

INSPECTION REPORT

GIPSEY BRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gipsey Bridge, Boston

LEA area: East Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120449

Headteacher: Mr S Jones

Reporting inspector: Mr E Jackson
3108

Dates of inspection: 20 -22 May 2002

Inspection number: 196832
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 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Leagate Road Gipsey Bridge Boston Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE22 7BP
Telephone number:	01205 280240
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Stainton
Date of previous inspection:	30.6.1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3108	E Jackson	Registered inspector	<p>English as an additional language</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p> <p>Mathematics</p> <p>Science</p> <p>Art and design</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>Information and communication technology</p>	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>How well are pupils or students taught?</p> <p>How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
9327	S J Vincent	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
11419	P J Underwood	Team inspector	<p>The Foundation Stage</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>English</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p> <p>Music</p> <p>Religious education.</p>	<p>Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.</p>

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Gipsey Bridge Primary is a small rural school four miles from Boston in East Lincolnshire. It is very popular locally, and oversubscribed. There are 78 pupils on roll from Reception to Year 6, with equal numbers of boys and girls. However, year groups often have imbalances in the number of boys and girls: last year's Year 6 had 14 boys and only one girl, whilst the current Year 4 has only three boys and ten girls. The incidence of free school meals is well below average, as is the number of pupils from minority ethnic groups or learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below average, and there is no pupil with a statement of special needs. The pupils' special needs vary from moderate to specific learning difficulties. The pupils are organised into three classes, one containing the Reception group and Years 1 and 2, with Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 forming the other two classes. The pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception group varies widely year-on-year, but is broadly average overall on entry-level tests.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Gipsey Bridge Primary is a very effective school, where the pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well. The headteacher sets high expectations for the school's work, supported well by the rest of the teaching and support staff. The quality of teaching is very good, leading to a rich variety of good quality learning experiences for the pupils. They respond to these with great enthusiasm and determination, showing very good attitudes to their learning, and behaving very well. A marked feature of the pupils' development is the staff's focus on real independence in learning, which allows the pupils to grow in confidence as they move through the school, so that in Year 6 they flourish as competent and successful learners. The Governing Body fulfils its duties very well, and gives very good support to the maintenance of the very effective relationships that are the key to the school's success. Given the high standards achieved from the above average finances available, the school provides good value for money, improved since the last inspection.

What the school does well

- The headteacher leads by example very well, supported very effectively by the rest of the staff, the governing body and the parents who between them create a successful family atmosphere in which the pupils thrive.
- The teaching is of high quality, leading to good progress in the pupils' learning.
- The staff have high expectations of the pupils, leading to high standards in attainment and personal development by Year 6.
- The pupils are very well motivated, and rise very well to the challenge of becoming well-behaved, independent learners.
- The staff have maintained a very broad and balanced curriculum for the pupils, enriched by a wide range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.
- The provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good.

What could be improved

- The range of opportunities available for pupils to develop their awareness and understanding of Britain as a diverse and multicultural society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Very good improvements have been made since then. All the key issues raised at the last inspection have been dealt with successfully, and the school has also moved forward in other areas very well. The school took the last inspection report as a basis for all-round progress, and successively addressed each aspect judged to be less than good, including the amount of teaching time. There have been good improvements in management and leadership, in the quality of teaching and learning, standards in reading and mathematics, and in the effectiveness of the monitoring

and evaluation of the school's work. The accommodation has been upgraded, and, following a successful campaign by the governors, now includes an area of land adjacent to the school, being developed as a playing field and environmental education area. The governors' close involvement in the school's work is exemplified in the school development plan, a working tool revisited at each meeting of the governing body to assess the progress made towards the agreed targets, improved since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A	D	E
mathematics	A	A	A	B
science	E	B	D	E

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

Caution is required in interpreting these results as they are based on small numbers. Last year, for example, there were only 14 boys and 1 girl in the Year 6 group, and only 5 boys and 3 girls in the Year 2 group. Last year's results for Year 6 pupils were low in English and science because there were fewer pupils who attained at higher than expected levels, although the number achieving the nationally expected level was close to the national average. This had been predicted because the group was composed almost entirely of boys, who typically achieve lower levels than girls nationally, particularly in English. The group also contained a number of pupils with special educational needs. Compared with similar schools on the basis of eligibility for free school meals, the school's results were well below average overall. Other lower socio-economic statistics for the locality suggest caution in using this as the sole measure for comparison, however. In general, the school achieves high results in the national tests for 11 year-olds, particularly in mathematics. Taken over the last three years, the school's average results were much higher than the national average, particularly in reading. The current Year 6 pupils are on track to achieve well above average levels in mathematics and science, and above average levels in English. The current Reception group has made good progress in learning, and is on track to exceed the expected levels in most areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. Similarly, all the current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and for a high proportion to exceed expected levels in reading, mathematics and science. The school sets challenging targets based on its ongoing assessment of pupils' attainment, and it is on track to achieve these this year. From entry to leaving the school the pupils make good progress in their learning, including those pupils with special educational needs. As well as results in reading and mathematics being particularly strong, the school ensures that pupils attain above average levels in most areas of the curriculum, particularly science, information and communication technology, art and design, history and music. Year 3 and 4 pupils produce particularly impressive work in art and design.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils are very well motivated to learn, concentrate on the work they have to do, and show in their enthusiasm how much they enjoy it.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: older pupils set the tone very well here, and in lessons, assemblies, and at playtime and lunchtime, the pupils follow the staff's high expectations of their behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	A strength of the school: from the Reception group on, the staff expect the pupils to relate very well to each other, and to grow as independent learners – they do this very well.
Attendance	Well above average: this contributes well to the pupils' opportunities to learn and make progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good.	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 quality of teaching and learning are very good overall, and range from being never less than satisfactory to being outstanding. A key strength is the high quality of the teamwork by all the staff, including the support staff, which ensures that the work challenges the pupils to extend their thinking and develop their skills further. In Class 1, teachers and support staff combine very well to work with the separate year groups, and ensure that the level of challenge is appropriate for each child. The staff also ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively, including those with special needs, those learning English as an additional language, and those recognised and gifted or talented in different areas of learning. Another strength is in the high quality of lesson planning to meet the pupils' needs. The staff have adapted the national literacy and numeracy strategies very effectively to teach the skills of literacy and numeracy, and organise the teaching of these alongside a two-year cycle of topics for the other subjects. For such a small school, where each class has at least two year groups, and one class covers three age groups, the staff skilfully weave a pattern of learning that ensures all the pupils receive their full curricular entitlement without too much repetition of previous work. Another great strength is the way that the staff help the pupils to grow in independence as they move through the school, so that they are fully competent learners by the time they leave. For example, children in the Reception group were asked to test the comparative capacity of a variety of containers under supervision, but had to record their findings independently, then return to the teacher with a further guided choice of receptacles to continue their investigation. The work in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 also gives the older pupils very good opportunities to think and to decide for themselves individually or as a group how they will tackle such activities as science or mathematics investigations. Specialist teaching in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and music draws on the skills of the whole staff effectively to push the pupils on in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has maintained and further developed a rich and interesting curriculum that covers all statutory requirements, and provides a wide range of exciting opportunities for pupils to use their skills across different subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made for those pupils with special needs, and they make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good; fully integrated provision, leading to very good progress in learning English, and across the curriculum, supported very well by the local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Service.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	A strength of the school: pupils achieve real independence in their learning because the staff have high expectations of their good behaviour, co-operation and creativity. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall, but more could be done to raise awareness and understanding of Britain as a diverse and multicultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well: pupils are safe and secure, and good assessment arrangements ensure that the work they have to do that meets their needs effectively.

The parents rightly hold the school in high regard. The partnership between the school, the parents and local community is strong, and supports the pupils' learning well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads by example, having high expectations for the school which are very well supported by the rest of the staff. Between them, they manage all aspects of the school's work effectively, and ensure a high quality of education for the pupils. Performance management has been introduced successfully.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors have improved their monitoring and evaluation role, and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are closely involved in its work, and ensure that all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher keeps the governing body very well informed, and they use the data they receive to set targets for improvement in the development plan, which they monitor regularly for its effect on the school's work.
The strategic use of resources	Governors work closely with the headteacher to make best use of the financial and other resources available. The staff ensure that time and learning resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning.

Because the governors value small group teaching, they ensure that teaching and support staffing is at good levels. There are good learning resources available, used well in lessons. The accommodation has been improved since the last inspection, and is adequate. There are still weaknesses, particularly in sufficient space for indoor physical education, and a dedicated play area for children in the Reception group.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That their children enjoy school, the progress they make, and their good behaviour. • The leadership and management, the high quality of the teaching and the approachability of staff, the expectations for hard work and the encouragement of maturity and responsibility. • The way the school works with parents, the information about progress and the amount of homework. • The range of activities outside lessons. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were no significant areas mentioned.

