes and more generally in reading. As a result some pupils are being given tasks that do not help them to learn.
76. The range of learning opportunities enables pupils to learn about different cultures and social contexts. Sensitive questioning and explaining strengthens pupils' moral social and cultural development. These instances are incidental and not planned. There was no opportunity to strengthen spiritual awareness.
77. The co-ordinator is actively involved in the Loughborough Development group, through which she gains training, advice and support. She passes on information to colleagues in school and provides informal advice and some formal training through staff meetings. She has monitored coverage through planning and book scrutiny. The role of the co-ordinator is undeveloped at present because there are no procedures in place to allow her to fulfil her role. The literacy co-ordinator recognises that she is not involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning, and does not yet have a detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. She appreciates that assessment is at an early stage of development and there needs to be much greater use made of assessment information.
78. The resources for English are satisfactory. The library is a suitable room, though a

little cramped, well organised and inviting. Stock is limited and many of the books are old. However during the inspection classes, groups or individual pupils rarely used the library, except for meetings or pupil support. It is not used effectively to support literacy or to develop research skills. Resources for literacy teaching are good, well organised and readily accessible.

79. The literacy governor carries out her role very effectively. She regularly gains an insight into school developments and teaching in English. She is aware of the level and detail of planning, has been involved in staff training, and has a good understanding of the subject and the needs of the pupils and the community.
80. Since the last inspection the impact of the National Literacy Strategy has improved consistency and has had a very positive impact on raising the quality of teaching and standards. Poor behaviour of groups of pupils still has a negative effect on learning. The monitoring and evaluative role of the co-ordinator needs further development, as does assessment.

MATHEMATICS

81. Evidence from ten lesson observations, teachers' planning and assessment documentation, discussions with pupils, in particular a group of Year 6 pupils, and a scrutiny of pupils' work from this and the whole of the last academic year, indicates that pupils in Year 6 attain the standards expected for their age in numeracy and all areas of mathematics.
82. Pupils' attainment in national tests, since 1998 has been erratic with the 2000 results seeing the school in the lowest five per cent nationally for similar schools. However, the 2001 figures show a 15 per cent point improvement with 70 per cent of last year's cohort achieving Level 4 and above in mathematics, meeting the school's own target. There was also a significant improvement in the number of pupils attaining Level 5 in mathematics, which now compares very favourably with the national picture. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy is contributing extremely positively to raising pupils' attainment and currently standards are improving. Local education authority monitoring, through numeracy strategy staff and a progress review in April 2001, confirms that mathematics standards throughout the school have risen. Inspection findings, including observation of the work in the booster groups in Year 6 in mathematics, would suggest that the 2001 results are set to continue. Pupils are attaining satisfactorily across the whole of the mathematics curriculum and are particularly good at investigations. There is no difference in attainment between boys and girls and information and communication technology is used appropriately to practise and sharpen skills. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for, make satisfactory progress and attain appropriately, with good quality support being provided from learning support staff. The same is true for pupils with English as an additional language. Inspection results show a significant improvement since the last inspection.
83. Work is well planned and the appropriate programmes from the National Numeracy Strategy framework are used. A scrutiny of last year's work shows pupils making clear progress. In Year 6 during the last academic year the majority of pupils progressed from work on multiplication using written methods in the early part of the year, onto algebra, ratio and proportion, and to being able to deal competently with fractions, decimals and percentages of quantities often related to real life situations,

such as clothing sales. The above average group had more challenging and a greater number of examples, thus covering more work. The above average pupils typically covered 50 per cent more work than the rest of the group. The lower group also made satisfactory progress throughout the year. They worked on fractions and simple equivalence at the beginning of the year for example, $\frac{3}{2} = ?$ $5 + \frac{3}{10} = ?$ $\frac{?}{10}$, and went onto an appropriate activity in mid-year, related to the colouring in of the number of dots on a domino to show $\frac{2}{3}$ of 6. In July they attempted rotational symmetry, simple money problems including change and evaluating how much articles cost, and some data handling involving the use of co-ordinates, graphs and charts. Evidence from these books also shows supportive comments from learning support assistants helping the less able pupils to achieve their goals. Work from all groups of pupils shows similar progress, with less challenging work in the early part of the academic year progressing to more difficult problems such as some investigations into numbers, in July of the following year.

