

INSPECTION REPORT

NORTHBOROUGH COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northborough, Peterborough

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110700

Headteacher: Mr P K Kemp

Reporting inspector: Mr T Richardson
16500

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 March 2002

Inspection number: 198084

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address:

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Northborough
Peterborough
PE6 9BN

Postcode:

Telephone number: 01733 252204

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D G McLaren

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16500	Mr T Richardson	Registered inspector	Science; information and communication technology; art and design; music	How high are standards; how well are pupils taught; how well is the school led and managed
9756	Mr K Parsons	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
23475	Ms K Tomkins	Team inspector	Mathematics; geography; history; religious education; foundation stage	
23319	Mr V Leary	Team inspector	English; design and technology; physical education; special educational needs; equality of opportunity	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 community, mixed, infant and junior school for pupils aged four to eleven. It is just below average size with 208 pupils on roll, has more boys than girls, with the majority of pupils being of white heritage. There are no pupils with English as an additional language. The school has a very low proportion of pupils with special educational needs and only two of these have Statements of Special Educational Needs for moderate learning and speech difficulties. There are 32 children in the reception class and the proportion of pupils in the school eligible for free school meals is below average at five per cent. A quarter of the pupils live outside the defined catchment area and the school is popular among local residents. Northborough is a Beacon school with a focus on pupils' writing, assessment, gifted and talented pupils and those with special educational needs. Inspection shows that the attainment of children on entry to the reception class is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Northborough is a very effective school that is continuing to improve. The very good leadership of the senior management team and governors results in good teaching that leads pupils to attain well above the national average in English and information and communication technology, and above the national average in mathematics and science. In addition, the school enhances the personal development of the pupils giving them confidence and independence as learners. The Beacon work of the school is highly effective and is helping to raise standards in other schools as well as in Northborough. Overall, the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and the reception class leads to good achievement and high standards in English, and information and communication technology in Years 5 and 6.
- The headteacher provides very good and corporate leadership that is very effective and leads to a positive culture in the school where pupils, teachers, governors and parents are involved in learning.
- Each individual is valued, along with the contribution they can make. This leads to very good personal development for the pupils and very good provision for their social and moral development. In addition, pupils become increasingly confident. They become independent in their own learning and are very well prepared for secondary education.
- The Beacon work is of high quality and is helping other schools to improve as well as raising standards and the quality of assessment in Northborough
- The deputy headteacher provides excellent leadership for literacy.
- The curriculum is enriched with: a very good emphasis on learning through first-hand experiences; the contribution of homework; a wide range of clubs; and the 'show and tell' presentations made by pupils.

What could be improved

- The procedures for promoting good behaviour generally work well but do not support some teachers sufficiently to prevent the occasional lesson from being disturbed by the behaviour of a minority of pupils.
- The quality of teaching in two classes, whilst at least satisfactory, lacks inspiration and challenge.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement. Standards in core subjects have risen and the quality of teaching and learning has improved. All the previous key issues have been addressed well and the school has done much more in providing very good assessment procedures, exceptional leadership for literacy and achieving Beacon status for writing.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

in the top 5 per cent A*

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Most years, the attainment of children on entry to the reception class is broadly average and pupils generally achieve well or very well by the end of Year 6. The school shows an improving trend in English, mathematics and science over the last five years that is ahead of the national trend. It also sets challenging targets for pupils' performance that are usually met each year, including 2002. Currently, children are achieving well in the reception class and are likely to enter Year 1 with attainment in most of the areas of learning that is above average. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain above average results in the national assessments for reading, writing and mathematics, and also in their teachers' assessments for science. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards in mathematics and science are above average. In English, pupils achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 and their attainment by the end of Year 6 is well above the national average. The school's work as a Beacon school for writing leads to high standards in this area; standards in speaking and listening are also high. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology in Years 5 and 6 and show standards and skills that are well above average. In music, a large proportion of pupils benefits from instrumental tuition and achieves well in performance skills. Pupils with higher attainment achieve satisfactorily and are sufficiently challenged in their lessons. Lower attaining pupils achieve well over their time in school and most of them catch up with their peers in other schools by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs show good achievement due to the effective support they receive. The school is very effective in promoting personal development as well as academic success. The pupils gain confidence and independent learning skills that prepare them very well for secondary school. In response to some parental concerns: the temporary cover for an absent teacher in Year 3 is not affecting standards; and the class sizes are not a disadvantage.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are happy to come to school, and work hard at their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave sensibly in most lessons and play outside together very well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There is mutual respect and a partnership in learning between pupils and teachers. Pupils feel valued and willingly help one another. They are proud to take responsibility and confident to present their work to the class.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance figures are well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	very good	satisfactory	good

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

By the end of Year 6, pupils become effective learners with independent research skills and are keen to learn more. The very good teaching in the reception class raises the attainment of the children as well as consolidating all the areas of learning and raising their esteem, independence and confidence. The teaching of English is good in all classes and mathematics is taught satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 with good teaching of the subject in Years 3 to 6. Literacy and numeracy are taught well throughout the school. In particular, good opportunities are taken in subjects other than English to help pupils to improve their speaking, listening, reading, writing and spelling skills. Teachers work effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and provide challenging work for higher attaining pupils as well as helping pupils with lower attainment to achieve well. The quality of teaching observed in Years 5 and 6 was very good. Most lessons in these classes were inspirational, motivating, and challenging and this resulted in pupils giving of their best and enjoying extending their knowledge. There is a good emphasis on pupils learning to find out things for themselves and they are confident to use their new knowledge and to share it with others. Teachers also place a strong emphasis on pupils learning through experience, and as a result, pupils are able to recall a wide range of facts from their visits and understand more. Pupils are given interesting activities to do at home and often do more than is expected as a result. The outcome of this approach is that most of the pupils develop good independent learning and research skills that equip them well for the next stage in their education. However, there are currently some occasions where ineffective behaviour management is affecting lessons in Year 2. Also, some uninspiring lessons in Year 4 are not motivating the pupils sufficiently.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Statutory requirements are met and the school is successfully developing the National Curriculum beyond the recommended minimum provision. There is a very good range of additional activities, clubs, visits and residential experiences. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented exceptionally well and the school's Beacon work is further improving this provision.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils are identified early and effective support is provided that helps the pupils to meet the targets in their good quality individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development. There is very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. In particular, there is a strong ethos that pupils will follow a moral code. This results in well mannered pupils who respect one another and clearly know right from wrong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There is a strong sense of community that helps pupils to become mature and responsible. Very good procedures for assessment are used well to monitor progress. The good procedures for improving behaviour work well where teachers know pupils well. The anti-bullying policy works effectively.

The school has a very good partnership with its parents. They provide a very good contribution to pupils' learning through the support they give at home and in school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for improving the school and is supported very well by a deputy headteacher of high quality. There are very good procedures for teachers with responsibilities to improve the quality of provision in their subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are very well led. They challenge the work of the school and ensure that school improvement is targeted to match the priorities set.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. There are very good procedures for evaluating the work of the school. The action taken to improve the quality of teaching is effective, but not always sufficiently rigorous.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school improvement plan is very good and implemented very well. The school's finances are controlled very well and the principles of best value are applied very effectively. The funding for Beacon work is being used very well.

The school is appropriately staffed but there are some difficulties in recruiting teachers for part time and temporary cover arrangements. Good quality learning support assistants are employed and good use is made of their skills. There are generally adequate resources for learning in all subjects. The school buildings are adequate for purpose and the environment is enriched significantly with a very good field and an excellent orchard area.

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, make good progress and are taught well. • Children behave well and are motivated to work hard and do their best. • The school is well led and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a suggestion or a problem. • Children gain confidence, are helped to become mature and responsible, and are prepared well for secondary education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication from the school could be clearer and parents could be better informed. • Increased playground area and equipment are needed. • Pupils could be more involved in competitive sports.

Inspectors endorse all the positive opinions of the parents. Pupils are sufficiently involved in competitive sports and the school has appropriate plans to improve the playground and provide suitable play equipment. Good information is provided for parents but it could be written and presented in a more lively style.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainments of pupils in Year 6 are usually above or well above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The school shows a trend of improvement in these subjects over time that is ahead of the national trend. In 2001, national assessments show that the Year 6 pupils attained results well above average in English, and above average in mathematics and science. When these results are compared with schools with similar proportions of pupils with free school meals, Northborough pupils are well above average in their English scores, and in line with the average in their mathematics and science. Most years, the attainment of children on entry to the reception class is broadly average. When this is compared with the above average or well above average results of pupils in Year 6 it shows that pupils generally achieve well or very well over their time in Northborough school.
2. The current picture, observed during the inspection, shows that attainment on entry to the school is average. Children achieve well in the reception class and enter Year 1 with attainment in most of the areas of learning that is above average. Pupils then achieve satisfactorily through Years 1 and 2 so that, by the end of Year 2, they attain above average results in national assessments for reading, writing and mathematics (and in teacher assessments for science). Overall, in Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve satisfactorily in mathematics and science so that, by the end of Year 6 their attainment is still above average. However, in English, pupils are currently achieving very well in Years 3 to 6 and their attainment by the end of Year 6 is well above the national average. Closer analysis of the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 shows a slowing down of the rate of achievement in Year 4, with a subsequent acceleration in Years 5 and 6. This is due to the quality of teaching being higher in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 3 and 4. Nevertheless, when comparing the current Year 6 with their attainment on entry and at the end of Year 2, these pupils are achieving well in mathematics and science and achieving very well in English.
3. Pupils with higher attainment achieve satisfactorily and are sufficiently challenged in their lessons in most classes and through the research they carry out at home for their show and tell presentations. Lower attaining pupils achieve well over their time in school. When children enter the reception class, a third show attainment that is below the average for their age. By the time these pupils leave Year 6, most of them have caught up with their peers in other schools and attain the expected Level 4 in English, mathematics and science. Pupils with special educational needs show good achievement, and are suitably challenged. The school is very aware of these pupils' strengths and weaknesses through its assessment and testing procedures in English and mathematics. Teachers use this information effectively and plan appropriate work for individual pupils. They also make sure the pupils receive the necessary support to successfully complete the activities and to achieve success in meeting their targets. All pupils in the school achieve very well in their personal development. The school works hard to promote personal achievement as well as academic success. Parents expressed their pleasure at the confidence and independence they see in their children and remarked how well the school prepares children for secondary education. Inspectors support these views and observed, for example in show and tell sessions, how well prepared the pupils were for their presentations and how effectively delivery was made with confidence and style. Pupils were also observed to have well developed independence in their learning, using dictionaries, reference books and other sources appropriately without having to ask their teachers what to do. These skills, and the self-esteem the school promotes, prepare pupils very well for secondary school.
4. In English, standards in speaking and listening are high as a result of the emphasis teachers place on developing these skills. Teachers expect pupils to articulate their answers with clarity and accuracy and encourage extended replies rather than single word replies. This approach was observed in all subjects and is helping to raise standards in this area. Year 6 pupils read fluently at a standard that is well above average. They are knowledgeable about books and

authors and read with very good understanding as well as considerable enjoyment. The school is a Beacon school for writing and high standards are seen in this. Pupils in Year 2 write for a variety of purposes and set out their work well with handwriting that is usually well formed and easy to read. The pupils in Year 6 are achieving very well and write lively extended stories with vivid description and effective characterisation. They also show a clear knowledge of their audience and adapt their writing style to match. The school has used its opportunity as a Beacon school to devise very good assessment procedures that show in detail which aspects of writing skills pupils do well and which areas could be improved. Teachers use this assessment very well to help pupils to build on their existing skills and encourage them successfully to raise the standard of their writing.

