

INSPECTION REPORT

**DIGBY CHURCH of ENGLAND PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Digby, Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120519

Headteacher: Mr D Gibbons

Reporting inspector: Mr M Johnstone

Dates of inspection: 11th – 13th March 2002

Inspection number: 198081

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed

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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr C J Town

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

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21114	Mr M Johnstone	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language English Geography History	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
12682	Mr C Farris	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
30441	Mr M Pritchard	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music	How well is the school led and managed?
21858	Rev J Pryor	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage Mathematics Art and design Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a small rural voluntary controlled Church of England primary school situated in the village of Digby near Lincoln. The pupils' families live in a mixture of private and local authority housing and about a third of the pupils are transported to school by coach from the surrounding area. There are 105 pupils on roll with 62 boys and 43 girls taught in four classes. The number on roll is increasing gradually from year to year. At the time of the inspection, there were 12 children in the Foundation Stage (children under the age of six in the reception class). These children were in a class with eight Year 1 pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry is generally below average. Over the past three academic years most boys have entered school with attainment that is well below average. Almost all the pupils are of white United Kingdom heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Twelve per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and 18 per cent of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs. These two percentages are broadly average. Most of the pupils who have special educational needs have moderate learning difficulties and two have a statement of special educational needs. The turnover of pupils is above the national average. In the last academic year, 14 pupils joined the school and five left.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

In most aspects of its work, the school is providing a good education. Children enter school with attainment below average, with particularly low attainment for most boys. Children are given a good start to their education in the reception class and make good progress. With satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2, pupils make steady progress, although overall standards are below average by the end of Year 2. Learning accelerates markedly in Years 5 and 6 and pupils of all abilities do well to achieve standards that meet and sometimes exceed the national average by the end of Year 6. This is because teaching is good in Years 5 and 6. Pupils enjoy all aspects of school life and their very good attitudes and behaviour impact strongly on their learning. The headteacher leads and manages the school well. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading, science, religious education, history and geography are above average by the end of Year 6.
- The headteacher manages the school well and leads by example.
- Teaching is good for children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils in Years 5 and 6; as a result these pupils achieve well.
- Classroom assistants provide very good support for all the pupils, including those who have special educational needs.
- Pupils' very good attendance, attitudes, behaviour and personal development support learning very well.
- The school has developed a good partnership with parents who value what the school does for their children.

What could be improved

- The standards attained by boys in literacy and numeracy by the end of Year 2 and standards in spelling and handwriting by the end of Year 6 are below average.
- Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school are below average.
- The suitability of the work given to pupils in order to meet their different needs.
- Outdoor play facilities for children in the Foundation Stage to develop their physical and social skills.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, improvement since the last inspection in October 1997 has been good. Despite some fluctuations from year to year due to small groups taking the national tests, standards by the end of

Year 6 have been maintained in line with national averages in English and mathematics and have improved in science. Despite improvement in the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2, they remain below average in English and mathematics. There has been improvement in teaching, and the leadership and management of the school has been strengthened significantly. There has been good improvement in provision for pupils' cultural development and in the arrangements for more effective use of outdoor space and the level of supervision at lunchtime.

STANDARDS

This part of the report normally contains a table showing the attainment of pupils in the last set of national tests for eleven-year-olds. However, because the number taking the tests is so small (ten last year) the table can be very misleading and is therefore omitted.

Given their below average attainment on entry, children in the Foundation Stage do well, although most are unlikely to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical understanding. By the end of Year 2, overall standards are below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards achieved by the girls are above average in reading and mathematics and similar to the national average in writing. However, the standards achieved by the boys are well below the national average in all three subjects. Despite some marked progress by boys in all three subjects since the last inspection, standards are not yet high enough. This picture of standards is reflected when analysing pupils' performance in national tests over the past three years.

With small numbers taking the national tests for eleven-year-olds and the high pupil turnover, results tend to fluctuate from year to year. Inspection evidence indicates that standards are average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Whilst the boys tend to do better than the girls in mathematics, there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in the other subjects. Most pupils are confident and proficient readers. They write in a good range of styles, but standards in spelling and handwriting are below average by the end of Year 6. This picture of standards is reflected in the pupils' performance in national tests over the past three years. In English and mathematics the school has set realistic targets for 2002 that it would be likely to maintain.

In all year groups, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well. Classroom support assistants who work closely with the teachers support them very effectively.

In Information and communication technology, standards are below national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6, despite good progress over the past year. The work seen in religious education, history and geography is better than that expected for pupils' age. In all other subjects, it is similar to that expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good; pupils enjoy school and are keen to participate in all aspects of school life. These attitudes are developed well in the Foundation Stage.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good; pupils, whatever their age, behave well both in lessons and around the school. All pupils show care and respect for others.
Personal development and relationships	Good; relationships throughout the school are very good. Personal development is good and pupils act with increasing maturity as they move up through the school. They take on responsibilities willingly.
Attendance	Very good; well above the national average. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are sound and meet the needs of all pupils satisfactorily. Teaching is mostly good in the Foundation Stage and gives children an effective base for learning. They achieve well given their low attainment on entry. Teaching is satisfactory in most other year groups, although it is good in Years 5 and 6. This accounts for the pupils' good achievements by the end of Year 6. In all year groups, reading is well taught and pupils achieve well. The teaching of writing and numeracy are satisfactory and pupils' achievements are sound. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good. Key strengths in teaching and learning are:

- the relationship between teachers and pupils that develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem well;
- the management of pupils so that they work productively both individually and in groups;
- the teamwork established between classroom assistants and teachers that results in well-targeted support for pupils, especially those who have special educational needs; and
- good references to previous work in order to consolidate learning and questioning that extends pupils' understanding well.

Areas for improvement in teaching and learning relate to:

- the provision of group and individual work that does not always meet the different needs of the pupils. This means that some pupils find the work too difficult while others are not challenged enough;
- overly long, whole class sessions that do not involve the pupils enough in discussion;
- planning of personal targets for pupils to help them gain a better understanding of how well they are doing and more comments in the marking of their work to show how they might improve; and
- greater use of computers to support learning across all subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good; all statutory requirements are met and there is a broad and relevant range of learning experiences. The curriculum is socially inclusive and provides good equality of opportunity. There is a good range of activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; work designed especially for them is well focused on particular needs. There is sensitive and very effective additional support from classroom assistants who work well with the teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; the staff are good role models. There are good opportunities, such as the school council, for pupils to develop responsibility. Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good and their moral development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good; positive steps are taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, including arrangements for child protection. There are effective procedures for promoting good attendance and behaviour. Methods to

	find out how well pupils are doing and to develop learning further are satisfactory.
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There is a good partnership with parents. This is developed effectively from the time children begin in the reception class. There is a high level of satisfaction with what the school provides and achieves. Parents make a good contribution to children's learning at school and at home.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There has been much improvement since the last inspection, where weaknesses in the leadership and management of the school were identified. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and governing body are now good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are strongly supportive of the headteacher and have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has been successful in gaining a good general view of its work and, given the heavy teaching commitment of the headteacher, there is a good programme to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. The monitoring has not succeeded in analysing fully what works well, what does not, and why.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and the school budget is used well to support educational priorities.

The governors have a satisfactory understanding of the principles of best value and apply them when taking educational and financial decisions. There are sufficient teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum. Classroom assistants support the teachers very well. Accommodation is satisfactory overall with good outdoor space. The hall is too small to fully develop the gymnastic skills of the pupils in Years 3 to 6. There is no designated outdoor play area for children in the Foundation Stage. Most resources are used well, although more could be made of computers and the school library to support learning across the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and are making good progress. • Behaviour is good and the school is helping children become mature and responsible. • The teaching is good and children are expected to work hard. • The school is well led and managed and works closely with parents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of interesting activities outside lessons.

Inspectors are in broad agreement with the parents' positive views. The range of interesting activities outside lessons is good, although many are confined to the pupils in Years 3 to 6.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Over the past three academic years, the results of the school's testing of children soon after entry into the reception class indicate that children join the school with markedly lower than average levels of attainment. They also reveal that the average attainment of boys is significantly lower than that of girls. This provides some explanation for the variations in the attainment of boys and girls later in the school. The boys' language and mathematical skills are particularly low. From this low base, children in the Foundation Stage achieve well due to good teaching. Despite this good progress, most will not have attained the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical understanding by the time they are six years of age.
2. Only ten pupils took the 2001 National tests for eleven-year-olds and 16 took the tests for seven-year-olds. Relatively small numbers make it difficult to draw conclusions from results in a particular year. In the 2001 tests for eleven-year-olds, standards were well below the national average in English and very low in mathematics. They were similar to the national average in science. However, when looking more closely at the group of pupils who took the tests, five had joined the school in the juniors and two of these had particularly low attainment when they entered the school in the year of the tests. These factors explained the poor results for this group of pupils. The school's tracking of the five who had been in the school since the infants showed that they had achieved well. When pupils' performance in national tests since the last inspection is averaged out, a more accurate and fairer picture emerges. On this basis, standards are high enough to be similar to the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Whilst the boys tend to do better than the girls in mathematics, there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls in the other subjects. This analysis of standards reflects the inspection findings. The school has set realistic targets for 2002 that would be likely to maintain these standards.
3. Results in the 2001 tests for seven-year-olds were well below average in reading and very low in writing. The girls did much better than the boys and exceeded the national average in reading and mathematics, although results in writing were below average. The boys' results were well below average in all three elements and adversely affected the overall standards. Close scrutiny of the results since the last inspection reflect this picture and indicate that standards for the boys are not high enough by the end of Year 2, despite some improvement since the last inspection in all three elements. This position reflects the findings of the inspection and indicates a continuation in the upward trend in the standards attained by boys. In 2001, teachers assessed standards in science as well above the national average. Inspection findings judge standards to be in line with national averages by the end of Year 2.
4. In English, speaking and listening skills are below average by the end of Year 2, particularly for the boys. However, this represents satisfactory achievement based on their prior attainment on entry. Pupils' confidence increases well in Years 3 to 6 and standards are similar to national averages by the end of Year 6. Reading is well taught and pupils achieve well. They develop a good knowledge of letter sounds (phonics) and this enables pupils of all abilities to read unfamiliar words successfully. In Years 1 and 2, the below average speaking skills of most average and below

average pupils, particularly the boys, adversely affect their ability to express opinions about what they read, although most read with reasonable accuracy. Most pupils know the purpose of a contents and index page in a reference book. Most pupils in Years 3 to 6 are confident and regular readers. They read a wide range of books, including fiction and non-fiction. Pupils have good understanding of contents, index and glossary pages and use this knowledge to locate information quickly and accurately.