84. Similar evidence from Year 3 pupils during the last academic year closely mirrors the increase in knowledge shown in the examples from the older pupils. In this year group pupils are able to deal with questions on place value such as reading and writing numbers to 1000 in figures and in words in the early part of the year, being able to do simple number puzzles and problems and working with data in graphs and charts at the end of the academic year.
85. Direct observation of current work in lessons shows Year 3 pupils confidently tackling addition and subtraction of length with rounding up and down to the nearest 10 or 100 centimetre, and accurately measuring a series of objects, including the playground. In Year 4 pupils were seen attempting the more challenging mental manipulation of measurements quite confidently, including the calculation of perimeters, and were readily converting from one measure to another using decimals and fractions. Pupils in Year 5 are able to recognise equivalent fractions and place value and in Year 6 the pupils in the booster group were eagerly attempting challenging work on comparisons of fractions, ratios and percentages. They find it difficult to decide what number operation to use when trying to solve problems. Pupils of all abilities are normally provided with suitable tasks from the numeracy framework examples and adult support where necessary.
86. The majority of pupils have positive attitudes to the school. Pupils say they like mathematics, show interest, try hard and apply themselves to the task in hand. They support each other and co-operate well and listen attentively, readily contributing to discussions. However, the presentation of some of their work is unsatisfactory. There is a minority of pupils who show little interest in their work and when their inappropriate behaviour is not dealt with they adversely affect the learning of all the class.
87. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory or better. Overall it is good. Fifty per cent of the mathematics teaching seen was good or better and 30 per cent was very good or excellent. This is a vast improvement since the last report where there were a significant number of unsatisfactory and poor lessons. This is because lessons are well planned from the numeracy framework, cover all aspects of the programmes of study and challenge pupils of all levels of ability, although there are rare examples of unchallenging work, for example, when all the Year 3 cohort were given simple work on fractions which was clearly inappropriate for the most able. Teachers generally

possess good subject knowledge, deliver three part lessons, often with good pace with clear explanations and good questioning techniques. Resources are used well although the use of pupil's white boards and digit cards could be extended. Appropriate mental and written strategies are taught and learning objectives are shared with the pupils. Generally, concepts are developed well and carefully explained and often pupils are given time targets to complete the tasks set. Games and information and communication technology are used appropriately to practise skills and support staff are sensitively deployed to maximise their use. There are good relationships existing between teachers and pupils and praise is used well. Pupils are encouraged to have a go even if not totally sure and teachers use strategies such as '*phone a friend*' to encourage pupils to take part even when they do not feel confident. Marking does not always help pupils' to improve their work. Summing-up sessions do not always consolidate the learning in the lesson and leave pupils ready for the next lesson.

88. The quality of learning is always at least satisfactory and often good or better because teachers are aware of individual pupils' needs and address them sympathetically, giving them confidence. Teachers are aware of the levels of pupils' ability through assessment and indicate clearly to them what they should know by the end of a piece of work. However, they do not involve pupils sufficiently in other assessment issues, such as marking, so that they are not terribly clear as to what they have to do to improve. All pupils are making good progress and, except for a minority, behave well in lessons.
89. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator. She has been highly influential in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards of attainment. She has been directly involved in training and monitoring classroom practice, improving teachers' planning and the quality of the task the pupils undertake. Monitoring of the subject takes place through an improved system of record keeping of key objectives.
90. The commercial scheme, used at the time of the previous inspection, which encouraged an over reliance on working through textbooks by some members of staff, has been replaced and the subject is now taught through the National Numeracy Strategy. Appropriate resources have been purchased to support this. No use was made of the library for mathematics during the inspection.

SCIENCE

91. The statutory test results for eleven-year-olds show that standards achieved are below both the national average and below standards achieved in similar schools. The year 2000 cohort of pupils achieved the same standards as for the previous year. These were slightly higher than those for the previous two years, when pupils attained well below national expectations. In the 2001 Year 6 unconfirmed test results about a third of pupils achieved the higher levels in science and about two-thirds are expected to gain the nationally expected level. This is about the same as at the time of the previous inspection.
92. Standards seen during the inspection indicate that most pupils in Year 6 will reach the expected standards. Attainment seen in other year groups indicates that most of these pupils should reach the expected national levels by the time they are in Year 6.
93. In Year 3, pupils followed up a visit from a dentist with good recall of what they had

learnt. They recalled the types of teeth with the correct words, 'canines', 'incisors' and 'molars'. They understood that each type of tooth had a different purpose. Pupils recalled that children had fewer teeth than adults. The teacher showed them the animal skulls that the dentist had brought and pupils discussed similarities and differences between the teeth in these skulls and human teeth. Pupils checked their own teeth using mirrors. At this age some pupils had gaps or new adult teeth and this factor added a further dimension to the work which the teacher promoted well. In Year 4, pupils knew the difference between a solid and a liquid. They carefully observed the solids, such as flour, sand and sugar, and predicted what would happen when water was added to them. However, they did not understand why the solid might dissolve.

