

INSPECTION REPORT

**Cowbit St Mary's (Endowed) Church of England
Primary School
Spalding**

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique Reference Number: 120611

Inspection Number: 197272

Headteacher: Mrs Maureen Martin

Reporting inspector: Mr D Nightingale
18911

Dates of inspection: 20 – 22 September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707588

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary School
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Barrier Bank Cowbit Spalding Lincolnshire PE12 6AL
Telephone number:	01406 380369
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd H J Theodosius
Date of previous inspection:	6 – 8 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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D Nightingale
Registered Inspector

Subject responsibilities

Mathematics
Design and technology
Geography
Physical education
Areas of learning for children under five
Special educational needs

Aspect responsibilities

Attainment and progress
Teaching
Curriculum and assessment
Efficiency

T Bradley
Lay Inspector

Equal opportunities

Attendance
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Partnership with parents and the community

P Stevens
Team Inspector

English
Science
Information technology
Art
History
Music

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Leadership and management
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- .The quality of teaching is good in nearly two-thirds of lessons.
- . The curriculum is very well planned over the long term and for each term.
- . Assessments in English, mathematics and science are used very effectively to help with planning work for each term and each week.
- . Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. Behaviour and relationships are good. Pupils willingly take responsibility.
- . There is very good provision of extra-curricular activities for a school of this size.
- . The school is very good at encouraging good behaviour in its pupils.
- . Personal and social education is good and the school is very good at promoting pupils' social development.
- . Involvement with the local community is good, particularly the link with the local newspaper.
- . The school has a good partnership with traveller families and is successful in helping their children make good progress.
- . The school has a good level of resources which are used well.
- . Financial administration is good

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

- I. Attainment in writing is below that expected for pupils' age.
- II. Older pupils make limited progress in their ability to conduct and record scientific investigations
- III. There are no procedures for the assessment of information technology or records of pupils' attainment and progress.
- IV. Since the last inspection the governing body has made insufficient progress in formulating policies to define its roles and responsibilities through appropriate terms of reference or a suitable code of conduct.
- V. There are limited criteria in the school development plan for evaluating the success of targets and the effect of spending decisions.

This is a good school where the weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governing body's action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils in the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. It has successfully introduced a policy for personal and social education which has helped raise pupils' awareness of issues of health and relationships. Learning objectives have been introduced into weekly and daily planning to help teachers have a clearer focus on what they expect pupils to learn and to help them assess how well pupils have achieved. A newly introduced record system helps with recording these assessments. The integration of children from traveller families has had a significant influence on helping pupils understand about different cultures and pupils now have a better understanding of the multi-cultural nature of modern society. The governing body is more actively involved in the life of the school and makes regular visits to see the school at work. They have yet to draw up an appropriate policy to formulate their roles and responsibilities. This still remains a weakness which needs to be addressed. Under the leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of the governing body the school is in a good

position to continue to develop further.

Standards in subjects

Standards achieved by 11 year olds based on the latest National Curriculum tests are usually reported. As only a very few pupils were tested, results are not published nor are comparisons made as the very small numbers make any comparisons unreliable.

The evidence of the inspection is that pupils' attainments are close to that expected nationally in mathematics, science and information technology at both key stages. Their attainments in English overall are consistent with national expectations at both key stages with well developed skills in speaking and listening. Pupils' attainments in writing are below that expected by the age of seven and eleven. Older pupils' skills in investigative science are not at the level expected for their age. Although test results are not published the trend over the past three years is consistent with the inspection findings

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Science	N/A	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology	N/A	Insufficient seen	Insufficient seen
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Insufficient seen	Insufficient seen

The quality of teaching was satisfactory or better in 97 per cent of lessons seen. It was good in 63 per cent of lessons and very good in seven per cent of lessons. The good teaching makes an important contribution to the sustained overall progress pupils make throughout the school. Very good rapport between teachers and pupils and well organised lessons which meet the needs of pupils of different ages and experiences are features of the good teaching. There was a very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching seen.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Pupils have positive attitudes to work. Behaviour is good in and out of the classroom. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Satisfactory.
Ethos*	Good. It is committed to helping pupils achieve as high a standard as possible and to developing positive attitudes and good relationships.
Leadership and management	Leadership by headteacher is good. School development plan is well written by headteacher and supported by governing body. It lacks clear criteria to help governors evaluate its success.

Curriculum	The well-planned curriculum ensures pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding at a time appropriate for their age. There are good assessment procedures in English, mathematics and science but no procedures for information technology. Good use is made of information obtained from the assessments.
Pupils with special educational needs	There is good provision, including effective use of support from other agencies; pupils make good progress by the age of 11.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for pupils' social development and good provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Provides effectively for pupils' intellectual, emotional, social and aesthetic development.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school is appropriately staffed. Resources are good but there is no separate outdoor play area for children under five. Good use is made of local facilities to compensate for the absence of a hall.
Value for money	Satisfactory. Standards are appropriate for pupils' age, teaching is good and pupils have positive attitudes.

** Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

• **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
VI. Parents are encouraged to play an active part in the school. VII. The school is approachable with problems. VIII. Children are encouraged to take part in more than their daily lessons. IX. The amount of homework set is appropriate. X. Their children enjoy coming to school.	XI. Several parents expressed a desire to lum each term

From the evidence of the inspection, parents are justified in their generally positive views of the school. Parents do not receive information on what pupils are to study each term and the school acknowledges that this is an area that could be further developed.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

The governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- i Raise standards of attainment in pupils' writing by:
 - XII. *raising expectations of the levels at which pupils should achieve;*
 - XIII. *improving the accuracy and presentation of pupils' written work.*
(paragraphs 7, 8, 13 and 82)

- ii Raise the standard of the scientific investigational skills of pupils at Key Stage 2 by:
 - XIV. *encouraging them to draw appropriate conclusions;*
 - XV. *ensuring that work is recorded carefully and logically to help demonstrate clearly their understanding of what they have found out.*
(paragraphs 12, 15, 95 and 96)

- iii Further develop the good procedures for assessing pupils' attainments by developing an effective strategy for assessment and recording in information technology, consistent with that used in the other core subjects.
(paragraphs 41 and 106)

- iv Further develop the role of the governing body by:
 - XVI. *completing a code of conduct to help governors fulfil the complexities of their role;*
 - XVII. *setting out clearly terms of reference for the governing body and its committees;*
 - XVIII. *identifying clear criteria for the monitoring of decisions made by the governing body to help in evaluating the effect they have had on raising standards and improving the quality of education.*
(paragraphs 57, 59 and 66)

In addition to the key issues above, the following weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs 37, 55, 58, 63 and 71.

- XIX. Providing a suitably enclosed play area for children under the age of five.

- XX. Providing all parents with access to information on the content of the curriculum for each term.

- XXI. Ensuring that statutory requirements are fully met in the school's policy for special educational needs and in the annual report to parents.

INTRODUCTION

· Characteristics of the school

1.The school is situated in the village of Cowbit close to the market town of Spalding. It is much smaller than the average primary school with 49 pupils on roll aged four to eleven years at the time of the inspection. There are a similar number of boys and girls. They are taught by two full time teachers, including the headteacher, and one part-time teacher in two classes. Children are admitted to school part-time in the term following their fourth birthday and begin full-time in the term in which they are five. During the inspection there were four pupils who were under the age of five. Children are assessed when they enter school and usually attainment on entry is about that expected of children of their age. About 30 per cent of pupils come from traveller families and their presence or absence affects the number on roll at any one time. Most of these pupils start at school later than the reception year and many of them have little pre-school experiences. The school is in the Weston Ward where the last census return showed the percentage of adults with higher educational qualifications to be below the national average and the percentage of higher social class housing to be similar to the national average. The 13.2 per cent of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are currently 22 per cent of pupils on the register of special educational needs and this is a bigger percentage than schools nationally. Two of these pupils have statements of special educational need. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. Since the last inspection in 1996 a new headteacher has been appointed. There has also been an increase in the percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and the number of children eligible for free school meals.

2.The school aims to give pupils a positive self-image and to help them enjoy success so that they leave the school able to tackle life's challenges from a position of strength. It further aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure the development of pupils' emotional, physical, intellectual, social and spiritual growth and to enable them to test and develop their personal values and attitudes. As a church school, it aims to teach Christian values of caring and sharing as well as respect and politeness. Good relationships with the travelling families are important and the school aims to embrace the differences in culture and marry the different perceptions of education and school to the benefit of all pupils. The school seeks to encourage parents to be involved in their child's learning.

3.The school's priorities for the immediate future are:

- .to maintain a good standard of teaching through regular monitoring and appraisal;
- . to raise standards in mathematics through the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy;
- . to maintain the momentum of the Literacy Strategy, particularly in improving spelling and the pupil's ability to understand the questions set on any text;
- .to develop skills in the teaching of art;
- . promote Health Awareness, particularly through the achievement of the Heart Shield award;
- . continue to improve the premises through a replacement and redecoration programme.

Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	4	4	8

Due to the small number of pupils being assessed the school is not required to publish its National Curriculum assessment results.

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	3	1	4

Due to the small number of pupils being assessed the school is not required to publish its National Curriculum assessment results.

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	4.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	1.3
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	7

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

²

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

· EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

· Attainment and progress

1.Children's overall attainments when they enter school aged under five are about those expected of children of their age. By the time they leave the school at the age of 11, pupils' overall attainments are in line with those expected nationally for the age group. The good quality of teaching influences the generally satisfactory progress made by pupils as a significant proportion of pupils, mainly from traveller families, enter school during the middle years with very little or interrupted previous school experiences.

2.By the time they are five children have made satisfactory progress and most achieve the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes for language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in physical and creative development. They make good progress in their personal and social development benefiting from the presence of older children.

3.Children under five make sound progress in most aspects of language and literacy although their early writing skills are limited. Most children can write their names and copy letters but few attempt to write familiar words independently. They are beginning to recognise initial letter sounds and understand how books are set out, for example, with a title and author at the front. Good progress is made in developing skills for speaking and listening as they communicate ideas clearly and listen carefully to stories. Progress in mathematics is satisfactory. Through counting rhymes and games they count numbers up to 10 confidently. Some children can nearly count to 20. Objects are classified by their colour and shape and appropriate language is used to describe shapes such as circle or rectangle. In their understanding of the world, physical and creative development children make sound progress. They explore different sounds made by musical instruments and develop a sense of the past through looking at how people change. They use paint, pencils, scissors and different adhesives effectively to make models and create interesting pictures or patterns. They enjoy joining in with actions to songs. They develop appropriate control over movements such as running, climbing, throwing and catching

4.The previous inspection reported standards of attainment to be good in English and information technology and to be sound in mathematics and science. Standards have been sustained in mathematics and science but standards in English have been influenced by the significant increase in the number of pupils with special educational needs. Standards in information technology are sound and reflect the increased expertise expected of pupils and teachers since the last inspection. Inspection judgements show that overall pupils make satisfactory progress in English by the end of Key Stage 1, and their overall attainments are consistent with national expectations. Pupils' attainments in speaking and listening are better than average but their attainments in writing are below those expected of their age. Due to the very small cohorts there are variations in test results from year to year but the overall trend has been for improvement with results being at least in line with national expectations and in some years in excess of these. Comparisons with similar schools are favourable with the 1998 test results indicating much better performance in reading and writing than schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Comparative data for 1999 is not yet available. By the end of Key Stage 2, inspection evidence shows that pupils' attainments are broadly in line with those expected nationally, although they are better than this in speaking and listening but below average in writing. This is consistent with the 1998 national test results for eleven year olds where pupils' performance was close to the national average, but it was below average when compared with similar schools. Although there

are variations from year to year due to the small cohorts the trend in results has been close to the national average over the past three years. There are no significant variations between the attainments of boys and girls.

