

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **NEWCROFT PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Shepshed

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119950

Headteacher: Mr C Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mr B Tyrer  
23101

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 196670

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 10
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Trueway Drive Shepshed Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE12 9DU
Telephone number:	(01509) 503214
Fax number:	(01509) 508700
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr C Booles
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23101	Mr B Tyrer	Registered inspector	Art Music Equal opportunities English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
13981	Mr T Morgan	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?
23958	Ms C Balson	Team inspector	English Geography History Special educational needs	
22352	Mrs F Gaywood	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Design and technology Foundation Stage	
21245	Mr W Lowe	Team inspector	Science Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils?

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the Shepshed East Ward of Leicestershire. There are 289 pupils on role of whom 151 are girls and 138 are boys. Seventeen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs. This proportion is below the national average. Of those, two per cent have statements of special needs and this proportion is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the average. The school admits pupils at age four, some on a part-time basis, into the reception class and they leave the school as pupils in Year 5 aged 10. The school considers the attainment of pupils on entry to be at or just below average. The school population is predominantly white. The socio-economic status of the area is one that suggests that most pupils enjoy conditions that are broadly similar to the national picture.

### HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Inspection shows standards that are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science for pupils in Year 2. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and the leadership and management of the school are also very good. In considering the high standards achieved, the quality of education that the school provides and the effective use that is made of funding, the school is providing good value for money.

#### What the school does well

- Standards are high and pupils are achieving very well.
- Personal development is excellent and attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Teaching is very good.
- The school offers a good curriculum and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.
- The school takes good care of its pupils and works very well with parents.
- The leadership and management of the school are very good.

#### What could be improved

- The way in which work is sometimes planned for higher attaining pupils in English and science.

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

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

The school has made a good improvement since it was last inspected in 1997. The key issues of the previous inspection have been successfully addressed and the quality of teaching has been improved. High standards have been maintained and in some instances improved.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results. There are no results for older pupils because of the LEA's policy of transferring pupils from some schools to the next stage of their education at age 10.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	A	A	A*	A
writing	B	C	B	C
		Newcroft Primary School - 5		

**Key**

well above average    A

above average        B

average                C

below average        D

well below average    E

mathematics	B	A	A*	A*	
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The attainment of pupils aged seven in national tests in 2001 was very high in reading and mathematics (in the top five per cent) and was above average in writing. When compared with similar schools this performance was well above average for reading and mathematics and was average for writing. In teacher assessed science the pupils' attainment was above average at the expected level (Level 2 and above) and was well above at the higher level (Level 3). Standards in all three subjects have been consistently above the national average and the improving trend is broadly better than that seen nationally. Inspection shows that high standards are being maintained. The attainment of pupils aged seven in English and mathematics is above expectations and in science it is well above. For pupils in Year 5 who are aged 10 their attainment in these subjects is above what might be expected for their age. The attainment of pupils aged seven and aged ten is as might be expected in all other subjects with the exception of design and technology and information and communication technology where it is above average. The attainment of these pupils is as might be expected in religious education for pupils of their age who use the same agreed syllabus. Children enter the reception class with levels of attainment that are broadly similar to those which might be expected and having made very good progress achieve levels that are well above average.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and hardworking.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils respond well to all members of staff.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is excellent and relationships are very good. Pupils are keen to participate and take on responsibility.
Attendance	Good. It is above the national average.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 5
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

The teaching of English and mathematics is good and ranges overall from satisfactory to excellent. The skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught in English and very well taught in mathematics and the national strategies for their teaching have been effectively implemented. The school meets the needs of all pupils well including those who have special needs. Teaching is very good overall and has many strengths. Relationships are very good and pupil management is excellent. Planning is generally good but attention needs to be given in some English and science lessons to planning more challenging tasks for pupils with higher ability.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There is a very good range of extra curricular activity.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Individual education plans are well thought out and excellent support is provided in the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. It is good for spiritual development and very good for social, moral and cultural aspects.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school takes good care of its pupils. There are very good procedures in place for child protection.

The school works very well with parents and they hold the school in high regard. They report that the school keeps them well informed and that they feel comfortable about approaching the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The new headteacher has made a very good start and has been very well supported by all staff including those teachers who have posts of responsibility.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are active in support of the school and in planning its development. They are meeting their responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has good systems in place and sound judgements are made.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school is careful to seek best value and to evaluate the effectiveness of its decisions.

The matching of staffing to the demands of the curriculum is very good and particularly so where support staff are involved. The accommodation is very good and provides an exciting environment within which pupils can learn. The school actively pursues best value principles. In the short time that he has been there the headteacher has shown that he is capable of developing the school in ways that will ultimately raise standards even higher.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• That behaviour is good.</li> <li>• That the school has high expectations and that teaching is good.</li> <li>• That they are comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• That it is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homework.</li> <li>• Information about progress.</li> </ul>

The support of parents for the school is very high and returns to questionnaires and comments at the parents' meeting support that view. The issues in the 'what parents would like to see improved' category still attracted over 80 per cent support in their favour.

The inspection team agrees with what parents find pleasing and finds that the information provided to parents

is very good. Homework is generally suitable and has relevance to class work.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage in the reception class with levels of attainment that are broadly average. Many will have had some pre-school experience in nurseries or playgroups. By the time they have completed their reception year their personal and social development will be very good. Their communication, language and literacy skills will be well above what might be expected and their mathematical development will be above average. Their physical development will be good as will be their knowledge and understanding of the world and many will exceed the standard for their age in their creative development.
2. Children make very good progress in the Foundation Stage as they develop their personal and social skills. They are able to take turns and share and they cooperate well in role play, for example in their travel agent's office. They quickly come to understand the rules and quickly pick up routines. They are able to listen carefully and can talk to one another about what they are doing or are going to do. Many are articulate and speak clearly in sentences. They are able to make comments about the work of others and can suggest how things might be added or changed. When asked to observe, for example, in a physical education lesson, they are able to do so and can afterwards offer comments on what they have seen. They enjoy mathematical games and excel in areas such as shapes and measuring. Through use of equipment such as a large dice they are able to work cooperatively to solve the problem of 'one more than' with numbers they generate. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is good. They show that they are able to talk about places and forms of transport. They know that different groups celebrate different things and at different times; and that small creatures such as earwigs and spiders have their own habitats. They become well coordinated and so can manipulate tools such as scissors efficiently. They control paintbrushes and writing implements well. In physical education sessions they show that they are able to make a range of different movements such as jumping in different directions and that whilst doing so they are aware of what others are doing as well. In music sessions they listen carefully and offer suggestions as to how new instruments could be used. Computers are used effectively and children are adept with hardware and software. In art they enjoy mixing colour and show high levels of concentration as they produce self-portraits.
3. The results for national tests for seven year olds in 2001 showed that :
  - standards in reading and mathematics were very high (within the top five per cent);
  - standards in writing were above average;
  - standards in science based on teacher assessment were above average for the proportion reaching the expected level ( Level 2 and above); and
  - in comparison with similar schools the results were well above average for reading and mathematics and were average for writing.
4. The attainment of pupils aged seven over time has been well above average in reading and mathematics and has generally been above average in writing. Improvements in standards have generally taken place at a rate greater than that seen nationally.
5. As pupils in Key Stage 2 transfer to the next stage of their education at the end of Year 5 there is no data available to the school in the form of national test results for pupils at age 11 (Year 6).
6. Inspection shows that the attainment of the present Year 2 cohort is currently above average. The attainment of pupils in Year 5 is above what is expected for their age in English, mathematics and science. They are achieving very well in mathematics and science and well in English. The attainment of pupils in Years 2 and 5 is above expectations in speaking and listening, reading and

writing. There has been quite a number of changes to staffing in the last two years, but there are no unfilled teaching posts and the very good standards and rates of progress are a reflection of the very good teaching on offer, taking place as it does in a very conducive and well managed environment. There remain occasional instances where, in English and science the more able pupils need to be provided with higher challenges.

7. Pupils in Year 2 are able to recall information, for example what they have found out about their topic on 'whales'. They speak clearly and without hesitation. They are able to combine several sentences of a complex nature together in response to questions. In Year 5 pupils are able to give convincing reasons and arguments for points they want to make. Because it is part of the school ethos that everyone's contribution is of value and hence important, pupils listen attentively when others are speaking. These pupils are confident speakers and are happy to engage visiting adults in conversation. They use grammar correctly and structure their sentences well. Pupils in Year 2 are generally good readers. The best read without hesitation and with expression. They are able to recall details of the plot and can suggest how the story they are reading may turn out. In using non-fiction materials they can refer to an index and can summarise what they have read making reference on occasion to the text or the illustrations. In Year 5 pupils are accomplished readers. The best again read fluently at a more difficult level and are able to decode unusual vocabulary. Some are able to draw inferences from what they have read and can say why they prefer a certain author or genre. They use their library skills well in support of research work for other subjects.
8. Pupils in Year 2 write well-defined sentences. They spell common words accurately and use punctuation, for example speech marks, appropriately. When asked they can supply a range of imaginative and exciting vocabulary as was seen when they chose different verbs in an exercise about whales. Pupils in Year 5 are able to build phrases and sentences into coherent paragraphs. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 are using a fluent joined script for their work and those in Year 5 use connectives and commas to produce interesting sentences.
9. Pupils in Year 2 are able to operate with two digit numbers so that they can add or subtract numbers in units or tens. They estimate and measure and tell the time to the quarter hour. Using the four rules of number they are able to make numbers up to a target number and can partition shapes into quarters. In Year 5 they use big numbers and double and half. They use percentages, proportion and have worked on probability. They can suggest the properties of different triangles and are able to solve problems concerning distance and time. Fractions, decimals and percentages can be interchanged and pupils represent data with different types of graph.
10. In science the younger pupils in Year 2 are beginning to draw conclusions from their experiments. They draw accurate diagrams for their work on electricity and know what constitutes a fair test. Outcomes of experiments are accurately recorded. In Year 5 pupils are able to use data to help solve problems. . They can hypothesise about outcomes and then test to see if they are correct. In work on food pupils are able to consider nutritional values and are able to graph their work.
11. The attainment of pupils in other areas of the curriculum is as might be expected for pupils of their age. It is higher for pupils aged seven and ten in design and technology and in information and communication technology. In religious education, pupils' attainment matches that expected for pupils of the same age who use the same agreed syllabus.
12. Because the school is careful to ensure that all pupils are given equal opportunities to learn and make progress, there is no discernible difference between the progress made by boys and girls. Pupils of different ability and attainment make progress that is commensurate with their peers and pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets set for them in their individual education plans.