94. Year 6 pupils continued their work on electrical circuits. They were able to make several different circuits using bulbs, switches and buzzers. They knew that the more battery cells in the circuit the more power that went to the bulb, switch or buzzer. They could draw a circuit using correct symbols.
95. An analysis of pupils' work, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, shows that they are making satisfactory progress throughout the school. Pupils develop the ability to use scientific terminology correctly. By Year 6 they can predict accurately and formulate a hypothesis. They learn how to devise a fair test and to write their findings in a scientific way. Able pupils write: '*The larger the canopy of the parachute the longer it took to reach the ground*'. Less able pupils express themselves less clearly but nevertheless show their understanding. For example, '*Because there is no gap so the electricity can run through to the bulb*'. Average and less able pupils find it more difficult to use the correct scientific language and to formulate a hypothesis without support.
96. Teaching is good in both classes in Year 6 and satisfactory in the two lessons seen in Years 3 and 4. Teachers explain the tasks carefully to pupils, prepare the resources well and show appropriate subject knowledge. They make good use of scientific vocabulary. Teachers explain safety procedures with care. They question pupils closely to ensure that they understand what is asked of them. Some teachers are too prescriptive in what they want pupils to do. Pupils are not given choices in practical lessons. This means that pupils do not design their own experiments, consider the criteria for a fair test or evaluate the outcomes. They find it difficult to work together and share equipment in small groups. The weakness in the teaching of science is that the tasks are too prescriptive to allow pupils to develop initiative and to take responsibility for their own learning. All pupils copy too much work from the board. There is an over reliance on work sheets which only ask pupils to fill in words from a given list. This results in the pupils having the work to read and learn but does not guarantee that they understand it. Little use is made at present of information and communication technology.
97. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. She has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning herself, though she ensures that planning follows the agreed overview. She has also monitored the pupils' work, drawing evaluative conclusions to inform her action plan. The school has identified investigative skills as a weakness within the subject and is seeking to address this fact. Teachers use the school scheme of work alongside the national guidelines to plan and deliver their lessons. Little use is made of the library during

lessons or for personal research. Sometimes pupils use their numeracy skills when preparing tables and graphs. They do not use their writing skills effectively as much of the work is copied using the teachers' words. Resources are stored centrally in a very organised way so that they are readily available for lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