5. In mathematics, by the end of Year 2, pupils are confident with calculations involving tens and units and also multiply numbers by two, five and ten. Pupils in Year 6 calculate accurately using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and apply these skills to decimal numbers and to solving word problems. Higher attaining pupils are challenged effectively and the school has enabled some talented pupils to attend a local secondary school for additional work in mathematics. In all subjects, pupils apply their basic skills of literacy and numeracy to good effect and this helps to improve the standards of their work. For example, in science, the pupils in Year 6 use accurate measurements and precise vocabulary to make sure that their experiments are fair tests. They also know which parts of an experiment should be variable and which should be constant and they apply scientific method well.
6. Pupils show very good achievement in information and communication technology in Years 5 and 6. Prior to this, their achievement is satisfactory, but the very good teaching and interesting work they do on computers in these classes motivates the pupils so that they learn new skills at a very fast rate. In music, a large proportion of pupils benefits from instrumental tuition and achieve well in their performance skills. Some of these pupils play very well and play as a group in three parts with expression and fluency. In history, geography and religious education, pupils are currently attaining standards in line with the national average at the end of Year 2 and then achieving well over their time in Years 3 to 6 so that, by the end of Year 6 their attainments are above the national average. In art, design and technology, music and physical education, pupils achieve satisfactorily and have attainments in line with the national average by the end of Year 6.
7. Before the inspection, some parents expressed concerns whether the temporary arrangements to provide cover for an absent teacher in Year 3 were affecting standards. Inspection shows that this is not the case and the pupils currently in this year are benefiting from good teaching and are likely to achieve well over their time in this class. Some parents also wondered whether the size of classes was having an adverse impact on standards. During the inspection, there was no evidence to suggest that this was the case. However, inspection did reveal that there are currently two threats to standards. The first is the temporary arrangements in Year 2. The school's procedures for behaviour management along with insufficient motivation for the pupils in some lessons are leading to occasions when a minority of pupils disturbs the learning of others and this is currently slowing the rate of progress in this class. The second is the predominance of satisfactory but uninspiring lessons in some subjects in Year 4 that results in pupils in this class not giving the effort of which they are capable and leads to pupils having to regain the momentum for their learning when they move into Years 5 and 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils hold very positive views about their school. They are proud to be members of the Northborough school community, and are very willing to talk about their experiences of school life. Many are personable young people, whom it is a real pleasure to meet. Most pupils are happy to come to school, and are prepared and ready to work hard at their lessons. They complete their homework willingly, and a large number take advantage of the range of lunchtime and after school clubs on offer. They have very good involvement and interest in school activities.

9. The behaviour of pupils in the school is good, an aspect appreciated by virtually all parents. Pupils generally conform well to the school's high expectations. Their sensible behaviour in most lessons means that teachers do not have to spend much time maintaining order, with a clear benefit to the quality of learning taking place. In a Year 5 games lesson on the field, for example, the teacher could concentrate on ensuring that the pupils she was working with made good progress and was able to trust pupils elsewhere on this large field to get on with their task. Even the youngest children in the school in the reception class behave well. In one lesson, for example, a group of children in the computer suite with a learning support assistant concentrated totally on their task for a long period without any disruption, whilst back in their classroom groups of pupils worked well on their individual tasks, allowing the class teacher to concentrate on the needs of the particular pupils she was teaching. Even in the less interesting lessons, pupils do their best, and most resist any temptation there may be to misbehave. There is a minority of pupils in Year 2 who have difficult behaviour and there are others in the class who are willing to follow their lead. As a result, learning in some lessons in this class is currently adversely affected. Pupils' behaviour around the school is very good. The playground is a safe and friendly place, with pupils playing happily together despite the limited space. There have not been any exclusions in recent years, a very good achievement. Neither parents nor pupils regard bullying as a problem, and any incidents of bullying or serious teasing that occur are quite exceptional to the normal run of school life. Pupils respect each other's and the school's property. They look after their environment well and there is no litter.

10. The teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, whilst even those who are relatively new to the school have built good relationships with their pupils in that time. These contribute to a productive mutual respect and partnership in learning. Teachers value the work of all pupils and the pupils are confident to ask for support and guidance when they need it, which has a positive effect on their learning. Pupils' relationships with each other also reflect the strong values encouraged by the school, the key rule in the school's code of conduct being "everyone will act with courtesy and consideration to others at all times". Pupils do respect each other as individuals and understand the impact of their actions on others. They share resources well when working in pairs or in groups, and co-operate well, respecting each other's point of view. In a Year 5 lesson, in which individual pupils gave a talk on a subject that interested them, their classmates listened attentively and politely to the speaker. Pupils throughout the school pay attention to each other's ideas, sometimes changing their own views as a result. They value each other irrespective of attainment levels, each pupil being accepted for their own ability to contribute. For example, pupils with particular behaviour problems are well accepted by the others for who they are. Inclusion is deep rooted in the fabric of the school, with all pupils part of the school community. Low and high attaining pupils work constructively together and no pupil is excluded from pair or group work. For example, in a Year 4 mathematics lesson, those who had understood the task better helped those who were having difficulties, co-operation that enabled all pupils to keep progressing. Boys and girls usually work together unselfconsciously. Pupils in different years often know each other and older pupils play with younger ones. During a playtime, an older girl helped a much younger child who had fallen over, comforting her and taking her to a supervisor. Pupils have the confidence to enable them to relate well to each other and to adults. The school's focus for this term is "manners matter", and the whole school operates in a way that shows courtesy and consideration to each other and to adults.

11. When given the opportunity, pupils take initiative and personal responsibility. The school council allows pupils of all ages to contribute well to the running of the school. Members are proud of their work and that it is taken seriously by school leaders. In lessons, pupils willingly carry out jobs such as handing out books and this makes a significant contribution to the easy running of classes. They take pride in their work, encouraged by the way teachers value it. Even in the reception class, children are keen to show what they have made, such as a paper crocodile with scary jaws, or a picture of a fruit tree drawn on a computer. Further up the school, a Year 5 pupil's presentation on his interest in swimming had taken a number of evenings at home to write and showed real commitment. Pupils appreciate the range of activities provided outside of lessons and they participate well in them. For example, the Morris Dancing Club saw 18 older pupils concentrating hard to improve their performance, with individuals prepared to persevere well when they found it difficult to get a sequence right. In many lessons, the objectives are

shared with pupils. Combined with the way that pupils are given clear personal targets, this allows pupils very good opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

12. Overall, pupils' relationships, attitudes and behaviour are a strength of the school, one which makes a significant contribution towards their attainment and progress. They have at least been maintained from the levels achieved at the time of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school. Most are attentive and follow instructions well. They are confident, show enthusiasm for learning and work well together.
13. Attendance is well above the national average for a school of this type. Unauthorised absences are few in number and pupils arrive at school punctually, allowing an efficient start to the school day. No pupils beyond the early years have an attendance record below 80% and there are no particular groups of pupils with poor attendance. A number of parents take their children out of school for holidays in term time, which can affect their attainment. Rates of attendance show an improvement since the last inspection, although the figures then were adversely affected by the poor record of one particular pupil.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good, and has improved since the last inspection. However, within this overall judgement there are some variations between classes with very good teaching in some years and satisfactory teaching in others. In the lessons observed during the inspection, teaching and learning of at least good quality was a feature in seven out of ten. Almost four out of every ten lessons were judged to be very good or excellent and only two lessons were unsatisfactory.
15. Over their time in school, pupils become effective learners with independent research skills and are keen to extend their knowledge in class and through working at home with their parents. Inspectors observed very good teaching in the reception class that raises the attainment of the children from broadly average on entry to above average for most of the children by the time they move into Year 1. This is as well as consolidating all the areas of learning and raising their esteem, independence and confidence. The school's induction procedures for newly qualified teachers are good and effective support is provided by the reception class teacher. This is helping the teacher in Year 1 to develop her work and realise her potential. Currently, and unusually, there is satisfactory teaching in Year 2, and overall in Years 1 and 2. Pupils' work shows that the regular class teacher in Year 2 is rigorous and has high expectations and that the pupils' rate of learning is slower during her temporary absence. Another teacher is absent in Year 3. However, in this class the temporary arrangements for cover are working well and pupils have a consistently good input from their teacher. The lessons observed in Year 4 were satisfactory overall, with some good lessons seen for literacy and numeracy. However, inspectors noted a common factor that a number of the lessons were uninspiring and delivered at a slow and even pace that did not sufficiently challenge and motivate all of the pupils. The quality of teaching observed in Years 5 and 6 was very good. Most lessons were inspirational, motivating, and challenging and this resulted in pupils giving of their best and enjoying extending their knowledge. This pattern of teaching in Years 3 to 6 has been noted by the school and, from the analysis of 2001 assessment data, appropriate targets have been set with the aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning so that pupils make as much progress in Years 3 and 4 as they do in Years 5 and 6. However, this work has yet to have sufficient impact in Year 4.
16. The core subjects of English, mathematics and science are taught well throughout the school. Teachers' expertise in literacy is particularly evident and good opportunities are recognised and taken in subjects other than English to help pupils to improve their speaking, listening, reading, writing and spelling skills. Inspectors judged the teaching and learning to be good overall in Years 3 to 6 in information and communication technology, physical education and religious education. Teaching is satisfactory throughout the school in music and art and design; and also in geography, physical education and information and communication technology in Years 1 and

2. Insufficient lessons were seen to judge the quality of teaching in design and technology and history; or in geography in Years 3 to 6 and religious education in Years 1 and 2.

17. Where lessons were very good or excellent the following characteristics of teaching and learning were noted:
- Teachers have high expectations and set activities that are challenging and imaginative. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson for pupils in Year 6 the teacher asked the pupils to prepare a briefing paper for the prime minister containing a balanced opinion on the future of food and farming. This led the pupils to work in groups to research demanding texts giving views of differing opinion such as those of organic farmers and producers of genetically modified foodstuffs. As a result, pupils used higher level research skills to extract key points from their reading to use in constructing well reasoned arguments for the debate that followed.
 - Teachers use clear logic in their explanations and check carefully that pupils understand. This was seen in a mathematics lesson for higher attaining pupils in Year 3. The teacher led the discussion with the pupils systematically so that they came to realise that if eighteen divided by three is six, then this equation can be written four ways and that the numbers can be replaced with letters as an abstract formula.
 - Teachers provide work that is interesting and well matched to the attainment of the pupils. For example, in an English lesson in Year 5 pupils were given the task of converting a story into a play script. This captured the pupils' interest and led to very good behaviour as they became absorbed in their work. In addition, the teacher expected that the text would be read with expression and praised each pupil for doing this. As a result, the quality of their reading improved and the clarity of meaning brought through the good expression used helped all the class realise how the text could be written as a script.
 - In a very good lesson in the reception class, the teacher constantly assessed how well the children were understanding their number work and adapted her strategies accordingly. For example, the children first counted frogs in different positions, then children were asked to work out how many were missing, or how many more were needed to make ten. The difficulty of these questions was matched exactly to the ability of each child and this helped them to move on effectively to new levels of knowledge about numbers that make ten.
18. In other lessons, teachers take the opportunities to help pupils extend their basic skills and place a good emphasis on pupils learning to find out things for themselves. This was observed in the 'show and tell' sessions where pupils talked confidently to the class about a topic of their own interest they had researched at home. These presentations demonstrated effectively how pupils use non-fiction books, the Internet and other sources of information and are confident to use their new knowledge and to share it with others. Teachers also place a strong emphasis on pupils learning through experience, for example, through visits to sites of historic interest to aid their learning in history. These experiences are used well and pupils are able to recall a wide range of facts they learn, as these visits help them to remember and understand more about the subject. Another successful feature is where teachers present new topics in a variety of ways. For example, in a science lesson in Year 3, the teacher wanted pupils to learn the names of the major bones in their bodies. The pupils looked at X-rays; they assembled a fabric and Velcro skeleton; pupils examined a model skeleton; they used reference books and CDs to find out the names and functions of bones; and also constructed and labelled a small paper cut-out skeleton. This wide variety of approaches kept all the pupils interested and this helped them to learn more so that, by the end of the lesson, they showed a level of knowledge about the skeleton above the level expected for their age.
19. Teachers themselves are actively involved in learning and this is seen in their specialised knowledge of how to teach writing, and in some classes, in their improved computer skills. This knowledge is then put to good use in lessons and is leading the pupils to better understanding of what they should do to improve, and hence to higher standards. Good use is also made of homework and pupils are given interesting activities to do at home and often do more than is expected as a result. The outcome of this approach is that most of the pupils know how to learn and develop good independent learning and research skills that equip them well for the next stage in their education. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall.