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

13. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good; their personal development is excellent. All these aspects have improved since the last inspection. Attendance is good.
14. Throughout all classes pupils have very good attitudes to learning. Almost all parents say that their

children like coming to school. Pupils clearly appreciate what is being provided for them both in classrooms and in the many extra-curricular activities. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to instructions, work well independently or in co-operation with others and show an enthusiasm to do well. They respond eagerly to questions and accept that others may have a different point of view. Pupils of all ages contribute when asked to do so in whole school assemblies. Most pupils explain confidently what they are doing and are keen to show their work. They concentrate on their tasks, enjoy being challenged and persevere when they find things difficult, learning from their mistakes. The fun of learning is frequently evident.

15. Pupils with special educational needs also like coming to school and enjoy taking part in the activities provided for them. Overall they are developing positive attitudes to both school and learning. Their behaviour is very good and they respect and value the learning support assistants and other adults working with them. They work very well together and relationships are very good. They generally concentrate well and enjoy all aspects of their work.
16. Parents are very pleased with the standard of behaviour and inspection judgements strongly support these views. The very good behaviour, throughout all classes, makes a major contribution to effective learning and to the quality of school life in general. There is a pleasant air of orderliness without the suppression of natural exuberance. Pupils know what is expected of them and they behave appropriately, generally not for any reward but because they accept that it is the right thing to do. They are polite and considerate to one another, to staff and to visitors – doors are held open for others and “please” and “thank-you” are regularly heard. The school is a very pleasant place to be in. Pupils take good care of equipment and furniture, treating it as though it is their own. There is no evidence of bullying and pupils are aware of what to do if they encounter any. When instances of unacceptable behaviour occur, they are dealt with swiftly and appropriately. There have been no exclusions.
17. Relationships throughout the school are very good. All the staff, teaching and non-teaching, are splendid role models. Pupils of different ages relate well to each other and there is a friendly atmosphere with older pupils being successfully encouraged to be aware of the needs of younger ones. A pupil, new to the school, was seen being looked after sensitively by his classmates. Several older pupils assist in the younger ones’ playground at break times. Pupils co-operate in pairs when working in classes and collaborate effectively when required to engage in group or whole-class activities. They show an interest in what other pupils are achieving and appreciate the efforts of those less able than themselves. In the many extra-curricular clubs and sports teams, pupils of both genders and a range of ages mix together very well.
18. The personal development of pupils is excellent. Almost all parents say that the school is successful in encouraging pupils to become mature and responsible. The opportunities for taking responsibility, given in all classes, are eagerly sought and effectively discharged. Pupils in Year 5 are appropriately given more responsibility such as making their own way to the pool for swimming lessons, setting up the hall for assemblies and running the Tuck Shop - including the ordering of stock and accounting for the money. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their efforts, both orally in lessons and, for the older pupils, in writing for each subject. Their capacity for personal study and self-discipline is enhanced through the regular setting and completion of homework. The School Council, with a representative from each class including the Reception, meets the headteacher every week to discuss matters such as the provision of additional playground equipment; the representatives are responsible for ensuring that the notes of the weekly meetings are read out to their class. All pupils are divided into four houses; this gives rise to keen competition across a range of activities. Pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are given opportunities to go on residential visits where they experience different social environments and academic and physical challenges. This is an outstanding feature of the school’s provision for personal development.
19. The good rate of attendance, at above the national average, has been maintained since the last inspection. Parents are keenly aware that their children should miss school only if absolutely essential with the result that there is almost no unauthorised absence. Registers are completed correctly in accordance with requirements. Efficient registration ensures a prompt start to lessons and this has a beneficial effect on pupils’ learning.

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

20. The quality of teaching is very good across all phases and this constitutes an improvement since the last inspection. Previously there was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection and the proportion of good, very good and better teaching has improved. Fewer lessons were seen in the Foundation Stage where the best teaching was seen. There was no significant difference in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Over one third of teaching was very good or excellent and almost one half was good. The remaining fifth was satisfactory.
21. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good, overall, and some excellent lessons were seen. Teachers organise children appropriately in groups and know them well; they match activities to pupils' needs carefully. Children with special educational needs are identified early and given very good support from the learning support assistant. She is very careful to allow the children she supports, sufficient opportunities to try things out and join in the activities, but also very sensitive to the needs of the other children and teachers, knowing just when to withdraw and work on a one-to-one basis. This enables all groups to be included, appropriately, with the minimum of disruption. More able children are well catered for in their groups and have ample opportunities to work at a level suitable for their needs. The team plans very well, within the 'stepping stones' system, for the Early Learning Goals (ELGs) and already works within the structure of the literacy and numeracy hours. This enables children to progress well, and many were reaching several of the ELGs at the time of the inspection. All staff expect high standards of behaviour. This ensures that the children are secure and know what is expected of them, which helps them to think for themselves and make appropriate decisions about their work and social interactions.
22. The teaching of English is good in both key stages as well as being good in mathematics for pupils in Key Stage 1. The teaching of mathematics in Key Stage 2 is very good. Strategies for teaching literacy are effective and they are very effective for the teaching of numeracy. Basic skills are well taught in both subjects and many opportunities are taken in other areas of the curriculum to utilise or consolidate such skills.
23. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, especially when pupils are withdrawn from class, and when teachers plan appropriately matched tasks and use a range of effective teaching methods, such as discussion or practical tasks, that help pupils learn. When teaching is good the teacher plans and discusses work with the learning support assistants. The assistants' work enhances the quality of learning for pupils.
24. The previous report suggested that at times the teachers' interpretation of the behaviour policy was responsible for slowing the pace of the lesson and pace was also criticised. These matters have been most effectively addressed and teachers' management of pupils is now excellent. Teachers' use of time and pace are good and they use very effective teaching strategies. The previous report was critical of an occasional lack of challenge for higher attaining pupils. This remains the case in some aspects of English and science.
25. Four different teachers produced a total of five excellent lessons which covered mathematics, art, physical education and aspects of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Many other lessons were very good and came close to that standard. A common feature of much of the teaching is the teachers' very good knowledge of the subject and the ability to plan in detail how they are going to teach. For example in an excellent art lesson on Kandinsky, the teacher had introduced the work and described it through good display. The subject was then taken to another dimension and used as inspiration for a dance lesson. As a result the pupils became enthused with the artist's work as they looked at it in greater and greater detail. Techniques were analysed so that pupils were able to see how the artist actually made his marks and this in turn opened up questions about media. When asked to make pictures in the style of the artist the pupils were full of enthusiasm and energy because they understood what they had been working with. Opportunities then followed for evaluation and discussion. The lesson was one of a series that had most effectively not only given pupils knowledge and skills but had seized opportunities to develop other areas of the curriculum. It also made a very good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
26. Teachers' management of pupils is excellent and as a result relationships are very good. Teachers

convey their intentions and expectations clearly and show pupils, through the quality of their planning, that they not only care for their pupils but that they want them to do well. There is scope for higher demand to be made through the planning for pupils of higher ability in some English and science lessons but generally pupils are well catered for in this respect.

27. Support staff contribute very effectively to the learning process. They are well deployed and again enjoy very good relationships with their pupils. Teachers use their time and their resources very well and planning for support in the classroom and through withdrawal is excellent. Good use is made of assessment; as teachers are able to encourage all pupils to improve their work and make more demands of themselves, the pupils achieve very well. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning and is sensibly related to the work in hand.
28. Pupils learn at a very good rate and achieve very well. In response to the high quality provision that is made for them they become active and interested participants in their learning. They want to do well for themselves and their teachers and they take a pride in their efforts. Because they are confident in the relationships they enjoy in school they are able to offer and take constructive criticism which in turn leads to the consolidation and improvement of what they know and can do.

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

29. The school has achieved its aims as set out in its mission statement in that it provides a happy, caring, safe and supportive environment in which pupils are encouraged to do their best with their successes being celebrated. It provides very well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils in its charge. The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. The majority achieve very well in relation to their earlier attainment. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements including those for religious education and provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage. The school has adopted very effective strategies for teaching numeracy and those for literacy are good.
30. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and other activities that include sports, music and those linked to the curriculum, considerably enrich the school's overall provision for the development of its pupils. For example, the music curriculum is enriched by the provision of extra-curricular tuition in guitar playing, recorders, woodwind, a small amount of brass and strings and infant and junior choirs. Pupils are given the opportunity to develop their artistic skills through art and construction kit clubs. Sporting activities are well catered for with a range of clubs such as cross-country, football, and netball. The school has a homework club and a computer club that provides extra experience in information technology for Year 5.
31. The school maintains a policy of equality of access and opportunity with some success. Pupils are encouraged to take a full part in all the activities provided, whether as part of the normal school day, or as extra-curricular provision. Those who have special needs are treated with sensitivity and encouraged to do their best as full members of the school community. However, the school's policy of charging for a small number of activities such as music and some football training does limit, to an extent, the effectiveness of its commitment to equality of opportunity. The scrutiny of pupils' work carried out during the inspection and some lesson observations indicate that a minority of pupils, for example the more able, are not being fully challenged in English and science because the activities provided do not always match their individual needs.
32. A broad balanced and fully inclusive curriculum is offered to pupils with special educational needs. The school fully implements the national Code of Practice and applies the special educational needs identification procedures appropriately. Pupils' needs are reflected in their individual teaching and learning programmes.
33. The school makes good provision for the personal and health education of its pupils. The drugs policy constitutes a clear statement of the school's attitude and provision for this area. Sex education is not covered by the school curriculum although members of staff deal with any questions that pupils ask as they arise - this subject is covered formally in Year 6 at the local high school.