5. Writing is below average overall by the end of Year 2 and is well below average for the boys. By the end of Year 2, most pupils use only simple words and phrases in their writing and ideas are not developed into a sequence of sentences. Letters are not clearly shaped and the spelling of simple words is often inaccurate. In Years 3 to 6, most pupils achieve well in the range and structure of their writing and use these skills well in other subjects. Pupils' achievements in handwriting and spelling, however, are not high enough. Some pupils are not writing in a consistent joined script by the end of Year 6 and many pupils still misspell common words in their workbooks.
6. In mathematics, pupils' achievements in all year groups are mostly satisfactory. Pupils are given opportunities to work across all the required areas of the National Curriculum but by the end of Year 2, standards are below average in most aspects of the subject. Pupils' below average literacy skills have a detrimental effect on their ability to discuss and record their work. Good teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, results in good achievement and, by the end of Year 6, most pupils present mathematical information in a clearer way and are developing their own strategies for solving problems. They have a sound knowledge and understanding of number, shape, space and measures and data handling. At all stages, pupils' quick recall of simple number operations is not as sharp as it should be. Their mathematical skills give satisfactory support to work in subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.
7. Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop sound investigation skills and use simple equipment to make accurate observations whilst carrying out practical experiments. In Years 3 to 6, pupils have good knowledge of life processes and living things, materials and physical processes and develop a good scientific vocabulary. They conduct experiments with the precision necessary to produce valid statistical results and understand the need for fairness when testing a hypothesis.
8. Despite good improvement and achievement over the past academic year, standards in information and communication technology are below average by the end of Years 2 and 6. Key skills have not been developed consistently from year to year and computers are not used enough to support work in other subjects and consolidate and extend computing skills. The work seen in religious education, history and geography is above average and pupils achieve well. In all other subjects, standards are average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory.
9. Pupils who have special educational needs achieve well across all subjects and in all year groups. This is due to the very good support that they receive from classroom assistants and the close co-operative planning between teachers and classroom assistants. Progress is also enhanced by the good individual educational plans that target specific literacy and numeracy objectives geared to their needs. There is some evidence from the inspection of a lack of challenge in the work given to the above average pupils in all subjects and this is reflected in the below average numbers of pupils reaching the higher levels in the national tests at age seven and eleven. The

achievements of these pupils in some of their work are satisfactory but not as high as they ought to be.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Children in the reception class settle into school well and have good relationships with adults and each other. They make the change from home to school well and quickly learn the school and classroom routines. Their behaviour is very good and they play well together sharing and taking turns without squabbling. They are able to work on their own, for example, in one literacy lesson they practised their reading skills diligently while the teacher worked with another group. They know that their classroom has to be tidied up and join in with their classmates to do this.
11. Throughout Years 1 to 6 all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, have very good attitudes to learning. They enjoy school and are very well motivated to do their best. They listen politely, both to the teacher and their classmates, and many are keen to answer questions and be involved. Pupils settle down to work quickly and most show good levels of concentration, even when not directly supervised. They are particularly well motivated by interesting or challenging activities, such as when using the Internet to plot the best route for a school journey. When required, they work together in class co-operatively in pairs and groups. Their capacity for independent study is developing well and pupils use reference media such as the Internet or CD-Rom's with increasing confidence.
12. The behaviour of the pupils, both in and out of the classroom, is very good overall. No pupils have been excluded. The pupils are a pleasure to be with; they are polite and cheerful and know the common courtesies. They show good respect for property and treat books and equipment with care. Behaviour within the school is based on having respect for other people and this becomes second nature to the pupils. This respect and good behaviour leads to an atmosphere within school that is calm, friendly and non-threatening. Playground behaviour is also good. Pupils take good care not to interfere with the activities of others during their play. There was an absence of any bullying or oppressive behaviour during the time of the inspection and from conversations with pupils and staff such behaviour is rare.
13. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils of all ages support each other well and are patient and understanding of those who find the work difficult. They listen to the views of classmates and are spontaneously generous in their recognition of their successes. They mix well together at playtimes and lunchtime. Older pupils support the younger ones, for example, in learning playground games, and there is a real family atmosphere within the school community.
14. Pupils respond well to the school's provision for their personal development. This includes working in different groupings, both within and across year and ability groups, and also includes good opportunities for pupils to assume responsibility. For the younger pupils this includes tidying up the classroom. Such activities are carried out enthusiastically. The duties increase as the pupils move up through the school and by Year 6 pupils have a range of responsibilities that include acting as class monitors and supporting younger pupils during the day. Pupils from each class are elected as members of the school council and play an important role in presenting pupils' views of the school. The school council organises successful fund-raising activities to purchase playground equipment.

15. Attendance during the last academic year was very good, being well above the national average. Attendance has shown a year-on-year increase for the last three years and is better than it was at the time of the previous inspection. There is no unauthorised absence. Punctuality is good and lessons start on time.
16. Overall, the pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour, relationships and attendance and their good response to the opportunities provided for their personal development contribute to the effectiveness of the learning environment that is a strength of the school. Pupils of all ages play together at playtimes and lunchtime and this benefits them positively by enhancing their social awareness and developing their self-confidence. All these aspects of the pupils' development have been strengthened since the last inspection when they were judged to be good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning are sound and meet the needs of all pupils satisfactorily. This judgement is made on evidence from the lessons observed during the inspection and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' past work. In the 25 lessons seen during the inspection, 44 per cent were good, 52 per cent satisfactory and 4 per cent unsatisfactory. This judgement on the quality of teaching is similar to that made at the time of the last inspection. There has, however been some improvement. Fewer unsatisfactory lessons were seen and teachers' lesson planning has improved. Classroom management has also improved and very little inappropriate behaviour was seen.
18. **The teaching of the children in the Foundation Stage is mostly good and helps children make good progress:**
 - the teaching of reading is good, and as a result, children enjoy books and quickly learn to recognise key words;
 - planning follows the National Literacy Strategy but is adapted to meet the needs of the children;
 - the teacher and classroom support assistant work together well to provide effective small group and individual support;
 - early numeracy skills are taught well; the staff provide opportunities for children to talk about numbers, play matching games and sing number songs to develop the basic steps of mathematical understanding.
19. **The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall with some good features:**
 - reading is well taught and, based on pupils' low attainment on entry, they achieve well;
 - all teachers develop pupils' phonic skills well (the ability to recognise and use letter sounds to read unfamiliar words);
 - planning in both literacy and numeracy follows the nationally recommended structure and provides a consistently satisfactory base for learning;
 - although teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write in a good range of styles and for different purposes, not enough attention is given to the teaching of spelling and handwriting in pupils' workbooks;
 - in numeracy lessons, pupils are taught mathematics for use in real life; this feature of teaching adds meaning and interest to learning;
 - where the teaching of numeracy is less effective, opening sessions designed to improve pupils' mental skills lack pace and do not achieve their objective.

20. Teaching and learning in science, history, geography and religious education is mostly good, being particularly strong in Years 5 and 6. In art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music and physical education, teaching and learning are satisfactory.
21. **The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and helps them achieve well:**
- teachers have developed good individual educational plans that are focused effectively on key aspects of literacy, numeracy and emotional and behavioural needs;
 - very good support is provided by classroom assistants that keeps pupils focused on their work and helps them sustain good progress;
 - teachers plan effectively with classroom assistants and review pupils' progress at the end of lessons; this planning and review process helps them plan subsequent work that develops learning well.
22. **Strengths in teaching and learning across all subjects and in all years are:**
- the good relationships between teachers and pupils that make lessons enjoyable;
 - the very good management of pupils and high expectations of behaviour that develop pupils' concentration and attitude to learning well;
 - good references to previous work in order to consolidate learning and questioning that extends pupils' understanding well; in a science lesson on micro-organisms for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teacher asks, 'what conditions are needed in order for yeast to grow and what practical application might this have?'
 - the successful targeting of boys and girls equally in whole class question and answer sessions.
23. **General areas for improvement in the teaching relate to:**
- the provision of work that is not matched effectively enough to the different needs of the pupils; this weakness means that in a significant minority of lessons and in the scrutiny of pupils' work particularly in Years 1 to 4, the above average pupils are not challenged sufficiently and below average pupils find the work too difficult;
 - whole class sessions that go on for too long and do not involve the pupils enough; these limit opportunities for the development of speaking skills;
 - the planning of personal targets for pupils to help them gain a better understanding of how well they are doing and a lack of comments in the marking of their work to show how they might improve;
 - the use of computers to develop learning across all subjects.