All teachers have an appropriate understanding of the curriculum needs for pupils who have individual difficulties especially in English and mathematics. They take care to plan activities which take account of pupils' prior attainment. They seek out opportunities to involve them in all activities. For example, in a reading session a pupil with a Statement of Special Educational Needs read out loud in a confident manner while the other pupils listened carefully. This inclusive approach has a significant impact on pupils' learning and their self-esteem, resulting in good progress. The special needs co-ordinator provides assessment advice and resources where needed. Learning support assistants are very well briefed and individual education plans for pupils are in place and are of a good quality. These are focused on what pupils should learn next and are sufficiently clear so that teachers and assistants use them effectively.

20. The unsatisfactory lessons were in Year 2 where the class is currently being taught by temporary teachers and were due to:
- Formal procedures for managing difficult behaviour not being made clear enough so temporary teachers are unsure of what to do; and
 - Lesson introductions that did not sufficiently interest all the pupils so that a minority misbehaved and encouraged others to join in.

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

21. The curricular opportunities offered to the pupils are very good and prepare pupils well for the next stage of their education. There is now a coherent whole school plan for the curriculum. Schemes of work are fully in place and are being adapted appropriately to meet the needs of the pupils, representing a significant improvement since the last inspection. All statutory requirements are met. Provision for the foundation stage is good, and the curriculum covers the recommended areas of learning. Children are provided with a well-planned range of learning opportunities that allow them to develop their skills well in the reception class. There is an effective balance of adult-directed and child-chosen activities. For pupils in Years 1 to 2, the school provides a good range of learning opportunities and this is added to very effectively in Years 3 to 6 with additional opportunities, activities and clubs. The curriculum includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. In addition, there is a very good range of extra-curricular activities and clubs provided, as well as a strong emphasis on pupils learning through experience with visits and residential experiences. The school is in the process of adapting government recommended guidelines for National Curriculum subjects to better match the needs of the pupils. These modifications to subjects are based firmly on experience and evaluation. These help to ensure that pupils' learning opportunities cover the required ground, build effectively on what they already know and enhance the quality of learning and teaching. This is also another improvement since the last inspection.
22. The National Literacy Strategy is being implemented at a level of outstanding quality. The literacy curriculum in Years 3 to 6 is a notable feature of the school, and evident in the school being awarded Beacon status in writing. The strong emphasis on literacy and innovative strategies enrich the pupils' experiences in writing, researching, independent learning and the use of information and communication technology. The numeracy strategy is well implemented. Teachers' planning is consistently and securely based on these strategies. Medium and short term planning is generally good in all subjects. This provides a consistency of approach that was lacking at the time of the last inspection, and is proving effective not only in raising standards achieved by pupils, but also in raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can do. In literacy, this is evident in pupils' growing competence in handling a broad range of written texts and in numeracy, in pupils' experiences of a good range of mathematical activities including work on measuring, weighing, symmetry, shape and time. In religious education, work is based on the local agreed syllabus, supported by National Curriculum guidelines. This now provides the required support and guidance and helps to promote pupils' learning in this subject, an improvement since the last inspection. The daily acts of worship meet requirements and provide good support for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

23. Provision for personal, social, and health education is very good. There is a detailed draft policy and a good programme of personal and social education is continuous throughout the school. There are also good elements of health and sex education including learning about the dangers of substance misuse. The curriculum, notably in English, science and physical education, includes appropriate provision for addressing personal social and health education in all year groups. Assemblies also make a significant contribution to the sustaining of good behaviour and personal development. The teachers provide high quality specific lessons on personal, social, and health education. Pupils are encouraged to discuss issues and personal dilemmas. They are given essential facts and the necessary skills and knowledge to enable them to make informed decisions for themselves. For example, Year 6 pupils were provided with the opportunity to talk about drugs, with a particular reference to smoking, in a secure and encouraging environment where pupils and their teacher talked about and acted out key issues such as parent role-models and peer group pressures. This resulted in improving the pupils' listening, speaking and drama skills but more importantly provided the pupils with self-knowledge and strategies to inform and guide their personal decision making. The school's positive and inclusive atmosphere reflects the very good provision in this area.
24. There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are identified as early as possible and appropriate steps are taken to assess their needs, write individual educational plans and provide effective support. The school has great success in involving such pupils in all aspects of school life. Effective teaching and support is a major strength of the provision. Pupils' individual targets are well thought out, and their progress is reviewed regularly. These include goals for literacy and numeracy but do not always emphasise sufficiently how to improve behaviour. The needs of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Needs are met very well, and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement. Individual educational plans are reviewed appropriately and are effective in helping pupils to achieve more. The school promotes educational and social inclusion, and is committed to raising the achievements of all pupils. However, there is a need for the school to extend its special needs provision to include the management of behaviour. It was noted in some lessons that the quality of learning and teaching was diminished by the poor behaviour of a few pupils. Provision for the gifted and talented is a developing area. The school is in the process of assessing their gifted and talented pupils and is already making some effective provision, for example in partnership with a local secondary school. However, the plans for improving this provision are in draft form and full implementation is slow.
25. Provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a wide range of after school activities for Years 2 to 6. These activities are well attended. The school also participates in a sufficient number of competitive sports and other local inter-school sporting events. A good range of visits and visitors is provided to extend and enrich the curriculum. Useful visits are made to areas beyond their locality. Pupils also make visits to their local churches. The clergy are regular visitors to the school, involving themselves in leading assemblies. This results in developing further pupils' understanding of Christian religions and enhances their spiritual, moral and social development. Pupils use the local area well to carry out geography surveys. The upper juniors participate in an annual residential visit. These visits make a positive contribution to their learning and to their own personal development. The school also has some useful and effective links with local businesses. For example, a local business allows pupils to use their sporting facilities on occasions. The school has good links with other educational institutions. The school's Beacon status results in significant and regular liaison with the Soke cluster schools. Also a local high school provides extra specialist teaching in mathematics for two gifted pupils. These inter-school links are highly valued and make a very effective contribution to the pupils' learning and raising the expectations and confidence of the teaching staff.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

26. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall and is a strength of the school. It reflects the aims of the school very effectively. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when the provision was judged to be good.

27. The quality of provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Although there is little evidence of any specific focus on this area being written into lesson plans, pupils experience a range of activities that contribute significantly to their spiritual development. For example, they experience the wonder of magnificent buildings and places of worship through their visits to local cathedrals and stately homes. Residential visits to Derbyshire give them the excitement of standing on a hilltop and admiring the view. Assemblies meet the requirements for collective worship and place emphasis on raising pupils' spiritual awareness. Appropriate opportunities for prayer or silent reflection are included. The effective use of music at the start of assembly creates a calm atmosphere which encourages pupils to be quiet and thoughtful. The school orchard offers pupils a tranquil setting in which they can come close to nature.
28. The quality of provision for pupils' moral development is very good. There is a strong ethos and expectation throughout the school that pupils will follow an appropriate moral code. From the time pupils join the school, behaviour expectations are made very clear and they are encouraged to develop concepts of right and wrong. They learn to respect each other's belongings, taking care of precious items such as a porcelain model fairy brought in for a 'show and tell' session. Class and school rules are displayed around the building and there is a special aim for each term which pupils know well. Staff are very good role models and as a result pupils demonstrate very good manners in and around the school. The monthly cup of achievement helps pupils to understand that their behaviour and that their attitudes to each other are both important and noticed.
29. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. Very good classroom organisation in the reception class means that from the start pupils are encouraged to be independent, use their initiative and share resources. Older pupils take responsibility for different tasks around the school such as preparing the hall for assembly and escorting younger pupils back to class after a family assembly. Visits from pupils from other schools create opportunities for pupils to build positive relationships with others and co-operate and collaborate with them when using the school's facilities and orchard. Visits outside school, including residential ones, also enhance pupils' social development. A school council has been established to enable pupils to voice opinions and take greater responsibility in the school.
30. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school is aware of the need to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society and makes good efforts to provide appropriate experiences. Cultural development is clearly linked with the work done in religious education when pupils learn about other religions such as the Jewish and Muslim faiths and Hinduism. Pupils learn about other countries in lessons and through the school's e-mail link with a school in Canada. In addition, the school has set up a website for the school bear, Olric, who travels to many parts of the world with different pupils from the school who are then responsible for writing Olric's diary. Visits to places such as Chatsworth House and Kentwell Hall, where pupils take part in a Tudor day, enhance their understanding of British history. They learn about their own culture through visitors such as a folk band and have the opportunity to join in both country and morris dancing. They carry out research into such customs as well-dressing. Residential visits to Derbyshire provide very good first hand opportunities for pupils to experience different communities and environments. In addition, the school is already pursuing plans to make effective links between pupils in Northborough and with pupils in multi-cultural schools in nearby Peterborough.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The school places particular emphasis on pupils' social and personal development. This extends beyond the formal provision within the curriculum for PSHE, and even beyond the very good extra curricular provision. A strong ethos permeates the school, which means that in some areas there is less need for formalised procedures than in a larger or less personal school. Northborough School has a very strong sense of community, and it is this strength that means the school does not just function through formal rules. Virtually all parents believe that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible individuals.

32. The school's procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school provides a caring and supportive environment in which pupils can feel safe and valued. The senior management team and teachers at all levels make considerable efforts to address the welfare of individual pupils when they need it. The contribution of teachers is noted and appreciated by both parents and pupils. The headteacher, who is responsible for child protection, has received suitable training and liaises with the local social services department as necessary. Adults in the school are made aware of their child protection responsibilities and proper records are kept. There is good provision within the programme for personal and social education to help pupils to take responsibility for their own safety. There is a useful booklet issued to pupils to remind them of how to protect themselves from bullying or inappropriate behaviour by others. This support allows pupils to feel safe and valued and to concentrate on their learning, thus helping them to progress to the best of their ability.
33. Health and safety provision is good. The governors, headteacher and caretaker are active in ensuring that health and safety procedures are in place and followed. The governors have carried out a very professional risk assessment of the school site and it provides a safe environment. Routine health and safety procedures and testing are in place. No unsafe practice was seen in lessons during the inspection.
34. All teachers are active in the pastoral care of their pupils. Class teachers know their pupils well, and when needed, the management team provides good support. Records on the few pupils who find it difficult to meet the school's expectations are comprehensive and useful. Throughout the school, teachers know their pupils well and successfully meet their individual needs. They are effective in supporting them when they need it. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is good, although largely informal. The pro formas completed by teachers prior to their regular meetings with parents contain perceptive comments, showing how they treat each pupil as an individual. The PSHE curriculum contributes to pupils' personal development, helping pupils grow into responsible adults. A particularly strong strand within the school is the way that the pupils are encouraged to give a presentation in front of an audience, developing an ability and confidence that is impressive for their age.
35. The school has good procedures to monitor attendance and encourage pupils to come to school regularly. There are systems in place to identify problems with attendance as they emerge, although the strong support for the school from parents means that these are not often needed. Pupils are keen to earn certificates awarded for 100% attendance. There is rarely a need to involve the Educational Welfare Officer except in problem cases.
36. There are good procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour. These are not just the formal systems. Rather, they take the form of a general unspoken consensus throughout the school that there is a natural way to behave, and that pupils will conform to it. This expectation and ethos is strong and is established right from the early years; it permeates the school. There is a system of rewards and sanctions, with pupils motivated in particular by the merit system. However, most pupils do take pleasure from good work or behaviour for itself, either their own or others', as shown by the way they clap each other's achievements on occasion. The self-discipline the school instils is something that pupils can take with them into secondary school and later life, when more formal controls have been long forgotten. All staff, including teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors, are constantly reinforcing the school's expectations. The standards of behaviour achieved owe much to their relationships with pupils and their personal effectiveness. This is a strength, but there are a few occasions where this approach breaks down. For example, the formal systems are not necessarily robust enough to enable staff who are new to the school to control unsatisfactory behaviour at all times. The Staff Code of Conduct document includes details of the options available to teachers, but it needs to be more explicit in its guidance to fully support replacement teachers facing difficulties with specific pupils. For example, the pupils concerned are not on the school's register of special educational needs and do not have specific plans and targets for improving their behaviour. This means that not all staff know and apply consistently the agreed rewards and sanctions and that the provision of additional support from assistants is not always at the time when it is most needed.