34. The school maintains very good links with the local community and uses them effectively to enlarge and enrich the curriculum. For example, the link maintained with a local company provides a technology challenge for Year 5 pupils, the resulting work being exhibited at Loughborough University. In involving local companies and other organisations in its work, the school has been able to access extra funding in the form of sponsorship such as that provided for football and netball kits. The Loughborough Primary Sports Association has provided funding and organised inter-school activities. An annual sports afternoon is organised under the auspices of the Shepshed family of schools as well as various local competitions such as cross-country and netball events. The school maintains satisfactory relationships with the local high school but is actively seeking to improve these links by further developing its existing contacts such as combined teacher training sessions and inter-school visits by Year 5 pupils and their teachers. Relationships with the various nurseries and other organisations that feed into the school are good.
35. The school has maintained the very good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of its pupils noted as being a strength of the school in the last report. There is an all pervading atmosphere of mutual trust and respect, reflected in the high level of very good relationships between the teachers and their pupils and between the pupils with each other.
36. The quality of the school's provision for spiritual development is good. This is an improvement of the findings of the last report when this provision was seen to be satisfactory. The school seeks to provide opportunities for spiritual and personal growth within its policy for collective worship. Pupils are able to delight in the wonder and creativity of their own learning, for example, their reaction of astonishment at the results of experiments involving pneumatics. The school grounds are successful in providing an area for quiet reflection. Pupils are encouraged to think of themselves as special, for example, the work done in religious education in which a pupil wrote "I am special because my Mum and Dad love me." Religious education plays an important role in the spiritual development of the pupils by fostering the concept of God as interpreted by different religions and cultures.
37. Provision for moral development is very good. It is firmly rooted in the ethos of the school and the expectation that the pupils will respond appropriately. Pupils in the school demonstrate a strong understanding of what is right and wrong, thanks in the main to the constant reinforcement of good behaviour with praise by the teachers and by the celebration of success that is a major feature of the school's moral provision. Pupils are encouraged to think about factors outside their own immediate experience. A good range of money-raising activities leads to substantial donations to a number of national charities. As part of its moral education the school encourages its pupils to take on a very wide range of responsibilities such as helping in assemblies and through the work done with the younger children by pupils in Year 5. A notable feature of the responsibilities taken by the pupils is the elected membership of the School Council that was, for example, instrumental in suggesting that the money raised at the Christmas Concert was donated to a specific charity.
38. Social development is very good and strengthened further by the good role models presented by the staff. Pupils are very good at working together as part of a team. They are well mannered, very well behaved and both supportive of and kind to each other. Good opportunities are provided for the pupils to develop an awareness of the diversity of cultural backgrounds within the wider community. Pupils are made aware of the art forms of different cultures and have produced some good work based on them. Pupils take part in Maypole dancing and folk dancing and experience Indian music and the instruments used. There have been visits to the school by the Shree Ram Krishna Centre for Multi-cultural Education and the school has links with a school in Birmingham and have exchanged cards with the pupils there at Eid and Christmas. The governors of the school are aware of the need to further develop the provision for cultural education in particular through visits to places of worship used by other faiths such as Islam and Hinduism.

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

39. The very good care provided by the school has a substantial effect on pupils' attainment and progress. The safe, supportive and caring environment provided for the pupils is a strength of the school. There has been an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are well known by staff and there is evident concern for their welfare and development. During lunchtime and the morning break, as well as in the classroom, pupils are supervised sensitively and effectively. This makes a significant

contribution towards the pupils' feeling of security and their enjoyment of school life.

40. Teachers know the individual needs of pupils in their own class very well and are always striving to provide a learning environment in which each pupil feels valued and fully included in all class activities. The good programme of personal, social and health education underpins the development of fully rounded junior citizens. Targets are set for personal and academic achievements in a variety of ways – some classes have whole class targets which are changed frequently. Teachers set targets in workbooks; groups are set both short and longer term goals and annual reports on individual pupils always state what needs to be concentrated on to achieve improvements. Monitoring of pupils' personal development through class teachers' detailed knowledge of their own pupils, daily diaries and formal assessment records is good.
41. Pupils with special educational needs are well provided for. Their individual education plans are reviewed and amended as necessary and pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs receive their entitlement. Annual reviews are carried out appropriately. Good records are kept which allow staff and parents to see what progress is being made.
42. Procedures for child protection are good with a detailed, informative policy that is brought regularly to the attention of staff, teaching and non-teaching. There are very good procedures for ensuring health and safety. The health and safety policy sets out responsibilities but contains few specific school procedures and requirements. However, there is a very effective system of checks and records completed by the caretaker and the secretary. Much thought has been given to this aspect - for example, the fire evacuation instructions are written in language suitable to be understood and followed by the pupils rather than the usual formal notices. Members of the Site Committee do a comprehensive health and safety survey three times each year. There are good links with a range of professionals responsible for education, welfare and health.
43. Good procedures for checking and improving attendance are applied consistently and effectively. Attendance records are analysed regularly and any unexplained absences are swiftly investigated. Parents are conscientious in advising the school about why their child is away and in keeping holidays taken in term time to a minimum.
44. The procedures for monitoring and encouraging positive behaviour are very good as are those for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour. There are clear behaviour and anti-bullying policies and the school rules are short and simple. Pupils are frequently encouraged to think about the effect of their behaviour on other pupils. The headteacher has an effective system for recording any incidents or concerns about an individual pupil's conduct and for consulting pupils and parents to agree a way forward.
45. The school has detailed procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and for applying this information to guide curriculum planning. Baseline assessment for reception children is carried out just after their entry into school to determine their attainment in all areas of learning. Throughout the school there are regular tests in English and mathematics and the optional National Curriculum tests are used in all year groups. Individual portfolios of pupils' work show what pupils know, can do and understand and this highlights their progress over a period of years.
46. Good use is made of the analysis of results from statutory and annual tests and from teachers' day-to-day assessments. For example, the results of annual testing are used to place pupils in ability sets for English and mathematics in order to raise attainment by matching the work more directly to pupils' abilities. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is thorough and is used effectively to set or amend learning objectives for each lesson, either for the whole class or for specific pupils or groups.

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

47. The school's partnership with parents is very good and makes a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The emphasis on partnership in the school's aims and in the prospectus is very much reflected in practice.
48. Thirteen parents attended the pre-inspection meeting and 44 per cent of questionnaires were returned.



Almost all views expressed support for what the school is doing in all respects. Parents spoken to during the inspection reinforced the positive opinions. Parents state that their children make good progress. They feel that behaviour is good and that the teaching is good with teachers having high expectations of pupils' abilities. Parents are confident that the school is well led and managed and they are comfortable with raising questions or problems. They also believe that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and that there is a wide range of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence strongly endorses these positive views.

49. Some parents have concerns about homework, a few mentioning that they believed it to be too challenging. Inspectors found that, overall, the use of homework is good with about the right amount and appropriate to the age and ability of pupils.
50. A few parents feel that they are not well enough informed about the progress of their children and that the school does not work closely enough with them. Inspection evidence does not support these views. Teachers are available to see parents at the start of the day for urgent matters and particularly, at the end of school for other informal discussions – several parents were seen doing this. The headteacher makes himself readily accessible to parents, usually without the need to make appointments. Parents are quickly involved if the staff have any concerns about their child.
51. The quality of information formally provided for parents is very good. There are induction meetings for parents whose children are about to join the reception class. All parents have the opportunity of formal meetings with their child's class teacher in the autumn and spring terms. Curriculum meetings are held for all parents or particular groups of parents, for example on Key Stage 1 Standard Assessment Tests. At the end of specified months, "Effort Cards" are sent out that show what level of effort the pupil has put in over a range of school activities; parents sign and return these cards. Letters, in a friendly, eye-catching format are sent frequently on all aspects of school life; topics to be studied are included in the first letter of the year. Annual written reports on pupils' progress are good. They give a clear description of what pupils have achieved and how progress can be made in the future in personal development as well as in academic subjects. Some of the most recent reports include digital photographs, showing for example, pupils with work produced in design and technology classes.
52. Parental involvement with the school and with their children's work at home is very good. Parents and other adults are encouraged to offer to help in school – a good feature is the tear-out page at the back of the prospectus. More than 20 adults, grandparents and volunteers as well as parents, do so regularly. Their work is well planned by teachers and they make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Other parents willingly help as escorts on visits and with other events in the school. The take-up of places on courses such as "Partners in Reading" and "Partners in Maths" is exceptionally good and has had a positive effect on the progress of the children of these parents. Reading by children at home is well supported, as is the completion of homework.
53. Parents of pupils with statements of special educational need are kept well informed about their children's progress both at parents' evenings and at the annual reviews.
54. The "Friends of Newcroft Primary School" plays an important part in the life of the school. A variety of activities are organised by a hard working committee of staff and parents. Although fund-raising is the main aim, all the events have a social element and involve the pupils. A large amount of money is raised each year and has been used for such purposes as purchasing outdoor adventurous play equipment, projectors, special furniture and as a substantial donation to the cost of extending the hall. The efforts of "The Friends" make a major contribution to the facilities and the general development of the pupils.

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

55. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher has been in post for one term and has made a very good start. There has been no slowing down of impetus and it is already apparent that projected developments will enable all connected with the school to enjoy challenge and change whilst continuing to improve and diversify.