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

24. As at the time of the last inspection, the curriculum provided by the school includes all the subjects required by the National Curriculum as well as religious education. Curriculum provision for children in the Foundation Stage is effective and based securely on the nationally recommended areas of learning for children of this age. However, these children still have no readily accessible outdoor play facilities. For all pupils, the learning of gymnastics is severely hampered by the small size of the hall. The lack of a hall is nearing a solution as a new building is proposed for 2003. Overall, however, the curriculum provision in the school is good. Its breadth and coherence has been maintained while relevant changes and new initiatives have been incorporated.

25. The national initiatives in literacy and numeracy have been taken on board and have begun to have a positive effect on standards. Improvements in information and communication technology have been slower in adoption and there are still some weaknesses in standards in the subject. Developments in religious education and personal and social education, together with the study of citizenship, are already in hand.
26. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Their individual education plans are well constructed and used well by the teachers in the planning of their work. The learning support assistants are very competent and work in close co-operation with the teachers to ensure that the pupils have access to the entire curriculum and make good progress. The parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the decisions about their children's education.
27. The school makes good provision for extending the curriculum outside school hours through sports, dance and art clubs, and other opportunities for tuition in music or French at different times of the year. There is also a full programme of visits to places of educational interest or cultural importance that involves pupils of all ages. These include visits to a butterfly farm and a residential course in Whitby. The school is involved in county visits such as the Church Schools' Festival in Lincoln Cathedral and the Usher Gallery in the city. They are engaged in local community arts' projects as well as being successfully involved in local and national competitive sports.
28. All the activities in the school are open to boys and girls equally, and though there are some limitations of age, such as swimming beginning in Year 4, essentially there is equality of access and opportunity to the entire curriculum.
29. The provision for personal, social and health education is good with some very good elements. The school programme for personal, social and health education includes occasions of free discussion and exploration of matters of concern to all the pupils in circle time (occasions in class when pupils gather together to discuss various moral and social issues). There is also the more formal and successful school council which pupils see as a major factor in having their concerns directly considered by the staff and governors. Sex and relationships education involving the school nurse is provided for pupils in Year 6 with the parents carefully informed about its contents.
30. The school is a significant part of the village community and there is a good deal of mutual support. It is involved in village and church affairs, such as the Harvest Festival. The school provides a gymnastics display at the Digby Feast and provides entries and displays in the village produce show. The school also contributes to the parish magazine. The local community also supports the school considerably through the Friends Association and in providing volunteer support in classrooms and for school outings. There are regular visits from the local police and fire service. The school is involved as a partner with local schools in sporting, dance and artistic ventures and it is prominent in the group of Church schools supporting occasions in Lincoln Cathedral. There have been links with schools in America and there are also links with the local playgroup and the secondary schools to which the pupils go, but these are less prominent. All these links enrich the educational experiences of the pupils and develop their social awareness.
31. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and this is an improvement since the last inspection when pupils' cultural development was judged to be unsatisfactory. The staff are conscious of the contribution that subjects such as art and design, science, English and physical

education, as well as religious education, can make to the pupils' sense of wonder and personal worth. This provides a strong base for their spiritual development and is well supported by the range of visits, which extend the pupils' experience and provide further opportunities for the pupils to experience wonder. The residential trips are also valuable in developing the pupils' self-awareness and personal maturity. Religious education provides good opportunities for the pupils to reflect upon spiritual as well as moral matters.

32. The provision for moral development is very good and is a significant reason for the very good behaviour and personal relationships in the school. Teachers provide opportunities for the pupils to reflect on why some behaviour is acceptable and some is not. The work in circle time provides another forum in which the pupils can discuss openly their feelings about right and wrong. Studies in history and geography provide other occasions when larger matters involving adult behaviour or environmental issues are discussed. The work of the school council, as well as the variety of jobs which the pupils willingly undertake to ease the running of the school, enhance the good provision for social behaviour. They are encouraged to look out for one another and the younger pupils at playtimes. The high quality of relationships between staff and pupils and between the pupils helps to produce the strong family atmosphere that is a feature of the school.
33. The school's provision for cultural development was found to be unsatisfactory in the last report. That judgement has been reversed; it is now good. This judgement applies to both the provision for the pupils' own cultural traditions as well as those of other traditions. The programme of religious education provides information and insight into the beliefs and behaviours of Jews, Muslims and Hindus. Work in geography provides insights into life in different countries, as do the links with students from Japan and with schools in other parts of the world. The culture of people from different ethnic and faith backgrounds is used as a stimulus in art and design, music and dance lessons. This enables the school to be inclusive and to tackle issues with openness and sensitivity. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 gained valuable insight into issues of race and colour when discussing the story of Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The school provides a good level of care for the pupils and there are good procedures in place to ensure their safety and wellbeing. This is an improvement on the situation at the time of the previous inspection when weaknesses were identified. These were concerned with supervision at lunchtime and arrangements for playtimes. These have now been remedied. The school is a safe and friendly place in which pupils are happy and secure and enjoy their school life. The high levels of care for the children in the Foundation Stage help them settle quickly and learn effectively. The very good relationships that exist throughout the school make it easy for pupils to talk to staff about any worries they may have. The personal development of the pupils is well promoted through lessons, assemblies, responsibilities and individual attention. Although there is limited formal monitoring of personal development, teachers know the pupils well and any concerns are shared between staff and acted upon.
35. There are good child protection procedures. The headteacher is the child protection liaison teacher and has had relevant training. Staff are briefed on individual cases and, where necessary, the school involves outside agencies. Class teachers are very aware of pupils' needs and give good support to them all in class, particularly those with special educational needs.

36. The school promotes and monitors attendance well. Most parents inform the school if their child cannot attend and unexplained absence is followed up immediately if there is any specific concern. The headteacher strongly promotes the importance of good attendance and works with families of pupils with poor attendance records to bring about improvement. Registers are properly maintained and monitored.
37. The school's management of behaviour is very good. There is a clear policy on positive behaviour that ensures consistent behaviour management across the school. Staff set a good example and have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils know what is expected of them and for most it is second nature to conform. Pupils respond very quickly and positively to teachers' instructions and lessons proceed smoothly and without fuss. This leads to an atmosphere that is conducive to effective learning. Midday supervisory staff manage playtimes sensitively and this has a positive effect on playground behaviour and safety.
38. The management of health and safety on a day-to-day basis is good and the governors' involvement is also good. This is an improvement over the situation at the previous inspection when the governors' involvement was unsatisfactory. A governors' committee carries out an inspection every term and risk assessment is well established. There are appropriate fire procedures and arrangements for the testing of portable electrical appliances. First aid procedures are sound and several staff have first aid qualifications. Accidents are properly logged and parents are notified in writing in the event of any serious accident. The school is kept clean and tidy by the premises staff.
39. There has been satisfactory improvement in the methods and use of assessment since the last inspection. There are good systems to assess children soon after entry into school and these enable teachers to highlight any potential special educational needs, and to group pupils according to ability. In all other year groups, the systems for assessing the pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science meet the needs of the school satisfactorily. They provide clear and adequate information that is useful in developing the curriculum and for calculating realistic targets to be achieved in those subjects. These systems are not too burdensome on the staff of this small school where teachers have to carry several responsibilities.
40. The formal assessment for other subjects is being developed satisfactorily. It has been helped by the adoption of the National Qualifications and Curriculum Agency guidelines for most of these other subjects, except art and design and religious education, since they already provide a good basis for schemes of assessment. Assessment procedures for pupils who have special educational needs are good and enable teachers to track individual progress successfully and monitor achievements against targets in their individual education plans.
41. The analysis of test results has been used effectively to highlight groups of pupils and areas within the curriculum, such as underperformance by boys at seven years of age. Where this has been done, it has met with some success in raising standards. In some classes, pupils have been set targets for writing, either individually or as members of a particular ability group. The school is trying out this good approach in advance of introducing it as school policy. This exercise enables a proper balance between the effort involved in managing the system of assessment, and the outcome in improved standards.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The school has a good relationship with the parents and this has a beneficial impact on their children's learning. This is a similar situation to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. The views of parents, expressed at the pre-inspection meeting, in the questionnaires and during discussions in the inspection week, were all strongly supportive of the school. Parents see the school as providing a good education and having a positive work ethic. They see their children liking school, being well looked after as they grow and develop. All find the school extremely welcoming. The inspection findings confirm these positive views.
43. However, one in five of the large number of parents who responded to the questionnaire feel that the school's provision for out-of-school activities is unsatisfactory. The inspection finds that the range of activities available, both currently and through the year, is good and compares favourably with those offered in many schools. More of the activities are available for the pupils in Years 3 to 6, but there are still some activities available for pupils in Years 1 and 2.
44. The information provided to parents about their children's progress and about general matters is satisfactory. There is an informative and regular newsletter from the headteacher giving diary details and other items of general interest. Each term, parents receive useful information on the curriculum to be studied. The prospectus and governors' annual report both contain the required information. Pupils' annual reports meet statutory requirements. They give details of the curriculum studied but most do not have enough comments on how the pupils might improve and their progress against specific individual targets. Parents of new pupils get good initial information, including how to help their children at home. A nice touch is that older pupils write a letter of welcome to children due to start in the reception class. Parents' views are actively sought through regular questionnaires, and such views are taken into account in the planning and development of the school. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress and are invited to attend all relevant reviews.
45. Parents make a good contribution to the learning of their children and to the life of the school. A good number of parents help in the school and on trips and provide valuable help that the school on its own could not afford. Discussions with teachers and the evidence of the pupils' reading diaries show that a good proportion of parents provide active support for their children's learning at home. The school's homework policy provides a structured programme that consolidates work learnt in class and helps pupils develop good working habits. The school organises parent education evenings on topics of interest and these are generally well attended. Attendance at the two consultation evenings on pupils' progress is high and the headteacher makes visits to families who are not able to come in to school. There is an active Friends Association that supports the school financially through its fundraising. It also helps in very practical ways, for example, by producing 'story sacks' for pupils in reception and Years 1 and 2.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. There has been much improvement since the last inspection, where weaknesses in leadership and management were identified. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and governing body are now good. The headteacher has a clear understanding of how to move the school forward and secure improvement in standards. The capacity for further improvement is good.