The inspection confirms and supports all of these positive views. There were no significant concerns expressed by parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Attainment at entry to the Reception class covers a wide range, and varies markedly from year to year. From an analysis carried out by the school over the last five years, overall entry-level attainment is broadly average. The current Reception group has made good progress in learning, and almost all of the children are on track to exceed the early learning goals¹ in most areas of learning by the time they start Year 1. This is because the teacher's planning of the work for the children is very good, and covers the recommended curriculum very effectively. This ensures that almost all the pupils are already working in the early stages of the National Curriculum at levels expected of pupils in Year 1. The co-operation of the team working together in Class 1, the class that contains the Year 1 and 2 pupils as well as the Reception children, is impressive and secures a well-organised and purposeful learning environment.
- 2 The children in Reception quickly settle to school, developing good self-confidence and independence in their learning. This is a key feature of the school's promotion of the pupils' personal development throughout the school. The good work begun in Reception is continued by all staff, who work hard to achieve the school's high expectations for the pupils here. The staff encourage the youngest pupils to communicate effectively, and speaking and listening skills are above average by the age of six. Reading is a strong focus throughout the school, and children in Reception all recognise some words, and high attaining pupils are already beginning to tackle unknown words for themselves. Children learn to write letters and numbers carefully, but need more opportunities to write out their own work, not copy mainly what the teacher writes from their oral descriptions. Number skills are well promoted, and children also learn to recognise simple shapes, and to measure and compare the properties of a variety of objects, such as which container holds the most. The children are encouraged to be inquisitive about the world around them, to learn to use the computer, and to develop a good range of skills in designing and making models, images and weavings.
- 3 All the current Year 2 pupils are on track to achieve the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and for a high proportion to exceed expected levels in reading, mathematics and science. This has lifted the school's results in this year's national tests close to the levels achieved two years ago, in 2000. However, the results in national tests for seven-year-olds from this school cannot be safely compared year-on-year as the number of pupils involved is so small. For example, the 2001 results in reading were well below average, when the year before they were well above average. Similarly, results in writing were average, but the year before they were in the highest five per cent nationally. Conversely, the 2001 results in mathematics were well above average whilst they were only above average in 2000. This illustrates the erratic effects from year to year of the data from very small samples of pupils (only eight pupils in Year 2 last year). This also makes comparisons with national and similar school averages unsafe, particularly as the measure for similar school comparison is based only on eligibility for free school meals, which does not give a fair picture of socio-economic circumstances for this school.

¹ Planning in the Foundation Stage is towards pupils achieving standards called Early Learning Goals in six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical development; and creative development.

- 4 By the end of Year 2 the pupils are confident and articulate speakers, and listen carefully when spoken to by adults or other pupils. They show in their answers that they listen with interest, being prepared to ask questions to clarify what they are hearing. Because the school concentrates very well on helping the pupils learn to read, they are often very good readers by seven. Parents work closely with the school in this, and the reading record books that travel between home and school are often testament to the very good communication shared between the staff and parents. A particularly good feature is that older pupils have the responsibility of hearing younger pupils read, for which they have specific training, and their comments also appear in these notebooks. Writing has been rightly identified as a focus for further development in the school improvement plan. Almost all Year 2 pupils currently attain average levels in writing, and a small number attain above average levels.
- 5 In mathematics, the pupils have developed above average numeracy skills, with almost half of them achieving well above average levels. Work saved confirms a strong emphasis on learning to compute accurately, and to investigate the properties of numbers. For example, there is good work in fractions, learning that four is $\frac{1}{4}$ of 16, and seven is $\frac{1}{4}$ of 28. Pupils also have good opportunities to learn about the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes, and to work practically in measuring length, and estimating and weighing a variety of packages of food and bags of fruit and vegetables, using non-standard and standard measures.
- 6 In science, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was well above average last year, and attainment this year is at similar levels. This is because the teachers and support staff provide the pupils with many opportunities to investigate the local environment, observe and experiment with plant growth, and test materials and forces, and to record their findings in a variety of ways.
- 7 In general, the school achieves high results in the national tests for 11 year-olds, particularly in mathematics. Taken over the last three years, the school's average results were much higher than the national average. Difficulties in the teaching of science, recognised by the governors two years ago, have been rectified, and the present Year 6 is on track to achieve well above average levels in mathematics and science, and above average levels in English. This illustrates how results in small schools can vary considerably from one year to another, based on the nature and prior attainment of the particular group, as previously explained.
- 8 Current attainment in Year 6 demonstrates how well the school helps pupils to build on their prior experience. Standards in speaking and listening are high, and the pupils are very articulate and confident speakers, using mature language to explain their thinking or to express how they feel. Reading continues to be a strength, and standards are above average in Year 6. Most pupils read a good variety of texts with ease, including stories, poetry and non-fiction texts. They have good research skills, and show in their explanations that they understand the subtleties and nuances in many pieces of writing. Writing standards are also above average covering a range of styles and types. Pupils are imaginative, use punctuation effectively, and are effective spellers. They use their literacy skills well in other areas of the curriculum such as history and religious education.

- 9 Year 6 pupils work at high levels for their age in mathematics, and are very accurate in the application of their computation skills in numeracy in other subjects. They handle data competently and creatively to solve problems and present their findings from independent investigations. This includes very effective use of information and communication technology in processing data about waste management, and in comparing the costs over three years of the annual school residential trip to the Peak District.
- 10 In science, Year 5 and 6 pupils have been involved in a good range of experiments in which they demonstrate clearly their understanding of how to organise and conduct a fair test. They have used effectively a good range of equipment such as digital and binocular microscopes, and studied and revised a wide selection of subject content, from chromatography and complex electrical circuitry, to testing reversible and irreversible changes.
- 11 As well as results in mathematics and science being particularly strong, the school ensures that pupils attain above average levels in most areas of the curriculum, particularly information and communication technology across the curriculum, history and music. Year 3 and 4 pupils produce impressive work in art and design.
- 12 The school sets challenging targets based on its ongoing assessment of pupils' attainment, and it is on track to achieve these this year. From entry to leaving the school the pupils make good progress in their learning. All pupils with special needs make good progress and are removed from the register when the appropriate standards have been reached, and their individual targets achieved. There have been many success stories with these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 13 Pupils' attitudes to their work and their willingness to learn continue to be a significant strength of the school. Pupils are keen to please their teachers, become absorbed in their lessons and are exemplary in their enthusiasm. They say that being at school is 'good fun' and particularly like the lessons where they are allowed to find things out for themselves. Older pupils are given freedom to learn independently and use the opportunities presented very effectively. Most are involved in many of the extra-curricular activities offered. They work hard to come up to the school's high expectations and the targets they are set. They settle to work quickly and without fuss and sustain this effort consistently. Attitudes are always very positive and frequently outstanding.
- 14 Behaviour in lessons is generally very good and in many cases it is excellent. Pupils are equally well behaved in the playground. They talk well, are confident and speak respectfully to adults. There are very few instances of unacceptable behaviour and there have been no exclusions during the last school year. Relationships are excellent at all levels amongst staff, pupils and parents and the atmosphere in the school is relaxed, friendly and welcoming. The school functions as a very harmonious community. Parents express their approval of the standards of behaviour achieved and say their children enjoy school.
- 15 Pupils' personal development is very good. Children join the school with social skills that are average for their age. They continue to make good progress throughout the rest of their time in school. They share resources, take the initiative in helping to organise their classrooms, take their turn and work co-operatively in pairs and groups. As they move towards the top of the school they are mature and confident and require

minimal supervision. They behave responsibly and help with the day-to-day running of the school, enjoying the responsibilities which most of them have. By the time they complete their final year in the school they are confident young people, well prepared to move on to secondary education.

- 16 Attendance is well above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 17 The quality of teaching and learning are very good overall, and range from being at least satisfactory to being outstanding. Three lessons at Key Stage 2 were outstanding, in science, art and design, and information and communication technology. Very good teaching was observed across the school, and with every year group of pupils, leading to very good learning for the pupils. The school co-operates well with parents, who value the homework arrangements which make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in reading.
- 18 A key strength of the teaching is the high quality teamwork of the staff, including the support staff, in ensuring that the work challenges the pupils to extend their thinking and develop their skills further. For example, during a mathematics lesson a teacher and support assistant taught the Year 2 pupils numeracy skills in a newly created small classroom in the main building. In this small space they worked very effectively with two groups of pupils, maintaining their concentration and pushing them on in their learning despite both groups performing different tasks. At the same time, Year 1 pupils worked with another support assistant in the classroom, whilst the class teacher worked with the Reception pupils to extend their ability to write formal addition sums using figures and symbols.
- 19 Another key strength is in the high quality of lesson planning to meet the pupils' needs. The teachers have devised a comprehensive two year plan for the curriculum that provides a very effective platform for their more short-term and detailed lesson planning. This is based firmly in the requirements to teach the full National Curriculum, with a concentration on English and mathematics. The staff have adapted the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies well to meet the specific needs of pupils in a small school with mixed age classes. The staff skilfully weave a pattern of learning that ensures all the pupils receive their full curricular entitlement without too much repetition of previous work. In Class 1, teachers and support staff combine very well to work with the separate year groups, and ensure that the level of challenge is appropriate for each child. In Years 3 and 4 the teacher also works well with support staff and parents to ensure a rich and exciting diet of learning for the pupils. For example, in a rich and varied art and design technology lesson, the teacher used an impressive array of fruits as a stimulus. She helped the pupils to observe and comment on this, eliciting 23 separate descriptive comments about a cut mango! The pupils' observation skills were acute, and part of the lesson covered aspects of science, as well as reinforcing speaking and listening skills well. A parent also worked effectively with pupils from this class in the kitchen area, preparing an elaborate fruit salad as part of food technology. They learned about hygiene and safety, whilst being expected to use sharp implements carefully to carry out the task.