56. The headteacher has been most ably supported by the staff, governors, parents and pupils and they have provided the necessary links in this transition. The governing body has and continues to have a sharp and well-defined perspective as far as the direction of the school is concerned. Through their well-defined committee structure they are able to follow and influence all aspects of school life. Many have strong links to the school through their association with a class or through their connection to a member of staff with a particular area of responsibility. They are able to contribute to planning for the management and development of the school and are keen to represent the views of the school, for example, in issues concerning the age at which pupils transfer to the next stage of their education. They are making a good job of meeting their statutory requirements.
57. There are good procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. Staff with positions of responsibility have shown at an early stage that they are willing and able to share more of the management burden and, as a result, the proposals to give them more responsibility are well founded. The deputy, as well as being responsible for the very good provision made for pupils in the Foundation Stage, has links with what might be described as feeder institutions and so helps the induction and transfer process well. Individual coordinators are enthusiastic and committed and this high level of commitment extends to all staff who, in turn, reward the pupils through the care and attention they pay to their jobs.
58. The provision for special educational needs is well led and managed. The special educational needs co-ordinator has commitment and clear vision. She leads the learning support assistants well, guiding and directing their work with pupils both in classes and when they are withdrawn from class. She recognises the need to develop more formal testing arrangements in order to identify pupils' needs more accurately. The co-ordinator has written a new policy to comply with the newly revised Code of Practice. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional extension work twice weekly when they are withdrawn from class for literacy and numeracy. The coordinator has also made provision for the more able pupils.
59. It is to the school's credit that it has recognised the need for inclusion and expressed as much in its aims and policy. Efforts are made to ensure that, through, for example, the analysis of attendance data or that for national test results, groups of pupils are not disadvantaged.
60. The process of identifying and prioritising what the school aims to do in the future is a sound one although the school development plan which articulates this is in need of including greater detail in future. However, the process is inclusive and does take account of the roles and responsibilities of staff. The budget is carefully matched to the needs of the plan and is carefully monitored by the bursar who ensures that regular performance data is made available. The principles of best value are effectively employed when seeking goods or services. Performance management is in place and targets ensure that staff have a clear picture of what is expected of them.
61. The school is able, through its good assessment procedures, to target the needs of pupils and forecast with precision what their expected levels of attainment might be. The school sets reasonable targets for these pupils and achieves standards that are generally very high in national tests.
62. The school makes very good use of new technology, for example by having its own website, in cataloguing books in the library, the transfer of documents electronically and through the marking, recording and analysing of attendance details.
63. Staffing is very good and is a major contributing factor to the high standards pupils achieve. The accommodation is very good. The building is quite unusual in that it is circular. The grounds are thoughtfully laid out and provide pupils with many different activities. The buildings are well looked after and treated with respect. As a result they provide an attractive and stimulating environment within which pupils may learn and teachers may teach. Good attention is also paid to the natural habitat that the school provides and pupils are encouraged to observe the small insects and creatures that can be found round the school. Resources are generally plentiful and of a very good quality and the school is well supported in this aspect by the generosity of the 'Friends of Newcroft'.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

64. In order to raise standards still further the senior management and governing body should:

- (1) provide work in English and science lessons which more closely meets the needs of all pupils, including higher attainers.

(See paragraphs 24, 26, 31, 84, 97)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	54
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	28

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	14	25	10	0	0	0
Percentage	9	26	46	19	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 one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	289
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	21	21	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	20	21
	Girls	19	20	21
	Total	40	40	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (94)	95 (93)	100 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	21	21
	Girls	19	21	19
	Total	40	42	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (91)	100 (96)	95 (87)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

*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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	226
Any other minority ethnic group	12

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

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

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

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.9
Average class size	24.1

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

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	265

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	606818
Total expenditure	640737
Expenditure per pupil	1960
Balance brought forward from previous year	30758
Balance carried forward to next year	-3161

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.8
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	253
Number of questionnaires returned	112

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	35	3	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	38	1	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	43	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	48	16	2	1
The teaching is good.	56	40	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	47	13	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	31	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	38	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	43	42	10	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	64	30	0	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	39	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	46	6	0	4



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

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

65. Education for children in the reception classes of the Foundation Stage is a strength of the school. Sessions are provided in a separate, purpose-built setting, known as the 4+ Base, which is linked to the main building. Children join the reception classes, full time, in the autumn term before their fifth birthday. They may also attend earlier on a part time basis soon after their fourth birthday. In this case, the school refers to them as 'the nursery children' and they have support from the specialist trained nursery nurse. This process works very well and, during the inspection week, children were admitted and settled very quickly. The school has very good links with the previous settings, which aid the smooth transition. However, the successful, effective process is mostly due to the expert and very carefully planned systems adopted by the 4+Base staff. These ensure that the children are well supported, whatever their age and stage and children become fully integrated as quickly and as smoothly as possible.
66. The team of practitioners in the reception classes is very effective. Two teachers are very ably supported by the nursery nurse and teacher assistants and the children are divided into small groups for the various activities planned. The team works very closely together, with excellent leadership from the 4+ Base leader, to provide rich, varied and exciting experiences for the children. The staff provide very good role models and their very good relationships ensure children feel safe and confident to learn. This very good start also sets the scene for the work of the following key stages, as the children move into the next phases of their learning.

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

67. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is very good. On entry to the 4+ Base, many of the children are already quite mature and the team builds upon this to improve these skills, so that they readily relate very well to adults and other children. Very good examples were seen as children sustained concentration in their work, or formed good relationships with adults, including inspectors. They were able to take turns and share, working harmoniously. Very good instances of this were observed in the many small role play areas, for example the travel agents' office. Children here worked well as a team, to sell the holiday to China, asked for by the inspector. They planned the air ticket, giving a flight time and the boat ticket for the river trip chosen and decided on the price. Three children collaborated, very closely, to 'run' this office and were very efficient, writing names and numbers naturally, as part of the game. They are self-sufficient and independent in their use of equipment, persevere with their tasks and become absorbed, even when not under direct supervision.
68. A very good feature of their development is their understanding of their own needs and those of others, as they play. When drawing and making a card, for example, children at the writing table held conversations and shared crayons and pencils well. One child returned to the table to find her space had been claimed by someone else. Another saw the difficulty and said, 'We can move up to make room' and they did. This demonstrates their maturity, as well as reflecting the atmosphere created by the team. Children are also extremely tolerant of the children with special educational needs, understanding the need to help, or appreciating the problems of the situation. This is, again, because of the happy, caring ethos created by the 4+ Base leader and her team. For instance, when stickers are earned for good work, it is a child who gives it to another, for example when two girls completed their jigsaw together. Each was encouraged to exchange stickers and give praise. Indeed, every opportunity is used to reinforce this aspect of the children's learning, whether it is planned or spontaneous. Children are given many opportunities to take responsibility, for example, when they check the cloakrooms and toilets after playtime, to make sure everyone is back in the 4+ Base; or, when it is their birthday, they choose who will go for the milk first. Because of this early, very good foundation in learning, pupils in the main school have a firm base upon which to build, with little or no dissent or bad behaviour in evidence.

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

69. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain levels well above those expected for the age group in most aspects of communication, language and literacy. Most enter the reception classes with adequate skills and a good proportion of them have good speaking and listening abilities. The school's analysis of data indicates that just under two thirds of children in the 4+ Base surpassed the Early Learning Goals in speaking and listening last year and were working within the first level of the National Curriculum. Just over a third were in a similar position with reading and writing. Thus, children make good progress through the reception classes in this aspect of their learning.
70. Children's conversation and negotiation, for instance in their role play areas, is very good. They co-operate well, sustain their concentration and use language appropriate to the different areas available, for example the travel agent's office and the home corner. The high quality of the environment and experiences, together with the high quality of the questions and talk, ensures that the children's understanding of language develops very well. In an excellent lesson for a more able group all opportunities were taken to use and hear language for all kinds of reasons. For example mathematical vocabulary was extended in such conversations as 'one year older than five, will be six' or 'two years older will be seven' when talking during milk-time about the birthday of a child that day. Outstanding planning ensured that the whole team and the children knew what they were going to do, and the children knew they would be talking in partners and groups. This conversation showed that the children are adept communicators. By the end of the session, almost all Early Learning Goals for communication, language and literacy were achieved by this group, their writing skills had been enhanced and they were working into aspects of the first level in the National Curriculum. This excellent lesson was built on well-established routines and, as a result, children learned and reinforced skills in an enjoyable and fun way. All the sessions seen in the 4+ Base made language a priority, in one way or another.
71. The children are used to being asked to analyse and evaluate their own and others' work and to offer ideas for new verses to songs and games. This helps them to broaden their range of vocabulary and to describe accurately what they see. In a physical development lesson, for example, the teacher asked them to watch a group and then to say what different ways were used to move. One very new child noticed that the boy 'jumped forwards and backwards'. Many opportunities such as this are used to assess children's development, so the team know how to provide appropriate activities and experiences. There is a strong emphasis on the development of communication skills; self-esteem and confidence are very important to the whole team. They aim to build effective foundations for the next stage of learning, and their success is to be found in the strong sense of positive interaction found throughout the school.

### **Mathematical development**

72. Most children enter the 4+ Base with adequate levels of mathematical understanding, overall. The team has seen an improvement in the levels of ability since the introduction of the Foundation Stage curriculum for all children under five. When they leave the reception classes, they are generally above the levels expected, because they make good progress, due to very good planning and teaching. The school's analysis shows that about half of the children were working into the first level of the National Curriculum in all aspects of mathematics, by the time they left the 4+ Base. Thus, they had exceeded the Early Learning Goals set, especially in shape, space and measurement. Lessons are very well planned with good, steadily building sections that ensure all children work appropriately. Teachers are warm and friendly, promoting self discipline by ensuring children put up their hands to answer, without suppressing spontaneity. Games, resources and practitioners all bring a sense of fun and enjoyment, for example, with the teddy cards and the paired work. For example, two girls worked very well with a boy, rolling the large die and asking each other the 'what is one more' question. All groups worked very well and were gaining in confidence, using the teddy cards, dominoes or building towers. Some members of this group were already reaching aspects of the Early Learning Goals, and the more able set were quite secure in their understanding.

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

73. Children enter the reception classes with a sound basic knowledge of the world around them. They

are curious, eager and confident to explore the rich environment. They talk about themselves well, with good understanding of how they have developed since they were babies and this is enhanced by the lively, fun display which contains their photographs. They use tools competently, for example cutting fabric for a monochrome collage and are safe with the scissors. They are very proficient at using the computer, which is always available, and help each other where necessary. For example, one little boy offered, spontaneously, to 'start it up' for another who had only joined the 4+ Base that day. He was confident and expert at showing quickly what to do. The new child was equally quick and adept with the rhyme games he was playing.

74. The 4+ Base building is an excellent resource, where the central, raised area gives a bird's eye view of the room, and provides many small places, underneath, in which to make role play areas, or dens in which to hide. Here, the children have a variety of experiences which they utilise to the full. The travel agent's office provided many opportunities, for instance to begin to think of other places and methods of transport. From a story last term, children were able to use their knowledge to decide to make the inspector's ticket to China red 'because there is a lot of red in China'. They had remembered the book and the display they had seen at that time and used it to join in the fun of preparing the holiday. They have also had opportunities to consider other peoples and festivals such as Divali, linking this with light for Advent. As they walked around the building to go to the hall for a lesson, some children pointed out the signs about the wildlife, observing that they had found earwigs and spiders and seen the webs. Playing in the play area, two children were also able to compare the trees and used imaginative language to describe the differences. The teaching by the team is very good. The range and quality of the experiences provided are excellent, with a corresponding positive effect on the children's learning.