5. By the time they leave the school, pupils have good speaking and listening skills. They speak confidently, ask and answer questions sensibly and listen attentively. Most pupils read competently at a level appropriate for their age. They use appropriate cues to help read unfamiliar words when necessary. They use reference books effectively to locate information. Pupils do not present their written work well; spelling is inaccurate and joined writing used inconsistently. Some pupils write imaginative and sensitive poetry, some of which has been published in anthologies.

6. Comparisons year by year of national test results are influenced by the variations caused by very small size of cohorts but the trend in results in mathematics over the past three years shows that pupils' attainments are in line with those achieved by schools nationally by the end of both key stages. When compared with similar school the 1998 results showed pupils attainment to be very high at Key Stage 1 but below average at Key Stage 2. These comparisons need to be treated with caution because of the very small number of pupils tested. Inspection evidence judges pupils' attainments in mathematics, by the end of both key stages, to be close to that expected nationally. There are no significant differences in attainments between boys and girls.

7. By the time they leave the school, pupils are competent in using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to solve number problems. They have a sound understanding of place values, including the significance of the decimal point. They explain sensibly methods they use to make calculations. They measure and record lengths and weights using appropriate units of measure. They interpret information from different types of graphs, including pie charts, and begin to look at the probability of events occurring.

8. The judgement of inspection is that most pupils attain the levels expected for their age by the end of both key stages in science. This varies from the 1998 results of teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 and national tests at Key Stage 2, when pupils achieved results that were above the national average. The variation between small cohorts accounts for the statistical differences. The trend of results is similar to that nationally with a steady improvement each year. At both key stages results were above the average achieved by similar schools. There are no significant differences between the attainments of boys and girls.

9. By the age of 11, pupils have a good understanding of the effects of forces knowing the need for them to be balanced to achieve stability. They know properties of different materials and the effects that changes have on them. They understand that some changes cannot be reversed. Pupils have a good understanding of how the organs of the human body work and how plants and animals are interdependent. They conduct simple tests but show limited ability in drawing appropriate conclusions and recording results.

10. Pupils' progress in developing speaking and listening skills is satisfactory at both key stages and builds on the good start made when they first enter school. Younger pupils develop a sound knowledge of language and grow in confidence to speak to larger audiences. Older pupils begin to use Standard English in appropriate situations. Progress in reading is satisfactory at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils improve the fluency with which they read, extend their knowledge of letter sounds but have not developed a range of strategies to help read unfamiliar words. At Key Stage 2, the more able pupils develop an understanding of genre and discuss the plot and characters of different stories. Pupils improve the fluency with which they read and begin to use reference books effectively to find information. Some of the lower attaining pupils have not developed their understanding sufficiently to discuss the plot and characters in a story. At both key stages the development of pupils' writing skills is limited. The handwriting of the younger

pupils is not sufficiently developed to present work consistently nor have they grasped an understanding of the use of appropriate punctuation. The older pupils have not developed fluent and consistent handwriting or made sufficient improvements in spelling and the accurate use of grammar.

11. Pupils at both key stages make satisfactory progress in their development of mathematical skills and understanding. From an understanding of the value of each number up to 10, pupils progress at Key Stage 1 to an understanding of the place value of larger numbers. They use their growing knowledge of addition and subtraction to perform calculations with increasing accuracy. At Key Stage 2, pupils improve the accuracy with which they add, subtract, multiply and divide and use this to explain how they solve problems. They extend their understanding of number to include fractional numbers and percentages. From recording simple lengths, weights and capacities using every day objects at Key Stage 1, pupils progress to accurately measuring angles, areas and perimeters by the end of Key Stage 2.

12. Pupils make satisfactory progress in science at both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, they have developed an appropriate knowledge about living things and forces. They begin to conduct simple experiments, sometimes making predictions as to the outcome but they do not always make clear conclusions from what they see. At Key Stage 2, pupils extend their knowledge of living things by, for example, looking at how the important organs of the human body work. They improve their understanding of how materials can be changed and extend their knowledge of the effects of different forces. Although they know how to conduct a fair test they have not developed their investigational skills sufficiently to draw sensible conclusions from their tests. This restricts the progress of the older, higher attaining pupils.

13. Pupils' progress in developing skills in the use of information technology is satisfactory at both key stages and they attain levels expected for their age. The younger pupils operate a keyboard and mouse effectively. They write simple texts on screen and know that their work can be saved or printed. Older pupils improve their ability to use word-processing to help present work, although they do not use this sufficiently to help edit and redraft work. They make limited use of storing information on a database and to produce different types of graph. They begin to use suitable programs to help control events, such as in a simulation in history.

14. By the time they leave the school, pupils make satisfactory progress in art, design and technology, geography, history and music. It was not possible to make judgements about physical education as very limited evidence of work in this practical subject was seen. Pupils are taught for sufficient amounts of time and work is systematically planned to ensure they receive suitable experiences to help them make appropriate progress. Literacy is used effectively in other subjects such as geography and history and numeracy skills are used to support learning in science, design technology and geography.

15. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their individual learning targets. With good levels of support they achieve the objectives set out in their individual education plans. The progress of the traveller children who enter school late is also good. They are integrated well into the classroom and begin to acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding. The good teaching pupils receive is particularly beneficial to these two groups of pupils and helps to sustain the overall level of progress made by pupils throughout the school.

18. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

16. Children under the age of five make good progress in their personal and social development. They have good attitudes towards their work and choose to return to activities which they have

enjoyed. Their behaviour is good and children co-operate well both in the classroom and on the playground. Children develop independence as they undertake responsibility for their personal hygiene and tidying away their resources. They relate well with older children and with adults and develop appropriate levels of concentration.

17. Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. In the vast majority of lessons pupils are attentive and responsive in whole-class sessions, especially those for literacy and numeracy. Here they often show their fascination for words, and willingness to make mental calculations. Most pupils take part enthusiastically in discussions, for example about the work of the artist Paul Klee, or the writer Francis Hodgson Burnett. They are prepared to express sensitive and thoughtful opinions. They sustain a good level of concentration in individual and group work, such as when making scientific investigations, drafting stories, working on the computer or weaving. In the literacy hour and numeracy time they show their capacity to work independently. They have not yet developed the capacity for prolonged, independent study, however, mainly because of lack of opportunity.

18. As reported in the previous inspection, almost all pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They work and play co-operatively, and show respect both for each other and the staff. They freely applaud each other's achievements, and, from reception, take turns when necessary. They are very responsive to instructions, and generally obey school rules. They are very careful with equipment, and take care of their school. Occasionally a small number of pupils do not behave well, but there have been very few instances of bullying. The pupils involved have responded instantly to the school's firm but fair handling of difficult situations, and the school takes care to involve parents when necessary. Teachers promote good behaviour not only by role modelling, but also through good policies for discipline, with a carefully staged approach to sanctions and rewards. In addition pupils respond well in assemblies and personal and social education, where they explore attitudes and behaviour through role-play and discussion. Although a small number of parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour the evidence from the inspection supports the views of the significant majority of parents who felt behaviour to be good.

19. Pupils show a good degree of respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others. In assemblies, for example, they discuss the differing clothes and customs of other faiths and cultures in a sensible, mature manner. However, pupils neither show a great deal of initiative nor undertake many responsibilities within lessons or at other times in the school day. The older pupils do take care of the younger ones, and undertake minor responsibilities like delivering the register to the office. However, they do not play a great part in the day-to-day running of the school, and do not contribute significantly to ideas for making minor or major improvements.

22. **Attendance**

20. Levels of pupils' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. The school does not now authorise the absence of those pupils who take extended holidays during term time. Attendance figures are influenced by the children of traveller families who are absent for long periods of time. Registration is taken promptly and registers comply with statutory requirements.

23. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

23. **Teaching**

21. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and makes a significant contribution to maintaining the progress made by pupils, particularly those who enter the school late because of cultural

traditions. Teaching was good or better in just over 60 per cent of lessons seen and in nearly ten per cent of lessons it was very good. A very small percentage of unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is consistent with the findings of the previous inspection where teaching was judged to be sound or better throughout the school and good in two-thirds of lessons. Teaching was good at Key Stage 2, where almost 80 per cent of lessons were good, of which 14 percent were very good. At Key Stage 1 teaching was good in nearly 60 per cent of lessons. Teaching was good in English at both key stages, and in mathematics at Key Stage 2. Teaching in science was at least satisfactory at both key stages and sound in mathematics at Key Stage 1. Too few lessons were seen in other subjects to be able to make secure judgements.

22. Teaching of children under the age of five is satisfactory. The curriculum is planned carefully to take account of the recommended areas of learning for children of this age although the way in which they are taught is sometimes restricted by the needs of the timetable for the Key Stage 1 pupils. Although planning includes a list of activities regularly available it does not indicate how and when activities such as imaginative play in the home corner or use of sand and water will take place. In some lessons, the daily planning provides for a balance of activities within the lesson structure. For example, in a lesson on shape, the youngest children withdrew for a short practical task and then became involved in making, painting and printing to consolidate their mathematical knowledge. To support and direct these activities, good use is made of the well qualified classroom assistant who has a good understanding of what children are expected to learn. Opportunities to further children's language skills are used well through effective questioning to encourage children to explain their work and to introduce appropriate vocabulary. Sensible use is made of routine tasks such as collecting shapes to reinforce number skills in counting. In some activities the teacher closely directs the tasks and children do not always have enough opportunity to take some initiative in selecting how to use resources or equipment. The need to work within the Key Stage 1 class sometimes results in the children sitting for too long through discussions which are inappropriate and in which they have little or no participation.

23. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects of the National Curriculum. They use this to good effect in planning a range of activities for the different age groups within the classes. Where teachers have specialist knowledge of a subject this influences the very good teaching seen. For example, a very good understanding of an author and the book being studied enabled the teacher to provide an informative introduction to a literacy lesson.

24. In most lessons, teachers have appropriate expectations of what pupils should achieve and high expectations of how they should behave. Pupils are set a suitable length of time for their work to be completed, although some of the younger pupils did not always have sufficient time to complete a task before the next activity was set. Tasks are usually appropriate for the age of the pupils - for example, in the mental mathematics session with the oldest pupils two sets of questions were used to provide suitable challenge for each age group. In some lessons, where a topic has been introduced to the whole class, the tasks set do not sufficiently extend the oldest pupils.