- 20 All the staff have high expectations of the pupils' progress in their knowledge, skills and understanding, and in their growth as competent learners. They help the pupils to grow in independence as they move through the school, so that by the time they leave they know how to tackle problems, discuss issues, and co-operate with others to find solutions. The work in Years 5 and 6 gives them very good opportunities to think and to decide for themselves individually or as a group how they will tackle such activities as science or mathematics investigations. For example, in a mathematics lesson, groups of pupils worked independently of the teacher to work out the average height of bounce of ten drops of a tennis ball, or how much 1,000,000 paper clips weigh. They sought their own equipment together, skilfully determining the best way to tackle each question. Meanwhile, the teacher could concentrate on helping another group to handle fractional numbers to three decimal places, confident that the rest of the class would be working hard to complete their investigations in time to report back their findings to the rest of the class.
- 21 Specialist teaching in English, mathematics, information and communications technology and music draws on the skills of the whole staff effectively to push the pupils on in their learning. The two teachers in Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6 take each other's class respectively for English and mathematics. As they are the English and mathematics subject leaders, this arrangement uses their skills well, and gives them overview of the whole key stage. The school secretary is employed to teach specific information and communication technology skills with groups in the computer suite. She was observed teaching high attaining Year 6 pupils to compare the costs of the last three years' residential school trips using a spreadsheet program. The pupils transferred information and data confidently between applications, and produced a variety of graphical presentations with good regard for the clarity of the display of information, and the overall finish. A specialist music teacher takes all classes in turn, and covers the whole of the required curriculum in a short time. Her lessons are brisk, and the pupils learn good skills in appreciating music, in composition, and in performing using a variety of tuned and untuned instruments. She also teaches every pupil to play the recorder, so that all read standard notation before they leave. By utilising specialist teaching skills in this way, and by involving parents with skills to offer, the school helps its pupils to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding through a broad and rich curriculum.
- 22 The staff also ensure that the needs of all pupils are met effectively, including those with special needs, those learning English as an additional language, and those recognised and gifted or talented in different areas of learning. Year 3 and 4 pupils were observed creating collage images after looking at a variety of fruit. They used fine observation to interpret the patterns and colours using a very good variety of materials prepared by the teacher. Because the teacher had planned the lesson so effectively, the pupils were enabled to work at their own level, and produce a collage that built very effectively on their previous skills and understanding. High attaining pupils used fine judgement in deciding how to represent the swirl of the pineapple skin, or the seeds in a melon. The finished products on display reflect the teachers' high expectations, and the pupils' high level response. Although few pupils learn English as an additional language, the school co-operates very effectively with the very good support from the local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Service to accelerate the learning of those pupils who require additional help.

- 23 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Each pupil has targets for their learning in individual education plans. The learning assistants liaise with the class teachers and know the needs of the pupils. As well as support in the classroom, small groups are withdrawn for more specific help in mathematics or literacy. Apart from such withdrawals these pupils are fully included in the classroom curriculum and work is carefully matched to their needs.

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

- 24 The school has maintained and further developed a rich and interesting curriculum since the last inspection that covers all statutory requirements, and provides a wide range of exciting opportunities for the pupils to use their skills across different subjects. The time allocated to each subject is fine, and the overall taught curriculum time now matches national guidance for pupils in Years 3 to 6. There is a good concentration on the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, with further development of writing as a major area for development in the current improvement plan. Pupils are encouraged to develop a wide range of skills to be used across the subjects of the curriculum, and in the topics which are alternated on a two-year cycle. These include the strong focus on enquiry-based learning, involving the pupils in growing independence and self-reliance, very well improved since the last inspection. Good observational skills are fostered in art and design and science, and information and communication technology is increasingly used to support learning in a number of curricular areas, particularly English, mathematics and science.
- 25 The curriculum has been adapted to meet the requirements of Curriculum 2000, a revision of the National Curriculum, and the new Foundation Stage curriculum for the Reception pupils. This has resulted in a wholesale review and updating of many subject policies and schemes of work. These are improved since the last inspection, and the school's cycle of topics is carefully planned to prevent undue repetition of aspects of each subject. Design and technology and information and communication technology have improved strongly since the last inspection, as has geography. All pupils have equal access to the full curriculum, and to the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities available. These enrich the curriculum well, added to the good opportunities for visits out of school, and visitors into school sharing their experiences. Very good work has resulted from visiting artists who have developed watercolour and craft skills with the pupils. A number of parents offer particular skills, such as in showing the pupils how to prepare a fruit salad, or to cook a range of meals from different cultures. Pupils take part enthusiastically in such activities as the gardening club, the Eco School initiative, the choir and recorder consort, and the chess club. The school has reached the national small school's finals in the last two years, hoping to improve this year on its runner-up place in 2001.
- 26 Good provision is made for those pupils with special needs, and they make good progress towards the targets set for them. When pupils are withdrawn from class for extra support, the school ensures that a record is kept of what is missed. Teachers ensure that the same pupils do not miss the same lessons by rotating the times when they receive extra help so that they receive their full curricular entitlement. When a year group with a very high proportion of boys was not making sufficient progress in English, the staff readjusted how the subject was taught so that a greater emphasis on practical work such as tape and video-recording, active debates and drama was introduced to good effect. High-attaining pupils are identified and work is planned to meet their needs, and to challenge them to make accelerated progress where possible. For example, a number of pupils in Year 6 completed the extension national tests in mathematics and

science, equivalent to those taken in Year 8. There is fully integrated provision for pupils learning English as an additional language, leading to very good progress in learning English and across the curriculum, supported very well by the local authority Ethnic Minority Achievement Service. Good provision is made for personal, social and health education, including sex education and drugs awareness.

- 27 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is a strength of the school, improved since the previous inspection. Moral and social development is very well promoted, and spiritual development is promoted well. However, whilst provision for cultural development is satisfactory overall, and some aspects of it are good, further emphasis is needed on heightening pupils' awareness and understanding of Britain as a diverse and multicultural society.
- 28 Spirituality is promoted effectively through assemblies, religious education and the prevailing atmosphere of the school. Assemblies are well planned with appropriate content, although time for personal reflection is sometimes very brief. Pupils are encouraged to think about how they treat others, how to be thoughtful and caring. A local Methodist minister is a regular visitor, leading collective worship and assembly. In religious education lessons teachers provide pupils with information about their own and other world religions. Pupils are well known to all adults who are dedicated to promoting confidence in them as individuals and an awareness of the impact of their attitudes and behaviour on others. Pupils are encouraged to consider the wonder of nature: the hatching of baby chicks during the inspection brought many sighs of wonderment from the pupils and expressions of surprise. This is also explored through working out number patterns in mathematics, the wonders of life and growth in science, and appreciation of music and art.
- 29 Moral education is promoted well through assemblies, discussion about the rules and expectations that all in the school will be well behaved and caring towards others. There is a behaviour policy in place that is known and consistently applied by all the staff. When a pupil has a problem it is talked through to help them understand the effect of their actions. There is a special assembly to celebrate pupils' successes and stickers are awarded for a variety of reasons, not just good behaviour or good work. The lunchtime staff can even award a sticker for bravery if a pupil falls over and receives first aid without a tear. These measures have a positive effect on the pupils' behaviour. Staff set a good example for the pupils, and take every opportunity to teach the principles of right and wrong.
- 30 Pupils are expected to look after their school and care for the environment. Each class has monitors for a variety of tasks. The older pupils are expected to show responsibility for the younger ones, particularly during break times. All pupils are also expected to work independently and are trusted to work in different areas of the school without direct adult supervision. This independence was demonstrated many times during the inspection when pupils in Class 3 were given tasks to complete in small groups: for example, during a geography session pupils had to write up a previous field visit and present the information. This was successfully accomplished. There are opportunities for the pupils to perform to an audience, not only in school productions but also in the local music festival. A range of visits give pupils first hand experiences, including a residential trip for Years 5 and 6 to the Peak District. Participation in local games competitions also helps to promote pupils' social development. The school has been very successful in the National Small School's Chess Championship, reaching the finals for the last two years.

- 31 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own culture through visits to local sites, exploration of the area around the school, and visits to places further afield. They learn something of different world cultures through religious education, such as Islam and Hinduism, and through geography, history and occasionally in listening to music and from studying art from different traditions. However, limited provision is made to heighten pupils' awareness and understanding of Britain as a culturally diverse society. For example, there are few texts illustrating this diversity in the school library, and there are few mentions in subject policies and schemes of work as to how staff should promote pupils' understanding in this area. This aspect of the school's curriculum is not at the high standard as the rest, and needs further consideration by the staff and governors.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 32 The school has very good procedures for pupils' care and welfare and has successfully created a family atmosphere within the school. The foundations of this are the excellent relationships and trust between adults and pupils. Teachers know the children very well as individuals, and any problems are discussed at staff meetings and concerns are dealt with quickly. The procedures for child protection are well organised, led by the head teacher. The school's health and safety policy and procedures are also carried out very thoroughly. All matters related to management responsibilities, classroom safety, fire drills, first aid, medicines and general welfare are dealt with very consistently. At the parents' meeting there was strong approval of the way the school cared for the pupils.
- 33 The systems for the improvement and management of behaviour are very effective. The rules are simple and behaviour expectations are clearly understood. Consequently, there is very little need for more than a quiet word to remind a pupil of the school's expectations. Teachers, classroom assistants and mid-day supervisors are very good role models. Staff are very visible at all times and this means that they are able to encourage positive relationships and behaviour and are very quickly aware of any problems arising. The pupils themselves say the school is a friendly place and say that they thoroughly enjoy being there. Parents strongly approve of the values promoted and the standards of behaviour achieved.
- 34 The procedures for assessment of pupils' learning and progress are good, well improved since the last inspection. The staff know the pupils very well, and use the information they gain from their close observations and assessments of their work well to plan further work for them. From regular analysis of data from various tests, including entry-level tests for Reception pupils and national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, teachers monitor and evaluate what works and what doesn't, adjusting their teaching accordingly. The staff increasingly set targets for the pupils' progress as a class, in groups or individually. These are referred to regularly during lessons, particularly to let pupils know what they are expected to learn at the outset, and to summarise and check their progress at the end. Teachers' marking of pupils work is sound, and sometimes good. The best examples make it clear what is effective in the work, and also ask pupils to think about their work further to improve it. However, errors in pupils' punctuation of their writing are occasionally missed.