37. Although seldom needed, the Anti Bullying policy is a comprehensive document. Within it, there is a good link with the PHSE curriculum, with a clear statement of what pupils should understand about protecting themselves at various stages, but overall, it lacks clarity for a teacher trying to apply it or a parent faced with understanding the school's approach. However, in practice the school's approach to eliminating oppressive behaviour is effective, based on establishing a climate for behaviour that emphasises the positive. The areas for improvement must not mask the general effectiveness of the school's approach to managing pupil behaviour.
38. The school's high levels of support for pupils have been maintained since the last inspection. Improvement in the school's assessment procedures was a key issue for action at the time of the last inspection, and progress since then has been considerable. Arrangements for assessing the pupils' academic achievements are now very good. In particular, the innovative work in assessing writing is an important factor in the results the school achieves and its consequent Beacon status. All teachers have assessment folders in which they keep comprehensive records of individual pupils' progress. Based on a variety of ways of assessing individual pupils attainment, such as SATs, optional SATs, PIPs, reading tests and routine marking, these are combined to provide a regular view of how individual pupils are progressing in core subjects. The analyses of progress are used well to analyse the effectiveness of the whole teaching process. In addition, teachers complete End of Unit Assessment Grids to highlight pupils' individual performances. The high frequency at which this analysis is carried out means that pupils who are not performing in line with expectations can be identified at an early stage and appropriate action taken. For example, in mathematics, teachers assess pupils' performance by individual test questions, thus highlighting topics where pupils are having difficulties and allowing the teacher to address the problem head-on. Pupils regularly complete self-assessment sheets. Target setting is closely linked to them, ensuring that pupils are involved in monitoring their own progress, and reporting of progress to parents to keep them involved is seen as an integral part of the process.
39. This rich vein of assessment information is used very well by subject co-ordinators to guide curriculum planning. Information is analysed across the school and appropriate modifications made to ensure that the intended learning outcomes are achieved as efficiently as possible. Subject co-ordinators carry out review interviews each term to bring together other teachers' feedback on curriculum effectiveness. This is carried out across a range of subjects and is an important element in ensuring that the curriculum meets pupils' needs. The assessment co-ordinator is providing very good leadership in establishing good practice throughout the school, leading by example through his highly effective work in English.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The vast majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire or attended the meeting with inspectors were very positive about all aspects of the school. In particular, parents believe that their children like school, that the teaching is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. They endorse the standards of behaviour achieved and think the school helps children to become mature and responsible. They think the school is well led and managed. Parents at the parents' meeting felt that their children gain confidence and are prepared well for secondary education. There were just a few comments that communications from the school could be clearer, and criticisms about the amount of homework and the range of activities outside of lessons. Communications with parents are slightly "dry" in style, but inspectors' findings do not support either of the other two minority concerns. Homework, including reading books, is appropriate for this age group, whilst the range of extra curricular activities is very good for a primary school of this size – it is possible that parents are not aware of the range of activities taking place in lunchtimes. Overall, parents' views of the school are very good and the school enjoys the confidence of its local community.
41. The overall quality of information for parents is good. The prospectus and annual governors' report to parents both meet legal requirements, but both could provide more of a flavour of the school, celebrating with parents its very real achievements. There are newsletters to keep parents informed of the life of the school. The annual reports to parents on their child's progress

are comprehensive and concentrate on curriculum coverage. They do include targets and comments on what pupils can do, but do not always give a clear picture on how well they are making progress. However, teachers do provide useful additional comments verbally at the meetings with parents, and parents receive good quality information.

42. The contribution of parents to the school and their children's learning is very good. The school encourages parents to help their children with research projects and homework. This work is successful and the outcome is that most parents support their children's homework, including some very good support for the presentations children give to their class. A significant number come into school to help in lessons, making a very good contribution to the work of the school. Others help the working parties to clear and maintain the orchard area. Parents support school policies and most have signed the home school agreement, formalising existing positive attitudes. The school PTFA is active in organising social and fundraising events. The parent governors make an appropriate contribution to the work of the school's governing body.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43. The quality of leadership is very good. The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection, standards have risen and the school's expertise in developing the skills of writing have been recognised by the award of Beacon status. There is shared commitment for improvement among senior leaders and key staff and the school has very good capacity to continue to improve. The headteacher has a very clear vision for raising standards and improving the school. He has a leadership style that encourages individuals to take responsibility for aspects of school development as well as promoting a corporate ownership of improvements so that all staff feel included as part of a successful team. The headteacher also has a clear view of his role and delegates administration tasks effectively so that he can devote more time to improving the quality of education. One effect of this delegation is that the headteacher successfully keeps a high profile around the school, observing lessons, supporting teachers, greeting parents, and spending time with pupils at break and lunch times as well as having a daily teaching commitment.
44. The headteacher is supported very well by a deputy headteacher of high quality and a very good governing body. School performance data is analysed very well and relevant conclusions drawn upon which positive action is taken. For example, the 2001 results of assessment have been used to set new targets for school performance that are challenging, yet realistic. Also, analysis of this data revealed that there is a need to increase the rate of progress pupils make before entering Year 5 and initiatives are already underway to do this. The effectiveness of the school is evaluated well through the following procedures:

- Subject co-ordinators review with other staff each term how well the subject has been delivered and what could be improved. They then set effective targets for improving the quality of provision in each subject over the next term. This procedure is very effective and keeps all teachers well informed of what others are doing.
 - The performance management and appraisal systems for staff are linked closely to the progress pupils make and teachers are set challenging targets for their class to attain over the school year. The outcomes of these targets are carefully measured and senior managers are able to effectively track the progress of each pupil as they move through the school. However, the action taken if some targets are not met is not yet sufficiently rigorous to bring about immediate improvements in the quality of teaching for some teachers.
 - Through their regular meetings and visits to school, governors receive good quality information about standards and gain a very good view of what works well and what needs to be improved.
 - In all evaluation procedures, the needs of the pupils are uppermost and the action that is planned from this evaluation is always aimed at improving the quality of education they receive.
45. The vision of the headteacher includes a strong emphasis on learning through experience and this philosophy is extended to adults as well as pupils. The impact of this is seen in the curriculum where the learning is enhanced in many subjects through visits and practical 'hands on' experiences. Also, school staff and governors are encouraged effectively to continue their own learning and the school has very good procedures for continuing professional development that enable this to happen. Subject co-ordinators are learning how to raise standards in their subjects and the quality of their work is evident particularly in the exceptional leadership provided for literacy and the good quality co-ordination of mathematics, special educational needs and science. The school provides a good quality of education for pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator manages and organises this provision to a good standard. The school is also helping other schools in the area to develop their expertise through the Beacon work on handwriting, assessment and special educational needs. This work is of high quality and other schools do not just attend courses but are encouraged to undertake improvement work and meet again to review this over time. Effective communication and recording systems have been established and the school is managing the additional work-load involved well, at no detriment to its own provision. In fact, being a Beacon school is a source of pride for staff and is raising their confidence as well as providing effective motivation for maintaining high standards in the teaching of writing.
46. The governing body is very well led and very effective in carrying out its responsibilities. A particular feature of their work is the encouragement given to governors to attend relevant training and to share their new knowledge with other governors. This is very effective in increasing the level of understanding among governors and enables them to carry out their work with greater efficiency. They challenge the work of the school and ensure that resources and school improvement are targeted strategically to match the priorities set. The school improvement plan is used very well to steer the development of the school and the priorities are monitored and evaluated routinely as they are implemented. The budget is set to enable priorities to be effectively funded. The school's finances are controlled very well and the secretary carries out her work well, with rigorous efficiency. Spending is monitored very well and the principles of best value are applied very effectively so that governors are aware, for example, that their investment in additional secretarial hours is worthwhile as this releases the headteacher to be more effective in raising standards. All specific government grants are used very well for the intended purposes, in particular, the funding for Beacon work is being used to support a number of initiatives to raise standards in imaginative and flexible ways. For example, in providing other schools with a grant towards bringing a professional author in to work with children.
47. The school is appropriately staffed with teaching and non-teaching staff and there are good procedures in place for the induction of new staff. However, there are difficulties in recruiting new teachers in the area and this leads to some part time and temporary arrangements for covering

absence. Good quality learning support assistants are employed and good use is made of their skills, for example, in the provision of consistent good quality support to pupils with special educational needs and in deploying a music instructor to assist teachers with their music lessons. There are a good number of computers and generally adequate resources for learning in all subjects. However, the children in the foundation stage do not yet have sufficient resources available so that they can raise their standards in physical development. The school buildings are adequate for purpose and the current developments are well designed to bring about necessary improvements. However, two classes are still housed in temporary classrooms and this means the pupils have to cross the playground to have access to central resources such as the computer suite. The school environment is enriched significantly with a very good field and an orchard that provides an excellent outdoor area for learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. The school and governors should continue to implement their plans for improvement with the addition of the following:
- Improve the procedures for managing pupils with specific behaviour difficulties (paragraphs 7, 9, 20, 36) so that:
 - all staff know and apply consistently the agreed rewards and sanctions;
 - individual behaviour plans for these pupils are implemented and reviewed so that the targets set for improvement are met;
 - support from assistants and other staff is provided when most needed;
 - the behaviour of individual pupils does not slow the rate of learning for the others.
 - Improve the quality of teaching in Years 2 and 4 (paragraphs 7, 9, 15) so that lessons have inspiration and challenge that motivates the pupils to make progress at least at the same rate as in other classes.

The school should also consider the following:

- *Implement in full the plans already made for meeting the needs of gifted and talented pupils (paragraph 24); and
- *Provide the required accommodation and resources for foundation stage outdoor play and physical development (paragraphs 47, 49, 50, 61).

* already included for action in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	47
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	16	16	12	2	0	0
Percentage	2	34	34	26	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	208
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	22

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	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	17	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	17
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	34	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (89)	100 (100)	97 (93)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	17
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	34	35	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (96)	100 (93)	97 (100)
	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	10	8	18

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	15	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (91)	78 (87)	94 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	15	14	16
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (70)	82 (87)	94 (96)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	207
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.5
Average class size	29.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	134

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.5
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1.5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	408,965
Total expenditure	389,007
Expenditure per pupil	1,955
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,673
Balance carried forward to next year	34,631*

**Includes funds ear-marked for building work*

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	208
Number of questionnaires returned	115

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	36	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	53	39	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	51	3	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	42	46	10	3	0
The teaching is good.	57	38	2	2	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	45	10	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	66	30	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	32	3	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	39	7	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	70	29	0	1	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	49	43	3	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	31	10	4	17

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

More than 90 per cent of parents agree that their children like school, make good progress and are taught well. Also that children behave well, are helped to become mature and responsible, and are motivated to work hard and do their best. The school is well led and parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a suggestion or a problem. Parents at the meeting also feel that their children gain confidence and are prepared well for secondary education.

Additional comments were received on 16 questionnaires. The comments made by more than one parent were that: the staff and headteacher deserve praise for their work; parents are happy with the school; communication between the school and parents could be more effective; and there is a need for more playground equipment.

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

49. Most children enter the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they have their fifth birthday. On entry, although the development of the majority of children is broadly in line with that expected at this age, there is a wide variation with equal numbers both below and above average. Children's social skills and their knowledge of letters and numbers are sometimes above expectations with a small minority of children well above average. Very good teaching means that all the children make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1, the attainment of most of the children is above the expectations of the early learning goals except in physical development. In addition, the children are very confident and demonstrate good attitudes to learning as well as very well developed social skills and moral awareness.
50. Overall, the provision made for the Foundation Stage (the reception class) is very good and gives children a very secure start to their school life. The majority of children observed during the inspection are on course to exceed the early learning goals for the end of the reception Year in five out of the six areas of learning. In the sixth, they are likely to meet the standards expected in their physical development. Since the last inspection, standards in children's knowledge and understanding of the world and in their creative development have improved while standards in the other areas of learning have been maintained. Teaching is now very good overall and the curriculum offered now gives a very good balance of adult led and child initiated activities meeting the needs of all the children. The new classroom provides very good facilities although the outdoor play area is still in need of development. Overall this represents very good improvement since the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

51. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the majority of children achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. Teaching is very good overall.
52. Routines are well established and children clearly understand what is expected of them. The new classroom, which at the time of the inspection had only been in use for two weeks, is well organised. Children develop high levels of independence because equipment and resources are very well arranged so that they can select what they need for their chosen activities. They work with confidence and perseverance showing pride in their achievements. For example, a small group worked together over several days to create their own detailed jungle frieze with very little adult involvement. They were very engrossed and talked enthusiastically with each other about what they were doing. Children become very involved in most of the activities, working hard, sharing resources and maintaining concentration. Very occasionally, however, activities are too heavily adult led, giving children limited opportunity to use and develop their skills and initiate their own ideas. Teachers and other supporting adults are caring and sensitive to the children's needs so that they feel able to seek help and support as they need it and relationships are positive. Staff acknowledge and praise children who behave well, reminding others about what is expected. Consequently, behaviour is usually very good in class and around the school.