25. Planning for each week and each lesson is good. The school has successfully addressed the issue from the previous inspection of clearly identifying objectives for pupils' learning in each lesson. Planning for each lesson is set within the context of a weekly plan where the expectations for the lessons for each week are set out. Plans for individual lessons indicate what pupils will do to achieve the objectives set out and how the class will be organised to take account of pupils' ages and previous experiences. Parents and classroom assistants are well informed about the contents of planning so that they can effectively lead the groups for which they are responsible.

26. The school has made a satisfactory start to the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Detailed planning pays close attention to the guidelines set out in both the Literacy Strategy and

Numeracy Strategy. Considerable effort has been taken to adapt the strategies for use in classes where there are more than one age group. The school successfully manages include the recommended structure to the lessons whilst ensuring that pupils of each group usually receive appropriate tasks. Whole class teaching is usually used successfully to introduce these lessons and group work is supported well by effective use of classroom assistants.

27. This use of classroom assistants is important in making the good organisation of lessons work effectively. Well organised lessons and group activities are a feature of the good teaching. Account is taken of the different ages, attainments and experiences of the pupils to organise appropriate groups. Introductions are usually informative and used well to encourage pupils to be precise in the use of words. Good use of questions challenges pupils to think carefully about their answers, particularly when explaining a method they have used to solve a problem. Occasionally the introductions last too long leaving insufficient time for pupils to work in groups. Tasks are clearly set so that pupils usually know what is expected of them. During group activities the teacher and assistant focus clearly on a group but maintain a good awareness of what the other pupils are doing. Lessons end with a useful class discussion to share what pupils have learned. Older pupils are encouraged to ask appropriate questions during these sessions.

28. A feature of the good teaching is the good rapport between pupils and adults throughout the school. Pupils respond well to the calm approach and pleasant relationships established by teachers and to the enthusiasm they show for lessons and after school activities. Good levels of discipline are maintained throughout and pupils new to the school are given a clear expectation of what is required of them. Praise is used well to help encourage pupils. Any inappropriate behaviour is managed with the minimum of fuss.

29. Most lessons proceed at a suitable pace and transition from class activities to group work is well managed with the minimum loss of time. On some occasions the balance between class discussion and group work is not always sufficient to give pupils, particularly the older pupils, time to develop their work. The need to provide mental mathematics questions at an appropriate level sometimes affects the pace of these sessions as one group sometimes has to wait for the next question. Resources are well prepared and usually easily available for pupils. Good use is made of the support services to help pupils with special educational needs and the pupils from traveller families. Their suggestions for work in class are adopted and individual education plans are used successfully to provide a focus for relevant pupils' work. Voluntary helpers and visiting specialists are used effectively in lessons such as physical education, food technology and information technology.

30. Good use is made of teachers' "daily jottings" in their planning to assess what pupils have achieved and help plan what they need to do next. Teachers mark most work with the pupils and praise positively to encourage pupils. Although the pupils understand what is expected from the marking, their work does not always show evidence of their response to the targets set to help pupils improve the content or accuracy of their work. Record books kept by the support services teachers are useful in helping teachers plan work for pupils with special educational needs or the traveller pupils. Teachers complete recently introduced records of pupils' achievements. A homework book has recently been successfully introduced to provide activities to extend or consolidate pupils' work in class. Evidence from inspection supports parents' views that an appropriate amount of homework is set.

33.

The curriculum and assessment

31. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which enables pupils to make sound progress in most aspects of the National Curriculum. The planned curriculum is effective

in promoting both the aims of the school and pupils' personal and academic development. All statutory requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Sex education and education about drug misuse are taught through a well planned programme of personal and social education. An appropriate amount of time is allocated for teaching the statutory curriculum and a sensible balance has been achieved to ensure that there is sufficient time to teach literacy and numeracy and still provide time for the teaching of other subjects, including personal and social education.

32.The curriculum for children under the age of five is appropriately based on the recommended areas of learning for language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative, physical and personal development. It enables them to make sound progress and successfully guides them into the early stages of the National Curriculum. There are good procedures for the assessments of children on entry to the school, including using the local education authority's scheme for baseline assessment. These results are analysed and used effectively to determine what pupils need to learn next.

33.The school is successfully implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Planning closely follows the national guidelines and has been sensibly adapted to meet the needs of teaching more than one age group in a class. Teachers work closely with other schools in planning this work to give them access to a wider range of ideas. Appropriate opportunities are provided for pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, when recording their results in design and technology they use different forms of writing or in geography they use their knowledge of co-ordinates to locate places on simple maps. Information technology is used appropriately to support learning in other subjects.

34.Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The Code of Practice is effectively implemented. The school's policy is helpful in stating criteria to help identify pupils experiencing difficulties and in clearly setting out the procedures to be followed. The omission of statements on admission arrangements, special facilities, links with other schools and how the governing body evaluates the success of the policy means that it does not fully meet statutory requirements. The school seeks to identify any pupils who may need additional support as soon as possible after they enter school and support these assessments by an appropriate test for pupils in Year 1. Individual education plans contain clear and achievable targets and are written by the class teacher with the support of the special educational needs co-ordinator and, where relevant, the advice of teachers from the local education authority's learning support service. Teachers are aware of these targets when planning activities for the class and they are the focus for work when pupils are withdrawn for short, but intensive, periods of additional support. Regular reviews of pupils' progress are held with all those involved in teaching the pupil, including the support services where appropriate. All requirements are met in fulfilling the Statements of Special Educational Needs of relevant pupils.

35.The school makes good provision for the significant proportion of pupils from traveller families. They are successfully integrated into the life of the school and follow the planned curriculum, sometimes with support from the local education authority's Traveller Education Service.

36.Planning for the curriculum is very good and ensures all pupils experience appropriate activities. Literacy and numeracy planning closely follow national guidance and a long-term plan identifies how all the other subjects of the National Curriculum will be covered over a four-year cycle at Key Stage 2 and a two-year cycle at Key Stage 1. This planning shows where the content of the programmes of study will be met in each topic. It does not, however, indicate how work will be adapted to ensure the different year groups work at levels appropriate for their age, particularly in science. Good planning for each term expands the long-term plan to include appropriate learning objectives for each topic, a range of suggested activities and in some subjects some criteria for assessment. Each week teachers write plans to provide details on what will be included in each lesson, including identifying clear objectives for each lesson. This marks

an improvement since the last inspection which criticised plans for not having sufficiently detailed objectives. Planning provides a sound structure for preparing pupils for the next stage of their education.

37.Provision for extra-curricular activities to support the curriculum is very good and is much improved since the last inspection. The highly successful dance project, "Oddsocks", which involved working with other schools received national coverage and culminated in a performance at the Lincolnshire Dance Festival. Pupils have the opportunity to take part successfully in competitions against other schools for football, netball and mini-rugby. In football they combine with another school in order to provide a competitive team. Coaching by the nearby Football League Club and the district authority Sports Development Co-ordinator enhance the physical education curriculum. Other activities include recorders, cycling and a sewing club which is currently engaged in making a Millennium Banner. Parents are pleased that their children are encouraged to take part in more than their daily lessons. Effective use is made of visits to places of interest such as the Ayscoughfee Museum. For a term each, the swimming pool and the sports centre in nearby Spalding are used well to compensate for the limited provision for physical education at the school. Visitors to the school such as local farmers, a local author and the Energy Officer of the district council bring relevant expertise to the teaching of topics. The recently introduced homework book indicates that suitable amounts of homework are set for each year group. The majority of parents are satisfied with the amount of homework provided.

38.Procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainments and progress are satisfactory and very good use is made of the information obtained to plan future work. Teachers use "daily jottings" on their weekly plans to make notes on further work pupils need to complete the current topic successfully. These notes are used well to modify plans for each day. At the end of each topic pupils' progress is recorded on the recently devised record sheets which use carefully worded statements to help assess how successful pupils have been in meeting National Curriculum criteria. Although the sheets and statements do not reflect exactly National Curriculum statements of attainment they have been devised so that their completion gives teachers an accurate idea of the levels pupils are achieving. The school has not yet devised a similar system for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress in information technology. Formal testing using recognised national tests provides information for teachers on pupils' levels of attainment, useful information about individuals and helps identify common problems experienced by pupils. A sensible analysis of statutory tests has also enabled the school to identify areas of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, that need more extensive coverage in lessons. The school meets statutory requirement for assessment, recording and reporting.

41. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

39.The school's overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This represents an improvement of provision since the last inspection.

40.Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school bases the curriculum and overall teaching upon worthwhile values, but in practice it does not consistently promote pupils' spiritual growth through the teaching of each subject. Religious education and assemblies make a satisfactory contribution by raising awareness of spiritual issues, together with a weekly service in the local church, taken by a priest. Any awe or wonder is spontaneous rather than planned for, as when discussions about the eclipse of the sun drew out strong feelings. In English, for example, there is little evidence of the nurturing of pupils' reflection on poetry, and in science pupils were rarely encouraged to wonder at nature. Moreover, the school environment, although satisfactorily enhanced with some pupils' work, lacks displays by teachers that set out to provide aesthetically pleasing and thought provoking experiences.

41. Provision for moral development is good. The school makes sincere efforts to develop values that respect others through its policy and practice regarding attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Assemblies use the school's merit system effectively to praise pupils for good behaviour and positive attitudes to work. The policy for personal and social education includes consideration of people's feelings and bullying. The pupils learn to behave according to a simple code of conduct of which they are made fully aware. Throughout the day the school expects pupils to distinguish right from wrong. The staff's own conduct provides a good model on which pupils can base their own behaviour towards one another.

42. Provision for social development is very good. There is a clear school policy which makes statements about the skills, knowledge and understanding that should be established. Teachers monitor pupils' social development throughout their school life. The school encourages pupils in Key Stage 2 to look after the younger ones, such as in the playground or walking to church. There is emphasis on promoting appropriate attitudes to other people, including those in authority, and a sense of fairness. The policy for personal and social education includes consideration of people's feelings and the development of good relationships. Teachers promote the development of empathy for others in different ways. In history, for example, pupils 'write home' from the Mary Rose to describe their treatment aboard the ship, or dress up and act out life in Victorian days. Most subjects in the curriculum encourage pupils to collaborate in group activities, although this is not strongly promoted in the context of joint enterprises in investigations. There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities including clubs for sport, dance, music and art. It is a caring school, and this is reflected in the way pupils behave towards one another. The headteacher and all staff are always on hand to deal with pupils' personal problems. The school encourages appropriate outward-looking attitudes towards people in the local community and beyond through staging fund-raising activities for charities and caring for local senior citizens. It welcomes students on work experience. Good links are made with local primary and secondary schools, sharing sports facilities, having joint dance, drama and sporting activities, and taking part in a science challenge.

43. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory, an improvement on the previous inspection. The Romany culture is the basis of the lives of a significant number of pupils. Teachers are proactive in taking all pupils to the local Romany museum, using relevant literature, and involving parents in the life of the school. The school makes good use of visitors of different religious and cultural persuasions to develop pupils' understanding and tolerance, and borrows resources from the local Jewish Centre. The literacy hour and the book week provide an introduction to good literature. Pupils listen to classical music by various composers and in art they are encouraged to appreciate the work of famous artists like Paul Klee and Kandinsky. It is in the field of multi-cultural education that the school has significantly improved, although it recognises that there is still room for further development. The school takes part in Caribbean dancing and performed 'The Awongolama Tree' based on a different culture. There have been very effective displays, including some of pupils' work, about events such as Divali and the Chinese New Year. The school has augmented the library with appropriate literature containing stories and poems from other countries.

46. Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

44. The school's provision for the support and guidance of pupils is good. It provides a welcoming and caring atmosphere in which pupils, including children under five, feel happy to work together. Pupils are supported by their teachers and other adults in the school through the normal routines of school life. This support extends to pupils of traveller families whilst they are in school and on their return after long absences. There are good induction procedures for introducing children under the age of five to the school. Pupils are given effective guidance and support throughout their lessons. The whole school celebrates the achievements of the individual. New record

keeping procedures have recently been introduced to monitor carefully the academic progress and personal development of pupils. This supports the teachers' good knowledge of the pupils.

45.The school monitors attendance and punctuality well and any serious concerns regarding attendance or punctuality are conveyed to parents by letter. Additional monitoring is supported by the school's educational welfare officer and, where appropriate, the Traveller Education Service.

46.The school's daily life provides satisfactory opportunities for every child to feel equal and receive access to learning and fair treatment. Procedures for the identification of pupils who require additional support are good and regular reviews of pupils' progress are made. Appropriate targets are set for pupils on the school's register of special educational needs and clear individual education plans are provided. The school receives good support from relevant services of the local education authority such as the school's psychological service, the learning support service and the Traveller Education Service. Provision for personal and social education which incorporates health, drugs awareness and the sensitive teaching of sex education is good.

47.The good behaviour of pupils has been maintained since the last inspection. The school has effective procedures for promoting good behaviour by pupils but the successful practice is not clearly described in the school's behaviour policy. Pupils throughout the school respond positively to the high standards expected by the staff and to the rewards for initiative, responsibility and good behaviour. No instances of bullying were observed during the inspection.

Parents and pupils agree that the very few instances of bullying are dealt with promptly and fairly by the headteacher.

48.Arrangements for child protection are satisfactorily in place and are based on the local authority's guidelines. The head teacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and has received the appropriate training. Medical and first aid procedures are well established and include the care of pupils with asthma. There are three adults qualified in first aid. Fire drills are practised each term and pupils are able to report on fire practice routines. Health and safety issues are monitored appropriately by both the school and the governing body. No serious hazards were observed during the inspection.

49.Parental comments confirmed that the school is very supportive of their children. The pupils interviewed liked school and all pupils agreed that they were well cared for at school. The high level of support, guidance and attention to pupils' welfare noted during the last inspection has been improved through the implementation of an effective personal and social policy.

52. Partnership with parents and the community

50.The school has a good partnership with its parents and the community. This partnership with parents brings home and school closer and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Its relationship with the Friends Association, which has provided a range of equipment such as the mini assault course for the playground, is a strength of the school. The friendship and understanding extended to the Traveller community is also an important feature of the school's partnership with parents. The contribution made by parents to their children's learning is good. A hardworking group of parents come into school regularly to help in the classroom and on the sports field. Children receive suitable support when they take home reading, multiplication tables and other mathematical work as homework. A Home and School Agreement is currently in place to strengthen this involvement. There is good liaison between home and school for children under five including a well-structured induction procedure, which includes home visits.

51.The school's work is particularly enriched by its links with the Church, charitable organisations within the community and particularly with a local newspaper. The school has instigated a Newspaper Club and was given expert advice on how to prepare an advert. Through this partnership the local newspaper informs the whole community of the good work being carried out by the school and the achievements of its pupils. Links with local companies are good and have been beneficial in promoting the performing arts and work with a local Carnival Arts project. The curriculum for younger pupils was enriched by a visit to a local farm whilst the older pupils benefitted from their involvement in a county science challenge. They also have the opportunity to compete in several local sporting competitions. All the school's links with the community make good contributions to the attainment and personal development of pupils.

52.The information provided for parents is satisfactory. Reports to parents give information on their children's progress in the subjects of the National Curriculum and provide some achievable individual learning targets for pupils. Teachers are readily available to discuss progress and other issues at any time during the year. Two meetings each year give parents suitable opportunities to formally discuss their children's progress. A few parents commented that they felt that they did not receive enough information about the content of the curriculum each term. Information on topics such as the Literacy Project is provided through meetings but the school does not formally provide parents with information about what work their children will be undertaking during each term. A very small number of parents felt that the school did not handle complaints well but discussion with governors and the headteacher during the inspection show that the school will handle complaints promptly and sensitively when given the opportunity. The school has successfully maintained its good relationships with parents and the community since the last inspection and has made good provision for the future.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

55.

53.Leadership and management of the school is good overall. Significant in this is the firm guidance and clear vision of the headteacher. A focus is placed on the raising of the standards and the quality of provision across the school. The headteacher has already used the very considerable skills and knowledge developed as an advisory teacher to provide good quality training in literacy and this is bearing fruit, particularly with those pupils who join the school with limited experience of other schools. The staff form a hard working team and the leadership has ensured that every subject and aspect of the school, including provision for children under the age of five, has a relevant policy. They have also developed long-term plans that give a thorough basis for planning a coherent curriculum in conjunction with schemes of work. The headteacher has striven to involve parents in the life of the school, and introduced a multi-cultural policy that pays regard to the needs of local people. Staff with specific responsibilities take their role seriously and benefit pupils' welfare and learning by their conscientious contribution to the organisation and management of the school. Good professional teamwork has developed so that teaching and management are consistent in their approach to all aspects of school life.

54.The governing body is supportive of the headteacher. It is led by a hard working and caring chair of governors and fulfils its role through an effective structure of committees for finance, premises and staffing. Individual governors also have an oversight of subjects of the curriculum such as literacy, numeracy and personal and social education. Though individual members of the governing body have participated in training this is not always reported back to the governing body. The exception to this is that they ensure that the premises are in order and that everything is done to provide pupils with an appropriate environment for learning. There is a strong element of pastoral care but a lack of systems to prevent difficulties. For example, there is no formal system for parents to make complaints to governors so that they can be dealt with consistently

and any issues resolved sensibly. Since the last inspection the governing body have become more actively involved in the life of the school, for example by regularly visiting to see the school at work. Although work has started on a code of conduct to define the terms of reference for the governing body and its committees in order to help governors with their role, it has to be completed. As a result individual governors are not always clear what is expected of them.

55. Systems for supporting and monitoring teaching and curriculum development are satisfactory. The documentation to support them is now in place, and adjustments are made to the curriculum as and when necessary. The school was prompt in introducing the literacy hour and is well underway with introducing the numeracy strategy. Whilst procedures for the assessment of individual pupils' attainments are satisfactory there is limited monitoring of teaching to help with the evaluation of how it affects what pupils achieve in class. Appraisal, however, helps with this process and in setting appropriate professional targets for teachers. Statutory requirements are not met in the school's special educational needs policy and the annual report to parents because some required information is omitted.

56. The school development plan is a clear and succinct document with clear realistic targets linked to associated costs. Although means of monitoring and evaluation are identified, including some criteria for judging success, these rely too much on the headteacher and staff for their implementation. In this the headteacher and staff are thorough. The governing body are not sufficiently involved in drafting the school development plan and do not become sufficiently involved until the point of ratification. As a result they do not help with identifying success criteria by which a shared judgement on what has been achieved can be reached neither do they have an appropriate strategic view of the school's development. They therefore cannot effectively evaluate the impact of their decisions on pupils' learning and the quality of education. The absence of a policy to define their roles and responsibilities, as identified at the last inspection, inhibits governors' clear understanding of how they contribute to the strategic planning and evaluation of the work of the school.

57. The school has appropriate aims that show excellent values and a wish to bring out the best in pupils. There is a genuine concern that relationships in all areas of school life build partnerships that benefit everyone. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development reflect a culture in which they flourish and feel at home. As a result there is a good ethos in the school which reflects the headteacher's and staff's total commitment to raising standards. Together with the governors, they work hard to provide an environment that helps pupils learn and ensures that there is equal opportunity for all.

58. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in achieving most of the targets identified. The successful introduction of a policy for personal and social development has raised pupils' awareness of relevant issues such as relationships and healthy lifestyles. In their planning teachers have provided a clearer focus on what they expect pupils to learn through the introduction of clearly identified learning objectives. A recently introduced and well thought out record system helps to record the assessments teachers make of pupils' attainments. Provision for pupils' cultural development has improved since the last inspection with a better understanding of the cultural backgrounds of children attending the school and an improved awareness of the multi-cultural nature of modern society. Although the governing body is more active in the life of the school they have yet to draw up a policy to formulate their roles and responsibilities and this remains a weakness of the school. The very good leadership of the headteacher and the commitment of the governing body mean that the school is well placed to continue to further develop.

61. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

59. The school's overall provision for staffing, accommodation and resources is satisfactory. It has a sufficient number of suitably qualified teachers, who provide the expertise pupils need in every subject. The school gives teachers satisfactory access to appropriate training to support them in working on professional and school priorities. The staff have taken care to have the knowledge and expertise necessary to implement the literacy and numeracy strategies. The school is very fortunate in having an expert on literacy as the headteacher. The number of well qualified support staff is good and caters for the large number of pupils with special needs; they provide these pupils with close attention so that they cope with their everyday schooling and their individual targets are achieved. Appraisal of teachers is conducted to meet requirements and support teachers in their professional development.

60. Overall, the accommodation is satisfactory. The Key Stage 1 classroom is reasonably spacious, allowing room for various areas for reading, writing, using the computer, art and role playing. The Key Stage 2 room is rather small but adequate for the number and size of the pupils. Here there is less room for extra areas to invite pupils to work in different ways. There are also two or three extra rooms for group activities, a pleasant library and good storage facilities. Rooms for the administrative staff, teachers and headteacher are suitably equipped and furnished. Since the previous inspection, improvements have been made to the heating and ventilation systems, but there is still a considerable amount of dampness that affects the appearance of the building and spoils the stock. There is a welcoming entrance with useful information for parents. The fact that pupils receive their entitlement with regard to physical education is entirely due to the hard work of the headteacher and governors in securing alternative facilities. The school still has no hall, no field, a rather small external play area, and no designated outside play area for the use by children under-five.

61. Resources for most subjects are good both in quality and quantity. Moreover, they are accessible to pupils. The school has improved its stock of fiction and non-fiction books, and these are now attractive and up-to-date, benefiting pupils' learning in literacy and cultural understanding. The school has access to a wide variety of external resources, all of which have a strong impact on the pupils' welfare and education. These include museums, the Jewish Centre, the Lucy Brayford Centre for multi-cultural items and other local primary and secondary schools which share resources for science, literacy and sport. A wide range of visitors from the local services, including the energy and environmental officers, the mobile police, the dental nurse, the fire prevention officer and representatives of the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children provide useful sources of information for the pupils. The level of resources has been improved overall since the last inspection.

64. The efficiency of the school

62. The current inspection is in agreement with the judgements of the previous inspection. The 1996 report judged the school to be administered efficiently and that accounting procedures were sound. It commented that the school development plan had insufficient criteria to help monitor the cost-effectiveness against developments in pupil's learning. Although some criteria are now included in the school development plan they are not yet sufficiently focused on judging how developments help to raise standards or improve the quality of education.