- 35 The procedures for recording and monitoring personal development, attendance and behaviour are very good and most pupils receive appropriate support to help them achieve their best. Teachers know the pupils very well and have excellent contacts with their families. In addition, all pupils have a personal file containing sufficient information to give a good picture of their strengths as well as where they need support. Targets are given to older pupils and they have a good understanding of the levels at which they are working. Gifted and talented children are identified and parents work with the school to ensure they receive the right opportunities and challenge. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and this ensures they also make good progress. Good records are built up so that detail of their progress is available for review meetings with parents and for further target setting.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 36 Parents hold the school in very high esteem. They have extremely positive views about what the school does for their children as well as the quality of education it provides. An exceptionally high proportion of the pre-inspection questionnaires were completed and returned and this itself is indicative of the excellent relationship which exists between parents and the school. The parents' meeting before the inspection was also very well attended and the views expressed verbally, confirm those in the questionnaires. Parents are extremely happy with most aspects of the school's work, for example, the progress made, the expectations of behaviour, the quality of teaching, the values that are taught, and the high quality of the leadership and management. Parents were unanimous that their children enjoy school. The school's high standing in the local community ensures that many parents from outside the normal catchment area apply for places for their children, and it is oversubscribed in some age groups.
- 37 Parents are given a very good range of information about the school and what their children are doing. Most information about day-to-day matters is passed on through individual letters but there are informal opportunities for parents to talk to staff at the start or end of the day. The headteacher welcomes pupils and parents at the start of each day and many parents take these opportunities to talk and socialise. More formal meetings with class teachers take place twice yearly and these are attended by all parents, almost without exception. The pupils' annual reports give a good review of progress and explain what pupils have achieved as well as where they can improve. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept fully informed about progress and involved in discussing their targets. Once pupils have been identified as having special educational needs the parents are involved in all reviews and often there is a section on the child's education plan that highlights what parents can do to help.
- 38 These very positive links between the school and home ensure that parents make a very valued contribution to the life of the school and what it achieves. At the parents' meeting it was commented that staff and parents "all work as a team". The Parents, Teachers and Friends' Association is very active and its organisers arrange regular and well-attended social events. As well as creating a strong sense of community, their efforts also make a substantial contribution to school funds and these are spent directly on resources for the benefit of the pupils. The school also seeks parents' involvement in the classroom and their help with visits. The regular support in the classroom from parents makes a significant contribution to what the pupils achieve. There is always a very good response whenever help is requested. The school has many links with the local community and is involved in many local activities. These too, reflect well on the school and enhance its reputation.

- 39 Parents feel very positive about the education their children receive and play a very productive part in it themselves. They approve strongly of the way homework is organised. They help their children to research and find out things at home. In particular, they contribute to the very high reading standards achieved by the children. All parents are keen to attend and discuss progress at the consultation meetings, particularly where their children have special educational needs. They ensure their children come to school punctually and regularly and this is reflected in the well above average figures for attendance.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 40 The headteacher leads by example, having high expectations for the school which are very well supported by the rest of the staff. He sets the tone very effectively in his classroom, shared part-time with another teacher. His very successful relationship with these older pupils establishes the pattern for the school. Because he is so well-known and respected by the parents and the wider community, his influence permeates all the school's work. He has high expectations of himself and of all who work in the school, including the pupils, parent helpers and governors. However, he achieves the difficult task of taking all the school's constituent groups with him because his leadership is clear, includes all the pupils, and is inspirational. This clarity is apparent in the school improvement plan, agreed with the governors. It is a finely tuned working document, accurately focusing on most of the key areas for the school's further development, such as further improvements in the standards of writing.
- 41 Between them, the staff manage all aspects of the school's work effectively, and ensure a high quality of education for the pupils. They have many areas of responsibility because it is such a small school, but never lose sight of the chief reason for the school's existence: to further the learning of the pupils in all aspects of their personal development to the highest standards possible. They co-operate very well as a team, teachers and support staff each playing their part very effectively. They are diligent in their leadership of aspects of the school's work. For example, the leader of the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, covering Years 1 and 2, also leads science, environmental education, geography and information and communication technology and acts as effective deputy head teacher. In the three years in which she has been at the school, she has overseen major changes in all these areas. Part-time and temporary staff also lead important areas of the school's work very effectively. English is led very well by a part-time member of staff, working full-time temporarily until a new appointee takes up a post in September. She has successfully introduced an adapted version of the National Literacy Strategy, and currently teaches the subject as a specialist in Years 3 to 6. Two other part-time staff take lead responsibility for music, special educational needs, the funds for staff development and improvements, and religious education. They all make very effective contributions to the atmosphere of the purposeful family life of the school so welcomed by the parents. Performance management has been successfully introduced and the staff's targets for improvement lead to the improving standards attained by the pupils.

- 42 There is a knowledgeable and interested teacher who oversees special needs and keeps the register up to date. All communication from outside educational agencies, reports, parents' interviews, individual education plans and records are well documented. When necessary there is good liaison between the school and receiving secondary schools when special needs pupils are due to transfer from Year 6 to the next phase of education. However, the policy is due to be reviewed in order to reflect the new national guidance as it still relates to the previous code of practice.
- 43 The governors have improved the way in which they oversee the work of the school, and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The chair of governors is regularly in the school, and is known to all staff, pupils and parents. He brings good skills to the role, and acts firmly as a critical friend. He has a very good working relationship with the headteacher, and they have strong mutual respect for each other. Many of the governors are closely involved in its work, and ensure that all statutory requirements are met. Those who have taken on specific responsibilities such as for literacy or numeracy perform their duties conscientiously, observing lessons, discussing developments with the staff, and keeping the other governors well-informed about progress in the subject. The headteacher keeps the governing body very well informed, and they use the data they receive to set targets for improvement in the development plan, which they monitor regularly for its effect on the school's work. Governors work closely with the headteacher to make best use of the financial and other resources available, including grants for specific purposes such as staff training. The staff ensure that time and learning resources are used effectively to support pupils' learning.
- 44 Because the governors value small group teaching, they ensure that teaching and support staffing is at good levels. There are good learning resources available, used well in lessons. The accommodation has been improved well since the last inspection, and is adequate. The school is a mixture of the original buildings and a modern extension. It is in good condition and cared for very well. The grounds are very pleasant and there is a recently acquired playing field. Classrooms and general rooms are good, but the hall is small, there is only limited space for the library and there is no separate play area for the Reception children. The school is aware of these shortcomings and in spite of them has created a very pleasant environment in which to teach and learn.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 45 The school should provide further opportunities throughout the curriculum for the pupils to learn about Britain as a diverse and multicultural community, particularly through geography, history, art, music and citizenship education. This should include staff and governor training, and the development of active links with schools in areas of Britain that contrast effectively in ethnic and cultural diversity with the school's locality. This issue does not feature in the current school improvement plan, but was raised by the school to the inspection team as an area to be considered. (Paragraphs 31, 90, 107)

Governors may also wish to consider the following minor issue:

to develop a dedicated and easily accessible play area for the Reception pupils, as funds allow. (Paragraphs 44, 54)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	10	10	2	0	0	0
Percentage	12	40	40	8	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 four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	78
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	1

Special educational needs	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	11

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	14	1	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	13
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (100)	87 (90)	93 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	12
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (100)	87 (80)	87 (100)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

*Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. * indicates groups of less than 10 pupils. Girls' results and totals are not shown because there was only one girl in the Year group.*

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	68
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.5
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	208,566
Total expenditure	199,118
Expenditure per pupil	2,520
Balance brought forward	852
Balance carried forward	10,300

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	78
Number of questionnaires returned	65

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	28	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	69	30	0	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	60	39	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	49	44	3	3	1
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	29	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	71	28	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	66	28	5	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	72	27	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	68	31	1	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	69	25	3	0	3

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

- 46 Provision for the Reception children in the Foundation Stage is in a mixed age class, covering Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 pupils. They are admitted to school in the September of the year of their fifth birthday. All children attend full-time from the outset. All children have had some pre-school experience. There is very good liaison with the local playgroup and during the last half of the summer term those about to begin school spend three afternoons here. In addition the school runs a successful weekly story club that is attended by pre-school children and their parents, and a few others from the infant class.
- 47 The provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The curriculum is based initially on the nationally agreed six areas of learning and in practice provides the children with a broad and balanced range of experiences. The Reception Year is effective in providing challenging activities that are directly designed to help the children progress towards the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals. The overall attainment of children entering the Reception Year is average, based on the results of entry-level tests. Many children come to school with good skills in speaking and listening. As they play games at home, most know how to take turns. Some can count to 10 and recognise colours. However, attainment on entry varies from year to year with some groups attaining better than others.
- 48 The teacher provides an appropriate range of activities to encourage children to play together and to mix with the older children in the class. Praise and encouragement are effective in promoting positive behaviour and personal and social development. Day-to-day assessment is used effectively so that daily lesson planning ensures that set tasks provide sufficient challenge. The staff record the children's progress, once a task is completed, on the bottom of the appropriate lesson plan. All adults have very good relationships with the children and this has a positive effect on their learning. The teacher and learning support assistants are enthusiastic and have high expectations; the children rise to these. Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's learning and are expected to listen to their child read every night. The majority of parents do this resulting in their children making good progress with their reading.