Communication, language and literacy

53. Children achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. Teaching in this area of learning is very good because staff know the children very well and have a very good understanding of their learning needs. Staff use a range of well prepared and appropriate practical activities to extend children's vocabulary. They talk to the children about the activities using the relevant vocabulary, encouraging the children to join in. When visiting the school pond, for example, the teacher talks about the frogs and spawn they see. As a result, children are later able to recall what they have seen using the correct vocabulary. In their play, children use talk to share their ideas and negotiate what they need to do next. In 'Show and Tell' sessions children have the opportunity

to speak in front of a larger group. Staff read stories expressively and explain and demonstrate tasks very clearly so that children listen and learn well in both large and small groups.

54. A book borrowing system is well established and parents are encouraged to share reading books with their children and record what has been read. Sometimes target areas to focus on are also identified. Children also have letter sounds and key words to learn at home. Children read regularly at school. As a result, most of the children have a positive approach to reading. Higher attaining children read unfamiliar stories confidently needing little prompting and showing awareness of speech and punctuation. Although these children recognise letter sounds, they are less confident about using this knowledge to build unfamiliar words. Average attaining children also find it hard to use their knowledge of sounds to work out new words. They recognise individual words from their word-lists but rely on memory and the pictures when reading simple stories. Lower attaining children need support to read simple stories, using the pictures as prompts as they read. They understand the sense of what they are reading and talk readily about the pictures. They are beginning to recognise individual words and already know most of the letter sounds.
55. Children tackle a good range of writing tasks. For example, they write about their favourite toys, their new classroom and about the signs of spring. They write 'thank you' letters after visiting the local garage. Most children write their names from memory and almost all letters are correctly formed and uniform in size. They use their knowledge of letter sounds to help them write recognisable words and simple sentences with higher attaining children spelling some simple words correctly from memory. Staff provide a very good variety of materials and opportunities to encourage children to use writing in their play and, in the course of the inspection, many were seen to choose writing activities and initiate their own writing.

Mathematical development

56. Children make good progress overall in relation to their attainment on entry to the school. The teaching observed was very good.
57. Children experience a wide range of relevant mathematical activities including number work and counting, shapes, weighing and learning the days of the week and the months of the year. There is a suitable range of mathematical equipment for counting and sorting. A one hundred number square is displayed for the children to refer to and use in counting activities. Very good teaching occurs when, for example, the teacher uses pictures, toy frogs and the number square in a variety of ways to help a group of average attaining children learn how to 'count on'. The methods used and the teacher's clear assessment of the children's difficulties ensures they successfully develop their understanding. All children enthusiastically join in counting in 10s to 100 and higher attaining children work independently and accurately using this knowledge to count in tens and complete number sequences to show, for example, the tens less and more than 70. Lower attaining pupils largely recognise numbers to 10 and count and make towers of bricks that match each number. Good adult support ensures that all the group are fully involved in the activity. The links made with other areas of learning, such as using toy frogs for counting, enable children to begin to see the relevance and purpose of mathematics.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. Teaching and provision in this area are generally very good and the majority of children are on course to exceed the expected standards. Children achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.
59. Children's computer skills are very well developed and they use the mouse with impressive control, for example, when using an art program to produce pictures of trees with buds. They successfully learnt how to mix colours and the results were very good. They were well supported by the classroom assistant who helped them to print out their work. Children learnt about the world about them through a range of well-planned themes and through very good use of the local environment. For example, when learning about the spring, children explored using

their five senses. They walked in the school orchard, listening to the birdsong and looking at the plants and the buds and blossom on the trees. They noticed the difference in the daffodils since the previous week and visited the pond to look for frogs and spawn. They saw several frogs and observed the spawn through magnifiers. Those who wished, gently touched it, reporting it to be 'like jelly' and 'sticky'. As a result, children have a clear understanding of the life cycle of a frog and higher attaining children are able to describe the stages in its development. Some children began to raise questions such as, 'Do frogs have ears?' and made suggestions as to what the answer might be such as 'I think they hear with their mouths'. Good use was made of a computer program, as well as books, to help them find out more about the frogs.

Physical development

60. Children's physical skills are broadly similar to those found nationally for this age group. Children benefit from the use of the hall and the school has appropriate plans in place to ensure they have a safe and secure outdoor play area. The teaching observed in this area of learning was variable but good overall and children achieve appropriately in relation to their attainment on entry to the school.
61. Children use the hall for physical education and dance. Most show a good awareness of space, finding a safe space of their own when requested. Almost all can move around the hall in a variety of ways such as marching, striding, jumping and skipping and can balance on one leg for a few seconds. A minority find hopping more difficult. In some lessons, children respond well to instructions but are given little opportunity to develop their skills or use their own ideas for moving. Although they remove their socks and shoes, keeping the rest of their clothes on, including sweatshirts, limits their activities. Staff are not always appropriately dressed so as to set the children a good example and allow them to demonstrate skills effectively. Children have access to a spacious outdoor play area which is used every day but is in need of development. The school has plans to install a safety surface, secure fencing and a shed. However, the current lack of equipment for climbing and balancing and of wheeled toys means that activities in this area are limited and some aspects of children's physical development are under-developed. The equipment that is available is well used particularly in developing children's imaginative skills and they enjoy the opportunities to build with big bricks and use the petrol pump and truck.
62. Children' manipulative skills are well developed through the use of pencils, pens, brushes and a range of tools which they generally handle correctly. Most children use scissors with accuracy even when cutting complicated shapes. Children also have access to a variety of large and small construction toys and to modelling materials such as dough and plasticine. They use different coloured plasticine very effectively when making 3D pictures of spring flowers and blossom, handling very small pieces with care and control.

Creative development

63. For the majority of children, attainment in this area of learning is above that expected for this age group. Teaching is good and children achieve well based on their development on entry to the school.
64. A variety of interesting experiences are available to the children and there is a good balance between adult led activities and opportunities for children to explore and develop their own ideas. Children are taught how to use powder paint to mix colours and successfully do this to create autumn paintings. They use rollers and inks to make prints. They are shown how to use split pins safely when making a frogs with moving parts and encouraged to look closely at details when making pictures of spring flowers. They draw, colour, cut and glue to make effective pictures of their own choosing. Imaginative play is well promoted through role-play. A well-equipped 'café' for example, encourages them to take on the roles of chef, waiter and customer. A role-play 'garage' helps them re-create some of their experiences from visiting the local garage. The teacher's involvement in children's play extends their ideas and thinking. For example, she successfully uses the 'Frog's Holiday' story as a starting point for children to

create a frogs' holiday home with the big bricks and they enthusiastically develop a swimming pool and a launderette for the frogs with her support. Construction sets are also available to help children play imaginatively and begin to make up their own stories. These activities also contribute well to the development of children's speaking and listening skills.

65. Children are keen to join in familiar songs and rhymes. They sing tunefully and know the words by heart. They successfully match their actions to the songs. When singing a song about spring, they made up an additional verse about frogs and enjoyed adding it to the song. The good musical skills of the teacher helped the children to learn a new song rapidly. Children have the opportunity to play percussion instruments which they handle sensibly and name accurately.
66. Adults work well together in the Foundation Stage each playing a full part in teaching and supporting the children. Everyone knows their role and what the children will do. Routines are clearly understood and consistently implemented so that children feel secure and know what is expected of them. Comprehensive induction procedures are in place for new entrants to the school and include visits to the school for children and their parents, an information evening for parents and visits by the reception teacher to the pre-school providers. Parents are given brief information booklets and a colourful display in the entrance to the reception class gives useful information about the curriculum. All children start school on a part-time basis for the first two weeks but some find it hard to settle initially when they become full-time due to the large numbers and the level of adult support available.
67. Curriculum planning meets the requirements of the national guidance for the Foundation Stage so that all aspects of the curriculum are properly covered and almost all activities planned are developmentally appropriate for the children. Children are well prepared for the requirements of the literacy and numeracy strategies when they move into Year 1. Resources are adequate and are currently being reviewed to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are properly catered for. Assessment procedures are thorough. The statutory assessment is carried out appropriately when children enter the school and staff continue to track children's progress through the year. Very good use is made of day to day assessments to inform the next steps in children's learning. The Foundation Stage is very well led by the co-ordinator who has a clear and appropriate view of how the Foundation Stage should be further developed and is creating an appropriate action plan for the implementation of these developments.

ENGLISH

68. Standards for pupils in Year 6 are well above the national average. Standards have improved since the previous inspection with a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher National Curriculum levels. Inspection shows that the majority of pupils, including higher attainers and pupils with special educational needs, achieve highly in relation to their prior attainment.
69. In last year's National Curriculum tests the performance of pupils in Year 6 was well above the national average and well above the average for similar schools. Standards have risen over the past four years with a significant advance in standards this year. In recent years, the performance of girls has been better than boys. However, inspection findings found no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in class. The high target set by the school is appropriate for this group of pupils and takes into account their prior attainment. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are above the national average, maintaining the high standards since the previous inspection, with an increased proportion of pupils reaching the higher National Curriculum levels in reading and writing. Most pupils start in reception with average levels of attainment. They achieve well in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2, and continue to build on this achievement in Years 3 to 6.
70. Standards in speaking and listening are well above average throughout the school. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing speaking and listening skills and as a result most pupils make very good progress. By the end of Year 6, standards are well above those expected

nationally. Many pupils are confident and articulate speakers. Teachers have high expectations of the accuracy of pupils' replies. Questioning in lessons encourages extended responses rather than single word replies. 'Show and Tell' sessions, where pupils give individual high quality presentations, also help to raising standards. For example, a Year 3 pupil prepared a 'speech' about computers, read it out confidently and with good expression. Personal and social education lessons and assemblies are also very well used to promote pupils' speaking and listening skills. These experiences result in pupils developing their skills effectively in expressing clearly their ideas and opinions and taking account of other pupils' views.

71. In reading, the majority of pupils achieve well and attain standards by the end of Year 2 that are above the national average, with a significant minority attaining high standards. Pupils read with understanding and can predict with reasonable accuracy 'what will happen next'. They know what authors and illustrators do and are able to identify the main characters and events in their reading books. Younger pupils read simple books with increasing accuracy and understanding. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 use a variety of strategies to aid recognition of unfamiliar words, such as letter patterns and sounds, context and pictures. They know the difference between 'fiction' and 'non fiction' and even those pupils with lower attainment put expression into their reading. Teachers ensure that the pupils receive appropriate and regular support at school, both as individuals and in groups. The parents support and encourage the pupils' reading skills well. The school has developed the range and accessibility of good quality group reading books and this is helping to raise standards in reading. However, class libraries are generally unsatisfactory while the school is in the process of building and stocking a new library area. They are currently cramped areas with too many sub-standard books thereby reducing the overall quality of available books.
72. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout Years 3 to 6 and achieve well so that, by the end of Year 6 standards in reading are well above average. Most pupils read a range of texts fluently and accurately and with good understanding. Some are very knowledgeable about books. For example, one pupil compared the style of writing in the 'Harry Potter' series by J.K. Rowling with that of the author Diana Wynn-Jones, making perceptive comments about the similarities of the characters living in a fantasy world. They use words and phrases like 'action-packed' 'intense' and 'heart thumping', showing real enjoyment and skill in analysing their reading. Pupils of all attainments are developing very good independent research skills. They know how to find information in reference books, using an index or contents, in CD ROMS and the Internet. Many understand the difference between a dictionary and a thesaurus and use them appropriately. The good progress and the improvements in standards of reading are due largely to good teaching during literacy lessons in Years 3 and 4 and the high quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6. There is an effective home-school partnership in which teachers and parents work well together to encourage pupils to read at home as well as in school. This leads pupils to enjoy books and hence to practise and develop their reading skills. This was evident in the range of authors popular with Year 6 pupils. These included William Nicholson, T Deary, J.K. Rowling and Berlie Doherty.
73. In writing, standards are above the national average by the end of Year 2. Pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 and achieve well over their attainment on entry to the foundation stage. Most pupils spell common words accurately and make good attempts to spell more complex words. Most write stories and accounts made up of sequences of ideas and some are very creative and produce well-structured, sustained pieces of writing. For example, one pupil caught the essence of adventure in his retelling of the Jack and the Beanstalk tale, *'The giant lived in a dark gloomy castle surrounded by white, misty winds blowing towards you. It was icy and slippery inside with fading evil music.'* Descriptive words are used well when pupils write their own stories. Higher attaining pupils use question marks and apostrophes and most use speech marks to add interest to their stories. They now write for a variety of purposes, this includes writing verse, prayers in religious education, recording science experiments and in history and design and technology pupils use their developing word processing skills to write about the different types of houses they have studied and made. Their handwriting is usually well formed and easy to read with presentation of a good standard.