47. This is a small school and the headteacher has a heavy teaching commitment as well as many areas of responsibility. He has established good relationships with staff, parents and governors and is clear about how he wants the school to develop. He provides inspiration and motivation for the staff and his own good teaching is an example of good practice. The governing body and parents are supportive of his leadership and appreciate the ways in which he gets results. Pupils also speak highly of their headteacher. The headteacher, staff and governors strongly support the ideals of inclusion and welcome all pupils, including those with special educational needs, as important to the school.
48. The school has a good, comprehensive set of achievable aims that are reflected well in all aspects of its work. In particular, the commitment to good relationships is a strong feature of the school. The school development plan sets out clearly the current priorities for the school, and there is detailed corresponding analysis on expenditure, timescales and success criteria. Pupils' performance in national tests is thoroughly analysed resulting in modifications to the curriculum, for example, in highlighting pupils' writing experiences as an area for development and the low standards of the boys at seven years of age. There is a good programme for the monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and this has given the school a good general view of how teaching and learning are developing. However, the majority of monitoring is too broad and does not focus enough on specific issues such as the standards being achieved by pupils and the impact of teaching on pupils' learning.
49. Subject leadership, including special educational needs and the Foundation Stage, is mostly satisfactory, considering the wide range of subjects each teacher has to be responsible for. Good arrangements for the training of teachers, linked to both the school's needs and the need of the individual, keep the teachers and teaching assistants well informed of new developments in their subjects. The knowledge gained from this training is shared well between the small staff.
50. Performance management is well established in the school and is viewed positively by all staff who are committed to improvement in their own teaching. The headteacher's own targets are appropriate to further the development of key aspects of the school's work. Initiatives involving other schools and agencies are used well to provide enrichment to the curriculum.
51. The governors' role in the strategic management of the school is effective and progressing well since the last inspection. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They are supportive and constructively critical of the headteacher and are recognised as being important in the school. Governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs have a good understanding of their role and a good knowledge of what is happening in their area. The governors are active and keep themselves well informed about what is going on in the school. They fulfil their statutory duties effectively and through a sensible committee structure discharge their duties well. Governors have a good understanding of the budget-setting processes and the link between school priorities and financial planning. They have a sound understanding of the principles of best value. Educational priorities are supported well through the school's financial planning and all grants are used for their specific purpose.
52. Staffing is adequate and satisfactorily deployed. The teachers are well supported by learning support assistants who provide very good support for individuals and groups of pupils. The administrative staff provide very effective support and take much of the routine management tasks away from the teachers. This enables them to

concentrate on teaching. The caretaker keeps the school very clean and well maintained. Teaching space is sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum and outdoor space is good for the numbers on roll. The school does find the space for physical education very limiting, although plans for a new hall have recently been approved. There is no designated, fenced outdoor play area for the children in the Foundation Stage and this restricts opportunity for the development of key physical and social skills.

53. Resources are generally satisfactory, and there has been an improvement in the resources for religious education since the last inspection. They are now adequate to meet the needs of the locally agreed syllabus. However, there are weaknesses in the provision of non-fiction library books and large climbing apparatus for physical education. This places some limitations on the development of reference skills and gymnastics. The library is not used as well as it should be, although there are plans to extend it when the new hall is built. Resources for design and technology are held centrally and neither organised nor available in sufficient quantities to allow pupils to access all aspects of the National Curriculum design and technology programme. Resources for children in the Foundation Stage and for those who have special educational needs are satisfactory and support learning well. The available resources are generally used well, although there is insufficient use of computers across all subjects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to improve standards and the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should continue to work to:
- 1) Raise standards by the age of seven in literacy and numeracy, primarily for the boys, and in all year groups raise standards in spelling and handwriting by:
 - a) encouraging boys to talk more about what they read and express opinions in a wider range of contexts;
 - b) taking more opportunities to encourage them to write at greater length by reviewing the use of commercially produced worksheets that only demand one word or short written responses;
 - c) using computers more to help stimulate the pupils to want to write;
 - d) ensuring that pupils form letters correctly and write in a consistent joined script by the end of Year 6;
 - e) developing pupils' understanding of spelling patterns more effectively;
 - f) improving pupils' competence in mental mathematics;
 - g) in Years 1 and 2, encouraging pupils to talk more about their mathematics and improving their understanding of place value; and
 - h) focusing monitoring more sharply on what is working well, and what is not, with the above issues.

(paragraphs 3-6, 18, 19, 23, 48, 66, 69, 72, 73, 75, 77, 79, 82)
 - 2) Raise standards in information and communication technology by:
 - a) developing key skills consistently from year to year;
 - b) using computers more across all subjects; and
 - c) planning activities to develop the control and modelling aspects of the subject.

(paragraphs 8, 23, 25, 75, 86, 90, 95, 99, 107, 108, 111)
 - 3) Achieve a better match between the work given to pupils and their different abilities across all subjects by:

- a) ensuring activities provide more challenge for the above average pupils and are not too difficult for the below average pupils; and
- b) extending the setting of individual and group targets in writing to other key areas of learning.

(paragraphs 23, 74, 80, 90, 93, 114)

- 4) Provide a designated and safe outdoor play facility for the children in the Foundation Stage that develops their physical and social skills more effectively.

(paragraphs 24, 52, 65)

It is recognised that the school is aware of these issues and has begun to take some effective action.

In addition to the key issues above, the school should also consider including the following less significant issue for inclusion in the action plan:

- In the marking of pupils' work, include more comments on how the work might be improved.

(paragraphs 23, 74, 80, 91)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	0	11	13	1	0	0
Percentage	0	0	44	52	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	105
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	12

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	19

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	6.1
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	7	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	4	6
	Girls	7	5	7
	Total	13	9	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (62)	63 (69)	81 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	3	9
	Girls	7	4	7
	Total	11	7	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	69 (62)	44 (85)	100 (85)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

The numbers of pupils taking national curriculum tests has been very small i.e. ten or less. The test results of such small numbers of pupils are not a reliable guide to the standards pupils achieve. The test results are therefore not published.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	101
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.3
Average class size	26

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	110

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	236,450
Total expenditure	233,225
Expenditure per pupil	2,221
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,167
Balance carried forward to next year	4,234

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	105
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	38	0	6	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	52	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	44	4	2	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	52	7	6	0
The teaching is good.	56	42	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	43	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	20	6	2	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	46	45	9	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	37	4	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	42	0	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	37	13	7	6

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

55. The children in the Foundation Stage are taught in a small class alongside the younger and lower attaining pupils in Year 1. Generally a good balance is maintained in the planning between the needs of the Foundation Stage children and those of the Year 1 pupils.
56. Levels of attainment are assessed soon after the children join the class using the Durham University Pips scheme. The results, over a number of years, show that children join the school with markedly lower than average levels of attainment. The tests also indicate that the average attainment of boys is significantly lower than that of girls. This provides some explanation for the variations in the attainments of boys and girls later in the school. The boys' language and mathematical skills are particularly low.
57. From this low base, children in the Foundation Stage achieve well due to good teaching, however, most will not have attained the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and mathematical understanding by the time that they are six years of age.
58. The staff in the Foundation Stage consists of a class teacher and a learning support assistant. A number of parents provide additional and useful support. The children are admitted to the school in the September following their fourth birthday. Some of the children attend one of the local playgroups for up to three days a week in preparation for attending school. Parents can defer their children's entry until they are five, or they can attend part time for a short settling-in period.

Personal, social and emotional development

59. The school rightly prides itself on being like a large family. Children joining the Foundation Stage find the classroom a comforting place and the staff and other children welcoming. This helps them to make the change from home to school well. The gentle and supporting style of the teacher and learning assistant ensures that this smooth transition from home to school continues. The children learn to relate positively to one another in the classroom and at playtime; they share resources and learn to express their views, talk together and listen to each other. They quickly pick up the working atmosphere of the class and of the school. The good quality of the teaching ensures that they are keen to learn and persevere with tasks for longer periods of time, whether it is painting a picture or identifying the order of animals in a race. They work co-operatively, for example, when using construction equipment in pairs in the well-controlled atmosphere of the classroom. They learn to change quickly for the physical education sessions, which they enjoy. They dress up and play different roles in the afternoons when freer play takes place. Most of the children attain the early learning goals in this area of learning during their first year in school, and are ready for the National Curriculum studies in Year 1.