63. The governing body endeavour to practise good housekeeping in the management of finances. Financial planning is sound and is based on relevant information. The finance committee receives regular financial reports, which they use to monitor spending and report to the governing body. The school is clear about its priorities and ensures that the budget allocations match the identified priorities in the school development plan. Their commitment to making good provision for pupils with special educational needs is shown through the financing of additional support staff to help in classrooms. There are, however, no clear criteria for judging how effective

these decisions have been in improving the quality of education provided. The headteacher is successful at utilising different sources of funds although important and limited management time is sometimes used in having to resolve who is responsible for the financial implications of premises maintenance. The trustees, who have responsibility for administration of funds available as part of the original endowment, contribute significant sums to the school each year to help improve the resources available. The parents' association is also effective in raising funds to help provide resources for the school.

64. Teaching staff are deployed appropriately to take account of their experience and qualifications. The part-time teacher provides the headteacher with valuable, if limited, management time. Classroom assistants provide good support in helping manage the mixed age group classes and in supporting pupils with special educational needs.

65. The accommodation is used efficiently. Effective use is made of all the areas available for teaching as classroom assistants, support service teachers and parent helpers use the group areas regularly. Although the school has no hall and limited outdoor space it makes good use of other premises, such as the village hall and the local sports centre, to enable a full physical education curriculum to be taught. Learning resources are used well in most lessons.

66. Day-to-day financial control and administration are good. Procedures for ordering resources are clear and appropriate action is taken to check deliveries and ensure prompt payment. The minor recommendations of the most recent audit report by the local authority have been implemented. Appropriate records are kept of private funds and these independently audited each year. The administrative staff are efficient and effective in supporting the headteacher and staff so that they can concentrate on the key task of teaching.

67. The school provides a good quality of education through the teaching and the well-planned curriculum. This, combined with the sound progress pupils make by the age of 11, the educational standards achieved and the good attitudes pupils have to their work, ensures that, although the unit cost per pupil is above average, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

70.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

70. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

68.Children under five attend school part-time following their fourth birthday and start full-time in the term in which they are five. They are taught by an experienced teacher and a well qualified classroom assistant in a class with other reception year pupils and pupils in Years 1 and 2 of Key Stage 1. Children's attainments on entry to school are about those expected of children of their age. By the time they are five most children have achieved the Desirable Learning Outcomes in language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative and physical development. In personal and social development and in their speaking and listening skills many children exceed these expectations. There are sound induction procedures in place to support children when they start school. The accommodation and resources for children under the age of five are good and are used effectively to help children learn. There is no separate, enclosed and easily accessible outside play area where children can regularly use the recently acquired large scale play equipment.

69.In personal and social development, by the time they are five, children attain standards that are generally better than those expected for their age. In this respect they benefit from the example of the older pupils with whom they work. They come into school confidently and relate well to the adults in the class and to other children. They co-operate sensibly with others, for example, when making a jigsaw or playing a number game. Children choose to return to activities which they have enjoyed. When given the opportunity they make sensible choices and work independently. Children make good progress. They develop independence in personal hygiene and in clearing away after activities. They develop increasing levels of concentration and work for appropriate lengths of time. The quality of teaching is good. There is a clear expectation of appropriate behaviour, for example they are expected to raise their hand when asking or answering a question in a group discussion or to move sensibly from one room to another. When children become over excited by some activities they are sensitively managed and suitable behaviour is encouraged. This helps to create a purposeful atmosphere where the children feel valued.

70.By the time children are five, they make satisfactory progress in most aspects of language and literacy and attain standards that are about those expected for their age. They make sound progress in the skills needed for reading. They understand how books are set out and know that the title and author are recorded on the front page. They know that words and pictures carry meaning, for example by sequencing pictures of the story of Jack and Jill in correct order. They are beginning to identify letters and the sounds associated with them. They make good progress in developing skills for speaking and listening and with most children exceeding the standards expected of their age. They usually listen attentively to stories or music very well. Most children communicate their ideas clearly. Most children recognise their name and copy letters. The higher attaining children write their name independently and copy letters accurately. Progress in writing is less well developed than other aspects and there is little evidence of pupils attempting independent writing through making recognisable marks or by trying to use familiar words and letters. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Appropriate resources are used to develop language skills and children are given suitable encouragement to express themselves clearly and confidently.

71.In mathematics, children make sound progress and by the age of five they achieve the desirable outcomes. They develop an understanding of number through counting rhymes and games with numbers such as acting out a rhyme on based on *ten sizzling sausages*. They count up to, and down from, 10 confidently. The higher attaining children can nearly count to 20 accurately. Children sort and classify objects by their colour and shape and enthusiastically join in games to consolidate their knowledge of the regular shapes of square, rectangle, circle and

triangle. They use appropriate language when describing shapes or when counting numbers. The more able children compare objects using terms such as longer or shorter and thicker or thinner. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Good use is made of the classroom assistant to provide support for the group of children under the age of five. Activities are chosen carefully to consolidate understanding and develop skills in other areas of learning. In some lessons the children join with the pupils at Key Stage 1 for mental mathematics sessions. This is not always appropriate, as the children are not able to participate fully and consequently have to sit too long without being purposefully involved.

72. In knowledge and understanding of the world, five year old children attain the standards expected of their age and they make satisfactory progress. They know that computers help them record information when they produce pictures to illustrate letters they are learning. Children understand that different instruments make different sounds and enjoy trying to identify which sound is associated with a musical instrument. Through growing plants and watching creatures such as tadpoles they begin to develop an awareness of how living things grow. It also helps them understand that living things need to be cared for. Children begin to develop an appreciation of how things change over time by noting how people change as they grow older. They improve their knowledge of the world around them through their study of their village where they identify important landmarks such as the shop and the school and through visits to places such as the Romany Museum. Teaching is satisfactory. Children are encouraged to listen carefully and to respect the equipment they use. Resources are usually readily available.

73. In physical development, children make satisfactory progress and achieve the outcomes expected by the age of five. When given the opportunity they run, jump and skip and climb on apparatus effectively. They throw and catch suitable balls and beanbags and the more able children can control a ball with a slow dribble. All children are developing confidence in water through regular swimming lessons. Children develop more controlled skills in cutting with scissors, and in using pencils, crayons and paintbrushes with increasing confidence. Teaching is satisfactory. Good links are made with other areas of learning so that children can practise and improve their manipulative skills. Although pupils have access to large toys and equipment their progress in developing skills through their use is constrained as they do not always use this frequently enough.

74. Children make satisfactory progress in their creative development and by the age of five have achieved standards expected of their age. They know the most frequently used colours and use these to create colourful pictures. They use paint and sponges to print shapes or paint pictures associated with their work in mathematics. Children join shapes effectively to make a "Jack-in-the-Box" from regular shapes. They enjoy making and painting models using recyclable materials such as boxes and moulding shapes using wet clay or other malleable materials. They listen carefully to musical sounds and participate enthusiastically in songs joining in with suitable actions. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The opportunity to develop skills through other areas of learning is taken successfully. The teacher directs the activities appropriately to ensure all are able to take part. The use of the term 'on-going' is too imprecise in the planning for role play as it does not indicate when or how often children have access to this. During the inspection no children were observed using the well set out home corner for imaginative play, indicating that it is not used every day in helping to develop imagination, language and co-operation.

75. Children under the age of five receive a broad and balanced curriculum, which effectively contributes to the satisfactory progress that they make. It is appropriately based on the recommended Areas of Learning for children under the age of five and successfully guides the children into the early stages of the National Curriculum. The need to teach children in a class with older pupils acts as a constraint as it is not always possible to give children regular access to appropriate practical activities. The good system for the assessment of children's attainments on entry to school meets all the expected national requirements. Recently introduced records of

good quality are kept on children's progress. The information from these assessments is used to help plan what to teach next.

78. ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

78. English

76. Differences from year to year are apparent when the results of the national tests in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 are compared with the national average, and with similar schools. In 1998 the results were very high in comparison to both the national average and the results obtained by similar schools but the most recent results were much closer to the expected average. Results in the National Curriculum tests are influenced by the very small size of the cohorts. The trend over the past three years, however, has been for a significant improvement. Similarly, the results in the tests at the end of Key Stage 2 vary because of the small cohorts. In 1998 performance in English was close to the national average, but below it in comparison with similar schools. The most recent results are broadly in line with the national average. Over the past three years, results of the national tests for eleven-year olds in English have varied each year although they have always been close to the national average. This is consistent with inspection judgements which show that overall, pupils' attainments in English are in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages. Their speaking and listening skills are better than expected for their age throughout the school, while their reading skills are consistent with expectations for their age. Their writing, however, is below what is expected at both key stages. With the exception of writing, the school has maintained the standards observed at the previous inspection, and raised them in the case of speaking and listening.

77. By the age of seven standards attained in speaking and listening are better than expected for pupils of their age. Pupils take a pride in using correct terminology such as 'author' and 'illustrator'. Pupils speak clearly and competently in group work and class discussions, and in more formal situations such as assemblies, confidently engage the listener's interest. By the age of eleven, many pupils understand the need to use standard English in formal contexts. They speak clearly when expressing ideas and most pupils listen carefully to each other making suitable suggestions about the ideas offered. When explaining what they have done in practical activities they do not always provide sufficient detail. Almost all pupils in both key stages listen attentively to their teachers and peers; they respond appropriately to instructions, and ask and answer sensible questions. The majority of pupils develop a good knowledge of language. Pupils make satisfactory progress by the end of both key stages. They build on their skills of listening and are able to listen with more attention to detail. Older pupils are increasingly prepared to respect and listen to the ideas put forward by others, particularly in group activities. Their speaking skills get better as they acquire a wider and more extensive vocabulary. The use of technical language improves and this adds to the standards achieved in other subjects such as mathematics, art and design and technology.

78. By the end of Key Stage 1, they read fluently, although the lower attaining pupils do not always have a strategy to tackle difficult words. The majority of pupils discuss the plot of their story, and make reference to their likes and dislikes. Higher attaining pupils are confident in finding the non-fiction book they need. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read independently. They use their reading skills successfully to find information. They are not in the habit, however, of using word-lists, dictionaries, thesauruses and glossaries to support their written work. The majority of pupils develop fluency and expression when reading aloud, and the higher attaining pupils reach a level above that expected for their age. Quite a large group of pupils, however, hesitate in their reading, although they manage to help themselves with phonic cues and by searching for meaning. Unlike their peers, they are not confident to discuss the plot

and characters in books, although they can make simple predictions. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to be aware of genre, and understand the purpose of aids to reading, for example glossaries. Most pupils know how to use the Dewey system to locate the non-fiction book they need, and the contents or index to find what they want to learn about. The majority of pupils in both key stages make satisfactory progress in their reading. Pupils improve their ability to read aloud with appropriate expression. In recalling stories they provide more detail although some of the pupils, particularly those who have started later at the school, make slower progress in developing their ability to discuss the plot of the story or describe significant characters.