98. By the age of eleven pupils attain standards in art and design that are securely in line with those typically expected of pupils of that age.
99. Evidence from pupils' work, displays around school and their efforts in lessons shows that pupils are developing skills and techniques using a range of materials and media. They are using and combining these skills in response to a range of stimuli. Pupils in Year 3 develop skills through sketching and observational drawing and wax resist pictures, using a range of mark making tools. In Year 4 pupils use colour-mixing skills to paint jungle scenes using secondary and tertiary colours. By Years 5 and 6 pupils are able to combine drawing, painting and paper sculpture into multi-media studies of landscapes and sunflowers, for example. Examples of work show that all pupils respond well and take pride in their work. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to gain experience of three-dimensional work. There are limited opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively.
100. Teaching observed during the week was limited to two lessons, with very good teaching in one and good teaching in the other. The positive features in teaching were the effective use of artefacts and pictures to stimulate pupils' ideas, good demonstration and the opportunity to build on previous learning. Pupils are using their sketchbooks to plan and develop ideas, experiment with techniques and develop observational drawing. Learning support assistants helped pupils with special educational needs to access and respond to the lesson. There was too limited use of resources to provide choice for pupils, and too little focus on the vocabulary of art and design. Pupils responded very well in both lessons, showing interest and concentrating well. They celebrated each other's efforts, and in one lesson collaborated and evaluated their own work and that of others in a constructive way.
101. Teachers currently use the national guidelines for planning. The curriculum is enriched through involvement with projects, such as the mosaic on the Thorpe Acre Trail and the village sign on the green. Visits by students from the Art College and local artists, such as Roger Hutchinson, also enhance the provision. Little use is made of art and design based computer programmes. Pupils do not use the library for research and there are few opportunities for them to use numeracy and literacy skills within the subject.
102. The co-ordinator is active within the Loughborough Development group and links closely with the art and design co-ordinator in the infant school. She checks portfolios to monitor coverage and standards and supports colleagues informally. As yet she has not further monitored the teaching and learning or developed a system for assessing or recording attainment. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection, strengthening observational skills, imaginative work and cultural awareness. Expectations have been raised and a policy and comprehensive medium term planning are now in place.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. During the period of the inspection very little evidence of design and technology was seen. However, from the two lessons seen, discussions with pupils and the lack of a range of work samples, standards by the age of eleven are below national expectations and attainment is unsatisfactory. This is the same as at the time of the 1997 inspection. The safety issues mentioned in the previous inspection report have all been addressed. A booklet to guide staff has been produced and during the inspection teachers taught safety rules and pupils used tools safely. Teachers use the national guidelines and projects from the school's own scheme to plan work. The management and planning for the subject have improved since the previous inspection but have not yet had a significant effect on the pupils' attainment.
104. Too little time in the past has been used to develop skills, for example for joining and moving. Work on display showed that, when in Year 5, pupils had joined wood together with triangular card corners to produce a support for two-dimensional Greek temples made of card. In a Year 6 lesson the same pupils were using this same technique to make a moving fairground ride. Year 4 work on display showed designs and cardboard models of chairs for specific people. In Year 3 pupils disassembled boxes to look at how they were made. Then they drew the net of a cube and decorated it. They began to understand that they needed to put tabs on some sides to make the box hold together. No design work for this was seen and all the boxes were the same. A group of Year 4 pupils enjoyed making bread. They developed the skills of weighing, measuring, rubbing in and kneading and followed the recipe carefully.
105. In some lessons pupils do plan or design their work but, as in the case of Year 6, the design was copied and so all designs were identical. Pupils were given the dimensions for their model and so all the finished ones will be the same. There was no evidence of pupils' evaluating their work at the end of the project. Pupils' practical skills are poor. In Year 3 many could not cut accurately along a line. In Year 6 some could not saw straight along a marked line. Pupils have not been taught the skills such as joining, combining and assembling materials progressively. They are not given the chance to select their own tools and materials and to decide on the scale of their models.
106. Too few lessons were seen to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching. Teachers understand what they have to teach and have resources well prepared, but they are reluctant to let the pupils experiment and learn through making mistakes. Pupils enjoy the lessons but could achieve so much more. The poor behaviour of some pupils affects the progress others are able to make. Little use is made of the library for research or computer programs for ideas and design opportunities. Pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills of labelling and measuring when they plan work. They also measure in some projects where dimensions are important. The co-ordinator looks at pupils' planning but does not monitor the quality of teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

107. Only one geography and two history lessons were seen but discussions with co-ordinators, scrutiny of the work of the pupils over the last academic year, monitoring of school schemes of work and teachers' plans, discussions with pupils and examining displays show that standards in history and geography are in line with those expected at the end of Year 6.