Communication, language and literacy

60. Most children start school with particularly low attainment in this area of learning. This affects the overall levels of achievement, even though they make good progress in

language development in this class. A significant minority of the children has difficulty articulating some letters and sounds. This has a continuing adverse effect on activities, such as matching sounds and letters. Although the staff are careful to correct mispronunciations and provide good models of speaking for the pupils to copy, their progress is slow. The children enjoy the pre-reading activities with books, listening to stories and discussing them. This prepares them well for early reading.

61. The teaching of reading is good and the children in the reception year make good progress. The planning of the work in literacy follows the general pattern of the National Literacy Strategy in this mixed-age class, but the work is also carefully matched to the needs of the younger children in the group activities and in the standard of work expected of them. The above average children generally achieve the early learning goals by the time they move into Year 1. While they make good progress, the average and below average pupils are unlikely to fully achieve these.

Mathematical development

62. The children join the school with a generally limited experience of mathematical ideas and vocabulary. The staff encourage talk about numbers, sing number songs and rhymes and provide number and object matching activities to give the children the basic steps in mathematical understanding. For example, the children enjoy matching the symbols used to represent a number and names to patterns set on different coloured shapes on a wall display. In role-play games the staff introduce real life mathematical problems, such as those involved in sharing out equipment between a number of pupils. The children learn the correct order of numbers and use this knowledge to place animals in a race. Good opportunities are provided for the children to become familiar with the meaning of 'more' and 'less than' and 'before' and 'after', especially with reference to time. Children put the events of their days in sequence and learn about the times when such events as lunchtime, or the beginning of the school day, take place.
63. The quality of teaching is good in this area of learning. The benefits, of the close co-operation between the teacher and support staff are clearly illustrated in the way they carefully check with each other how particular children respond to the work. In the recognition and use of numbers and shapes and their application in everyday activities, the children make good progress from a low entry level, although only about half are likely to attain the early learning goals in this aspect of their learning.

Knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development

64. Through a wide range of experiences and activities, the children investigate and explore the world around them. They are taught to look carefully at objects and creatures. They find out about living things and investigate different materials comfortably achieving the early learning goals related to the basis of science. They investigate how things fit together, and how to build objects, such as imaginary cars or rockets from construction kits. In conversation with members of staff and other adults, they learn to think and talk about what might happen if they choose to do one thing rather than another. In the study of time and the sequence of days in a week and the seasons in a year, the children achieve the early learning goals that underpin later understanding of history. In work on time, the children learn about past times and about anticipating the future as they talk about events like birthdays. Frequently, they record what they have been thinking or talking about by painting imaginative pictures where they experiment with colour, texture and line. On other occasions they make clay models and figures, exploring three-dimensional shapes.

65. The teaching in these areas is imaginative and well planned to extend the children's ability to explore and express ideas. They listen to music, learn songs and dance, not only for their own amusement and development, but to share these in performances for parents and friends. They join in with the religious education studies, in collective worship and in grace before meals. These activities develop sensitivity and understanding of the beliefs of others. The good teaching and learning in these areas prepares the children well for National Curriculum studies in geography, history and religious education, as well as art and design. Most of the children achieve the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative development expected of them by the time they are age six.

Physical development

66. The children's physical development when they arrive in school is average on the whole, though a number lack experience of a range of different types of pencils, crayons and brushes or scissors. The variety of tasks they are given in school quickly encourages them to develop the skills to use them effectively. They are successfully taught to run and jump, and throw and catch reasonably well. These activities are taught well and most children reach the early learning goals in these aspects of their physical development by the time they are six. They understand the need to warm up and cool down when exercising; they carefully follow the clear instructions of the teacher and move about the small hall safely without bumping into each other. As at the time of the last inspection, there is no readily accessible and safely fenced area suitable for their outdoor play and for using large wheeled toys as well as scrambling and climbing resources. In spite of the good efforts put in by the staff, these aspects of their physical and social development that are usually developed through vigorous play interspersed with static learning, are hampered. The smaller finer skills involved in cutting and folding, in painting and writing are well taught and the children make good progress with them.

ENGLISH

67. Overall standards in English are below the national average by the end of Year 2, although in relation to pupils' prior attainment, their achievements are satisfactory. The standards achieved by girls are broadly average but the standards achieved by the boys are well below average and should be higher. By the end of Year 6, standards are similar to the national average and the gap between the standards of the boys and girls has closed. Standards are above average in reading and average in speaking and listening and writing. This represents good achievement, particularly for the pupils in Years 5 and 6 where much of the teaching is good. Results have fluctuated since the last inspection due to the small numbers involved. When averaging out pupils' performance since that time, national test results paint a similar picture.
68. When children enter the school, most have speaking and listening, reading and writing skills that are below average. This is particularly marked for the boys who have outnumbered the girls significantly over the past three years. Teaching is mostly good in the Foundation Stage and this enables children to achieve well in these aspects of their learning. Whilst teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and enables pupils to improve at a reasonable rate, it is not strong enough to compensate fully for the low starting point of many of the boys when they reach the age of seven. Mostly good teaching in Years 5 and 6 leads to good achievement and the rate of progress in pupils' learning increases markedly.

69. Pupils who have special educational needs have well-focused individual education plans that target the development of key weaknesses in their learning. Careful and effective planning between the teacher and classroom assistants ensures that work is geared to meeting these needs. Very good extra support is provided during literacy lessons and in small group and individual sessions in small areas outside the classroom. This good level of provision is successful in helping these pupils to make good progress with their reading and writing.
70. All teachers have high expectations of behaviour and very good classroom management. Pupils know they need to work hard and behave well. By the end of Year 2, they listen politely to what others have to say and seldom interrupt. They convey simple meanings to teachers, other adults and pupils, speaking audibly. Above average pupils are beginning to extend their ideas by providing more detail and speaking at greater length. Generally, however, speaking and listening skills are below average, particularly for the boys. Most seldom ask questions to clarify their understanding or take different views into account. They do not speak with clear diction and appropriate intonation or organise what they say. As pupils are given more opportunities to speak in front of others, their confidence increases as they move through Years 3 to 6. By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are average. Pupils begin to question in order to clarify their understanding and average and above average pupils use a good vocabulary when making contributions relevant to the topic. In a science lesson in the class of Years 5 and 6 pupils, for example, pupils reported back to the class using words such as 'micro-organism' and 'carbon dioxide' accurately.
71. Reading is well taught and pupils achieve well. Given their limited skills on entry, girls do well to attain satisfactory standards by the age of seven and all pupils do well to attain above average standards by the age of eleven. Pupils' phonic skills are developed well and enable pupils of all abilities to read unfamiliar words well. In Years 1 and 2, the below average speaking skills of most average and below average pupils, particularly the boys, has a detrimental effect on their ability to express opinions about what they read. The above average pupils have good recall of the plot and characters of the stories they read and are able to make simple predictions about what might happen next. Average and above average pupils have satisfactory understanding of the purpose of a contents and index page.
72. Teachers in Years 3 to 6 build on this base well and most average and above average pupils are confident and avid readers. They put good expression into their reading, taking note of the effect of punctuation when reading aloud. They read a wide range of books, including fiction and non-fiction. Above average readers talk knowledgeably about biographies and autobiographies. For example, one pupil explained that biographies are written in the third person and autobiographies in the first person. Below average readers show interest in books and try hard with their reading. Their phonic skills enable them to read with reasonable fluency, although they are not yet putting any expression into their reading. Pupils have good understanding of contents, index and glossary and use this knowledge to locate information quickly and accurately.
73. Writing is below average by the end of Year 2 and similar to the national average by the end of Year 6. By the end of Year 2, above average pupils are able to sequence a series of sentences correctly, for example, to retell the story of 'Goldilocks'. They write a series of simple sentences that are clearly demarcated by capital letters and full stops. They write good factual accounts of various events such as a Teddy

Bear's party with letters clearly formed. Average and below average pupils use only simple words and phrases in their writing and ideas are not developed into a sequence of sentences. Letters are not clearly shaped and the spelling of simple monosyllabic words is usually inaccurate.

74. From this low base, writing develops satisfactorily through Years 3 to 6. In terms of the range and quality of writing experiences, pupils achieve well. They have opportunities to write imaginative stories, poetry, factual accounts, letters, biographies, autobiographies and instructions. Average and above average pupils make good vocabulary choices to interest the reader. For example, one pupil wrote 'the buildings had their heads in the sky; they were like giants turned to stone'. Another pupil wrote 'the sea gently glides backwards and forwards; the sun is glowing like a boiling furnace'. Pupils use their writing well in other subjects. They write good factual accounts in history, for example about the Vikings and Tudor monarchs. They express their feelings and opinions well in pieces of writing in religious education. Standards in spelling and handwriting for most pupils are, however, below average and pupils' achievements are not high enough in this aspect of writing. Handwriting is good in pupils' handwriting books but teachers do not expect the same good standards in pupils' workbooks. There is a significant minority of pupils who are still not writing in a consistent joined script by the end of Year 6. Many pupils still misspell simple polysyllabic words in their workbooks. Pupils have regular spelling tests but teachers do not place sufficient emphasis on the teaching of spelling patterns in literacy lessons.
75. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs. One lesson in the Years 1 and 2 class was judged to be unsatisfactory. The strengths outlined in the last report have been maintained. Teachers continue to use good questioning in order to assess and develop understanding. For example, in a lesson for the Years 5 and 6 pupils the teacher asked pupils to try and explain the difference between skimming and scanning of a text. Clear instructions are given to the pupils so that little time is lost in starting group and individual work. In all year groups, resources are used well to develop understanding. Big books, word charts, whiteboards, videos and pictures are all used effectively in literacy lessons. In a class for Years 1 and 2 pupils, for example, a video of a television programme on the development of phonics captured the pupils' attention and motivated them to want to work on the follow-up activities. Reading is taught well with good attention to the development of phonic skills a key feature in most lessons. Pupils are expected to work hard and they respond by persevering well with their work. In a significant minority of lessons and in the scrutiny of work, some tasks given to groups and individuals are not matched well enough to their individual needs. This slows down progress to a satisfactory, rather than good, rate.
76. Teachers' lesson planning has improved since the last inspection with teachers making clear to pupils what they will learn in the lessons. Lesson planning is now satisfactory overall with good examples in Years 5 and 6. In a few of the lessons where teaching is less effective, opening whole class discussions drag on for too long and pupils' lose interest. In the closing review sessions of some literacy lessons, the activity is too rushed and fails to fully explore any weaknesses in pupils' understanding. Whilst teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write in a good range of styles in English and across other subjects, they rely too heavily on commercially produced worksheets, particularly in the infants. These are not geared enough to the different needs of the pupils and often make too few demands on them

to write at length. Most teachers do not use computers frequently enough to consolidate and extend learning in the subject.

77. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. A good scheme of work forms a solid base for teachers' planning and good assessment procedures have been introduced this academic year. Personal targets for pupils' writing have also been introduced this year. It is too early to assess their impact on learning. However, there is little reference to them in teachers' marking and they have not been extended to include reading. The co-ordinator has a general view of the quality of teaching and the standards across the school through analysis of pupils' performance in national and school tests and through scrutiny of teachers' planning. She has been in post for about 18 months but has not yet had the opportunity to see other teachers teaching in order to fully assess what is working well and what is not.

MATHEMATICS

78. In relation to their low attainment on entry, pupils' achievements in the subject are mostly satisfactory. They are good in Years 5 and 6. This mirrors the quality of teaching in the subject. By the end of Year 2, standards are below average, mainly because boys do not do well in the tests and too few of the pupils attain the higher Level 3. By the end of Year 6, pupils' achievements are good and standards are similar to the national average. This picture of standards is largely reflected in the performance of the pupils in national tests over the past four years.
79. There is considerable variation between the levels of mathematical understanding of different groups of children when they join the school so that the potential for high achievement also varies from year to year. The school carefully uses and analyses the tests given to pupils on entry and throughout the school to try to identify how each group of pupils can best be helped to achieve well. This careful planning is easily upset by the movement of pupils into and out of the school, since the performance of one or two pupils can affect the overall performance of the year group considerably. The careful analysis of the pupils' performance is used well by the headteacher, who is also the co-ordinator for mathematics, to set targets for the subject and to identify those areas that need most effort if standards are to improve. This has resulted in, for example, the decision to target mental mathematics as an area for improvement in the latest round of planning. This priority is appropriate since for most pupils the quick recall of simple number operations is not as sharp as it should be.
80. By the end of Year 2, pupils have experience of working on using and applying their mathematics, number activities, shape, space and measures and handling data. Most pupils, however, do not discuss their work well by using mathematical language and find it difficult to explain why an answer is correct. Their knowledge of place value (how the position of a number affects its value) is unreliable. They develop a satisfactory knowledge of the properties of simple shapes and measures. Their below average writing skills have an adverse effect on their ability to communicate their findings adequately in simple tables, charts and graphs. Good teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, result in good achievement by the end of Year 6 across the areas of mathematics required in the National Curriculum. Pupils present information in a clearer way and are developing their own strategies for solving problems. They develop a sound understanding of place value and add, subtract, multiply and divide whole numbers and fractions with good accuracy.
81. The overall improvement in the teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection has resulted from the general adoption of the National Numeracy Strategy,

and the associated training that staff have received. In the classes for the Years 1 to 4 pupils, where the adoption of newer and more effective methods has not been entirely accomplished, the pupils' progress is slower and their achievements are not as high as in other year groups. The differences between boys and girls, indicated in earlier test results, were not observed in lessons during the inspection. This suggests that the school's efforts to close this gap have achieved some success. However, there was only occasional evidence in lessons and in the scrutiny of work that above average pupils are being challenged sufficiently as a result of more demanding work. The provision for pupils with special educational needs throughout the school is good, and they make good progress and achieve well. This is the result of careful planning and close support.

82. The teaching of mathematics throughout the school is at least satisfactory, with some good teaching observed in Years 5 and 6. Planning is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and this ensures that pupils are taught all the aspects of mathematics in the National Curriculum. In all classes, a good feature is the teaching of mathematics for use in real life. In the class for Years 5 and 6 pupils, work in capacity and weight linked to the use of decimals was used well to calculate comparative costs of everyday purchases. Pupils in Year 1 learn the names and qualities of regular shapes and use them as they recognise numbers and number patterns from an attractive wall display. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 use sound understanding of shape and measurement to design and make objects in technology. The collection of information in a science lesson for Year 1 pupils about model cars travelling down a slope is used to make graphs which they learn to interpret well.
83. In all classes, the numeracy lessons begin with a session of mental mathematics. Where the teaching is good, this is undertaken at a swift pace and individual questions are targeted at the respective ability level of the pupils. In less successful lessons, the pace and success of this activity is not so marked. Independent work is also encouraged in some of the homework that is set, especially among the pupils in Years 3 to 6. In some classes, the sharing of targets and the discussion of the learning objectives of lessons give pupils a stake in their own learning. This is not yet a common practice throughout the school, so that on occasions among the pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4, they are not clear as to why they are doing what is set for them, and the quality of learning is not as effective. In the better lessons, where the development of mental mathematics is handled enthusiastically, the pupils develop a good facility with numbers and are excited to try to work out more complex sums.
84. A feature of the teaching throughout the school is the good use made of learning support assistants. They provide a good level of help for below average pupils or those with special educational needs, working to the planning provided by the teachers. Additionally, they provide oversight for self-directed groups of pupils, enabling the teachers to give good quality teaching to targeted groups. This increases the pace and depth of learning.
85. Pupils throughout the school are keen and try hard at mathematics; the above average pupils enjoy working with mathematical ideas and finding good, and better, ways of working problems out. Where the teaching is most effective, this is encouraged and the pupils develop a fruitful independence of approach, as in the Years 5 and 6 class.
86. The system of assessment in mathematics is soundly based and manageable. In Years 5 and 6, where it is carried out well, it makes realistic target setting, and the matching of work to the pupils' needs and levels of attainment more effective.

Mathematics is used effectively to support work in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology.

87. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed by the headteacher who is the co-ordinator. He monitors the learning of mathematics effectively and provides good support for the teachers. The governing body maintains a direct interest in the subject through a named governor who is knowledgeable about standards in the subject. Computers are not yet used enough in the development of the subject.

SCIENCE

88. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards are average by the end of Year 2 and are above average by the end of Year 6. This represents good achievement for all the pupils. Over the last four years, standards have remained in line with the national average overall. There has been improvement in the standards for pupils at the end of Year 6 compared with the last inspection report, when standards were found to be average. This is the result of good teaching in Years 5 and 6.
89. By the end of Year 2, most pupils develop satisfactory investigation skills. They use simple equipment and make accurate observations whilst carrying out practical experiments. For example, in a test to compare how far different cars will travel down a fixed slope, pupils were able to predict the result and explain why some cars went further than others. They describe similarities and differences between materials, know that some materials can be changed, for example water into ice, and that materials can be grouped according to their properties.
90. By the end of Year 6, pupils are beginning to explore, observe and ask questions about living things, materials and physical phenomena. They carry out a series of observations and comparisons with the precision necessary to produce valid statistical results. They make sound predictions based on their earlier learning and draw correct conclusions from the evidence gathered. Pupils in Year 6 carry out experiments involving the growing of microorganisms, investigating the best conditions for yeast to culture. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their work, demonstrating a good scientific vocabulary and scientific knowledge across their studies in life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. Good support is given to pupils with special educational needs to enable them to take part fully in the lessons and make good progress.
91. In the lessons seen, teaching is mostly good and is never less than satisfactory to good. Where the teaching is good, staff have a clear understanding and enthusiasm for the subject. Most lessons are planned to include practical work by the pupils, clearly linked to the development of the idea of a fair test. Teachers have good classroom control and high expectation of behaviour. In the minority of lessons where the teaching is satisfactory, activities are not sufficiently matched to the wide range of pupils' ability within the mixed-age classes. This means that work is not demanding enough for some pupils and too difficult for others. The use of the closing discussion session at the end of lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6 is used particularly well to reinforce learning and provide challenging additional work for the above average pupils. There is little evidence in lessons and in the scrutiny of work that computers are used to support and extend learning in the subject.
92. The assessments of pupils' work are sound and the information gained is used satisfactorily to inform the planning of subsequent work. The setting of individual targets for pupils is in its infancy and is not used consistently enough to impact on

learning. Too much emphasis is placed on the use of commercial worksheets for pupils, particularly in Years 1 and 2 and this reduces the progress of the above and below average groups. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory and links with other subjects are identified as an integral part of the science teaching. The two-year cycle of science topics is under constant review to ensure that the statutory parts of the curriculum are delivered effectively within mixed-age classes.