Personal, social and emotional development

- 49 Teaching is good and the majority of children have already achieved the Early Learning Goals. Children enjoy school, are enthusiastic about learning and are well behaved. They are beginning to develop independence and confidence. This reflects the teaching and its encouragement to achieve, consistently reinforced by all the adults in the classroom. Children are beginning to develop an understanding of the needs of others, particularly in play and group activities. Adults provide good examples here as they treat the children and each other with courtesy and respect, and the children know they are valued. Children are beginning to grow in self-reliance in taking responsibility for their own actions, for example tidying up. They are encouraged to share, take turns, help each other and wait patiently. Examples of this were seen when children shared the pastels during an art session, and when they waited patiently for their turn to tell their news. The teacher makes sure there is a good range of activities available to help children develop positive attitudes towards learning.

Communication, language and literacy

- 50 Children broaden and consolidate their use of language and most have already exceeded the level expected by the time they enter Year 1 for speaking and listening before the end of the Reception year. The teacher plans well-organised lessons and tasks pitched at an appropriate level. Communication skills are encouraged throughout and children's speaking and listening skills progress well. This is evident in many classroom activities. The teacher provides time for the children to share experiences and work during discussions on the carpet after each session. Children listen and respond to the teacher's questions and to the contribution of others. The majority of children know their letter sounds and can recognise rhyming words, through the effective use of a teaching aid, "Percy Panda". All children have made an enthusiastic start with reading and enjoy sharing books with adults and older pupils, and they listen attentively to stories, often joining in the familiar parts. All children can recognise a few words but the higher-attaining readers have begun to sound out unfamiliar words for themselves. Children know a variety of fairy stories and nursery rhymes but are not all happy to retell them or recite a rhyme. They use the pictures in their books to help them answer questions about the story and handle books with confidence and pleasure. Most children read regularly at home to their parents and daily in school. A reading record book provides a useful link between home and school. In their writing, children are beginning to tell the teacher simple sentences to write for them which they can then copy into their books. However, there are too few opportunities for higher-attaining children to write independently in a range of contexts, as these children should be writing sentences for themselves by this time of the year.

Mathematical development

- 51 The teaching of mathematics is good, with a range of activities to support the learning. Attainment is good and many children have already achieved the early learning goals and are working towards the targets in the National Curriculum for pupils in Year 1. They can count confidently to 10 and some to 20. They can work out addition and subtraction sums, using numbers to 10 or in some cases to 20. The higher-attaining children are beginning to solve problems with missing numbers and adding three single digit numbers together. Children are taught appropriate vocabulary such as longer, shorter, heavier and lighter. They know the names of two-dimensional shapes and can match three-dimensional shapes and make patterns. They are taught how to investigate number patterns and, for example, to compare the capacities of a wide range of different containers.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 52 Teaching is good and all the children are on course to achieve the Early learning Goals: many have already achieved these Goals. Children show curiosity in their surroundings and explore, investigate and ask questions. They enjoy a walk round the grounds to collect leaves, sorting them by size, spikiness and smoothness, learning early scientific classification. Children are aware of what plants need to grow and willingly demonstrate their knowledge. They have looked at old toys that their parents played with and are beginning to appreciate the differences between old and new, and past and present. Early in the year children looked at different features in the local environment and talked about what they liked or disliked about the area. Recently a traffic survey was undertaken and the results recorded in simple graph form. The Christmas and Easter stories have been part of their work. Many children work on the computer with confidence although at times they are unsure of the purpose of the program they are

using. Mouse control and computer skills are developing and children enjoy being on the computer, although further help is sometimes needed to get them started.

- 53 A variety of visits out of school and visitors who have a variety of experiences to share enhances the curriculum and motivates the children to learn.

Physical development

- 54 The children are on course to achieve the expected levels in this area by the end of the Reception year. There was little opportunity to observe the children participating in lessons specifically designated for physical development. Children were briefly observed outside, riding bicycles with stabilizers confidently round the playground, throwing balls and learning how to skip: something many of them found quite difficult. Fine motor skills to control a pencil or cut accurately with scissors are developed well. There are opportunities for children to develop their manipulative skills through colouring, writing, in the role-play area and cutting out. The majority of children can cut out reasonably carefully along the lines. Pencil control is improving as many children write carefully formed, legible letters. Paintbrushes are used with care. Outdoor work in this area is restricted because there is no dedicated play area specifically for the Reception children.

Creative development

- 55 The teaching in this area is good and many children have already achieved the Early Learning Goals. Children enjoy a range of experiences with colour mixing, collage, printing and clay. The children have produced some careful portraits of their friends. They have tried to create a picture in the style of Matisse and currently are looking at painting a still life of fruit. Some of these pictures show how closely the children have looked at the fruit and the colours. A few children found this a very demanding task: one painted all the fruit in a row, another a very small representation of the still life in one corner of the paper and yet another had to be helped to appreciate how many of each fruit there were. Children enjoy music with the specialist teacher and sing a range of songs, including nursery rhymes. They begin to explore untuned percussion instruments and rhythm patterns. The role-play area is changed to complement the topic and children are encouraged to play together, developing their social skills still further.
- 56 Overall the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Staff have a good knowledge of the needs of the children in this stage and of the curriculum. The teacher is enthusiastic and has a very good relationship with the class, as do the support staff. At the beginning of the year lessons were well planned with appropriate early learning objectives but as the majority of children have now achieved many of these goals the planning objectives reflect the Key Stage 1 curriculum. A good range of activities and effective use of questioning extend the children's learning. The adults work as a team within the classroom and the children benefit from this consistent approach. Expectations of the children's involvement in activities are high and they respond well to those expectations. For example they help to tidy up when asked and line up sensibly for assembly. The attractive wall displays, much of which is the children's work, provide a bright and interesting environment where learning is encouraged. Overall the standard of provision is good and has been maintained or even improved in some areas such as creative development.

ENGLISH

- 57 Standards in English for 11-year-olds are above the national average. Pupils' speaking and listening and reading skills are above average. The majority of pupils are on course to achieve the expected level or above in writing. Depending on the number of pupils who achieve the higher level the overall results could, in fact, be well above average.
- 58 In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for 11-year-olds, the pupils achieved below the national average and, compared to similar schools, below average at Level 4 (the expected level at 11) and very low for level 5. However, as the numbers in the year groups are consistently small the statistics are unreliable. Taken over a five-year period, results have fluctuated with successful years and poorer years. Last year's group was mainly boys, some of whom were on the special needs register, and this had a marked effect on the standards achieved.
- 59 Current standards in English of pupils in Year 2 are above average. Speaking and listening and reading skills are above average. All the pupils are on course to achieve the expected level or above in writing. As with the Year 6 group, it depends on the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in reading and writing.
- 60 The pupils have a good range of experiences to develop their speaking and listening skills. By the end of Year 2, they are becoming articulate, confident speakers. When given the opportunity, they readily respond to questions and volunteer information. For example, they enjoyed talking about their weekend and discussing what plants need to grow in science. The pupils in another class demonstrated their growing understanding of story structure when they were asked to recall the elements of a known story. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident and very articulate, often expressing their views in detail and frequently showing a good understanding of the subject. For example, pupils discussed the pros and cons of having an angling club in the area and some came up with interesting ideas. In a religious education lesson pupils were very aware, from reading specific newspaper articles, of what modern day people do to help others or make their lives more difficult. They use mature language to express how they feel. This was related to the Good Samaritan story.
- 61 By the end of Year 2, standards in reading are above average. Books are handled with care and pupils read a good variety of texts, including poetry and reference books. Many pupils read fluently with understanding and a few with good expression. The pupils are developing ways of reading unfamiliar words by sounding out the letters or breaking them down into smaller parts. Pupils are confident to talk about their favourite books and authors, succinctly retelling parts of the stories. Similarly pupils know how to use reference books, contents page and indexes, although they do not have many opportunities to practise these skills.
- 62 By the end of Year 6, standards in reading are above average. The majority of pupils are independent readers, enjoying a range of stories, poetry and reference books. Most are fluent, although not all read with expression. All pupils talk knowledgeably about stories they have read or are reading. Most pupils can predict what might happen in a story. These pupils know how to use reference books: for example the quality of recording in their history projects shows how well research skills are used.
- 63 Each pupil has a reading record book and all children are expected to take their books home regularly. Parents are encouraged to listen to their children every night: the majority of parents do this and write comments in their children's reading record books. This has a positive effect on the standards of reading.