108. In history in Year 3, pupils understand the terms *'invade'* and *'settle'* and can recognise characteristics that place Celts and Romans as having lived a long time ago. They understand the idea of chronological order and that living conditions were extremely different then, compared to now. They confidently articulate the differences in clothing between us, the Celts and the Romans and differences of people generally. They are able to explain the properties of Celtic settlements and their differences when compared to Roman ones and are eager to use correct terms such as *'wattle and daub'*. In a Year 6 lesson about Victorian schooling, pupils showed good recall of facts related to the Victorian times. They remembered that children worked as chimney sweeps and factory cleaners and knew the names of Victorian reformers, such as Elizabeth Fry, Lord Shaftesbury, Doctor Barnardo and their contribution to the Victorian period. After watching a television programme the pupils could list the differences between their schooling and that of the Victorian period, mentioning ink-wells, slate boards and the use of sand trays by infants. They do not have enough opportunities to learn from primary sources, such as artefacts, such as information and communication technology, as well as secondary sources such as video-tapes and computer programs.
109. In the only geography lesson seen a Year 4 group were discussing the effect of man on the environment and could list positive and negative effects such as oil spills, car fumes, recycling paper, and walking rather than car riding and have designed an interesting questionnaire to take to their parents to ask them about their lifestyle. Evidence in pupils' books shows attempts at using first hand sources of information. For example, in a town study pupils used brochures, maps and information booklets. In both history and geography pupils are attentive and take part with lively contributions. Unfortunately, some older boys challenge the teacher with poor behaviour, odd and inappropriate comments and constant chatter. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make appropriate progress and are able to explain how to find out information systematically from reference books and other sources when it is to hand, though they make little use of the school library.
110. The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes very good with appropriately challenging and interesting tasks set for the pupils. For example, in a Year 6 group where the pupils were encouraged to write a play; and in a Year 5 class where they were asked to give reasons for preferring to live in Athens rather than Sparta. Those pupils who need support receive it from learning support assistants which improves the quality of their learning and all make satisfactory progress. Work is well planned, taken from the school scheme and the teachers have good subject knowledge. They use questioning skills well, asking many open questions that make the pupils think. For example, in a Year 4 group with a question *'Would it be ok if you travelled by car to work if you lived one mile away, five miles away or ten miles away?'* Many pupils found this type of questioning challenging. The quality of experience in one class was greatly improved by both the teacher and the pupils spending the whole day dressed in Victorian costume, and having other parts of the day such as registration and physical education performed as if in Victorian times. In some lessons pupils are asked to share ideas with a partner before committing them to paper or attempting an answer, but in others they are not encouraged, sufficiently, to be independent and are held back waiting for the whole group. There is a lack of

insistence within the teaching groups on good standards of presentation of written work.

111. Both co-ordinators see their role as writing policies and schemes, advising staff and purchasing resources. Neither is involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning in their subject and as such the role is unsatisfactory. Neither subject has figured in the recent past on the School Development Plan. The assessment of pupils' performance in both subjects is limited to the coverage of the school scheme and its content and this needs addressing, as does the systematic development of concepts and skills as the frequency and regularity of the teaching of history and geography is not yet clarified. The standards in both subjects remain the same as at the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. By the age of eleven pupils attain standards in information and communication technology (ICT) broadly typical of those found nationally in this age group. With the introduction of a scheme of work, which enables pupils progressively to build a range of skills and knowledge, progress recently has been strong.
113. All pupils have opportunities to become familiar with computers and their uses, through working in the school's recently equipped ICT suite. All classrooms have an additional computer, and there are computers in the library and small shared learning areas. The quality of opportunities offered outside ICT lessons is underdeveloped and varies between classes, depending on teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject. As a result of timetable organisation the ICT suite is only used in the afternoon, with each class working in the suite just once a week. This is a weakness in the subject because pupils do not spend enough time in activities that will make them confident in the use of ICT.
114. Pupils in Year 6 are able to retrieve, amend and save work in their class folder. In a lesson on data handling, they were able to apply a formula to a range of data to find totals and averages. They were also able to make sensible choices about the best way to represent the data. Throughout the school pupils develop strong word processing skills. They can use an art program to design and amend pictures. Pupils develop good skills in handling and interpreting information, and are beginning to strengthen modelling and control skills. The use of the Internet is at an early stage of development. Pupils have not yet had the opportunity to use e-mail, as this facility is only currently being introduced into the school. During the inspection the school received a digital camera, as a result of the successful collection of shopping coupons. The use of such a device is intended to broaden their current narrow experience of the use of technology.
115. During the inspection three lessons were observed, one was for a short part of the lesson and teaching was not graded, one was satisfactory and one was good. Positive features of teaching were the effective use of resources and stimuli to give relevance and purpose to the learning activities, which provided opportunities for pupils of different ability levels to make progress. Demonstration, and the use of correct terminology, helped pupils to make progress, for example '*go to the toolbar and press the rotate icon – like this*'. Good use was made of learning support assistance to ensure access for pupils with special educational needs. Pupils responded well to these features concentrating, working hard and showing delight in their work. Less effective

features of lessons were when pupils were unable to work co-operatively in groups of three at a computer, or when they had difficulty in generating ideas to use in their work. This resulted in off task behaviour.