79. Pupils' attainments in writing are below that typically expected of their age by seven and eleven. By the end of Key Stage 1, the form in which they write is narrow and they have not developed the skills of writing with different structures and models. Two thirds of the pupils struggle to get beyond the early levels of writing, and most are not aware of the need for punctuation. By the end of the stage, higher attaining pupils can write a sequence of meaningful sentences, with accurately formed handwriting and simple words spelt correctly. The majority of pupils, however, are still very erratic with their handwriting skills and use of punctuation. By the end of Key Stage 2, a small number of pupils is producing some imaginative and sensitively written poetry and prose, some of which has been published in locally printed books. Most pupils do not draft and edit in order to raise the standard of their initial attempts, and present the finished product poorly. Spelling is inaccurate and handwriting is inconsistently formed, with some higher attaining pupils not joining their letters. Pupils sometimes mix their tenses, and there is very little transfer of knowledge of adjectives and adverbs from the literacy hour. Given that writing skills are limited by the age of five, pupils make satisfactory progress in writing at both key stages and thus do not achieve the levels expected by the time they leave the school. In lessons, pupils make suitable progress in their knowledge of language and in its use. Although the quantity and content of their writing improves as they get older, pupils do not make sufficient improvement in the presentation of their work, both in handwriting and grammatical usage to achieve the standards appropriate for their age. Pupils with special educational needs make better progress than their peers in their reading and writing because of the good level of support provided.

80. The majority of pupils at both key stages enjoy English lessons and work hard. In Key Stage 1, pupils behave sensibly and attentively in whole-class sessions. They read aloud confidently and concentrate on their group work, collaborating where necessary to develop their learning. They enjoy talking about words and how they are used, and also read in silence when necessary. Pupils in Key Stage 2 respond similarly in whole class and group sessions during the literacy hour, although occasionally they do not collaborate successfully. Throughout the school, however, they do not take care with their accuracy and presentation in writing both in English and in other subjects like science and history.

81. The quality of teaching is good. In three-quarters of lessons seen it was good and occasionally very good. It was satisfactory in the remaining lessons except for a very small percentage of unsatisfactory group teaching. Where teaching is good or better teachers work from a good knowledge of language to introduce new text in the literacy hour in a way that engages the attention of pupils. They stimulate pupils' interest in words very successfully. Through their good relationships with pupils and by careful planning they enable pupils at Key Stage 1 to appreciate stories such as those about 'Elmer'. At Key Stage 2, teachers introduce pupils to authors in order to give them insight into their thinking, for example when looking at a book by Francis Hodgson Burnett. Whole-class sessions usually move at a good pace, but occasionally teachers leave too little time to follow them up with relevant group work. Well-prepared resources invariably support pupils' learning about language. At both key stages, teachers almost always use support staff effectively to help small groups. This organisation, which is used to meet pupils' different needs, particularly benefits pupils in Reception and Years 3 and 4, as well as the lower attaining pupils. Expectations are satisfactory overall; they are good regarding speaking and listening, as well as reading, but low regarding pupils' standards of

writing. The school regularly tracks pupils' progress and uses the information gained to plan lessons. Day-to-day marking is often done with the pupils who understand the strategy used but their work shows that they do not always respond to what is suggested to help improve their work. Where features of unsatisfactory teaching were observed teachers did not encourage pupils sufficiently to participate in reading aloud as a class. In some group activities the support assistants did not have a clear understanding of what was expected from the lesson and the management of the pupils was not of the usual high standard.

82.The literacy hour largely provides the framework for teaching language, and for enabling pupils to appreciate a wide range of literature ranging from the classics to modern poetry. The school has sensibly recognised that pupils have not the time to extend their writing. Teachers have enabled pupils in Years 5 and 6 to produce some longer stories at other times in the school day. The school has now equipped itself with good resources. It has improved the quantity and quality of books in both the library and on the shelves from which pupils choose their fiction. Pupils have access to a wide variety of computer programs to develop their knowledge and understanding of language. Teachers write special plans and produce learning targets to meet the needs of the considerable number of pupils who enter the school not only in reception but also at various points in the two key stages. Good long-term and short-term planning, together with flexible organisation, enables the school to meet these pupils' needs. The subject is well co-ordinated overall, although monitoring of standards in writing is not sufficiently thorough. The high priority given by the school to literacy has greatly benefited pupils. This is not least demonstrated by their involvement in a very interesting book week with a variety of enjoyable activities including dressing up as characters from literature.

85. **Mathematics**

83.The evidence of inspection judges that by the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments are close to those expected nationally. Due to the very small numbers of pupils tested the results of the national tests for seven and eleven year olds are unreliable for comparisons with national figures as percentages can vary considerably from year to year. Despite this, the trend over the past three years has shown results to be at least in line with those achieved in other schools nationally at both key stages. The most recent results confirm this pattern. There is no significant difference between the attainments of boys and girls. Where pupils have entered the school late due to cultural traditions their attainments have not always been as high as the other pupils in the school.

84.At Key Stage1, most pupils work at the levels expected for their age but few pupils work consistently at the higher level. By the age of seven, most pupils add and subtract numbers involving tens and units. The higher attaining pupils are developing an understanding of hundreds, tens and units and competently add tens to numbers. Lower attaining pupils add and subtract numbers to 10 accurately. Pupils use non-standard units to measure, weigh or fill everyday objects. They estimate whether familiar objects are longer or shorter than a metre. They know the names of most regular shapes such as square, rectangle, cuboid and cylinder and explore some of the properties of these shapes.

85.By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are working at the level expected for their age but few exceed this in number work. In some aspects of measuring and handling data pupils work at a higher level. They competently add, subtract, multiply and divide to solve number problems involving hundreds and thousands. The higher attaining pupils know how to check their answers by using the inverse operation. Pupils begin to investigate different ways of multiplying large numbers, although not always successfully. Pupils estimate lengths, weights and volumes and perform calculations involving kilograms, litres and money. They calculate the area of irregular shapes, such as their hand, by counting the squares they cover. Pupils understand the

difference between area and perimeter when they explore shapes with the same area but different perimeters. Simple block graphs are drawn accurately and the higher attaining pupils interpret information presented in a pie chart. Pupils explore probability by looking at the chance of an event happening on a line of certainty.

86. Pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Some pupils who enter school late make good progress in developing their understanding of mathematics. At Key Stage 1, pupils develop a sound understanding of number. They progress from identifying and counting numbers to being able to use them competently in addition and subtraction. They begin to develop an understanding of number relationships. Pupils improve their understanding of shapes and measures. Younger pupils identify the features of different shapes while the older pupils develop an understanding of angles, for example being able to identify and draw a right angle. At Key Stage 2, the effects of good teaching are most noticeable in improving the attainments of those pupils who have joined the school late with little previous school experience as some of these begin to achieve standards close to those expected for their age. Pupils further improve their understanding of number and use increasingly more complex numbers. They begin to explore different patterns in numbers, such as looking for numbers that read the same forwards or backwards or by finding prime numbers. Progress in their understanding of shapes and measures is good as they compare imperial measures with their metric equivalent and discover how to calculate areas of regular shapes. Progress in understanding and using data is satisfactory as they begin to understand the significance of probability and how to interpret information in different types of graph.

87. Pupils have positive attitudes towards mathematics. They enjoy the challenge of different tasks and are eager to answer questions and explain how they arrived at their answers. They maintain good levels of concentration in class and group activities. When co-operating in groups, pupils including those with special educational needs, sensibly discuss their work and are willing to help each other clarify their ideas. Older pupils identify errors in their work and correct their answers without prompting. They show some initiative in solving problems and checking their answers, for example, when subtracting the price of an article chosen from a catalogue from £50 they had been allocated as available to spend. Some younger pupils find it difficult to sustain concentration when they are unsure of the task. Pupils do not always show sufficient pride in their completed work, which is too often presented untidily.

88. The overall quality of teaching is good and makes an important contribution to sustaining progress, particularly with pupils whose lifestyle leads to erratic attendance. Teaching was good in all lessons seen at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1 where almost half the lessons seen were good. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and have improved their understanding through training for the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. They use correct terminology confidently and insist pupils record work using formal methods. In most lessons planning is good with clear objectives of what pupils are expected to learn and clear descriptions of how work will be organised for the different age groups in each class. Lessons are organised to take account of the Numeracy Strategy and usually begin with a session of mental mathematics. Teachers try hard to involve most pupils either through direct questioning of individuals or by using number cards which all pupils can use to respond. The latter method is usually most successful. The pace of these sessions, particularly with the older pupils, is sometimes restricted by the need to keep at least two groups occupied with appropriate tasks. With the youngest pupils these sessions are sometimes inappropriate, as they do not have the knowledge or experience to participate fully. Teachers introduce new topics well and make sensible links with other subjects, for example, when introducing some work on money the teacher linked this to work their topic in history. Good use is made of the classroom assistants to support an appropriate group during each lesson. Most lessons end with an effective discussion where pupils have the opportunity to share their work and to ask each other questions about what they have learned.

89.The school has made a successful start to introducing the National Numeracy Strategy. Planning has been developed over the past year to ensure that all the relevant skills are taught at appropriate times to each age group. A commercial scheme is used sensibly to support the planned curriculum. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good and include using nationally accredited tests annually to check on progress, identify areas of weakness and to provide information about each pupil. These are supported by recently introduced record system which has clear and succinct statements on what pupils are expected to learn each year. These assessment procedures provide useful information to help plan future work. Resources for supporting pupils' learning are good and are used effectively in most lessons. The constraints of a small school limit the time available for monitoring and evaluation although there has been some monitoring of numeracy by the co-ordinator. The governing body has also nominated a governor to help with the monitoring of the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy.

92.

92. Science

90.Inspection findings judge that the school has maintained the average standards of attainment at both key stages reported at the previous inspection. Variations in the size of the very small cohorts significantly influence the comparative levels of attainment from year to year. In 1998, statutory teacher assessments for all aspects of science, at the end of Key Stage 1, indicate that overall standards were very high in comparison with the national average and with similar schools. Results of National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 were also above the national average and the results achieved by similar schools. The most recent national test results are similar to those of 1998. The school is following the national trend of steady improvement. Boys' results were well above the national average, while girls' results were well below it. This is partly a reflection of the very small cohorts as no significant difference between girls and boys was evident during the inspection.

91.Only three lessons were observed, one in Key Stage 1 and two in Key Stage 2. Discussion with pupils, however, together with scrutiny of their work, provides the basis for secure judgements.

92.By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils know the main organs of the body, and what humans and animals need in order to maintain their health. They know that forces are basically pushes or pulls, and have an early understanding of the effects of forces such as the wind. They learn to observe carefully using all their senses, but not always to describe differences precisely. They can carry out simple experiments such as testing the effect of mass on the distance toys roll down a fixed slope. During their investigations they learn to predict and record systematically. Pupils do not always take care to measure accurately, nor to make clear conclusions on the basis of what happens.