- 64 Currently standards in writing for pupils in Year 2 are above average. Their work shows that there are some pupils who are on course to achieve above average standards. Some of the stories written contain lively vocabulary and imaginative ideas. However, punctuation, particularly in free writing, is often forgotten or used sparingly: this includes missing out full stops, capital letters and speech marks. Spelling is more accurate than the use of punctuation. Pupils are given opportunities to write for different purposes such as retelling a favourite fairy story, writing a poem, news, book reviews, information and instructions. The pupils plan their stories carefully and learn to redraft them. Other areas of the curriculum such as comprehension and grammar are taught at appropriate times. All pupils are taught cursive script and most use this style of hand writing for their work: presentation of most work is neat and usually dated.
- 65 By the end of Year 6, writing standards are above average. Various writing tasks are set including book reviews, character descriptions, retelling the story of a poem, different types of poem such as haiku, cinquain, imaginative stories and letters of protest. Pupils explore the difference between opinion and fact. Vocabulary is often imaginative and descriptive; “cracked the guns...piercing the black night” or “trembling like a leaf ... eyes darting at every movement”. Punctuation is used effectively and spelling is becoming more accurate. Most pupils use cursive script and presentation is good. There are many opportunities for writing in other subjects as the pupils research a variety of topics.
- 66 Throughout the school pupils enjoy literacy lessons and are keen to participate. They are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary such as author, illustrator, fiction, and non-fiction. They listen to texts with interest and excitement, responding with enthusiasm to questions and discussion. Good examples of discussion can be found in many lessons. Pupils are well-behaved and work well, concentrating on the task, particularly where the teachers’ enthusiasm has inspired and stimulated them. In these lessons, the pupils listen attentively and respect the views and opinions of their peers. Reading is a pleasure and enjoyed by all pupils: many higher attaining pupils are avid readers. The majority of pupils read every night at home.
- 67 Pupils across the school make good progress in developing the appropriate skills in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Those pupils with special needs make good progress and with additional support some achieve the expected levels for their age.
- 68 The quality of teaching is always good or better. The lessons are well structured with a variety of activities that motivate and hold the pupils’ interest. Effective questioning helps to extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding, and to develop their speaking and listening skills. All teachers have very good relationships with their classes and this give the pupils confidence to answer questions. The lessons move at a good pace and encourage pupils to succeed, thus helping their learning. Teachers’ planning using an adapted version of the National Literacy Strategy shows work carefully matched to pupils’ needs, providing appropriate challenges for all levels of ability. Whole class feedback sessions are used effectively to share pupils’ work or reinforce learning. In many lessons, support staff are deployed well and have a positive effect on the learning of pupils with special needs, particularly when reading and written work is well matched to their needs. Although teachers regularly check pupils’ work, marking is not consistently rigorous or precise enough to provide pupils with clear guidance about what they need to do to improve and consequently they often repeat mistakes. This is especially so with punctuation. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to write in other subjects and to use computers to improve and present their work.

- 69 The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the implementation of the Literacy Hour have been successful. Although the school does not follow the strategy rigorously it has influenced the planning and the range of activities the pupils experience. Various initiatives such as early literacy support for Year 1 pupils and additional literacy support for Year 3 pupils are being used effectively to enhance the learning of these particular pupils.
- 70 The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leader. Evaluative lesson observation has been a focus and both planning and teaching have been observed. The subject is well resourced. Because of the constraints of the building the library area is very small but each classroom has its own well-stocked book corner to compensate.

MATHEMATICS

- 71 The subject is very well taught throughout the school, and the pupils experience the full range of the subject curriculum, making good progress in their learning. A particularly strong feature of this teaching is in the promotion of investigative skills and independent learning. This leads to high standards in the pupils' ability to think creatively about their work, communicate what they have found out clearly, and in the progressive development of their problem-solving skills. Pupils with special needs make good progress towards the targets set for them.
- 72 Under the guidance of the experienced subject leader, the school has adapted the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively for its pupils. Mental strategies are very well promoted in whole class oral sessions at the beginning of lessons, and quick-fire but comprehensive summaries of targets achieved complete lessons effectively. Individual and group work, using a commercial scheme of work well to cover all aspects of the subject, has been retained from previous practice, ensuring that the school's high standards are maintained. Teachers' marking of the pupils' work is up-to-date, accurate, and often sets new targets. Occasionally, it does not explore different ways to tackle problem-solving activities sufficiently, to show pupils alternative strategies. The pupils respond very well to the staff's high expectations of their behaviour, attitudes to the work, and commitment to independent problem-solving.
- 73 In Years 2 and 6, pupils achieve well above national average levels for their ages in all areas of the subject (number, algebra, space, shape and measures, and data-handling). Standards have improved strongly for seven-year-olds over the last three years, and have been maintained at high levels for 11-year-olds for a number of years. These standards are also above those in similar schools, although caution is needed in comparing results based on such small year groups. Comparisons between the performance of boys and girls are also suspect, as, for example, there were 14 boys and only one girl in last year's Year 6 group. However, statistics from national test results for Year 6 pupils over five years show that both boys and girls equally achieve well above boys and girls nationally. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support in working towards their learning targets, and make good progress.
- 74 Currently, Year 2 and Year 6 pupils achieve well above average levels in all aspects of the subject. Year 2 pupils have good numeracy skills, developed well through whole class oral sessions and good investigations in group work. For example, whilst one group worked effectively with a support assistant adding and subtracting numbers up to 20, the higher-attaining group worked with the teacher in playing a number exchange game. Using a die, they gathered tens until they had enough to exchange for 100. As the game progressed, they began to predict what number they would need to throw to

effect the exchange, and monitored skilfully the scores achieved by other children. This work was at a higher level than expected for their age, and was well-pitched to challenge and extend their thinking. Work saved confirms a strong emphasis on learning to compute accurately, and to investigate the properties of numbers. For example, there is good work in fractions and to learn about the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes. Pupils also work practically in measuring length, and estimating and weighing a variety of packages of food and bags of fruit and vegetables, using non-standard and standard measures. The staff build well in Year 1 and Year 2 on the good development of independence and investigatory skills in Reception. They encourage the pupils to think for themselves, and to explore and think creatively about mathematical ideas.

- 75 This very good work is continued superbly in Years 3 to 6. The two classes are taught by the headteacher, who is the subject leader, and he extends the high expectations of pupils' self-reliance and independence very well. Year 6 pupils work at high levels for their age, and are very accurate in the application of their computation skills in numeracy. They handle data competently and creatively to solve problems and present their findings from independent investigations. This includes very effective use of information and communication technology in processing data about waste management, and in comparing the costs over three years of the annual school residential trip to the Peak District. A group of Year 5 pupils tackled an investigation to find the average of a series of tests very confidently. When they had worked very well together as a group, they presented their findings in pairs or individually in a variety of ways. Some chose to use a data-handling program on the computer with confidence and competence, whilst others chose to set their findings out manually in line and block graphs. They completed this work accurately and skilfully, presenting their findings clearly and carefully. This illustrates well how the staff's high expectations inspire the pupils to take the initiative in their own learning to very good effect.
- 76 Teacher's planning of the pupils' work in the subject is very good, and meets the needs of groups and individuals very well. High-attaining pupils are pushed on, often working at levels expected of pupils one or two years older than they are. Pupils needing extra help are also well supported to make progress at their own level. For example, a group of pupils in Year 3 worked with a support assistant to develop their understanding of multiplication. They made a spinner to create sums to work out so that they could practise at home. This activity also illustrates how well the staff and parents co-operate in helping the pupils to make progress. Pupils use their mathematical knowledge and understanding well in other subjects, such as when measuring accurately to make models in design and technology.

- 77 The subject is very well led and managed, and the adaptation of the National Numeracy Strategy to meet the pupils' needs has been very effective. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching and learning, leading to high standards. The governor who oversees numeracy works closely with the subject leader, has observed lessons, and makes a very good contribution to management in overseeing the subject for the governing body.

SCIENCE

- 78 Standards vary year-on-year because there are small year groups whose attainment at entry to the school varies considerably. The quality of teaching and learning in the three lessons observed ranged from very good to outstanding, and is very good overall. This has led to high standards of attainment this year across the school, representing good progress in all aspects of the subject, but particularly in the skills of scientific enquiry.
- 79 Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 2 was well above average last year, and attainment this year is at similar levels. This is because the teachers and support staff provide the pupils with many opportunities to investigate the local environment, observe and experiment with plant growth, and test materials and forces, and to record their findings in a variety of ways. In national tests last year, all the Year 6 pupils who sat the tests attained the expected level, and this gave a level that was above average nationally and in comparison with similar schools. However, fewer pupils than average attained at higher than expected levels, which gave the school a below average rating overall. This represents a good improvement since 1999, but lower results compared to last year. This reflects both the variation in prior attainment year-on-year, and the influence of small year groups. Over five years, the Year 6 results are close to the national average. This year, attainment towards the end of Year 6 is well above average, with a small number of pupils working at very high levels for their age. The high quality of teaching they receive, leading to good and sometimes very good progress in their learning, is based on the teacher's good subject knowledge, high expectations of pupils' investigative skills, and thoroughly planned and prepared lessons. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress.
- 80 Year 2 pupils work well in groups with Year 1 and Reception pupils to observe, measure and record the growth of a variety plants that they have prepared in a number of different growing conditions. They develop good observation skills, and are taught how to compare results from one week to another. In preparing a poster to describe the best conditions for growth, these pupils showed how much they had learned, and used their language skills effectively in choosing key words to emphasise their choices. Year 3 and 4 pupils build well on their previous work in learning about life processes. During a whole-class discussion to summarise their findings from a variety of ongoing experiments, they commented that a hair dryer 'burned the plant', being placed in a freezer 'froze it to death', sandy, dry soil 'killed it', while being placed in a box caused the plant to overstretch 'to get out of the box to the light'. This was followed by a very well-planned investigation of plants in different habitats in the school grounds. As well as checking the height of plants in the various habitats, they were able to research the type of plants they had found from their leaves using a wide range of texts collected by the teacher. This work maintains the high levels recorded in the pupils' saved work, including work on light, materials and electricity.