### **Physical development**

75. Children's physical development is generally good. Their development is as expected when they first come into the 4+ Base. They become well co-ordinated and able to take care of dressing and undressing for a hall session, with a minimal amount of help. Teachers plan very effectively to combine the physical, creative and social aspects of learning wherever possible. The team has high expectations and the children rise to this. Thus, when asked to talk and then make a sequence to perform together, in the hall session, all children did this well in a very self-controlled, co-operative manner. The school's provision of an outdoor area is enviable. There are soft and hard surfaces and large grassed areas, where the children know they should not be until the weather is better so as 'not to spoil the grass'. There is an appropriate climbing frame, which attracts attention during play sessions, but children know they should not crowd round and are happy to wait or do other things. They also have opportunities for structured playground games, such as 'here we go round the mulberry bush' and 'the hokey cokey'. These are well organised and led by the team, and greatly enjoyed by all. The children are encouraged to make up the actions for all to do and had great fun jumping the whole body in and out, backwards and forwards. Indoors, they have many opportunities to handle different materials and tools as well as developing the important social skills of respect for other people's space, for instance when moving round the hall or in the reception base.

### **Creative development**

76. Children's creative abilities are developing appropriately from a typical level on entry to the reception classes. Most hold a brush or a pencil quite well because they have had opportunities in previous settings. Many and varied activities and tasks are provided for them, in order to develop their skills further. They use a variety of media and a display of flower pictures, drawn from life in pastels, was very sensitive and mature as well as extremely well controlled. They have had many opportunities to explore texture, shades of a colour and form as well as figurative work based on their own faces. These faces were, again, very mature, indicating a high degree of concentration when looking in the mirror and co-ordination to put that on to the paper. Computers are also used well to generate images of, for instance, teddies getting dressed. The same theme is followed up in the peg dolls made by the children, with one of the talented assistants in the 4+ Base. The work is careful and well executed, needing good co-ordination to wrap and stick the fabric on to the clothes peg. The work was tackled in stages, enabling the children to practise the first principles used in technology when higher up the school.

77. Musical development is also appropriate. An excellent lesson saw the children learning the sound and use of techniques for playing two new instruments. The children also considered how these might be incorporated into the performance they would make about the rain and thunder. They discussed very well how the rain might sound harder, because of the teacher's good questioning skills, then they all played the instruments, making the sound louder then softer, quite naturally. They had a real sense of performance and were extremely well self- controlled with the instruments. After putting them away, children decided on singing rhymes and songs they liked and happily made up new bits to fit. Because the teacher is such an expert in how young children need to learn, they are inspired to do their best. They had an obvious delight in music and responded well. By the end of the session, most of this more able group had reached the ELG for musical development. Most children are expected to achieve the levels expected, in artistic and musical development and many to exceed them, by the end of the reception classes.

## ENGLISH

78. Evidence during the inspection was obtained from the observation of 11 literacy lessons, hearing pupils read, analysis of pupils' work, displays throughout the school, an audit of resources and discussion with the co-ordinator and with a group of pupils.
79. Overall standards in English are above national expectations by the time the pupils leave the school at age 10 and the quality of learning is also good. This demonstrates good improvement since the last inspection.
80. The speaking and listening skills of most pupils are above those of seven and 10 year olds nationally. Pupils speak clearly, ask questions, follow instructions, sequence events and have a satisfactory vocabulary. Most pupils listen attentively to their teachers and each other and show interest in what is being said. They express themselves clearly and confidently when sharing their ideas. For example, several pupils in Year 1 were speaking in well-constructed sentences of a good length when retelling the story of "When dad got stuck on the roof." During a literacy lesson in Year 2, pupils used intonation well when reading aloud from the big book "Puss In Boots." Pupils in Year 2 also gave very good factual information about Blue Whales and could tell the teacher the difference between fact and fiction. Year 3 pupils confidently discussed with the teacher the use of morals and the meaning of "sour grapes" when looking at fables. A pupil was able to suggest a meaning for "scoffed" and another explained "disrespect of equals." In Year 4 pupils are articulate and use complex sentences to describe their imaginative worlds. Pupils in Year 5 communicate fluently with adults and each other and express their ideas confidently. They demonstrate maturity of thought, for example when talking about the books they read and the reasons for their choice. Pupils use standard English and grammar correctly. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to participate in all speaking and listening activities and are very well supported by learning support assistants.
81. By the ages of seven and 10 the majority of pupils attain above national standards in reading. The most able pupils read with fluency and expression and talked confidently about books, authors and characters. They could explain how to find a book in the library and research a topic. The least able pupils also read books appropriate to their ability well and had good strategies for de-coding unknown words. In Year 2, the most able readers read fluently, clearly enjoying the story of Mr Gumpy's Outing. In Year 5, the most fluent readers pronounce complicated words correctly; compare books and authors; discuss plots and characters and express opinions about how the story influences the listener. The most able pupils read fluently with good expression. Most of these pupils give an accurate account of the story so far and describe plots of stories they have read before. Some older pupils have not yet developed the appropriate skills to draw reasons and conclusions from their reading, or look for meaning beyond the literal. Nevertheless, pupils often give considered reasons why they chose a book to read, some making reference to their favourite authors, recommendations of friends and, in the case of non-fiction books, the fact that they relate to a particular interest. Teachers keep satisfactory reading records for guided reading and pupils have useful home-school reading diaries. When these are used well, they enhance pupils' learning, however many are used as a record of what has been read, not how the pupil can improve. Higher attaining pupils use a dictionary and a thesaurus confidently. Pupils use their reading skills well across other subjects of the curriculum. For example, they spend time researching the Victorians in history and a village in India in geography. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support when withdrawn from

the class for additional help with reading and phonics.

82. In all classes, pupils write for a wide variety of purposes and audiences and overall, writing skills are above national expectations. The recent improvements in writing in Key Stage 1 are a reflection of the practice of targeting groups of pupils for additional challenge. Most pupils in Year 1 form letters accurately, spell simple words correctly and express themselves clearly. They can retell a story sequencing the main points and use capital letters and full stops accurately. In Year 2 pupils know the correct formation and position of speech marks in writing direct speech in sentences and use various verbs well when writing about Blue Whales. In Year 3 the pupils were working with the class teacher and focusing on the characters, themes, morals and language that is used in writing Fables. In Year 4 pupils are able to write about an imagined world using good adjectival phrases. Year 5 pupils successfully use laptop computers to effectively compose lists of descriptive phrases to build into a paragraph describing a monster. Higher attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5 use pens and join handwriting effectively. Pupils' spellings are largely correct and non-fiction writing, for example the biographical writing about Lord Shaftesbury, is well structured and has a good range of vocabulary. Pupils are using the connectives; 'therefore', 'also', and 'because'. When writing a continuation of a story using Harry Potter as a stimulus, pupils use interesting starts to sentences and commas to mark pauses and paragraphs. Pupils' skills in writing are developing well across other subjects. Work in books and on display shows examples of pupils using literacy skills to support other subjects. For example, in history Year 5 pupils used word processing with appropriate fonts to write about famous Victorians. Standards in spelling and grammar are generally above what is expected nationally. Learning support assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs during the group work sessions.
83. Overall pupils' attitudes to their learning are good and sometimes very good. They behave well and they settle quickly to the tasks set, concentrate well and value each other's efforts. Pupils have good relationships with their teachers. They enjoy the Literacy Hour, particularly the discussion with adults and other pupils.
84. The quality of teaching is good overall. In the 11 literacy lessons observed, five were satisfactory, five were good, and one was very good. The better teaching, especially in the Year 2 and Year 3 higher ability set is leading to an improvement in pupils' learning. Teachers plan their lessons well in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Most teachers ensure the work is matched to the overall attainment levels of pupils in their set. However there is insufficient match to the varying levels of ability found within those sets. In the introductions to lessons, the better teachers refer to the learning objectives and frequently use skilful questioning techniques to revise and review work covered in previous lessons before extending pupils' learning. They value the contributions made by their pupils. Most teachers give clear instructions and explanations for independent group work, so pupils know exactly what to do, but are less successful in making their expectations of how much has to be completed or the time that is available to complete the task. Very little evidence was seen during the inspection of any focused teaching of guided reading or guided writing in order to enhance pupils learning. The plenary sessions were often short and allowed little time for the teacher to review or consolidate the learning. All teachers manage behaviour very well and have good relationships with the pupils. The quality of marking of pupils writing is not always consistent and does not always tell pupils what they have to do in order to improve. Teachers consistently give pupils positive encouragement but do not identify areas for development when marking work. During the inspection there was evidence to show that pupils are successfully involved in the evaluation of their peers' work. Teaching assistants are used well throughout the school to support the teachers during the literacy hour and they also give good support to pupils with special educational needs. Those pupils who are more able or have special educational needs are withdrawn regularly for additional teaching and this provision is good.
85. The school has a good policy statement for English and this has recently been reviewed and updated. However there is no whole school scheme of work for English, including speaking and listening, drama or writing. Time allocation is sufficient to ensure that the appropriate programmes of study will be covered by the end of Year 5. However, timetabling is not sufficiently focused for the literacy hour and this means that often the lessons are long and time is wasted during the group activities. Raising standards in writing is a high priority for the school. The co-ordinator and headteacher have undertaken some limited monitoring of the effects of the National Literacy Strategy on pupils'

attainment through direct classroom observation and this has led to improved teaching and learning.

86. The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinator is committed to raising standards, especially in guided reading and writing. She has begun to implement a comprehensive monitoring, evaluation and assessment programme. Targets are set for pupils' attainment and these are tracked throughout the year.
87. Resources for English are satisfactory overall. There is a good range of fiction books and books to support teaching in the literacy hour. The library provision is good and well used by the pupils during the lunch hour opening times. At other times during the week the library is used for a range of curriculum activities unconnected to English. This prevents the library being used by groups of pupils to research topics or to improve their library skills. The furniture and fittings in the library are of good quality and enhance the school. The quality and range of the non-fiction book stock is good. All books are classified and catalogued and are entered onto a computer operated system. A learning support assistant and a parent work in the library several sessions each week on a voluntary basis and have developed the computerised system.