74. By Year 6, pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes using a wide range of styles. Attainment by Year 6 is well above average. Many of the pupils in the present Year 6 produce lively, well-structured pieces of sustained writing. High attaining pupils really know how to 'grab the reader's attention' using words and complex sentences very effectively to create interest. For example, a pupil described a character in his story on 'Time- Travelling Victorians' demonstrating very fluent use of descriptive words. *'On Monday, 17th January 1853, Matthew and Daniel Pict were playing in the local park.....But something strange happened, something that would change their lives for ever.A big hole appeared in the middle of the park. Matthew and Daniel were mesmerised. Inside they could see a hypnotising whirl. Then a voice spoke.'* Pupils write poems, book reviews, diaries, character portraits, letters and scientific and historical accounts. Many pupils use paragraphs, correct punctuation, complex grammatical structures and high quality vocabulary, often with correct spellings, to enrich their writing. Handwriting standards are generally high. As in other classes, good opportunities are provided in Years 5 and 6 for pupils to practise and develop their literacy skills across the curriculum. In mathematics and science investigations there are some good examples of high quality labelling and scientific and mathematical report writing where specific vocabulary is used appropriately. As a result, the pupils produce well-written answers. Computers are used effectively to improve the presentation of pupils' work and many opportunities are provided to use computers to research and explore their ideas in school and at home. They are an effective tool in raising the pupils' literacy standards.
75. The previous inspection identified some weaknesses in English. These have all been addressed rigorously and effectively. The way in which test data is analysed has helped the school identify very accurately just what needs to be improved. Formal monitoring of the quality of teaching and planning takes place and staff are given very good feedback on how to improve the teaching and learning in their lessons. Very good attention is paid to helping teachers develop their professional skills. This has been followed by well designed strategies to raise standards in both key stages. For example, modifying the structure for literacy lessons to allow more time to focus more deeply on an aspect of literacy, making greater use of the Internet to promote good quality work. The number and quality of group reading books has improved, helping to stimulate pupils' interest in reading. Finally, worksheets are used carefully so that they now complement other work. These significant changes since the previous inspection have resulted in the school being awarded Beacon status for writing.
76. In all classes teaching is good overall, with some very good and excellent teaching seen. Most teachers are confidently implementing the literacy hour. Teachers plan work which effectively matches pupils' prior attainment. As a result, those with special educational needs receive good support and make progress similar to their peers. A minority of pupils in Year 6 are gifted in literacy skills. Challenging teaching ensures that they achieve well, with some being able to attain standards more commonly associated with older pupils. Generally, lessons are carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils making sure that everyone is clear about what they are expected to learn. When teaching is very good or outstanding, expectations are very high and the teacher's enthusiasm, explanations and knowledge of the subject have a very positive effect on pupils' attainment, progress and attitude to the subject. For example, in one excellent lesson in Year 6, about identifying features of a balanced written argument with reference to crop cultivation, the teacher, skilfully involved pupils in researching, and summarising demanding texts on organic and genetically modified foods. He raised the level of the lesson by involving the pupils in role-playing the different advocates. This quality of teaching resulted in highly motivated learners with many pupils producing good quality sustained writing. Other characteristics of high quality teaching are where pupils are reminded of high expectations and other strategies to improve their work, such as good handwriting and correct punctuation. Furthermore, pupils experience learning as an enjoyable and stimulating activity. The teaching of handwriting and spelling is generally good and those pupils with special educational needs are well supported by teaching assistants. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not organise the work with sufficient rigour to allow the higher attaining pupils to always be consistently challenged throughout the lesson. Also, some teaching styles limit the opportunities for pupils to be active learners.

77. Relationships are generally very good, with most teachers having high expectations of their pupils' behaviour, resulting in very good discipline and pupils working hard and productively in their literacy lessons. As a result, they learn well. Most teachers assess pupils' progress very closely and effectively in lessons. This helps them to set challenging targets for individual pupils and groups of pupils. For example, teachers' planning in Years 5 and 6 provided very accurate evaluations of pupils' progress, with written comments about additional support required. The marking of work focuses clearly upon what is needed to improve standards. The marking in Years 2, 5 and 6 is particularly strong with frequent reference made to pupils' targets for improvement. The evidence of pupils' response is then seen in their books with very good improvements made in the quality of their work.
78. The subject co-ordinator provides excellent leadership, which is driven by a clear vision of what the school should be doing to raise standards in English. He has brought to the school a range of ideas and developed others in the light of his experience. He works closely with the headteacher and staff. This is a very productive partnership resulting in a strong and effective focus on improvement throughout the school, which is having a significant impact upon raising standards. In addition, the school's Beacon status in writing is successful in promoting pride in achievement and motivates teachers to analyse what works well and share best practice between themselves as well as with other schools.

MATHEMATICS

79. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is good over their time in school, with progress being made at a faster rate in the foundation stage than in other years. When children enter the reception class, their attainment is broadly as expected. Children achieve well and they are attaining above national expectations by the time they reach Year 1. Pupils maintain these standards throughout Years 1 and 2 and demonstrate satisfactory achievement. Achievement remains satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6 and by the end of Year 6 the attainment of the majority of pupils is above the national average.
80. In the National Curriculum tests for Year 2 pupils in 2001, the school's performance, when compared with all schools, was above the national average. When compared with similar schools, the results were average. Standards have remained steady over the last three years. The percentage of pupils in Year 2 achieving the higher Level 3 is close to the national average when compared to all schools but below that for similar schools. Overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Inspection findings also show that, in comparison with national expectations, standards in mathematics observed in class are above average. In the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, the school's performance, when compared to all schools, is above the national average and in line with similar schools. There has been a slight downward trend in standards since 1999. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 is also above the national average and in line with similar schools. Inspection findings also show that by the end of Year 6, standards in mathematics are above national expectations.
81. In Year 1, pupils quickly identify which items cost more or less than others when comparing prices up to 50p but they find it hard to work out the difference in cost. They successfully sequence numbers to 100 using large carpet tiles. The majority of pupils in Year 2 know that, for example, 30×2 is the same as $30 + 30$ and are successful in using $\times 2$, $\times 5$ and $\times 10$ in their 'number machines'. However, they find it harder to count backwards and forwards in 5s starting at numbers such as 90. Year 3 pupils build on their earlier knowledge recognising the relationship between 6×10 , 60×10 and 600×10 . Their understanding of halving and doubling helps them realise that 6×5 must be half of 6×10 . Higher attaining pupils in this class know that $18 \div 6 = 3$ is a variant of $18 \div 3 = 6$ as well as $3 \times 6 = 18$ and $6 \times 3 = 18$. In Year 4, pupils use factors to make multiplication calculations easier so that they know, for example, that 4×15 is the same as $4 \times 5 \times 3$. They begin to understand that, when multiplying by 9 or 11, rounding up or down to 10 is a useful strategy. However, many are unclear about how to record the steps in their books and make errors in their calculations. Pupils in Year 5 solve number problems involving hundreds, tens and units using four operations. They explain their methods

confidently and higher attaining pupils understand what an 'inverse operation' is. In Year 6, pupils count quickly and accurately in multiples of 7 backwards and forwards and in jumps of several multiples. They complete sequences of numbers from the term, steps and rule given and devise a variety of answers in response to questions such as 'If the middle number of a sequence of five numbers is 2 what could the other numbers be?' Higher attaining pupils use decimal numbers in their calculations.

82. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is good. At that time, standards were found to be in line with national expectations overall, so these current results indicate good improvement since then. This is largely due to the way the school has improved its procedures for assessing pupils' attainment, setting targets and tracking progress and these are now very good.
83. The quality of teaching overall is good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This is similar to the last inspection. However, teaching is better in Years 3 to 6, where half of the lessons observed were very good, than in Years 1 and 2, where teaching is satisfactory. Satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2 helps pupils to build on their earlier learning and develop their skills and understanding. Lessons are appropriately planned and structured but sometimes resources are not well prepared or used. As a result, pupils cannot always see what is happening and are not fully involved in the lesson. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that pupils experience a good range of mathematical activities including work on measuring, weighing, symmetry, shape and time as well as numeracy. However, the time available within lessons is not always well managed and pupils sometimes have too little or too much time for the tasks they are given.
84. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 varies from satisfactory to very good. In the most effective lessons, teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and show understanding of the best ways to inspire and motivate pupils. These lessons are planned in detail and move at a brisk pace. Teachers are lively and enthusiastic and pupils know what they are expected to do in the time available. They work hard and are keen to be successful. Support staff are very well deployed so that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well supported and make very good progress. Teachers constantly assess the pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking which the pupils recognise and enjoy. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, all pupils have whiteboards on which to record and display their answers. This ensures all are fully involved and enables the teacher to assess each pupil's response. He skilfully uses any errors to reinforce the teaching and to help each pupil to be successful. Less successful lessons occur when teaching is not lively enough to maintain pupils' attention and their work is not sufficiently checked to ensure they make appropriate progress. The work in pupils' books shows a wide range of mathematical experiences including work on shape and graphs, co-ordinates in four quadrants, percentages, ordering fractions by finding a common denominator and converting fractions to decimals. Pupils also use their maths knowledge and understanding in other subjects. For example, in a Year 4 lesson in the computer suite, pupils use their knowledge of angles when working out how to move the 'turtle'. The opportunities pupils have to explain their thinking to others also supports the development of their speaking and listening skills.
85. Pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to mathematics are almost always at least good and never less than satisfactory. Most pupils tackle their work with confidence and concentrate well. In three lessons in Years 3 to 6, pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the subject were very good. In a Year 3 class, for example, pupils were enthusiastic and applied themselves very well to their work due to the very clear instructions and continual challenge of the teacher. In the Year 2 class, however, the disruptive behaviour of a small minority limited the progress of the lower attaining pupils. Teaching in mathematics, when pupils are expected to settle to their tasks quickly, work hard and share their ideas with each other also makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
86. Mathematics is well managed and co-ordinated. The role is shared by two staff who have a clear view of the standards being reached, the strengths of the subject and the areas in need of development. This is due to the very good review system established in the school to which all

staff contribute and from which an appropriate action plan is drawn up and implemented. As a result, additional support has been put in one class and recent assessment of the pupils in that class shows significant improvement.