- 81 These pupils have also joined other pupils in earning the school an 'Eco School' Bronze award for their care for the environment, and their rubbish recycling campaign, organised by the subject leader. She also organises a successful and well-attended after-school gardening club, during which pupils of all ages learn how to care for plants, and the school grounds. This is another example of the way that the staff successfully combine elements from different subject areas to stimulate pupils' interest and motivate them to learn.
- 82 Year 5 and 6 pupils have been involved in a good range of experiments in which they demonstrate clearly their understanding of how to organise and conduct a fair test. They have used effectively a good range of equipment such as digital and binocular microscopes, and studied and revised a wide selection of subject content, from chromatography and complex electrical circuitry, to testing reversible and irreversible changes. They have used their scientific knowledge and understanding well in making models in design and technology which are powered or lit using switched circuits, for example. During one lesson, the pupils worked on a timed 'carousel' of activities in groups on the topic of micro-organisms. This included researching famous pioneers in the field, such as Jenner and Pasteur, collecting decaying plant life for close observation using magnifiers, binocular and digital microscopes, and answering timed quiz questions about micro-organisms. They demonstrated the school-wide high quality behaviour and concentration, co-operating in mixed groups superbly to achieve the goals in the time given. The teacher insisted on high standards of hygiene and safe practice, reminding the pupils to use plastic gloves when handling the found objects, not tasting anything, and finally washing hands carefully.
- 83 This lesson exemplified the care taken by all the staff in preparing their lessons thoroughly. Not only was there sufficient equipment, tasks and time available, but the teacher had carefully cultured a range of decaying food in sealed bags to illustrate the effects of micro-organisms. He had also brought a sample of home-made wine (not for tasting!), and live yeast. A high point of the lesson was when the first pupil to recognise that yeast was the answer to a set question was one who is learning English as an additional language. The lesson also demonstrated how the staff expect the pupils to be self-sufficient, and use skills learned in English, mathematics, information and communication technology, and observation from art in all areas of their work.
- 84 The subject leader, who is also responsible for Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage amongst other duties, manages and leads the subject very well. She has observed work in other classes, has a good idea of standards of teaching and attainment across the school, and sets a good example in her own teaching. She is supported very well by very good teaching and support from her colleagues. There have been good improvements since the last inspection, particularly in pupils' standards of attainment, the quality of teaching and learning, and the cohesion of curriculum and lesson planning.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 85 Standards in both subjects have improved to be above average in both subjects at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. All pupils, including those with special needs, respond very well to their lessons, and make good progress. The coverage of design and technology has also improved in response to a key issue from that inspection. Both subjects are fully covered throughout the school, and the staff ensure that there is good development of the specific skills in both of them. The school has decided not to encourage pupils to use sketchbooks to practise and develop their own ideas in art and design. This contrasts with the school's very good promotion of independence in other

areas. Good use is made of information and communication technology using draw and paint programs, and of a logic program to design symmetrical shapes, linked to mathematics.

- 86 From displays around the school, the school's high expectations clearly influence the finish expected of the pupils when drawing, painting, weaving, or modelling in clay or other materials. High quality working models made by Year 5 and 6 pupils incorporate a wide range of skills from a number of subjects. There are lighthouses, trucks, cabins and an aeroplane all having switched lighting or motor circuits, made with skill in the scale, fixing, and concealment of the wiring, and all carefully and convincingly painted. The switch for one lighthouse is hidden in a buoy in the painted sea!
- 87 Year 1 and 2 pupils have drawn plants and fruit from direct observation using pencil and pastels, and based on a study of paintings by Cezanne. These are of good standard for their age. These pupils have also sewn neat and attractive vein patterns on felt leaves, and they cut and stick real and imitation leaves on a group collage well. Year 3 and 4 pupils have painted wild and garden flowers from life, carefully representing the stem, leaf and flower from close observation, and mixing the colours accurately. They have also constructed bright and well-finished 'God's Eyes' from a study of Aztec art and design, using a basic wooden cross with a variety of colour-matched materials woven to it. Year 5 and 6 pupils have also worked with a visiting artist to create very impressive watercolours of the eponymous Gipsy Bridge, and with another to make a wonderful collection of large sculptures that hang in high corners of the school: a huge three-dimensional cardboard model of the Hogwarts Express from the Harry Potter books adorns one wall of the hall.
- 88 The quality of teaching is generally good, and occasionally very good or outstanding. There are now guidance documents for both subjects based on national guidance, and planned to develop skills and knowledge progressively, which support the staff well in their planning. Although no design and technology lessons were observed, there were very good examples of food technology led by parents with groups of pupils in the school's small kitchen. In one of these, the pupils learned about hygiene and safety, the types of fruit being used, and how to skin, peel, separate and present a fruit salad attractively. The discussion in these sessions is rich and productive. The full design process is followed in design and technology, and in making rubbish-recycling machines as part of an environmental project, for example, the pupils also use large-scale commercially produced construction kits on the patio outside the classroom.
- 89 In a good art and design lesson in Class 1, the staff and a parent led a variety of art and design activities covering textiles, collage and still life drawing. The teacher's lesson plan had precise objectives for the pupils' learning, and the pupils rose to the high expectations to work well and make good progress. In an excellent lesson with Year 3 and 4 pupils, the teacher linked science, art and design, English and design and technology in a very-well planned exploration of a rich variety of fruits. As well as high level discussion, the pupils' observation skills were keenly focused in a whole class opening to compare and describe the range and variety of colour, shape and pattern. The resulting collages based on this were of a very high standard for the age, showing imagination, very careful cutting and fixing, and fine discrimination in matching and contrasting colours. Throughout these lessons, the pupils behave very well, concentrate on the tasks, and bring creativity and imagination to their designs and working models.
- 90 The staff work closely together in managing the subjects, and have updated the subject planning in line with national guidance. There are very good resources, including a good

range of tools, and copies of work by a number of European artists. The staff also supplement these well from their own resources for particular lessons. Very good use is made of the grounds and the locality for observational drawing and painting, and of parents' skills and visiting artists. In the subject leader's file there are photographs of shadow puppets made to illustrate the story of Rama and Sita. This is good, but further work is needed on art from world cultures outside Europe, and from the different cultural groups within Britain.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

- 91 During the inspection there was limited opportunity to observe the teaching of history or geography because the subjects are taught in half-termly blocks. There were no lessons in either subject in Years 1 and 2 and only one geography lesson in Years 3 to 6. Evidence of attainment in these subjects was obtained from work scrutiny, teachers' planning and talking to pupils and the subject leaders. There was little written evidence from the seven-year-olds but from discussion with a group of them they demonstrated their knowledge of Louis Braille and the special language he invented for the blind. They also showed good awareness that Victorian toys did not run on batteries but clockwork and that life in the past was very different compared with the present day. Attainment at this age is above expectations. Similarly, work scrutiny across Years 3 to 6 showed that attainment is above expectations with some well presented work that contains much recording in the pupils' in own words. Topics ranged from the Tudors to Britain between 1939 and 1945 to the Ancient Greece. Attainment has improved since the previous inspection when it was in line with expectations at both the ages of seven and 11.
- 92 Attainment in geography by the age of seven and 11 has also improved since the last inspection and is broadly average for pupils of these ages nationally. The seven-year-old pupils recognise the differences between a town and where they live but did not recall drawing any route maps or maps of the area. They knew that the United Kingdom was made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland but were unsure of the capital cities, which many pupils of this age recall.
- 93 In Years 3 to 6, pupils have looked at weather and climate, devising their own symbols to record the local weather. Older pupils have looked at the water cycle and extended the theme of water well to include rivers. During the inspection pupils were preparing a good presentation of their fieldwork, looking at a dyke: measuring and drawing a cross-section of the bank and recording on a graph the water flow rate both at the edge of the water and in the middle. This was done using information and communication technology skills.
- 94 The pupils make good progress in history developing the relevant skills of research and historical enquiry and satisfactory progress in geography. Pupils with special educational needs also make similar progress.
- 95 Pupils enjoy both history and geography particularly when they can participate in fieldwork or visit historical sites and gain first hand experiences. In the one geography lesson seen the pupils cooperated very well to produce the required presentation, sharing out the tasks between themselves with little fuss or adult intervention. They work hard and the standard of presentation in the history topics shows how much care and effort is put into their recording.
- 96 The quality of teaching in the one lesson seen was good with high expectations and challenge; the pupils rose to this challenge with enthusiasm. There was effective use of

questions to reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge. Very good use was made of the pupils' information and communication technology skills to produce graphs and a written account of the visit.