ART AND DESIGN

93. Only one lesson in art could be seen during the inspection. The scrutiny of the pupils' work and teachers' planning indicates that the standards attained at the end of Years 2 and 6 are similar to those expected at these ages and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This reflects the judgement of the last inspection.
94. The school is a visually exciting place for the pupils. The displays of their work, as well as those providing information or stimulation set up by the staff, encourage the pupils to experiment when they paint and draw. There is also encouragement to spend time and effort designing their pictures or three-dimensional sculptures. The pupils write careful appraisals of what they have done, thinking of ways in which it could be improved. This development of critical appraisal makes a useful link with the school's design and technology activities. In some cases, the creative activity is too limited by the organisation of the lesson. For example, in the lesson observed, only a very few were actually painting at any one time so that more time was spent writing about it than doing it. This has a detrimental effect on the pupils' achievements in art and design reduces their enthusiasm for the subject, especially of those pupils with higher potential.
95. There is steady improvement in the quality of the pupils' artwork as they move up the school. They use a broad range of media and materials to achieve a variety of effects in their pictures. The pupils look at the work of artists from the past, and use similar techniques in their own pictures, such as the paintings of designs for a new playground carried out in the style of Paul Klee. They also look at paintings and other artefacts from different cultures and use them as a stimulus for their own creations, both in pictures and in clay work. Australian aboriginal art provided a starting point for some exciting sketches from pupils in Years 5 and 6. Educational visits to places as diverse as a butterfly farm or the Usher Gallery in the city enrich the pupils' imagination and broaden their ideas of what they can make or paint. They have a good effect on their levels of achievement at all ages. The emphasis on designing and evaluating strengthens their ability to make reasoned judgements about their own and others' artwork. This is especially the case with the Years 5 and 6 pupils as they overcome the diffidence in speaking in front of the class and adults, which is a characteristic of the pupils in the other year groups. The good level of support provided for the pupils with special educational needs ensures that they make good progress and achieve well.
96. The teaching observed was satisfactory, and the standards achieved in the work on display and in the pupils' sketchbooks suggest that this is generally the case. The planning is satisfactory and effectively covers all aspects of art and design in the National Curriculum. The development of skills as pupils grow older is well catered for. Pupils try out new techniques in their sketchbooks. They investigate colour mixes and textures; they look at the different tones that can be achieved from pencils with harder and softer leads. The encouragement to do this has a positive effect on the quality of their learning, and on the quality of what they produce. One area of work that is under-represented is the use of information and communication technology in

art and design throughout the school. Though there are isolated examples of good practice among the pupils in Years 3 to 6, especially in desktop publishing, the use of computer programs for art and design is not generally prominent.

97. A notable feature of the teaching is the good co-operation between the teachers, support staff and volunteers, and the generous use made of the talents that are available. The school also supplements the skills of its own staff by bringing professional artists into the school to work alongside the pupils. These artists add much to the development of pupils' skills and their love of the subject. Good use is also made of the opportunities to be involved in joint art ventures with other schools or the community. Pupils enjoy the subject and their behaviour is good. They are generous in the way they assess the efforts of their peers. Art and design plays a significant role in the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
98. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The recording of pupils' progress has recently been formalised but is at an early stage, so that the monitoring of standards is also in its infancy. The school has been successful in maintaining the proportion of time and effort devoted to art and design alongside the weighty national initiatives in other subjects.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Too few lessons were seen for a reliable judgement to be made about the quality of the teaching. However, on the basis of the one lesson, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work and discussions with pupils, it is at least satisfactory. The lesson for the pupils in Years 5 and 6 was judged to be satisfactory. Judgements on attainment and progress are based on similar criteria.
100. As at the last inspection, standards are similar to those expected for pupils' age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through a balanced programme of projects that require them to design and make food and textiles and build from construction kits. By the end of Year 2, pupils design and construct simple models, for example playground equipment, using straws, cardboard and pipe cleaners. They talk about what they have done in simple terms and describe the workings of levers used in displays around the school. In evaluating their work, pupils are encouraged to explain ways in which it can be improved. This self-evaluation is a good feature of the teaching. By the end of Year 6, pupils investigate and evaluate familiar objects, for example, a variety of slippers, considering their use, suitability for purpose and their design. However, there was little evidence throughout the school of either the use of information and communication technology, or of pupils' work using a wide range of tools and materials.
101. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator of the subject monitors the teachers' planning and provides a two-year scheme for design and technology to ensure that key skills are developed progressively from year to year. Information from assessments of pupils' work is used satisfactorily to plan subsequent work and the pupils are encouraged, as part of the design process, to undertake assessments of their own work.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

102. On the basis of the two geography lessons and a scrutiny of work in both history and geography, standards are similar to those expected for the pupils' age by the end of Year 2 and their achievements are satisfactory. By the end of Year 6, the work seen is better than expected for the pupils' age in both subjects and pupils' achieve well. Despite the emphasis on literacy and numeracy, the good standards in history have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of Year 6, standards in geography have improved from satisfactory to good since the last inspection.
103. Geography and history, while taught as distinct subjects, have good provision in the school as part of a two-year topic cycle. This cycle of work preserves the special identity of each subject well and also brings them together in productive ways that make sense to the pupils. This approach has ensured pupils get meaningful experiences in both subjects and pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects as they move up the school. However, because of relatively lengthy breaks between topics that have a historical or geographical bias, the development of key subject specific skills is sometimes broken. This is recognised by the co-ordinators of both subjects and there are good plans to address the weakness.
104. In history by the end of Year 2, pupils develop a satisfactory knowledge of famous people and events. They know about the life and work of Florence Nightingale and key features about the Fire of London. They develop a satisfactory understanding of what it was like in the past and how it was different to their own lives. This is developed through topics looking at, for example, modern and old toys and seaside holidays in the past. Teaching is mostly good in Years 1 and 2 and enables the pupils to recognise similarities and differences. It raises their awareness of why and how things change with the passing of time. Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6 and these themes are developed well. Pupils are encouraged to use research skills in lessons to investigate topics on the Ancient Greeks, the Vikings, the Tudors and the Victorians. They use their writing skills effectively to produce good factual and empathetic accounts of features in each period. Teachers make good links with literacy work when studying Greek myths and with geography when mapping Viking invasion routes. These links make the pupils' work exciting and motivates them to learn.
105. In geography, by the end of Year 2, teachers make good links with work in literacy. For example, after reading about Paddington Bear in a series of literacy sessions, pupils followed his route from Peru to London on a world map. Pupils develop a sound understanding of how their own locality differs from a distant one. When studying the Arctic region, for example, they talk about the weather being much colder and are aware of the different animals, people, homes and way of life. Teachers use pictures, maps and books effectively to develop understanding.
106. In Years 3 to 6, teaching of geography is mostly good. Pupils are taught to look for similarities and contrasts across the various units of study. For example, they develop good knowledge of rivers, a mountain environment and a different area of the United Kingdom and are then able to talk about how they are alike and how they are different. Environmental issues were explored well in a lesson for Years 3 and 4 pupils. The pupils collected litter deposited in school over a period of one week. They used their mathematical skills to carefully weigh the litter. With good questioning from the teacher, pupils began to realise the impact this might have on their own environment. Issues such as health hazards and re-cycling were all raised and pupils' understanding was extended well. The practical nature of much of the work and its relevance to a real life situation captured the pupils' interest and enjoyment of learning. In a good lesson where pupils in Years 5 and 6 were being prepared for a

residential visit to a coastal location, good use was made of computers to plot a route from the school to the destination. Good links were made to literacy work when pupils were encouraged to skim and scan reference books for essential information required for the visit.

107. In both subjects, pupils who have special educational needs receive good support and make similar progress to the other pupils. Evidence from one lesson and from a scrutiny of work across all year groups indicates an overuse of commercially produced worksheets that fail to challenge some of the average and above average pupils.
108. Co-ordination of both subjects is satisfactory. National guidelines have been linked successfully to the two-year rolling programme of work and this provides a reliable planning base for the units of work. Planning is scrutinised to ensure consistency and samples of pupils' work are taken in to assess strengths and weaknesses. This scrutiny has brought about changes in assessment procedures that are now satisfactory and identified breaks in the development of key skills from year to year. There are some examples of computers supporting work successfully in both subjects but they are not used enough to consolidate and extend learning in the subjects.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

109. At the time of the last inspection, standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 were judged to be in line with national expectation. Judgements in this inspection appear to show deterioration, with standards judged to be below national expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, National Curriculum requirements are now far more demanding and expectations have increased. The school has not stood still since the last inspection and there has been good progress, particularly over the past academic year, in developing the curriculum and increasing resource provision. This has not yet, however, been in place for a long enough period to have a sufficient effect on raising standards. Evidence from this inspection indicates that some pupils are now getting more regular opportunities to develop key skills and these are beginning to increase progress through the school. There are some examples of computers supporting work in other subjects, for example in literacy, science and geography but this is not as widespread or consistent as it should be if key skills are to be consolidated and extended effectively. There is little evidence of pupils having systematic experiences of the control aspects of the subject.
110. Pupils are introduced to computers in the Foundation Stage and, by the end of Year 2, they develop their mouse and keyboard skills satisfactorily to write and print words, changing font style and size of letters. They access simple literacy and numeracy programs effectively. They use computers for simple wordprocessing and are beginning to use them to organise simple data. For example, in a science lesson the teacher entered data collected by the pupils into a spreadsheet program, producing a graph of their results. However, pupils have limited experience of entering, saving and retrieving work themselves.
111. Scrutiny of pupils' past work, observation of pupils working on computers and discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils, indicate that relevant experiences are now being planned and delivered and standards, though below national expectations, are improving and are much closer to what is expected nationally. Pupils in Year 6 are able to use the touch pad and keyboard effectively to access and interpret information. For example, in a lesson about route planning, pupils accessed the

Internet using their own passwords, and were able to locate and print out a map of the area they were studying. These pupils also enjoy having e-mail contact with pen friends in America. Pupils in Year 3 know about and use the computers' e-mail facilities with the teacher e-mailing each pupil with their assigned work task. They use clipart, re-sizing and positioning images to create an attractive Christmas card. In discussion with pupils, it is clear that many of these experiences are relatively new and much of their past work on computers revolved around wordprocessing. Other key skills, including the use of computers to explore patterns and relationships with the aid of simulations, and controlling events using the computer, are below those expected.