93.By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils know a great deal about forces, and can identify situations where they are balanced, for example when boats float. They know the difference between solids, liquids and gases, and understand that changes from one state to another are sometimes irreversible. They have a sound knowledge of how the organs of the body work and of the way plants and animals depend upon each other. They understand cycles in both the atmosphere and the Earth's crust. They can test how different liquids such as oil and water separate when mixed, and learn about the effects of surface tension. Most pupils' ability to carry out and record experiments is unsatisfactory. While there is a structure to their investigations, such as into the

effects of heat on the behaviour of balloons or on ice in different conditions, their reports are too short and undeveloped. They are generally poorly presented, and often leave out important conclusions.

94. Progress in science is consistently satisfactory for most pupils, including those with special educational needs, at both key stages. In learning about living things, they move from making simple observations of parts of plants to finding out about major organs such as the heart and how they work. Pupils extend their understanding of a range of contexts in which changes such as evaporation and condensation occur, and can compare rocks and soils for their permeability. They cannot easily explain why things happen, and are not in the habit of making generalisations, for example, suggesting how forces work. Although pupils develop skills of predicting and make regular use of fair tests this does not always lead to systematic investigation in order to make conclusions. In lessons, most pupils at the end of both key stages achieve their set tasks because of good teacher planning and their own concentration. While lower attaining pupils often make good progress, aided by classroom support, higher attaining pupils, particularly in Years 5 and 6, often do not reach their full potential, particularly in developing their investigative and recording skills.

95. In the lessons observed, pupils enjoyed their work and behaved well. At Key Stage 1, they were keen to answer questions and respectful of resources, such as when exploring sounds using musical instruments. At Key Stage 2, pupils were attentive and responsive during class discussions, and were confident and keen to ask questions about such events as the eclipse of the sun.

96. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. In Key Stage 1, the teacher plans well-structured lessons, and has a pleasant relationship with pupils. Pupils are taught to observe carefully, such as when listening to different musical instruments, and given ample opportunity to use them to explore sounds. They are also taught to use resources such as the tape recorder independently and to concentrate on their tasks. In Key Stage 2, the teacher also plans well, but the lessons do not always meet the different needs of pupils. This is important with a range of four years in age and a very wide range of attainments. The teacher is very knowledgeable, and provides good resources for investigations such as into the permeability of soils and rocks. Pupils are expected to use the right scientific words, and these become increasingly sophisticated in order to describe, for example, different types of rock and how they are formed. In both key stages teachers manage and organise the pupils satisfactorily, but sometimes time is wasted before the lesson gets underway. Expectations with regard to written work are unsatisfactory in both key stages. Marking consists either of ticks where work has been completed, or of praise, which does encourage, but is not always due. Pupils are not always expected to present their work well, to use accurate English, and to provide reasons for their conclusions. This inhibits the progress pupils make in developing scientific investigations. Opportunities are also missed on some occasions to obtain pupils' ideas for making scientific tests. There are a few examples of inaccurate teaching that confuse pupils' learning. Classroom assistants provide good support for slow learning pupils.

97. The school has a sound policy and scheme of work to ensure that pupils have a broadly based curriculum, although, in practice, there is too little emphasis on investigative skills. There is a two and four year rolling programme in Key Stage 1 and 2 respectively which ensures that all pupils cover the programme of study of the National Curriculum. Nevertheless, every year group in each stage covers the same content simultaneously and at a similar level. Consequently, scientific knowledge and ideas are not developed in ways that match all pupils' needs, and this holds back their progress. Use is made of computer programs to develop knowledge and sometimes to make records of experimental findings. Ways to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding are not fully in place, but teachers make good use of what they learn about them to change their plans where necessary.

98.The subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated, although the school has not yet looked at the need for pupils' written work to be developed further to help with recording results of investigations. Resources are good and used satisfactorily to develop the quality of learning. Pupils are encouraged to develop their interest in science through the school taking part in the county Science Challenge.

101. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

99.No whole-class lessons were seen during inspection week, but individuals or pairs of pupils were observed at work in the classroom. Pupils were also interviewed, and their work scrutinised. The evidence from these supports the judgement that the pupils' attainments are consistent with the expectations for their age by the end of both key stages. The standards achieved at the previous inspection have been maintained.

100.By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainments are about those expected of seven-year olds. Using an appropriate word-processing program they produce short, accurate pieces of writing which are sometimes used to label displays. They find things out from the encyclopaedia stored on disk. Pupils use a graphics program to make interesting patterns using line and tone for their art. They control events when they manipulate a visual program to select clothes for a teddy bear. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainments are close to those expected nationally. They use their word-processing skills to present their written work clearly but they have not learnt to use the computer to help them with drafting, editing and redrafting to produce a final piece of work in accurate English. Pupils control events through the use of simulations, for example, in history they use a program on a Saxon village in order to find out about how people lived in those times. Pupils make limited use of technology to record information and help present results in graphical form. For example, results of a traffic survey were presented as block graphs and pie charts but there was little evidence of any further work like this. Overall, at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have progressed satisfactorily in their ability to use information technology. They learn how to display information, control events and use a range of information technology. Pupils at both key stages extend their understanding of how different forms of technology help their daily lives, for example, by using tape recorders in science when exploring different sounds in a science lesson. At Key Stage 2, pupils extend their control and ability to use a keyboard and mouse and further their understanding of how information technology can help with their learning. For example, they use a suitable program to help them compose simple tunes.

101.Pupils show interest and work effectively when they have the opportunity to use information technology. Pupils who find learning difficult enjoy developing their word skills, and learning about language. Pupils are especially keen to use simulations, the programmable models and the control box as part of their modelling and control technology.

102.Teachers organise pupils effectively in order to give them turns on the computer. Planning, however, does not ensure regular access in order to raise the standard of their information technology skills further. Limited access to appropriate computers limits opportunities for pupils to use the computer to interrogate and process information. This does not help with developing skills in other subjects, such as science, where information is not recorded to help draw logical conclusions from experiments, for example. Not all pupils learn to process information that they have stored themselves. The close attention given by classroom assistants supports low attaining pupils, and those with special needs. Where pupils have a specific task to complete, both teachers and classroom assistants are careful not to be too intrusive in order to encourage them to make independent decisions.

103.The school has recently increased its resources. Pupils have yet to use them fully and

independently as tools to support their work. Training takes place for staff when a new program is introduced, and the school has sensibly adopted the scheme of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. This is helping the school to provide a progressive programme of work for pupils. There are no assessment procedures in place to track and record pupils' progress in the acquisition of skills in information technology.

106. **Art**

104. It was only possible to see a very limited amount of teaching during the inspection. However, these lessons, discussion with pupils and work on display and photographic evidence, show that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress by the end of both key stages. The school has maintained the rate of progress observed at the last inspection.

At Key Stage 1 pupils soon learn to use a satisfactory range of media with which to work. They improve their use of paint, pastel crayons, chalk and charcoal when, for example they make pictures for their topics on families. Pupils develop care with their work to produce successful patterns with ribbon and thread. They progress steadily on the computer to make pleasing designs with use of line and tone and an eye for balance. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have satisfactorily developed the ways in which they use these media, and learnt to be more independent. Mark-making media are used at both key stages to produce effective pictures, such as those of windmills, while charcoal is used to make illustrations for their work about Victorians. They develop their ability to explore tone by choosing a wider variety of media, using paper or threads, and begin to develop the use of art techniques, for example wax resist. Pupils begin to recognise how works of art, craft and design are affected by their purpose. The limitations to their progress lie in the degree to which pupils develop sophistication and individuality in their use of the various media. Moreover, techniques as well as themes are not developed in depth so that pupils are not equipped to be resourceful in art. Nevertheless pupils in lessons show satisfactory control of the media in which they are working.

105. Pupils enjoy art lessons. At Key Stage 1, pupils concentrate well, by the way they carefully produce graded tones of one colour, or take time to leave no gaps in their weaving. They work well alongside each other, and enjoy offering their ideas for decorating their cubes with paint and soft materials. At Key Stage 2, pupils move on to discussing the qualities of the work of famous artists such as Paul Klee in a sensible and mature fashion. They use a very good vocabulary to express their sensitivity to his work.

106. The limited amount of teaching that was observed during the inspection was at least satisfactory. In one lesson, where teaching was very good, planning was very well thought out and implemented and clearly developed pupils' appreciation of art. Whilst pupils' work shows that teachers have appropriate knowledge, expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Insufficient time is given for pupils to develop the quality of their work in an individual way. The school has recognised the need to further improve the quality of teaching and has arranged training in art skills.

107. Resources for art are good, but not fully used. The school has also tried hard to develop pupils' interest in the subject by having an art club and an artist in residence. In the past, pupils have made very successful papier mâché masks for a Greek project, cards using curved stitching or painted pasta, and very good puppets. This level of work, however, is not sustained in pupils' general art. Resources are adequate and well used. Long-term planning covers all aspects of the programme of study of the National Curriculum.

110. **Design and technology**

111. Only very limited observation of design technology was possible during the inspection. The evidence from this, from pupils' work and discussion with pupils indicates that, by the time they leave the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve standards appropriate for their age. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection.

1. Younger pupils learn how to disassemble and reassemble boxes and use these in making models, for example, they make characters to represent mathematical shapes. This helps develop their understanding of mathematics. They develop skills in assembling and joining sufficiently to be able to make realistic Vardos following their visit to the Romany Life Museum. For some of their work pupils draw preliminary designs but they do not often evaluate the success of their work. Pupils' experience is extended through using fabrics when, for example, they weave with materials they select carefully for colour and texture, and when they prepare food such as designing a healthy salad. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have improved their ability to plan their work so that they include the materials they need to use, methods to try, relevant measurements and different views of their object. They develop appropriate skills in using tools so that they are competent in using a saw or drill for a suitable activity. A range of models is built using light wood, card and different adhesives. Confidence in their own ideas develops well as pupils try out their proposals, review the success and amend their method. For example, when trying to fit a bolt to provide a pivot for a cam on their model Vardo a group of pupils experimented, successfully, to find the best way to fit the bolt. They further develop their experience of foods when they make recipes of foods from different countries. Pupils learn how sewing can be used to create colourful and imaginative designs. A lunchtime club is developing this to make a Millennium Banner.

2. Discussions with pupils and the limited lesson observation show pupils have positive attitudes towards designing and making. They enjoy making models and working with different tools. They particularly enjoy cooking and work well together to prepare mixtures. They sensibly work together when washing up the equipment. Pupils work well together in small groups and collaborate effectively taking different roles when making models. They look after equipment and show a good awareness of safety when using tools. The older pupils work with a minimum of supervision, taking initiatives in the way problems are approached and selecting tools and resources with care.

3. It was not possible to see sufficient teaching of design technology to make a sound judgement on the quality of teaching. The four-year planning cycle at Key Stage 2 and the two-year cycle at Key Stage 1 ensure that the relevant aspects of the National Curriculum are covered and that pupils experience an appropriate range of resources. Planning for each lesson identifies different skills and challenges for pupils of different ages in each class. Skills in literacy are developed through providing opportunities to record their work in different ways and skills in numeracy are practised through the need to measure work accurately. There is an adequate range of resources available and a good supply of tools is easily accessible to pupils.