SCIENCE

87. Pupils do well in science. The results of national assessments in 2001 show that pupils in Years 2 and 6 are performing above the national average. There are slight variations in these results each year, depending on the size and nature of the year group, but the school's results are consistently better than the national picture. When compared against schools with similar numbers of free school meals, the pupils are doing as well as can be expected and matching the average for these schools. Inspection shows that standards this year continue to be above average and that pupils are achieving well over the whole of their time in school from entry to Year 6. There are, however, some years where pupils make more progress than at other times. Children enter the reception class with broadly average knowledge and understanding of the world. They make good progress and enter Year 1 with above average standards in this area of learning. Sound achievement is made over their time in Years 1 and 2, and pupils' books show that the current Year 2 were making good progress prior to the maternity leave of their regular teacher. Pupils in Year 3 are currently making good progress, and this rate of development is also observed in lessons in Years 5 and 6. In Year 4, pupils are being productive and achieving satisfactorily, but at a slower rate than in other years. This is because the pupils have fewer opportunities to reach scientific conclusions from their own observations and deductions. As a result, the achievement of pupils by the end of Year 6 is still satisfactory as they have to spend some time in Years 5 and 6 regaining the momentum of their learning.
88. Pupils in Year 1 show that they are aware of forces such as push and pull. They classify living things and use their observation skills effectively to record information. In Year 2, pupils show that they know a range of sources of light and most recall that shadows are created where the passage of light is obstructed. They also list some materials that can change their state (such as water to steam) and use this knowledge to predict the possible outcomes for new materials they study. In a lesson seen in Year 3, pupils were enjoying finding out about the human skeleton and remembered the correct names for most of the bones as well as being able to define, for example, that the rib cage protects vital organs such as the heart, lungs and liver. Pupils' books in Year 4 show that an appropriate curriculum is followed and that pupils can use measures such as thermometers and Newton Meters appropriately. However, they generally write the same work and identical conclusions for their experiments. Pupils in Year 5 know their pulse rate varies depending on the exercise they take and use their knowledge of plant structure effectively to determine from the structure of a flower how the seeds will be dispersed. In a lesson observed in Year 6, pupils discussed how to make a test fair and showed they know to have one measurable variable among other constants. They used stop-watches appropriately and carried out effective experiments to show, for example, whether increasing the area of the wings of a paper 'spinner' would increase its air resistance and slow the rate of descent. A particular feature of the work of the older pupils is the correct use of scientific vocabulary in their logical explanations, both orally and in their written work. This leads the pupils to focus upon what they are seeking to prove and to be meticulous and precise in their observations and measurements.
89. Since the last inspection, standards have risen and there has been good improvement in the curriculum provided and in the procedures for assessing and monitoring the progress of the pupils. The school is now following nationally recommended guidance for the curriculum and adapting it successfully to better meet the needs of the pupils. For example, some of the national guidance for what to teach in Year 1 is being included in the work for children in the reception class and this is helping to raise achievement. Also, effective use of computers is now being made to record results and present them more clearly in tables and graphs. Recent work on increasing the emphasis given to investigation and experimentation is being effective and this is now applied effectively in all year groups.

90. The quality of teaching is generally good overall. In some classes, such as Years 5 and 6, the quality of teaching is often very good and this inspires and challenges the pupils to extend their understanding. In Year 4, the quality of teaching is uninspiring and the pupils' work shows they are insufficiently encouraged to think and learn for themselves. A common factor in the best lessons observed is where teachers help the pupils to apply scientific method and draw their own conclusions from the experiments. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, the teacher took the pupils through a process of taking five readings of their pulse and then averaging them to find a baseline measurement of their heart rate at rest. Pupils then followed the same method after controlled periods of exercise and knew that their measurements could be compared to show accurately the impact of this activity on their heart rate. Another good feature is where teachers provide the pupils with writing frames and blank tables for recording their results. This enables the pupils to concentrate harder on their experiments as they do not become diverted by planning the lay out for their writing. In a lesson in Year 3, the pupils were motivated by the different methods the teacher had used to help them learn about the skeleton. The class had looked at real X-rays, a model skeleton, and a wide range of reference books. In addition, they had used a fabric collage and paper cut-outs to assemble a skeleton correctly as well as using a CD on the computer for further research. This led the pupils to follow their interests and find out more, for example, about how bones harden as they age and can become brittle when elderly. In the most effective lessons, teachers list clearly on the board the objectives and content of the lesson and keep reminding pupils of these throughout, with an effective summary at the end for pupils to recall what they have learnt. For example, in a very good lesson observed in Year 6, the teacher followed the listed plan with consistency and brisk pace, calling the class together at strategic points to remind them of what should be completed and what they should be doing next. As a result, the pupils worked hard and stayed focused on the scientific principles of air resistance as they extended the rigour of their testing procedures.
91. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator, currently absent on maternity leave. New procedures for assessment and monitoring the progress of the pupils are of very good quality but too new to judge their effectiveness yet. In particular, the termly reviews of the subject are carried out very well and the co-ordinator highlights appropriate areas for action and improvement on the basis of the detailed analysis made. This work is carried out effectively and is steadily bringing improvements in the quality of teaching and learning as well as raising standards. The school has an excellent resource in the orchard, pond, marshy areas and variety of habitats on the school site. Very good use is made of these natural resources to enhance the learning for the pupils and this makes a significant contribution to raising their interest in the subject.

ART AND DESIGN

92. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' standards in art and design are broadly average and they achieve satisfactorily over their time in school. Pupils' sketch books show above average standards in the design aspects and processes that lead to a finished work and demonstrate that pupils are modifying and re-drafting their original ideas well. Also, in some classes, the skills of drawing are taught well and this leads some pupils to use perspective in their paintings at a level above the average expected for their age. However, in most classes, the pupils' skills in painting and the quality of finish of their work are at the expected standard. In Year 1, pupils make fabric collage to illustrate their work in religious education and make effective textured clay tiles of houses. In Year 2, the pupils' observational drawings of local houses show a good attention to detail, scale and proportion as well as careful consideration of the background to add to the picture. In Year 3, pupils make attractive patterns with good use of colour and develop this theme to produce templates and printing plates for producing their designs on fabric. Pupils in Year 4 design containers for coins and notes and think carefully about how to construct them as well as how best to decorate them. A display of work in Year 5 shows that pupils make attractive clay thumb pots with animal decorations that are well glazed and finished. In this class, some pupils use a 'vanishing point' in their drawings and apply this principle of perspective effectively in their finished paintings. Year 6 pupils make attractive three dimensional face masks and use the work of other artists effectively to influence their own paintings. For example, one pupil has taken the line from a Picasso painting and developed it

into an abstract theme, trying this several times in his sketch book before reaching the final version coloured with pastels. Some higher attaining pupils draw expressive portraits with a lively and free style by building on their rough sketches appropriately with added detail.

93. Satisfactory improvement has taken place since the last inspection. The scheme of work has been improved and the pupils' record books now give an effective measure of the progress each pupil makes over their time in school. However, during this time, the school has given increased priority to literacy and numeracy and less attention has been given to developing the provision for art and design.
94. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall, with evidence of some good teaching and learning taking place in Years 5 and 6. In the lessons observed during the inspection the following positive features were noted:
- Where lessons are well prepared and materials are available on each table then pupils are able to concentrate on their work without unnecessary movement around the class. This, in turn, enables the teacher to move more freely among the pupils and help them effectively overcome any difficulties that may arise.
 - Where teachers discuss activities and explain clearly what to do, then pupils work effectively, often co-operating with one another to, for example, work out how to make a template for a wallet or purse.
95. In the lessons seen, the following point for improvement was also noted:
- Where pupils are insufficiently motivated they chatter about things other than their work and a minority remains 'off-task' for too long.
96. The co-ordinator has had responsibility for the subject since September 2001. Regular reviews of the subject are carried out with other teachers and these are helpful in providing areas for improvement as well as demonstrating the aspects of the subject that work well. From this work the co-ordinator has already identified a need to improve the quality of painting and the finish of pupils' work. Effective use is made of computer software, for example through using 'Dazzle' to make colourful and symmetrical patterns, but there is room for further improvement with a wider variety of software and the processing of digital images.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. One design and technology lesson was observed during the inspection in Year 5. Judgements about standards throughout the school are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work, including photographs, an examination of teachers' planning and discussion with teachers and pupils. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching.
98. By the end of Year 2, standards are similar to those found in most schools. Pupils make satisfactory progress in a range of joining and assembling skills. They competently make things out of different materials including card and fabric. For example, in Year 2, pupils examine types of vehicles, discuss such features as wheels, axle, chassis, body and cab. They then design and make their own wheeled vehicle. As they continue, pupils are expected to consider ways of improving their model. For example, a pupil decided to double the wheels on the rear of his lorry to support heavier loads. They are also expected to draw and label diagrams of their work and this helps pupils to review their design processes.
99. Achievement by the end of Year 6 is sound as pupils build on and extend their skills to a satisfactory standard. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 4 have improved their design skills. They are taught a basic understanding of planning a sequence of activities, which includes measuring and assembling techniques. These skills were put to good use when producing Viking boats for their history topic on 'Invaders.' Pupils in Year 5 have made some impressive board games with containers. There are detailed labelled sketches with measurements. The pupils talk knowledgeably about the intended user of the product, namely

the younger pupils in the school and the importance of making the container and board colourful and eye-catching. By Year 6, pupils are taught a basic understanding of 'levers' and 'linkage', and have produced jack in boxes with a range of moving parts. Their vocabulary is developing and words like cam, chassis and axle are well understood. A strong feature of the design and technology curriculum is the links made with other subjects, notably art, history and geography. This approach results in raising standards in design and technology but also reinforces and extends learning and attainment in other subjects.

100. In the lesson seen the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the subject was secure and the lesson very well planned. Effective use was made of discussion to help pupils evaluate their own designs and models. For example, pupils in this Year 5 lesson discussed their boardgames and decided to make large die as these would be easier for the younger pupils to control. Pupils have been given the opportunity to examine the design features of commercially produced objects. The teacher very effectively used opportunities to reinforce the importance of planning as a group, sharing ideas and changing ideas where necessary. As a result pupils are able to work together in a co-operative and mature manner. For example, two pupils collaborated well when discussing who would make which aspects of the game. As one pupil explained: "I'm good at doing the 'fiddly' bits but XXXXX is very good at making large containers." As pupils worked, the teacher and the support assistant further enhanced their learning by asking such questions as "what would happen if.....?", to encourage further experimentation. Good links are made with other subjects. For example, one boy said, "I intend using the computer to record the instructions in bullet point format." The learning climate created by the teacher in this lesson was of a high quality.
101. The school has adopted the government's recommended guidelines for the subject and planning shows these are central to the teaching of design and technology throughout the school and contributing to the improvement in the subject. Resources are adequate. There are no formal assessment procedures in place but this is not having an adverse impact on standards.

GEOGRAPHY

102. By the end of Year 2, pupils attain standards that are broadly in line with those expected nationally and the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Some very good teaching of older pupils means they achieve well and their attainment exceeds what is expected by the end of Year 6. Three lessons were observed during the inspection and the work on display, in photo albums and in pupils' books was also examined.
103. In Years 1 and 2, pupils experience an appropriate range of activities to help them develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in geography. They begin to draw and use simple maps and plans to find routes, for example, around the school building. They use the playground to learn about the four points of the compass. They identify the main landmarks on their routes to school and consider the different types of buildings in their local environment and the materials that were used in their construction. Pupils begin to express their own views of places by, for example, discussing their likes and dislikes of the church building. A survey helps pupils to consider the impact of traffic on the community. The quality of teaching overall in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Good links are made with pupils' literacy development when story books are used to help them compare their own environment with a different one. For example, the stories of 'Katie Morag' describe what life might be like on a Scottish Island and pupils identify the different types of transport used there. The events in the stories also give pupils the opportunity to recognise the impact that changes in the environment can have on people's lives. However, in the lessons observed, only one small copy of the book was available so that not all pupils could see the details of the pictures. As a result, few were able to identify the changes that took place on the island and the effect these had on various characters. The written task lacked challenge for many of the pupils in Year 2 so they made little progress in this lesson in developing their understanding and skills.

104. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on their earlier learning. In Year 3, for example, they use aerial photographs and pictures of significant features and match these to a map of Northborough. A well organised display with key questions encourages pupils to find their own homes and places of interest. In Year 4, pupils spend three days at a field study centre and in Years 5 and 6, they go camping in Derbyshire giving them a variety of opportunities to explore environments different from their own. All these visits are well planned into the curriculum so that pupils make good progress. Only one lesson was observed in the classes for Years 3 to 6 so it is not possible to make a judgement about teaching overall. However, the lesson observed was very good due to the teacher's confident and lively manner and the high expectations he has of his pupils. Very good links were made with the development of pupils' literacy skills when they were asked to take notes whilst watching a video clip about the Mississippi River. Tightly timed activities meant that the pupils worked very hard. For example, they were given two minutes to list five pieces of advice for people facing a flood and came up with a good range of relevant ideas. Most pupils in this class demonstrate good knowledge about rivers when they name the main features such as source, tributary and basin and the major rivers of the world.
105. Since the last inspection standards have improved from below to above national expectations by the end of Year 6. Geography is taught in blocks alternating with history and is based on the national scheme of work so that the subject is systematically covered. Pupils' attainment is now regularly assessed and their progress tracked which is an improvement since the last inspection. Visits, including residential ones, continue to play a significant part in the curriculum and are now more closely matched to the scheme of work. Overall, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.
106. Through the study of different countries and environments, geography makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development. There are good links with pupils' ICT skills through the use of CD material and the Internet. The school is aware of the need to develop further links with city schools to enhance both the pupils' geographical and cultural knowledge and understanding. The headteacher has only recently taken over the role of co-ordinator. However, as provision and standards in geography are reviewed in line with the very effective whole school system for subject review, staff have a clear view of what further developments need to be implemented to ensure that teaching and learning in the subject continue to improve.