116. The school has yet to implement a system for assessing and recording pupils' attainment in ICT. Consequently, teachers have little information to use when planning future learning experiences.
117. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future translated into detailed plans for development, built on a realistic view of current strengths and weaknesses. This is accompanied by a strategic resourcing plan. There is a clear policy statement, and teachers draw on national guidance when planning their lessons. There is no evidence of whole school planning to use ICT across the curriculum and little use is made of it in other subjects. This is unsatisfactory. The school does not yet monitor the quality of education, or standards of attainment in ICT, with any consistency.
118. The school has implemented a programme of training through the New Opportunities' Fund scheme. This is improving teachers' confidence and expertise, and having a positive impact on the attainment of pupils.
119. Since the last inspection attainment has risen. There is an effective scheme of work, staff have greater expertise and confidence and the curriculum co-ordinator has a clear and detailed development plan. Recent upgrades and additions to hardware meet the basic needs of the curriculum. This represents satisfactory progress.

MUSIC

120. In the previous inspection attainment in music throughout the school was below that expected. Pupils still do not achieve the standards that they should by the time they are eleven. Therefore there is no improvement since the last inspection. This is unsatisfactory.
121. The co-ordinator has been in the post for two terms and has realised that teachers lack confidence in the subject. Using a combination of the new Leicestershire scheme and national guidelines she is helping the teachers through writing lessons plans and buying resources that they are able to use in lessons. The impact of this support has not had time to take effect and some teachers are struggling with the lessons. There is an adequate range of teachers' books, taped music and instruments from many countries. Every class has a compact disc player and the school has an adequate collection of recordings for teachers to use in the classrooms. There is a new, well-resourced and well-organised music room. At present this is underused. No use is made of information and communication technology or the library to support learning. Procedures for assessment are not in place and this is unsatisfactory. The role of the co-ordinator is also unsatisfactory as monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is undeveloped.
122. Pupils have opportunities to sing in assemblies, lessons and concerts. They sing tunefully in assemblies and in lessons but most teachers lack the knowledge needed to improve the quality of the singing. When pupils sing in assemblies they sing tunefully and quietly. In one assembly Year 6 pupils sang a descant with obvious pride and

enjoyment. Music is played as pupils enter and leave assemblies. The title and composer is displayed in the hall. Insufficient use is made of this experience to develop pupils' listening skills, their knowledge of styles and composers across time and place or to develop pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

123. The theme for all the lessons for the term was Pulse and Rhythm. In Year 4 pupils understood the difference between a pulse and a rhythm. They could compose their own rhythms and clap them to the class. With a leader for each part pupils were able to keep both pulse and rhythm going in two parts. Pupils clapped the pulse to taped music, changed to arm actions in time and then back to clapping the pulse. They enjoyed the activities and made satisfactory progress. In another lesson pupils composed phrases using a five note scale. They volunteered to play their tune on the xylophone. Some played a drone while the rest of the class sang '*Old MacDonald had a farm*'. In Year 6, pupils enjoyed singing a simple song in a variety of tempos and volume as a warm up activity. They were able to clap the pulse for '*Pick a pocket or two*'. A group of pupils played the pulse on triangles while the rest of the pupils sang. This showed little progress from what Year 4 pupils could do. Evidence from music books in one Year 5 class showed that pupils composed tunes in groups using tuned and untuned percussion instruments. They wrote down their tunes using their own symbols. No other class had recorded any work in books.
124. Too few lessons were seen to make a judgement on the overall quality of teaching. During lessons teachers work hard to help pupils enjoy music but as it has not had a high profile in the school many pupils are indifferent to these efforts. Pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons but over time progress is unsatisfactory because the teaching of key skills has not build on pupils' attainment. Some pupils' attitudes are unsatisfactory. They do not make efforts to learn or to join in. Some behave in a silly manner, distracting others and seeking attention.
125. There is no school choir and no instrumental lessons. The co-ordinator plans to start recorder groups shortly.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. Only three lessons, in Years 5 and 6, were seen during the inspection but on the evidence gathered, discussion with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of the school scheme, pupils are on course to meet the expected levels at the end of Year 6. Boys and girls achieve similarly and are equally enthusiastic. All pupils make satisfactory progress and those with special educational needs are supported appropriately. Pupils have swimming lessons in Years 3 and 4 and most learn to swim. Those who do not have a chance to have extra swimming lessons in Years 5 and 6 so that the vast majority of pupils swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school at the age of eleven. Standards are similar to those found at the previous inspection.
127. In all lessons seen pupils were made aware of the need to warm up for physical activities and were well guided, without exception, by their enthusiastic teachers who took part and led the warm-up activity. Pupils have swimming lessons in Years 3 and 4 and most learn to swim. Those who do not learn to swim have a chance to have extra swimming lessons in Years 5 and 6 so that the vast majority of pupils swim at least 25 metres by the time they leave the school at the age of eleven.