- 97 Geography is now well managed with an up to date scheme of work ensuring that all relevant skills are taught and that there is appropriate coverage. The topics are taught on a two-year cycle and where it is possible has cross-curricular links with history; for example settlements has features of both history and geography. This subject was criticised in the previous inspection and has been greatly improved.
- 98 Planning and monitoring of history were judged to be in need of improvement in the previous inspection. These have been improved and the subject leader has a good overview of history across the school. Visits to historical sites and fieldtrips enhance the pupils' understanding by giving them some first hand experiences; such as life in Tudor times, a Victorian day and river work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

- 99 The subject has a high profile in the school, and the full subject curriculum is taught. There is a wide range of electronic equipment available, including a wide variety of computers in classrooms and in the ICT suite, calculators, a floor robot, tape and video recorders, digital cameras and a digital microscope, and a good range of software. The pupils and staff make good use of these, and there are examples in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, geography and personal and social education of their use across the curriculum. The scope and depth of the subject coverage, and consequent standards and progress for the pupils, is improved since the last inspection. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils monitored the progress of fertilised hen and goose eggs in an incubator. They read the data from the sensing equipment to ensure that the temperature and humidity were at the right levels, and kept the rest of the school informed as to their progress. There was great delight when they brought the incubator into an infant assembly as one of the chicks could be heard distinctly from inside the egg. This illustrates both the school's use of ICT for specific purposes, and the confidence the pupils have gained by Year 6 in using it.
- 100 Although little direct teaching was observed with Year 1 and 2 pupils, the computers in the classroom are constantly in use. The pupils use simulation and paint programs effectively, and are beginning to handle data and present information in a variety of forms, including posters, poems, and lists. They use a tape recorder to listen to stories and songs, and learn to program a floor robot. They attain at least the expected levels, and a few of them attain higher than is expected for their age. Almost all pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs.
- 101 By the end of Year 6, many pupils are skilled in using calculators and other electronic equipment, for example to set the CD player to the appropriate music in assembly. They use the digital microscope in science lessons, and are skilled in the use of electronic question and answer machines. They have developed very good skills in data and information handling, choosing the most appropriate way to present what they have found out either manually or using data-handling programs on the computer. They handle art and design programs, simulations, and word-processing packages with equal confidence, although no evidence was seen of a multi-media presentation. In the one lesson observed, the school secretary taught high attaining pupils advanced spreadsheet skills. She did this at very good pace, because she knew that the pupils would follow her. They did, and soon produced a comparative graph of three years' finances from the school trip, copying data between applications, and taking care that

their stylish presentations did not obscure the information they carried. This was work at very high levels for their age, and exemplified the confidence and ease with which the pupils use ICT to support their other work. Year 3 and 4 pupils have used a paint program to create and infill a variety of shapes, and regularly design project folder covers using a variety of fonts, sizes, colours and effects.

- 102 Year 5 and 6 pupils regularly use the internet for information during lessons, and for access to websites dedicated to their age group at lunchtimes. They are trusted to behave sensibly in the well-designed computer suite, and repay that trust by enjoying themselves in a safe and mature fashion for their age. All the pupils have their own e-mail address, and there are links with schools in California with 'E-pals'. The school subscribes to safety 'firewall' systems to ensure that the content of sites accessed by the pupils on the internet are appropriate to their age.
- 103 The subject is well organised, and the staff have made good strides in developing their own skills in order to help the pupils. The development of the subject further illustrates the school's insistence on the pupils developing the skills to help themselves to learn.

MUSIC

- 104 Attainment in music by the age of seven and 11 exceeds that expected nationally. By the age of seven, pupils can sing a familiar song as a two part round and sustain the parts: one group on their own, the other with support from the class teacher. They know the names of percussion instruments and how to play them correctly. They keep together and use the instruments to represent a type of weather, for example. By the age of eleven the majority of pupils can read standard notation and play a recorder. These pupils are competent musicians and regularly accompany the singing in assembly. All juniors play the descant recorder with a few pupils playing either the tenor or the treble. They sing well, particularly in assembly when the hymns are well known. They copy rhythm patterns and compose a simple tune to fit over this rhythmic accompaniment. They record their tunes using standard notation.
- 105 All pupils make good progress in developing their musical skills, illustrated by the fact that most Year 6 pupils play the recorder well and read music. Pupils are very enthusiastic and look forward to their music lessons. They really enjoy the sessions. They work well together in pairs or groups and share their ideas. They listen carefully and respect the feelings of others when asked to appraise what they have heard. There is a good working atmosphere in the lessons.
- 106 A specialist teacher is responsible for the teaching of music across the school and this ensures the progressive development of skills. Questioning is used effectively to extend and reinforce pupils' learning. The teacher has high expectations and very good subject knowledge. Consequently, standards are good. A very good relationship is sustained with all the classes. Lessons are taught at a good pace with a variety of activities that motivate and hold the pupils' interest. At the end of one lesson a pupil said to the teacher "I enjoyed that." Since the last inspection a music scheme has been written and an effective method of recording pupils' progress devised.
- 107 There are opportunities for all pupils in Years 3 to 6 to attend recorder practice at lunch times and to join the choir. The school is represented at local music festivals: enjoyed by all who take part. The school production is a vital part of school life and pupils look forward to performing for their parents. They also sing in the local church, particularly at Christmas. Tuition on musical instruments is available for violin, viola, and guitar. Occasionally, professional musicians visit the school and listening to them play

enhances the pupils' appreciation of live music. There are good opportunities for the pupils to listen to and appreciate a range of music, but this is mainly from Western traditions. However, the pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn to appreciate musical traditions from many world traditions, and from the different cultural roots of British society.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 108 No effective judgement is possible about standards of attainment or the quality of teaching and learning for Years 1 and 2. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection. This was an athletics practice session in the playground for Year 5 and 6 pupils, leading to 'tests' to achieve nationally promoted awards. The quality of teaching and learning in this lesson was very good, and the pupils achieved above average standards for their age, particularly those in Year 5.
- 109 The pupils worked very sensibly in pairs to improve their previous best in a standing long jump, and a standing triple jump. The teacher effectively coached them in safe techniques, and through his excellent rapport with them encouraged even those who had difficulty to improve on their previous attainment. It was remarkable that the pupils not only congratulated those achieving the longest distances, but also supported and applauded those who worked hard to better their less than average leaps. This illustrated well how the pupils respond to the school's high expectations of them.
- 110 From evidence received, all the pupils attain the national standard in swimming, many exceeding the standard requirement. All aspects of the subject are covered, including outdoor and adventurous activity, both through extra-curricular games and cross-country running clubs, and a residential stay for older pupils in the Peak District.
- 111 The school has recently acquired a piece of land adjacent to the school, which will soon be available for games and general sporting activities. Good use is made of the playgrounds which are marked with a variety of playground games. A range of equipment such as large and small balls, ropes, quoits and cones are available for the pupils at playtime, and good use is made of the targets for accurate throwing and the basketball hoops and netball rings for shooting practice. A possible hindrance to further improvement in dance and gymnastics is the tiny hall. It is very small for a class of pupils, and the school has to timetable its use carefully to ensure that the pupils gain advantage from it. The governors have begun to consider plans to improve this situation, which echoes the thoughts of the current Year 6 pupils who unanimously said that a larger hall would be the most significant improvement they could think of to an otherwise 'brilliant' school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 112 During the inspection only one lesson was observed. Evidence was collected through work scrutiny, teachers' planning and talking to the pupils. This shows the standard of attainment at the age of 11 to be above expectations and at the age of seven to be in line with expectations.
- 113 The younger pupils are very confident to answer questions about Christianity. They know both the Easter and the Christmas stories well. They recall that the Bible is the Christian special book and remember some of the stories from the Old Testament, such as Noah, Moses and Joseph. They also talk about the shepherd who lost one of his sheep as a story told by Jesus. However, when asked about other world religions they are very unsure. One pupil mentioned a Muslim but knew little about Islam. The 11-year-olds are able to demonstrate some knowledge about most of the other world religions although are not always sure of what fact relates to which religion. They are more secure talking about Christianity, Judaism and Islam than about Sikhism, for example. They know that the Bible, Qu'ran and Torah are books that are important to specific religions. They know about special ceremonies such as baptism and bamitzvah. They are becoming more aware of the importance of Christianity and all its implications to the way those who believe live their lives.
- 114 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress, whereas older pupils make good progress in developing an understanding of what the different religions are about and how they affect people's lives. They are not so aware that these religions are practised in this country, however, despite a visit being arranged to a mosque in Peterborough on a two-yearly cycle, for example.
- 115 All pupils enjoy these lessons and find the idea of different religious practices very interesting. In the one lesson observed they listened carefully to a visitor talking about the role of a barrister. They were fascinated by the wig and gown that was worn in court and in some of the traditions. They were keen to respond to and asks questions When set a difficult task they rose to the challenge and worked with interest and enthusiasm. The focus of this was morality and the law, related to holy law.
- 116 The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good. Questioning is used effectively to extend and reinforce pupils' understanding of the story of the Good Samaritan and how this could relate to the present day. Examples from the press are used for the pupils to consider where people had been helpful or otherwise. The pupils respond positively to the teacher's demands and discussion is good. There is a very good relationship between the teacher and the pupils, which gives all the confidence to respond to questions. The invitation to a barrister to come to school to explain their role in society was good but opportunities were missed to relate aspects of the law to Christianity.
- 117 The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for the subject, which has been up dated since the last inspection. A local clergyman visits regularly and leads the assemblies, which adds another Christian dimension to the work in the subject. Pupils also visit the local church as a place of worship and some services are held there at Christmas. They have previously visited a synagogue and a mosque to extend their understanding of religious traditions in Britain.