114. **Geography**

115. It was not possible to observe any geography during the inspection as lessons are timetabled for a day not covered by the inspection. From a scrutiny of pupils' work, examination of teachers' planning and discussions with pupils it was evident that most pupils make satisfactory progress by the time they leave the school and have acquired and knowledge and understanding appropriate for their age. At the time of the last inspection no judgement was made on standards in geography but the report commented that pupils received a wide range of appropriate experiences. This has been maintained.

1. At Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in developing geographical knowledge. They improve their knowledge of important landmarks in their village, such as the church, the garage, the school and the bus stop. Older pupils in the key stage extend their understanding of why Cowbit is a village and begin to make comparisons with the nearest town of Spalding and city of Peterborough. They give simple explanations as to how they are different. Through stories they develop an understanding about other parts of the United Kingdom: for example by reading *Katie Morag* stories they learn about life on a Scottish Isle and the occupations of some of its inhabitants. Although they identify a map of the British Isles they have not yet acquired sufficient knowledge to locate and name the different countries of the United Kingdom. Younger pupils make colourful attempts to draw simple maps whilst the older pupils mark the important buildings on a map of Cowbit. Most pupils begin to understand about different physical features as they recognise places such as a river, mountain and fields on a picture. There is, however, little evidence of pupils having undertaken a study of a different locality of a similar size.

2. At Key Stage 2, pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make satisfactory progress. They develop an understanding of life in other parts of Britain and in countries through their study of the Yorkshire Dales identifying important industries to that region such as farming and tourism. They improve their knowledge of other countries through, for example, comparing their own day with that of a Kenyan child. They know that instruments such as a thermometer, barometer and anemometer are used in measuring different types of weather and extend their understanding by completing weather charts. Skills in mapwork are developed appropriately beginning with simple plans of everyday objects to drawing sketch maps of their classroom or the village. Their work on recording weather and locating places on maps helps develop mathematical skills, such as the use of co-ordinates. They identify the countries of Europe on a suitable map and name the continents and oceans on a world map. There was little evidence of pupils' use of Ordnance Survey maps. They develop an understanding of how physical features have developed through their study of rivers and confidently describe what are the source, tributaries, meanders, ox-bow lakes and estuary.

3. In discussions with pupils they show that they are interested in learning about the world around them. They enjoy talking about what they have learned, answer questions confidently and are willing to offer sensible suggestions about what they observe. Work in their books shows that older pupils independently research some topics but the presentation of too much of this work is untidy.

4. Curricular planning provides a good structure for the topics pupils are to study over a four-year cycle at Key Stage 2 and two-year cycle at Key Stage 1. Whilst this ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to study each topic at least once during each key stage and so gain an appropriate body of geographical knowledge it does not sufficiently identify the skills pupils of different ages are expected to learn through the topics. This limits progress in developing skills such as map reading. Through research and recording their work pupils are given opportunity to use their literacy skills. Resources for teaching geography are satisfactory. Visits to places of interest and use of the local environment extend pupils understanding of the world in which they live.

119. **History**

5. Only one history lesson was observed during the inspection. From this and from discussions with pupils and scrutiny of work it is clear that pupils make satisfactory progress by the time they leave the school. At Key Stage 1, pupils begin to write and illustrate simple accounts of events like the Fire of London as part of their topic on Tudors and Stuarts. They use appropriate reference lists of dates in an order to help them understand chronology, and use simple sources such as books or artefacts, to find out about life in the past, for example life in Roman times. As

part of their studies they develop their ability to make satisfactory sketches, and begin to compare clothing of another period with their own. At Key Stage 2, pupils develop a good understanding of children's lives in the past, for example, in the Victorian era, and they use this knowledge to express views about which one they would prefer to live in. They perceive the changes that have occurred in the way adults treat children, and discuss the effects of the differences. Pupils use their knowledge of events to compose sensitively written letters such as that from imaginary sailors on the 'Mary Rose' to their families. These show that pupils have developed an understanding of how the sailors were treated. Pupils do not develop sufficient understanding of how historical events can be interpreted in different ways. Overall, pupils, including those with special educational needs, have maintained the satisfactory progress observed at the last inspection.

6. In the observed lesson at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils offered sensible suggestions about the use of artefacts and asked probing questions about them. They listened carefully to instructions and settled quickly to the class lesson. They were keen to share opinions, and confident in making deductions. In discussion, pupils answer questions, but did not show a great deal of enthusiasm for history. In their writing, presentation and accuracy of English are unsatisfactory and sometimes poor, reflecting an inappropriate attitude to their work.

7. Although no overall judgement about the quality of teaching is possible, both long and short-term planning are sound. Expectations of pupils regarding the recording of their work are unsatisfactory. Good resources are provided, however, including a large number of books that are chosen to match different pupils' needs. The staff teach pupils to use CD-Rom encyclopaedias to gain information, and to develop their understanding of periods by using a variety of exciting simulations, such as of a Saxon home. In the observed lesson, pupils developed independent learning by tackling tasks that gave scope for research and independent interpretation. The classroom assistant provides good support for the low attaining pupils.

8. The time allocated to history is rather limited to allow for independent study. Consequently pupils do not learn to discuss particular periods in detail. Nevertheless, the programme of study of the National Curriculum is covered. Pupils make some interesting visits and gain first-hand experience of Victorian life through dressing up and engaging in many of the day-to-day activities of people in those times. The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively, although this does not include monitoring standards of pupils' work. Marking is ineffective in moving pupils on in their learning, and pays too little attention to presentation and English. Pupils use resources satisfactorily to promote progress in knowledge and understanding, but not as frequently as necessary to development research skills.

123. **Music**

9. No lessons were observed in music. However, discussions took place with pupils and staff, a performance and assemblies were observed, and school documents and records of pupils' experiences were scrutinised. These provided sufficient evidence of pupils' music work, the level of their knowledge and understanding, and some of their skills. Pupils progress satisfactorily in their singing, maintaining an appropriate volume, and developing accuracy of intonation and rhythmic precision. Younger pupils accompany their singing with well-synchronised simple melodic and non-melodic phrases, and compose imaginative textures in providing effects for 'Noah's Ark'. Older pupils progress to two-part singing and make more complex instrumental performances for school assemblies and productions. All pupils learn to perform from different forms of notation, while pupils in Years 3 to 6 go on to engage in musical projects, leading to performance in front of an audience. Pupils learn to listen to and appraise music, including some from different ethnic cultures. The school has maintained the satisfactory progress reported at the last inspection.

10. Pupils in both key stages show that they thoroughly enjoy music when singing and playing instruments. They listen to each other courteously, and express appreciation of one another's performances. Pupils treat musical instruments with care, and are keen to play them properly.

11. It is not possible to make a judgement about the quality of teaching. Both long-term and short term planning are thorough, and ensure that pupils cover the entire programme of study of the National Curriculum. In situations where pupils perform, teachers organise the pupils satisfactorily, so that their musical skills develop under control. They praise good performance appropriately. In Key Stage 1, teachers develop ideas from topics such as 'Food', 'Families', 'Ourselves', and 'Toys and Games.' This enables them, for example, to think of musical elements as important ingredients of a tune, and to classify instruments according to their orchestral families. Teachers use information technology programs in both key stages for pupils to compose. At Key Stage 2, teachers develop work with the musical elements and introduce notation so that pupils learn to perform longer and more complex pieces.

12. Many pupils' progress is further enhanced by opportunities to learn the recorder or guitar. An important point in the Christian calendar music is a vital part of celebrations, where all pupils sing and play in front of an audience, thereby developing their sense of performance. The subject is satisfactorily co-ordinated. Resources are adequate and well used.

127. **Physical education**

13. It was not possible to observe any lessons in physical education during the period of the inspection, as nearly all lessons were timetabled for after the inspection. From discussions with pupils and teachers, examination of timetables and teachers' planning it is clear that the school has a high commitment to providing a range of opportunities to pupils, despite the severe limitations of the building. To compensate for the absence of a school hall a careful programme of activities is organised to ensure pupils experience the full range of activities expected with the National Curriculum. Each term two aspects of the curriculum are developed by using accommodation available to them. Swimming at the local pool and dance in the third classroom are the focus for the autumn term. In the spring term pupils walk to the village hall for gymnastics lessons. Sensible co-operation with the village hall means that the good range of mats and small climbing apparatus can be stored there during the term. A weekend at an activity centre provides pupils with opportunity to partake in outdoor and adventurous activities. In the summer term the school uses the sports hall in Spalding for teaching a range of games skills including short tennis, badminton and *kwik cricket*. Sports days provide opportunity for athletic events.

14. The school's commitment to providing pupils with good opportunities to develop appropriate skills is shown through the very good range of extra-curricular activities provided. Pupils take part in regular tournaments for football, netball and mini-rugby. For some of these competitions they join with another local small school. The very successful dance project with two other local schools, "Oddsocks", provided pupils with the opportunity of receiving specialist teaching. The school are rightly proud of their appearance at the Lincolnshire Dance Festival. Good use is made of the Football in the Community Scheme of the local Football League club. Pupils talk enthusiastically about attending these sessions.

15. The headteacher has provided good leadership for the subject by personal involvement and enthusiasm, by ensuring the breadth of the curriculum is achieved, by working well with other schools and by making good use of financial grants. The resources available for physical education are good with many items being recently acquired.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

130. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

16.A team of three inspectors, one of whom was a lay inspector, spent a combined total of six days in the school. Before the inspection they analysed a range of documents provided by the school. On initial visits the Registered Inspector met with the headteacher, the staff, the governing body and parents. At these meetings arrangements for the inspection were discussed and any questions raised were answered. Thirteen parents attended the meeting arranged to receive parents' views. Responses from the 12 questionnaires returned by parents together with three written comments were also considered and informed the judgements made by inspectors.

17.During the inspection a total of 30 lessons or parts of lessons was observed and 22 hours were spent observing lessons and other activities, talking with pupils and scrutinising pupils' work. Inspectors observed pupils at the beginning and end of the school day, during assemblies, breaks and at lunchtimes. They heard pupils read and scrutinised samples of their work, records and reports. The individual education programmes and work of pupils with special educational needs were examined. Samples of homework were inspected. Pupils were assessed for their literacy skills and their ability to work with numbers. Discussions were held with children as they worked in groups or individually.

18.Discussions were held with the headteacher and members of the teaching and support staff, members of the governing body, parents and representatives of other agencies, including the Traveller Support Service. Further documentation, schemes of work, teachers' planning, attendance registers, minutes of meetings and curricular plans were examined.

133.

DATA AND INDICATORS

133. Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	49	2	11	7

133. Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Y> - Y>)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	2.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	24

133. Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:	5
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	49

Average class size:

27

133. **Financial data**

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	98,710
Total Expenditure	100,980
Expenditure per pupil	2,348
Balance brought forward from previous year	4,870
Balance carried forward to next year	2,600

133. **PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out: 49

Number of questionnaires returned: 12

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	67	25	0	0	8

I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)

The school handles complaints from parents well

The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught

The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress

The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work

The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons

I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home

The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)

The school achieves high standards of good behaviour

My child(ren) like(s) school

50	42	0	0	8
17	67	0	8	8
42	42	8	8	0
50	33	8	8	0
33	42	17	8	0
42	58	0	0	0
42	50	0	0	8
50	33	8	8	0
50	33	0	8	8
58	33	0	0	8