128. In Year 5 children creditably perform creative movements to musical stimuli, satisfactory balances and rolling movements, including forward rolls, and are eager to learn how to improve their body position at the beginning and end of sequences. Year 6 pupils could explain the good and bad points of movements and are similarly eager to explain how to improve. They handle apparatus well.
129. The great majority of pupils enjoy physical education and enthusiastically takes a full part in the activities. However, a few older pupils act immaturely and refuse to apply themselves correctly to the task set and simply play around despite being constantly asked to join in the lesson.
130. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good well-planned lessons, clear, precise instructions and demonstrations often led by the teacher. Activities are now skill based, a clear improvement since the last inspection. Important technical points are raised such as '*strong balances*', positioning of parts of the body such as head and feet, and '*tension*' in movements. The lessons are physically active and pupils are appropriately challenged and are used well to demonstrate their performance, which they do eagerly. Although teachers are aware of health and safety aspects of physical education and do not allow pupils to wear jewellery, they fail to point out other hazards present in the hall such as stored apparatus and furniture. All pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning.
131. The pupils now follow an appropriate physical education programme linked to national guidelines, another improvement since the last inspection. This programme is supportive to all members of staff but aspects of progression in activities such as sequences need to be addressed. The current policy needs updating.
132. The subject is well led by an enthusiastic, but acting, co-ordinator who has been instrumental in developing strong links with a local specialist Physical Education College for shared use of facilities and the use of visiting consultants. All staff have taken part in Top Sport training and the school is well resourced having many Top Sport bags and other equipment. The extracurricular provision is already good including athletics, football, tennis and swimming clubs and is developing yet further, and all pupils are given the opportunity to take part in an annual residential activity. The role of the co-ordinator is undeveloped as she has not monitored the quality of teaching and learning and there are no procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This is unsatisfactory.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. The attainment of pupils in Year 6 is slightly above those expectations that are typical of those set out in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of religious ideas. They develop a growing ability to reflect thoughtfully about such ideas in the context of their own lives.
134. A scrutiny of pupils' books and observation of three lessons indicates that pupils are developing a growing knowledge and understanding of Christian traditions, such as Harvest and Easter. They gain a broad and secure awareness of the traditions and beliefs of Sikh, Hindu and Islamic religions over their four years in school. They relate this knowledge to their own everyday experiences and respond with thought, respect

and tolerance. One Year 6 boy explained: '*Sometimes we have to destroy things in war to make things right*'. The range of discussions and role-play activities enables pupils with special educational needs to make satisfactory progress.

135. Teachers make use of a very comprehensive scheme of work with half term schemes of work and supporting lesson plans. These make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and standards of attainment. This scheme is based upon the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus for religious education and meets statutory requirements.
136. Three lessons or part lessons were observed. Within the two full lessons teaching was very good in one and satisfactory in another. Teachers effectively used and built on pupils' own knowledge, they shared clear expectations and used a range of artefacts and stories to stimulate learning. In a Year 6 lesson pupils saw a video, watching Hindu dancers representing the creation. Pupils were able to understand the symbolism within the traditional dance. In a Year 5 lesson every day symbols such as '*Nike*' and '*Kappa*' were used to help pupils understand the religious symbols of Sikhism. Good use of questioning and sensitivity in letting pupils explain and justify thoughts were a common feature in lessons. Pupils develop a respect for the views and contributions of classmates. Occasionally the poor behaviour of a small group interrupted learning.
137. Religious education makes a strong contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at Thorpe Acre Junior School, though not to the further development of the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Too little use is made of the library and information and communication technology within the subject.
138. The co-ordinator has drawn up the very effective policy and scheme of work. She monitors coverage through looking at books and displays but has not monitored the quality of teaching and learning. No assessment procedures for pupils' attainment and progress are in place but it is the co-ordinator's intention to develop them in order further to monitor pupils' learning. Resources are well organised and provide a range of stimuli for the scheme of work.
139. Since the last inspection attainment has risen. Awareness of spiritual significance in lessons is now a common feature and there are clear expectations for pupils to develop understanding as well as knowledge.