## **MATHEMATICS**

88. Standards in mathematics are generally high. This is confirmed by the upward trend in results of the national tests over recent years. In the 2001 tests, pupils at the end of Year 2 attained very highly compared to the national average. When compared with similar schools, their attainment was well above the expected level. Inspection findings show attainment to be at least above the national average, at quite an early stage of the year. Teachers of the present Year 2 pupils are expecting all but a few to achieve the national standard and for the rest to continue the school's high record of attainment. At the time of the last inspection, attainment was judged to be in line with the national average. Thus the subject has made good improvement since then. Pupils in Year 5 are also on target to do very well, as their work is also of a good standard. They are already well on track to do well in the next phase of their learning.
89. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well, according to their differing abilities and make good progress. This is because the teachers group them well and prepare work which helps them gain the insight and understanding they need to succeed. This is typified in the way they ask their questions and the lively, fun, but steady, incremental learning which is so effectively planned for the less able; or the very challenging, stimulating work for the most able. Because each group is carefully planned for and taught well, all pupils are enabled to perform well and enjoy the learning. Computers are planned into mathematics and are used effectively, to support or reinforce skills and concepts. Mathematical skills are used appropriately in other subjects, such as graphical work and handling data.
90. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do well because of good teaching and very good attitudes to their learning. They are developing very good strategies for working out, encouraged by their teachers to explain and are generally very proficient in the basic skills. All groups show a pride in their work and present it neatly. This good organisation is mirrored in their thinking patterns and, therefore, their ability to evaluate what they know and understand. In this way, when they do not understand, they are ready to ask for help or clarification. This is because consistently good teaching and comfortable, but stimulating classroom atmospheres enable them to ask without worry; try ideas without fear of failure. Pupils see clearly the patterns in numbers and employ additional strategies, such as estimation and partitioning, to help them arrive at answers. A very good example was seen, in a Year 2 class, where pupils were using the vocabulary they knew to reinforce 'one more', 'three less', 'greater than' and so on. Thus, their application of mathematical principles aid their work in all other aspects of mathematics. All strands of mathematics are strong. Teachers in both key stages are ably supported by the teaching assistants. Liaison is very good and they know what is expected of them. They are aware of pupils' problems, or the potential difficulties that may arise, and quickly, but unobtrusively, support pupils with a quiet explanation or a different piece of equipment.
91. Pupils also work at a good rate because teachers have high expectations and conduct lessons at a good pace. Sometimes the pace is slower to aid understanding, sometimes it is 'quick fire' to ensure pupils' mental agility. In one lesson, pupils were encouraged to use their knowledge to make their

own arrows for 'greater than', 'less than' or 'one more' and so on. They investigated well and thought carefully about the operations they were required to do in order to get the end result. Pupils are also encouraged to reconsider their work at the end of the lesson. Good, well structured, final rounding up sessions allow teachers to check well for understanding and make new points for pupils' learning. In this way, pupils have a good measure of how they have achieved, set against the intention for learning, clearly posed at the beginning of each lesson.

92. In Key Stage 2, pupils build very well on the foundations set in the previous key stages. Here, again, work is prepared well to promote thought and guarantee success. Teaching is generally very good and pupils' attitudes are excellent. All are confident learners who are happy to ask about what they do not know. In an excellent lesson in Year 5, pupils asked supplementary questions about the main theme of their lesson, before going on to practical tasks. Because of this, their work was tackled with confidence and completed correctly. Part way through, the teacher offered further discussion, mainly for pupils needing more support with multiplication of two digit numbers and two others also joined in so they could check they were on the right track. This easy, comfortable but challenging atmosphere is all pervasive and enables pupils to question and be responsible for their own learning. Because teachers pick up on any doubts to strengthen thinking, pupils know they can succeed and their enjoyment is evident. Pupils also like working in the groups they are in, because they feel the work is right for them. Here again, the teachers conduct very good, final rounding up sessions, which check for understanding and move learning forward appropriately. This enables pupils to consider what they have learned and ensures that they know what they need to learn next.
93. Teachers use assessment very well. They make good comments in books and alter weekly planning in order to teach to the needs of various groups. The subject is very ably led and managed by two co-ordinators. They lead very effectively and have an excellent vision of where they know the subject needs to go in order to improve still further. They analyse data well and the various tests are used to track pupils' progress. They have worked well, as a team, to lead the subject over a number of years and have ensured that the school is very well resourced, as well as having a steady view of the necessary developments to be undertaken. The school has embraced the numeracy strategy well. They are confident and clear, and are now ready to modify what the school delivers, whilst ensuring that nothing is lost from the methods and results of present practice. Their scrutiny and sharing of work and teaching ensures the consistently high standards of work from colleagues, new members of staff and pupils.

## SCIENCE

94. At the end of Year 2 pupils are attaining at a level that is well above national averages. Pupils in Year 5 are attaining at a level that is above that expected nationally. These results represent an improvement in standards at the end of Year 2 since the last report (May 1997). Year 5 pupils have maintained the good standard reported then. The apparent difference in standards between Years 2 and 5 noted during the inspection, although they remain high in both key stages, is due in the main to differences in the cohorts. It should also be noted that the school has successfully reversed the comparatively poor results it obtained in 2000, achieving attainment levels above national averages at Level 2 or above and well above at Level 3 in 2001. Pupils in Year 2 have benefited considerably, hence their higher attainment, from having the full benefit of the school's drive to push up standards in the subject even further. During the inspection no significant differences were noted between the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils overall are making good progress in the subject.
95. By the age of seven, the majority of pupils work confidently within the subject and are developing their ability to draw conclusions from their observations and explain their reasoning. For example, pupils in Year 1, when asked to sort various instruments into groups, put a recorder on its own because "It's the only one you blow." Pupils in Year 1 are aware of the changes that take place during the life cycle of a frog and are able to classify some living and non-living things. In Year 2, pupils have begun to formulate simple hypotheses based on observation and perform experiments to prove or disprove them, they are also aware of the concept of fair testing. They are able to record their findings with simple drawings, diagrams and writing. In work on electricity they are aware of the nature of electrical circuits and have produced some good diagrams illustrating them. Some more able pupils are able to draw circuits using symbols rather than pictures.

96. By the time they reach the age of 10 the majority of pupils are able to extract information from tables and other sources and use it to answer questions. They have developed the vocabulary of the subject to a good degree and are able to formulate hypotheses, test them through experimentation and draw conclusions from what they see. In line with the development of their scientific study skills the pupils are developing their factual knowledge well. For example, pupils in Year 3 are developing their knowledge of the properties of different kinds of rocks and can explain the difference between permeable and non-permeable. They are also aware that rocks vary in hardness. Pupils in Year 4 are aware that some changes in materials are reversible whereas others are not. In their work on heat and insulation they have become aware that materials cool at different rates and have produced graphs to illustrate the changes. In Year 5, during work on food groups, pupils looked at the nutritional content of various foods by studying the packaging. They are able to produce graphs illustrating the results of their work. Year 5 pupils, in a study of the different times of sunset and sunrise over the year, have produced some good line graphs illustrating the changes. Pupils in Year 5 are able to name and locate the main organs of the body. They are able to explain the function of the spinal cord as part of the central nervous system and are able to name gases such as carbon dioxide, helium and oxygen.
97. Teaching in the subject is good overall with some examples of very good teaching. This is a marked improvement in teaching overall since the last inspection where it was seen as satisfactory for pupils aged seven and under and good for older pupils. There has been a similar improvement in the overall progress of the pupils in the subject. Lessons are well organised and the resources used are well focused on the objectives. Teachers have high expectations and endeavour to present challenging work to the majority of their pupils. However, a scrutiny of work and lesson observations strongly indicates that the work given does not always meet individual needs; this is particularly evident in the work given to more able pupils. The school is aware of the need to provide extension work and activities for this group. Pupils are kept fully engaged in lessons that are well paced with well-timed changes of activity. They are encouraged to work co-operatively with each other. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and are able to give clear explanations of the concepts being taught. Adult support in the classrooms is used very effectively to provide help to pupils who may need it. One of the major features of the good teaching taking place in the subject is the high quality of the relationships between pupils and their teachers that is a feature of all of the lessons observed. The pupils are confident in asking questions and seeking help when necessary.
98. As a result of the good teaching the pupils make good overall progress within science in all of its aspects. For example, well planned experiments provided by their teacher helped pupils in Year 3 to develop their knowledge of the properties of different rocks and their ability to carry out fair testing. In Year 4, pupils, in a lesson that provided a very good learning experience, extended their knowledge of the advantages and disadvantages of the action of friction with the imaginative use by the teacher of a bicycle. In a lesson on 'vibration', pupils in Year 5 further developed their understanding of sound and the way it is produced through the use of experiments and the recording of their results. Work scrutiny indicates that the work of pupils is generally well marked. However, there are examples where this is not the case and therefore the standard of presentation of work by pupils is not always as high as it should be. There is no evidence to suggest that pupils with special educational needs make any less than the good progress of their peers.
99. The pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject and this is reflected in their work during lessons. They are fully engaged and work well together, helping each other and sharing equipment sensibly. Their behaviour in lessons is very good; they are attentive, concentrate well, exchange ideas and are able to listen to the views of others. They are quick to respond to questioning and are able to explain clearly what they are doing. This ability to explain their reasoning is in the most part due to the encouragement they are given by their teachers to answer in sentences and speak clearly and to their generally good speaking and listening skills. It is also a further indication of the good relationships that exist in the classrooms that pupils feel able to express their opinions freely.
100. Teaching in science maintains links with other subjects, for example, graph work in mathematics and written explanations in English. The school makes satisfactory use of videos, data bases, spreadsheets and CD-ROMs in general science teaching.
101. The overall management of the subject is good. The new, well-qualified, subject co-ordinator has a clear vision of where the subject needs to be developed. There is a well-maintained subject file and



the work of the pupils is assessed and recorded well. Teachers' planning has been monitored and checked against the scheme of work to ensure consistency. Some limited monitoring of teaching has taken place; however, there is now an all school monitoring programme that will ensure fuller coverage in the future. Resources for the subject are generally good and easily accessible. Staff training needs have been identified and some training given. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to review the subject development plan and generally make it more detailed. There is a particular need to review the work given to pupils of different abilities to ensure that their individual needs are being fully met.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