112. Few activities were observed during the inspection involving the direct teaching of skills. The use of the school's four wireless-networked laptop computers should allow for key skills to be taught more effectively, but their use at present is relatively new. There is some good teaching of pupils who have special educational needs by learning support assistants. They use programs designed to develop key literacy skills and reading and writing skills, and individual support at these times leads to good progress. Teachers' expertise and confidence is variable with some teachers having good knowledge, while for others it is less reliable. All teachers are about to start major government-funded training in the use of computers to help offset these variations. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. At present, limited formal assessment systems to record pupils' experiences and progress in the subject, make it difficult for teachers to ensure key skills are developed progressively from year to year. The development of the subject is clearly identified as a priority in the school's development plan.

MUSIC

113. During the inspection, only one music lesson was observed. Too little evidence was available from other sources to make an overall judgement, but that available, from teachers' planning, music schemes and interviews with pupils, suggests that pupils' attainment in music matches the levels expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. This largely reflects the position at the time of the last inspection. All pupils throughout the school make satisfactory progress, based on their prior attainment, and classroom assistants give pupils with special educational needs good support.
114. By the end of Year 2, pupils have good listening skills and identify sounds successfully as high or low. The majority of pupils sing high and low notes enthusiastically and with reasonable accuracy. By the end of Year 6, pupils understand the meaning of harmony and pitch and know that volume and timbre can be structured to create varying moods and effects. They have limited understanding of great composers of the past, but describe and compare a range of music using suitable vocabulary.
115. Teaching in the lesson observed was satisfactory. The teacher's knowledge of the subject was good. The lesson was well planned to include participation by all pupils and opportunities were taken to assess the pupils' abilities. For example, an exercise in identifying pitch to cross imaginary stepping stones was enjoyed by the pupils and allowed the teacher to note improvement in their ability since the last lesson. The pace of the lesson was a little slow and some of the tasks were too difficult for some of the pupils. Recent involvement by the school in large arts projects has boosted staff knowledge and confidence. However, teachers' knowledge is variable throughout the school, with some teachers relying on recorded music programmes

for much of their teaching. Professional musicians visit the school and provide good modelling of lessons to help the less confident staff.

116. The school music policy indicates that all pupils should have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder but at the time of the inspection no tuition was evident. Two pupils receive peripatetic lessons but there are limited opportunities for them to perform in front of others.
117. Not enough improvement has taken place since the last inspection and co-ordination of the subject is unsatisfactory. Although there is a clear, structured approach to teaching music, there is no sufficiently detailed scheme with planning guidance for teachers who are non-specialists. Insufficient opportunities exist for pupils to perform in front of their peers, for example, taking an active part in school assemblies. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and planning, but there has been insufficient focus on improving teaching and learning or raising standards.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118. No judgements were made about standards in physical education in the last inspection report. The deficiencies in provision for the subject noted then still remain. A new and larger hall for the school, which would enable gymnastics and more vigorous physical activity for the pupils in Years 3 to 6 to be provided, is expected to be available by the start of the next academic year.
119. Standards are in line with what is expected of pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 and in most areas of the physical education curriculum pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The school is at pains to make good the deficiencies of the indoor provision for gymnastics by using the very good outdoor facilities to the full for the pupils in Years 3 to 6. This has a good effect on the overall quality of the pupils' movement and general physical skills and on their fitness. Standards in swimming are good, as almost all the pupils achieve the minimum standards expected of pupils at the end of Year 6. The games skills demonstrated in Years 3 to 6 in football, hockey and stool ball, both in ball control and games tactics, are satisfactory. These pupils have games together so that competitive games between reasonable numbers of pupils are possible. This has a good effect on the pupils' achievements and understanding of the games they play.
120. The absence of space and equipment for gymnastics means that the school works hard at dance; outside support is brought in to enhance standards in this aspect of physical education. The school also participates successfully in local community arts projects involving dance and movement. The extensive grounds support work in athletics for pupils throughout the school during the summer when the weather permits. All the sporting and games activities are open to, and enjoyed by, both girls and boys. The pupils with special educational needs are well supported so that they achieve as well in physical education as their specific needs allow.
121. All pupils change themselves for physical education quickly and are well prepared for physical education lessons. They understand the need to warm up before, and cool down after, energetic activity. They move confidently around the hall which, though small, is kept clear of obstructions to maximise its usefulness. Pupils in Year 1 demonstrate sound control of their bodies and a good understanding of how to use space and move around without banging into each other. They vary the size of the steps they make and the pace at which they move quickly and confidently in response

to the teacher's commands. They hold a balance position well, then change it quickly on a signal. They are well behaved and try hard to do well in lessons.

122. The physical education provided is energetic and provides a good support for the pupils' fitness and health, and this is a good feature of the school's provision for pupils throughout the school. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 demonstrated a good level of skill in the games lesson; they were keen to learn and to improve their skills in order to play the games better. They co-operated well and listened carefully to instructions and comments about their performance from both the teacher and their fellow pupils. They demonstrated sound levels of ball control with their feet and hands that are appropriate to their differing ages. This is true of both boys and girls. They handle hockey sticks generally correctly and persevere to improve that skill. They develop satisfactory passing and shooting skills and the older pupils develop tactical skills well in marking or avoiding opponents. These all benefit the pupils when they meet other schools in competitions. Their record of success is good.
123. The teaching observed in physical education was at least satisfactory and some of it was good. The lessons are well planned and geared effectively to the needs of the pupils. The teachers provide satisfactory opportunities for the consolidation and development of skills. They use their satisfactory knowledge of the subject, and of how it is developed and learned, to ensure that the pupils make sound progress, for example calling on above average pupils to demonstrate skills. They also use praise to bring on the skills of those pupils who find them more difficult. The enthusiasm of the teachers for the games or physical activity is infectious and motivates the pupils strongly.
124. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The planning of the subject, using the suggestions of the National Qualifications and Curriculum Agency, has provided a good basis for a structured assessment of pupils' performance, though it is not used consistently throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Since the last inspection, the school has revised its religious education scheme of work to bring it in line with the new Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus. The teachers have received training from the Diocesan school's adviser. This has enabled them to use the new scheme effectively. Standards in religious education in the last inspection were judged to be satisfactory by the end of Years 2 and 6. Current standards for the pupils at the end of Year 2 have been maintained since then, but they now exceed the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 6. Based on the pupils' general below average attainment on entry, this represents good overall achievement.
126. In Years 1 and 2, pupils study elements from Christianity as well as from Judaism. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 also study Christianity as well as Islam and Hinduism. An important aspect of religious education is the emphasis placed on the pupils reflecting on, and learning from, the religious beliefs and practices that they study. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 thought about, and discussed at length, what the symbols of bread, a candle and a shepherd mean to Christian believers today and what they meant to Jesus when he used them to describe himself. The quality of thinking and discussion in the lesson was high. In the Years 5 and 6 class, the pupils engaged in role play to explore what it felt like to grow up in a restrictive society such as that in South Africa in the sixties. This activity was a prelude to looking at the life and work of Archbishop Tutu. They made thoughtful comments about their feelings and of how he must have felt as a school boy and young man. They showed the same sensitivity

when they considered his current work for justice and reconciliation, clearly understanding what those two ideas represent.

127. The teaching of religious education is at least satisfactory and some of it is good. The planning is sound and generally matches the varying levels of attainment of the pupils. Where the teaching is satisfactory, the degree of challenge for the above average pupils is lower than it should be, as their capacity to handle complex thoughts is underestimated. The pupils discuss the topics they study with good insight and draw out the significance of symbols. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were able to make the link between the symbol of bread, the saying 'I am the Bread of Life' and the Christian communion service. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 drew the distinction between not being able to achieve a position of eminence, variously a scientist or a professional footballer, because of their failure to achieve high enough results in examinations, as against some authority denying them the chance because of their beliefs or skin colour. This degree of insight was due to the sensitivity with which the teacher handled the topic. The training that the teachers have received to implement the new syllabus has increased their sense of security with the topics suggested and this has given a boost of confidence to their teaching.
128. The increased breadth of the subject has brought about improvement in the provision made for the pupils' cultural and spiritual development. Other topics, such as the study of Moses and the adoption of the Ten Commandments, were a useful basis for a discussion about what constitutes right and wrong, and the place of rules in everyday life. These topics provide significant support for the moral and social development of the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively so that they achieve well. No pupils are withdrawn from religious education, which is taught in ways that are appropriate for pupils of all religious faiths, including those who have none.
129. Co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. Planning is discussed between teachers and the development of the revised scheme of work has brought about an extra interest in the subject. The resources for teaching religious education are in the process of being extended, in part from a grant from the Diocese. They are satisfactory, but the limited use of computers to support the subject indicates a gap in the resources, as well as an area of weakness in the teaching. There are currently no consistently used systems to track pupils' progress but the formal assessment of the subject, in line with the new syllabus, is being revised.