102. The standard of art for pupils aged seven at the end of Key Stage 1 and for pupils in Year 5 is similar to that expected for pupils of their ages. The subject has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and standards have been maintained.
103. All pupils have sketchbooks and pupils aged seven show a good range of experiences. Pupils in Year 1 were able to show some knowledge of the artist Wassily Kandinsky. They were able to identify elements in his painting that they wanted to incorporate into a design of their own. Pupils in Year 2 have produced patterns and have begun to develop the skills necessary to produce accurate and careful work. They have observation skills that enable them to complete and to a reasonable extent, match the colours in a bisected magazine illustration. They have used viewfinders effectively and have taken photographs. Pupils aged 10 are able to show a development of earlier skills. They have made observational drawings and have begun to look critically at art work. Non-European art features in their sketchbooks and they have begun to produce photo-montage work in connection with work on World War II.
104. Two lessons were observed, one of which was excellent. The teacher had enabled the pupils to look carefully at how Kandinsky had worked. Pupils were given opportunities to refer to a good display of the artist's work and had previously been asked to interpret it as part of a dance session. They had prepared drafts in their sketch book and showed good levels of skill in using a range of crayons in their interpretations of his style. The pupils were given the opportunity to look at the work of the class and then to choose the work of another pupil for class discussion. This gave very good opportunities not only for reinforcement of their knowledge and understanding of Kandinsky's work but for speaking and listening as well. The response of the pupils was excellent. They applied themselves very well to the task. They used materials sensibly and carefully and were, because of the excellent teaching, able to continue to focus on their objectives.
105. The subject is very well led by the coordinator. There are good resources and the priorities for developing the subject, which include a timetable for the observation of teaching and support, are most appropriate. The subject makes a very good contribution to the provision made for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and caters well for the multi-cultural aspect. Pupils with special educational needs are enabled to work and progress at rates commensurate with other pupils and the art club enables pupils to develop their skills and experiences to a higher level. The subject makes a very good contribution to the appearance of the school through the quality and variety of displays. Art is well integrated into the curriculum and makes a good contribution to many areas such as physical education and music.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

106. By the end of Years 2 and 5, pupils attain standards above those expected for their age groups. The subject has improved well, since the last inspection, when standards were found to be typical. Pupils including those with special educational needs make good progress because appropriate tasks are designed to include pupils of all abilities.
107. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. This is because teachers have very high expectations for the whole process but especially for the design element of the work to be undertaken. Thus, when pupils design a vehicle, take photographs, plan a scene or make a toy, the teachers ensure that they consider the purpose and users of the finished article from the very beginning. Very good focused tasks are planned to enable pupils to practise the skills they will need

to develop the piece effectively. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 3 lesson, concerning the use of pneumatics for moving parts. The work was very well planned, to build up pupils' understanding, incrementally and effectively. They became confident with the idea quickly and went on to incorporate this type of movement into their designs for monsters. Because of this and the attention to detail in some of the pupils' planning, the finished articles in any class are very imaginative and sophisticated, very closely resembling the design drawing and completed with obvious pride in the end product. Very good examples of this were seen in the Year 5 work using cams, for instance dancing children, jumping frogs, swimming fishes or bobbing cats. Good use was also made of computers, for example to generate the seascape for the Year 4 'perils at sea' project. Pupils also consider how they could change or modify their designs. Evaluations of the finished product take place and some are reasonably critical and analytical. The school is aware of the need to develop this still further, as part of their work on pupils knowing about their own learning.

108. The leadership and management of the subject have been good, in the past. After a series of managers in the recent past, the new headteacher has taken it over. He has a good vision and strong ideas on how to move the subject forward and it appears in the development plan as an area for consideration. Very good monitoring and evaluation have already taken place, through work sampling and teacher's planning and delivery. Points identified in this process are already discernible as developments in teaching. Assessment is planned as part of the subject focus. The work is well organised and integrated into the topics that the school pursues and skills build progressively through the key stages. This is why the pupils make good progress.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

109. The attainment of pupils in geography by the ages of seven and 10 is in line with that expected for pupils of their age. The standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
110. Pupils cover the programmes of study and have sufficient opportunity to think and discover information for themselves through the use of the Internet and reference books. As part of a study of islands, pupils in Year 2 use previously learned skills to focus on Scotland. They use a large map of the United Kingdom and enlarged compass points to discuss the position of the Borders and the Isle of Coll well. They used an enlarged map of an imaginary island to position mountains and water features, and can explain what a "birds eye view" is. Pupils can also use a programmable robot to move around the features on this island, and explain how they programmed it. This work is very well linked to literacy and uses the Katie Morag stories well. In Year 5, pupils are studying water in the local area of Shepshed. They brainstormed every kind of water that they knew of in the locality, including the swimming pool, reservoir and canal. Using Ordnance Survey maps of the area, pupils were able to locate many of the water features that they had listed. They used the map keys well, and were able to transfer their findings onto an outline map that the teacher had provided for them.
111. Pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. They gain geographical skills, such as using maps and plans of varying scales to ask and answer questions about places in their locality.
112. The quality of teaching was good overall. A successful Year 5 lesson used Ordnance Survey Maps symbols and co-ordinates. Here the teacher's good subject knowledge enabled her to provide clear and accurate teaching of skills. This resulted in good quality work being produced, which further motivated the pupils.
113. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good especially when the work is well planned and matched to their abilities. They listen well and carry out tasks enthusiastically. Pupils with special educational needs apply themselves well, and when supported by a learning support assistant they make good progress.
114. Co-ordination of geography is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning each half term and gives feedback to colleagues. She has identified the need to increase resources and, especially, to replace the atlases in Key Stage 2. The school's very good grounds are well used to enrich the geography curriculum. The co-ordinator has plans to implement a "schools grounds day" or week every term in order to maximise the use of the woodland, wildlife, garden and pond areas in the

school grounds.

## **HISTORY**

115. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any history lessons. This was because all year groups with the exception of Year 1 pupils are learning about geography during the spring term. Therefore judgements are based on analysis of work, discussions with staff, displays and photographs of past work.
116. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Year 2 and Year 5, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. Evidence of Year 1 work shows that pupils have had first hand experience of toys from past times. They have handled a number of artefacts, for example a cup and ball from 1900, a climbing clown from 1910 and a whip and top from 1920. A visit to Belgrave Hall gives first hand experience of what it was like in school during the Victorian times. Year 2 work shows knowledge about seaside holidays in past times. The pupils have composed a class book of memories retold to them by their parents and grandparents that tells about days out and seaside holidays that were enjoyed years ago. This has given pupils an understanding of what an eyewitness is and how history can be recorded in many ways.
117. Pupils in Year 5 show good factual knowledge of what life was like for children living in Victorian Britain and are developing an understanding of chronology, being able to order events from then until present times. Pupils use a range of resources well to identify and answer questions about reasons for and results of events. For example, they investigated what happened in ancient Egypt to people's bodies after they died. Themes such as evacuation, rationing, bombing and air raid shelters are studied in good depth, giving good support to pupils' learning and helping them to empathise with life at the time. Pupils have the ability to ask and answer questions and to describe the characteristics of a period of time. Particularly good links are made with literacy in Year 5 resulting in research and some extensive and effective writing.
118. Co-ordination of history is satisfactory and the subject has a detailed policy, which provides good support for teachers.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

119. In Years 2 and 5, standards are better than expected typically. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when they were found to be in line with expected standards. The school has continued to work hard to ensure that the pupils have plenty of opportunities to practise skills and they make good progress. This improvement has been made without the aid of a dedicated computer suite and is built on the strong foundations of a very able subject leader and the staff's increased confidence and willingness to learn.
120. In Key Stage 1, pupils have a rich and varied experience of using information and communication technology. They know that remote devices are receiving signals and give examples, such as a video or the printer. They have used programmable devices to move through angles and teachers find many imaginative ways for them to word-process, as well as using programs to support ideas in mathematics. Very good use is made of World Explorer to find and gather information and pupils make a study of and use information from, books' contents pages to help them. They make lists, for example of time words and save these to disk for future retrieval. Younger pupils have used a drawing programme very imaginatively to create a pattern stamp and to incorporate it, successfully, on to the background they have made. Teachers have found interesting ways for them to practise writing, such as their own name, in a changed font, inside a border they have chosen or made for themselves. In these ways, little time needs to be spent writing, in order to investigate and discover what the computer will help them to achieve. Pupils also 'draw' pictures and annotate them carefully and label and classify houses as part of their project. Their teachers are providing opportunities for pupils to learn more about the computer as well as how to use it as a tool to support their learning in other subjects. As a consequence, a small minority of pupils are beginning to understand that the computer is not always the best way to find information, because there can be too much to sort through.

121. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop skills well. A good example is where they incorporated images of themselves and friends into an existing photograph of a bombsite. This entailed them getting size and perspective correct and showed them the valuable lesson that the camera can lie in this modern, technological world. The school has developed an interesting and useful website in which the pupils are actively involved. Links to other sites are planned to aid searches; one already exists to a site about peanut allergy, so that parents and pupils can learn more about this problem. Home/school links are being forged for homework and have already helped to keep parents and pupils in touch with plans and activities from residential visits to Conway and the Isle of Wight. Pupils used email and captured digital images of the activities and sent them back to the school.
122. Pupils are also competent with more advanced techniques in word processing, such as cutting and pasting and have studied successfully the effects of page layout. When using draw programs, they are adept at knowing when and how to use the various functions to best advantage. A good example was seen in a Year 4 lesson, as pupils effectively interpreted a photograph of the Taj Mahal, using the appropriate symmetry icons and flood fill techniques. They were able to explain what the various functions, such as pencil and eraser, allow them to do. This is because the teachers offer examples and ideas, within imaginative frameworks and then the pupils investigate for themselves becoming familiar and improving skills. In a similar way, they have used the logo programme to draw and make angles but also to explore more complicated ideas such as writing words. Older pupils have an opportunity to join the computer club, run by the co-ordinator after school.
123. Teachers set up open-ended tasks and have high expectations for all pupils. Their recent training has given them confidence to use the equipment imaginatively, alongside the good ideas within the national scheme adopted. Pupils of all abilities are enabled to attain appropriate standards because the planning and teaching are good. Teachers make good use of the support they get from parents and teaching assistants. Adults working with pupils are unobtrusive but helpful, holding good conversations when necessary, but having an appropriately limited input if the pupils are working well. Throughout their work at the computer, pupils behave co-operatively, discussing layout or planning which techniques will be best to use; for example how to move around a mathematics adventure program in order to get further than last time. They also use other devices, such as calculators, effectively and have access to other hardware.
124. The subject is very well lead by an enthusiastic, knowledgeable co-ordinator, who has been in post for a long time. This has given stability to the subject through the many innovations and staffing changes which have taken place. He is well aware that the school must continue to work hard to keep up with the next phase of development and has a real vision how the subject needs to improve. His monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is thorough and the emphasis is now on the assessment processes and procedures needed to improve pupils' skills further. The school has adopted a sound policy for the safety and security of all its users of the Internet. The school has spent its information and communication technology budget wisely in the past and has used local business links to gain some sponsorship and some well-specified machines. Previously, the co-ordinator has not had any direct control of the budget allocation but the plans are now laid to change this in the new financial year.

## **MUSIC**

125. The standard of music for pupils aged seven at the end of Key Stage 1 and for pupils in Year 5 is similar to that expected for pupils of their age. The subject has made a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection and standards have been maintained.
126. The youngest pupils in Year 1 have begun to look at sound and record differences such as sounds we can hear and sounds we can make. Pupils aged seven are able to talk about music they have listened to and about how they have composed, recorded and played their own music. They are able to identify major groups of instruments in the orchestra and can talk about the different types of music and songs they have heard. Older pupils in Year 5 have listened to music such as that associated with the period of World War II and know about elements of music that describe it such as timbre and pitch. They have composed and recorded using different forms of notation including standard notation and have recorded and listened to their own work. For many pupils the opportunity to have instrumental tuition raises their levels of attainment. Pupils of all ages are given many opportunities to

sing and they do so well. They sing in unison or in parts and older pupils are able to cope with rounds in which there are four separate lines. Those who undertake instrumental tuition perform at a level that exceeds expectations for their age.

127. The quality of teaching is very good. Much of what was observed was led by the coordinator who is an able musician and teacher. The best lessons provide challenge and enjoyment as well as giving pupils responsibility where the achievement of the lesson objective is concerned. Because the standard of teaching is high, teachers are able to examine and cause pupils themselves to appraise and improve their own work. Those who have instrumental tuition outside the mainstream curriculum display a maturity and responsibility that enables them to make good progress. Two sessions were taken by visiting instructors and both were of a very high standard. In response pupils show themselves to be willing learners and actively participate in lessons. They also take the necessary time to practise at home with their instruments. They work hard and with enthusiasm taking pride in what they have achieved. Because relationships are very good pupils are quite happy to demonstrate their work and have colleagues suggest how it might be improved. When given the opportunity to experiment they do so with appropriate restraint and listen carefully to those who, for example in assembly, are chosen to play.
128. The coordinator is very well qualified and makes a major contribution to the way in which the subject is taught as well as to the ambience and ethos of the school as a whole. Music plays a significant part in school life and makes a major contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. The opportunity for pupils to play in the band is one which all pupils value and is an aspect of music that raises the school above what might normally be expected. It provides very good opportunities for developing other areas of the curriculum and those pupils who have special needs are seen to benefit in the same measure as the rest. In terms of being inclusive, whilst there are fees to be paid for instrumental tuition the school does help greatly by lending expensive instruments to pupils. The planned development of the subject is appropriate and should continue to maintain standards and keep music to the forefront.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

129. Because of the small number of lessons observed in each key stage no valid judgements as to overall attainment for pupils aged seven and ten were possible during the inspection.
130. However, it is possible to state that in those lessons that were seen the pupils demonstrated considerable enthusiasm for the activities and worked hard for their teachers. In dance Year 1 pupils demonstrate a very good level of body control and are able to move around with ease, altering their speed, direction and height of movements quickly. They respond well to music stimulus and are able to link a series of movements together to form short dance routines. Pupils show an ability to discuss their work and that of others in a positive and sensible way justifying their opinions.
131. In Year 4, pupils are able to use space efficiently when moving around the hall and their balancing skills are developing well. They are able to listen and respond to instructions and work in cooperation with others. Year 5 pupils are achieving well in swimming and respond to the challenges set them by their teachers. They show considerable enthusiasm, listen carefully to instructions and are at all times very well behaved. The majority can swim at least 25 metres using a variety of strokes and some are at Amateur Swimming Association Level 5.
132. The teaching that was seen was good overall. Some very good and excellent teaching was seen. This is an improvement on that noted in the last inspection when it was described as being satisfactory. During lessons, teachers demonstrate a good level of personal skills and use them well to demonstrate exercises to the pupils. They set a very good example to the pupils by being appropriately dressed and adopting an encouraging manner. They use their voices well and their good subject knowledge is used to ensure that the skill development of the pupils follows a logical sequence. Their lessons are fully inclusive and pupils with special needs are treated with considerable sensitivity both by their teachers and support workers; being allowed to develop their skills with the minimum of intervention. Teachers encourage the pupils to improve their performances by allowing them to demonstrate their skills as individuals and discussing their performances with the rest of the class afterwards. An outstanding feature of some of the teaching observed was the way

that the lessons were linked to other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 1 pupils have been looking at the work of the Russian artist Kandinsky and the dance lessons for them were based on the shapes that he uses in his paintings. During the same lessons the names of the shapes were discussed and in a link to their science work pupils checked their pulses after exercise. Another important feature of lessons in the subject is the way that teachers seek to develop the speaking and listening skills of their pupils by encouraging them to discuss both their own work and that of others. It is an indication of the very good relationships within classes and between teachers and pupils that they are very willing to offer their opinions. Thanks to the good and sometimes better teaching of the subject pupils make good overall progress. Pupils with special educational needs make progress in line with that of their peers.

133. The school provides a very good level of extra-curricular sports activities, for example, football, netball, tag rugby, short tennis and cross country. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a good range of competitive sporting events with other schools.
134. The management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator has a clear view of how the subject can be developed in the future. There has been an improvement in overall provision since the last inspection with the introduction of new sports activities and the forging of stronger links with organisations and businesses. The co-ordinator is very enthusiastic and is always seeking to provide new experiences for the pupils and to develop her personal skills. Planning in the subject is good as is the assessment and recording of the progress of the pupils. The co-ordinator has managed to maintain a good level of monitoring. The equipment is in good condition and easily accessible. There is a good range of both small and large equipment.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

135. Pupils of the ages of seven and ten are attaining at a level in line with that expected by the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus for the subject. The school has maintained the satisfactory level of attainment noted in the report of May 1997.
136. Pupils in Year 1 are developing their knowledge of the different ways in which people worship God. They are aware that Christians believe in Jesus and that he was baptised and died on the Cross. Pupils know that Christians have the Bible to help them understand what God wants them to do. They are learning some of the stories from the Bible, for example, the story of Noah and the Ark. In Year 2 pupils have been thinking about what makes them special as individuals. They have been learning about the story of Abraham and how it is common to both the Christian and Muslim traditions. Pupils have produced some good illustrations of a mosque and learnt about the Christian baptism ceremony.
137. Pupils in Year 3 have been learning about the different kinds of churches in their area and some of the symbols used by Christians. They have used their information technology skills to produce graphs showing the range of religions in their class. In work on the Old Testament they have looked at the number of books it contains. In Year 4, in some very well produced work on the Christmas story, pupils have developed their knowledge about the birth and early life of Jesus. They are aware of the Hindu belief of God as being everywhere and in many forms. They are able to say that Hindus believe that God is too great to be fully understood. In discussion they were able to name some of the Hindu gods, for example, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The work on the Qur'an by Year 5 pupils demonstrates a basic understanding of the life of Muhammad. They are aware of the main beliefs of Islam such as the Five Pillars of Wisdom.
138. The standard of teaching was not commented on in the last report. The findings of this inspection are that the teaching for pupils aged seven and below is good with some very good and for the older pupils teaching is satisfactory with some good.
139. The progress made by pupils in the subject is good for pupils of age seven and under and for the older pupils it is satisfactory. There is no inspection evidence that suggests that the progress made by pupils with special educational needs is less than that of their peers. Overall the teaching of religious education has many strengths, for example, all teachers demonstrate a good knowledge of the subject and use resources very well in lessons. They choose the stories used with care and try to fully involve their pupils in lessons. A good example of this is the use of drama in the form of mime to

re-tell the story of Moses in the bullrushes during a Year 2 lesson. During the lesson pupils developed their ability to work co-operatively with others and to retell stories giving them their own interpretation. Teachers encourage their pupils to discuss their ideas thus enhancing their speaking and listening skills. A feature of all the lessons observed in the subject is the good level of relationships maintained by the teachers. They listen to what their pupils say and take their views seriously. The standard of work is generally good and it is well marked.

140. The attitudes adopted by pupils towards the subject are good overall. They are very attentive and keen to take an active part in lessons. They are always well behaved and remain on task during practical work. They work well together and show considerable tolerance towards the views of others.
141. The subject maintains good links to other areas of the curriculum, for example, with English written work and discussions. Some of the pupils have produced graphs and timelines in links to history, mathematics and information and communication technology. The school is developing links to information and communication technology for the subject with a collection of CD-ROMS, videos and the use of word processing.
142. The management of the subject is good with the monitoring of samples of work that are checked against planning to ensure that pupils are working at an appropriate level. This monitoring has resulted in the amendment of some worksheets in Year 3.
143. The school has worked hard to formulate a scheme of work that reflected the areas of study it wanted to cover. Elements of the religious education scheme produced by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority, the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus and school-developed units have been successfully combined to produce the scheme of work now in use. The subject is well resourced with topic boxes covering the major world religions and a selection of artefacts. All resources are in good condition and easily accessible. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to further develop strategic planning in the subject and more visits to non-Christian places of worship.