HISTORY

107. During the inspection it was not possible to observe any history lessons. It is therefore not possible to make any judgement about the quality of teaching in this subject. However, evidence was gathered during the inspection through examining pupils' work, displays, photograph albums and teachers' planning and through talking to pupils. This indicates that by the end of Year 2 pupils attain standards in history that are similar to those found nationally. By the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining standards above national expectations. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good overall in Years 3 to 6.
108. In Years 1 and 2, pupils develop their knowledge, skills and understanding in history through suitably planned themes. They use an appropriate range of sources to find out about the past. For example, during the theme 'Houses and Homes' they make good use of Northborough to look at the variety and age of buildings and houses and use artefacts such as irons and hot water bottles to see how things have changed. First hand experiences such as taking part in 'Great Granny's School Days' help them develop an awareness of the past. They use pictures to compare the past with the present day for example when comparing their classrooms with those of the 1900s, identifying similarities and differences. Pupils listen to stories to learn about significant events and people in British history such as the Fire of London and Florence Nightingale. They begin to create questions to help them find out more about the past which also supports the development of their literacy skills. There are satisfactory links with design and technology and art but no evidence was seen of the use of computers to further pupils' research or to present their findings.

109. First hand experiences continue to play a significant part in the history curriculum in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 take part in an Evacuees day and experience a 1940s lesson. Others join in a Victorian day and in Years 3 to 6 they experience a Tudor re-enactment at Kentwell Hall in Suffolk. All these visits are well planned into the curriculum and ensure good development of pupils' knowledge and understanding. In discussion, Year 6 pupils had obviously found them supportive to their learning. They talked enthusiastically about their work on the Elizabethan era including learning about Sir Francis Drake and life on board ship. They recalled other topics they had studied and were clear and accurate about putting all these in chronological order from the Ancient Greeks to World War 2. Pupils use their computer skills successfully to search the Internet for websites such as when studying the Tudors and they also use reference books to carry out research. However, little evidence was seen of pupils being taught to recognise that the past can be interpreted in different ways.
110. Although it is not possible to comment on the quality of teaching, overall improvement since the last inspection is good. History is taught in blocks of half a term alternating with geography and is based on the national scheme of work so that the subject is systematically covered. Pupils' attainment is now regularly assessed and their progress tracked which is an improvement since the last inspection as is the rise in standards in Years 3 to 6. Standards in Year 1 and 2 have been maintained.
111. The school has put in place suitable temporary arrangements to cover the absence of the co-ordinator. Provision and standards in history are part of the whole school review process and staff have a clear view of what further developments need to be implemented to ensure that teaching and learning in the subject continue to improve.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

112. Over their time in school, pupils achieve very well so that, by the end of Year 6, they demonstrate standards that are well above average. However, the achievements of pupils in Years 1 to 4 are satisfactory and they show understanding and skill with computers in line with the average for their age. The rate of progress accelerates through Years 5 and 6 in response to the high expectations of the teachers and the ease of access that these pupils have to the computer suite. This boosts the pupils' performance and leads to their very good achievements. Most of the Year 6 pupils have knowledge, understanding and computer skills at the higher Level 5. This was demonstrated clearly during the inspection with the pupils' use of spreadsheets and presentations. Pupils enter data and formulae into spreadsheets to show, for example, the items required for feeding everyone at a party. They then use this information very well to model what will be needed should more people be invited and also to calculate the costs involved so that effective decisions can be made about the content and scale of the meal. Pupils have used 'Powerpoint' very effectively to prepare slides with animation, sound effects, imported graphics and clip art. They also use the fuller features of the software to prepare their notes and cues, including timings, for the presentations they then give to the whole class using the multimedia projector. In these presentations the pupils show that they are clearly aware of their audience and have prepared their work to support and clarify the main points of their 'talk'. This professional level of presentation is carried out to this standard by almost every pupil and is well above the average for their age. In addition, almost half the Year 5 pupils were observed during a lunch-time club where they used electronic mail very well to maintain running dialogue with friends in a Canadian school as well as using the Internet to quickly and confidently research aspects from their morning's lessons. These pupils, along with those in Year 6, also displayed speedy and accurate keyboard skills along with a very good level of technical knowledge about, for example, the relative speed of modem transmissions and the impact on Internet access when computers in the United States log on.
113. Pupils use computers appropriately in Years 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 2, have skills that are average for their age. They present the findings of class surveys in basic graphs; modify font, line and colour appropriately; and enter, save and retrieve their work. Year 3 pupils use 'Word Art' effectively and interrogate the information in a database to find what they are looking for. In Year 4, pupils use a branching database and program logo to control the movement of a

'turtle' on screen, giving the precise instructions needed, for example, to draw a capital letter without taking the virtual pen from the paper.

114. Since the last inspection, the school has made very good improvement in its provision for information and communication technology. A long-term strategic plan has been followed for improving the quality and quantity of computers, with additional opportunities taken for enhancement. For example, when offered a large quantity of used personal computers from a local business at an attractive purchase price. Teachers are being trained to improve their own computer skills, and this is already proving effective and raising standards in some classes. In addition, the software used has been changed so that pupils use in school the software they are most likely to have on their own computers at home.
115. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, being satisfactory in Years 1 to 4 and very good in Years 5 and 6. The characteristics of the very good teaching are that:
- Teachers set high expectations as they demonstrate clearly, so that all pupils can see, how they use computers themselves to help with their own work at home. Pupils are then encouraged to quickly put the demonstration into practice and this leads them to increase their effort, pace and concentration as they work.
 - Teachers expect pupils to do things for themselves on the computer and this results in pupils being very confident in their use of menus, mouse and keyboard.
 - Pupils are given very clear guidance about what they will learn each term, and what they are focusing on in each lesson. This leads pupils to know the skills they are learning and work harder to master them within the allocated time.
 - Teachers mark work with helpful comments such as, 'this printed on two sheets of paper – next time, reduce the column width'.
116. An improvement can be made in some lessons for younger pupils where they rely too much on trying things out on paper rather than having a go on the computers and learning through experience.
117. Computers are used effectively to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils use word processing and compile newspapers as a club activity that helps develop their knowledge of literacy. Some pupils use computers to follow an individual programme aimed at improving their mathematical skills. Most teachers encourage pupils to extend their artistic skills with computers and the Internet is used effectively to research the topics being taught in class. However, the school has rightly identified that further improvements can be made in establishing the computer as an everyday 'tool' for learning that can be used more fully at all times and in all subjects.

MUSIC

118. Standards in all year groups in music are in line with the average for the age of the pupils. However, a significant proportion of the older pupils (almost a quarter) have instrumental tuition in a range of tuned instruments and these pupils have standards of performance, reading notation and listening that are above the average for their age. In assemblies, singing sessions and choir practice, pupils of all ages sing tunefully in unison but the quality of singing lacks 'gusto' and older pupils are not yet singing comfortably in two or more parts. Examples of higher attainment were observed during the inspection when pupils having clarinet tuition performed a piece in three parts with accuracy and good regard for dynamics and tone. The school's recorder group accompanies singing in assembly with good quality playing using treble as well as descant recorders. The school orchestra rehearses effective arrangements of well known songs such as 'We are Sailing' and here, pupils have the opportunity to play their chosen instrument and enjoy the quality of sound they make together. In addition, the school provides good quality tuition for pupils on keyboards and recorders; and the local education authority music service teaches individual pupils in small groups to play the violin, clarinet and brass instruments. The pupils involved in these activities achieve well. However, the majority of pupils in their lessons, achieve satisfactorily over time.

119. In the small number of music lessons observed during the inspection, the pupils in Year 2 sang each note of an octave with accurate pitch and played their tuned percussion instruments together in reasonable time. Most pupils realised from graphic notation which symbol represented a high or lower note and played these accordingly on their chime bars. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4, pupils listened carefully to the music and thought how to describe the mood it created. They also played short sequences appropriately on their percussion instruments.
120. Since the last inspection there has been a change in the teacher responsible for co-ordinating the subject and this post is currently being covered by a learning support assistant who is skilled as a musician. She is an appropriately qualified music instructor and leads the lessons for most classes, aided by the class teacher, as well as running a number of clubs and the orchestra and choir. A new curriculum has also been implemented that provides sufficient guidance so that lessons can be planned for pupils to build progressively on their skills as they move through the school.
121. The quality of teaching in class lessons is satisfactory. The music instructor plans lessons carefully and includes an appropriate balance of listening, appraising, composing and performing. Class teachers support the lessons effectively by helping to manage and control the pupils and organise them into groups as required. This keeps the pupils engaged in their activities and they are suitably motivated by wanting to have a turn on the instruments. The local education authority provides instrumental tuition of very good quality. Teachers are skilled performers on their instruments and set high standards for the pupils to respond to. Most pupils practise each week and are motivated by the challenge of reading notation and using the correct musical terms as well as by their desire to play the instrument. The school's music instructor provides good quality teaching in the music clubs and sets a rigorous pace in these group sessions.
122. The school ensures that all pupils have equal access to instrumental tuition and provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to extend their experience of musical appreciation and performance. For example: there are regular concerts and school productions with a high musical content; pupils make visits to local cathedrals for music workshops; the local education authority music team perform for the pupils; visiting professional musicians (such as Bayou Secou from Louisiana) add to the pupils' experiences of other cultures; and this is also enhanced by involvement in the village's Peruvian harp festival. However, insufficient use is made of computers to further help pupils to develop their composition, recording and arranging skills. The school now has appropriate plans to raise standards and appoint a new co-ordinator as well as continuing to make effective use of the music instructor's skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in physical education are average. During the inspection, lessons were observed in gymnastics and games. Pupils of all ages achieve satisfactorily. However, standards in gymnastics have declined a little since the last inspection mainly due to a major building programme (now nearing completion) that has meant limited access to the hall. Swimming is taught to all pupils in the summer term and, by the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils attain the expected standards. In all areas of physical education, pupils with special educational needs make a similar rate of progress to others in their year groups.
124. The majority of pupils appreciate the need for a warm up activity. They understand the need for safe working and comply with the regulations about removing jewellery and wearing appropriate clothing. By Year 2, most pupils can use space well, keeping out of each other's way and moving safely around the hall at different speeds. They run, dodge and change direction in the available space effectively. They perform a sequence of movements including supporting weight on different parts of the body, rolling, and balancing on the floor. The majority use the available apparatus confidently and sensibly to develop further their movement skills. Some pupils also understand the importance of gymnastics in keeping healthy.

125. By Year 6, pupils build satisfactorily on these skills and also gain new ones. They use space and the apparatus effectively. Their balancing activities are developing well. Many pupils skilfully transfer weight from one part of the body, for example, performing cartwheels, however, their knowledge of ways of linking movements are limited. Control of movements is satisfactory, some pupils holding an extended balancing position at different levels successfully. They know the importance of improving their performances and are developing skills in synchronised movements in pairs. The skills of spatial awareness and different ways of travelling and turning developed in gymnastics are effectively used in games. The pupils respond well to changes in speed and direction and standards in striking and sending a ball improved in their tennis lesson.
126. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was good overall. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory where the teacher was new to the class. Here a small group of pupils, some with behaviour problems, were disruptive and limited the progress of most pupils in that lesson. Most lessons are planned carefully and include opportunities to warm up and cool down. The better teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge, good management of pupils, demonstrations of correct technique and effective feedback to pupils on their performance. For instance, in a Year 6 tennis lesson the teacher demonstrated 'serving' techniques resulting in most pupils improving their tennis skills. Classes are generally well managed and teachers make good use of the limited playground space available. Effective teaching in most classes enables pupils to make good progress in the acquisition of skills and understanding of the different areas of physical education. This results in most pupils displaying good attitudes towards their work and enables them to learn effectively. They enjoy the subject, get changed quickly for lessons and respond immediately to instructions. In all classes, pupils try very hard, and when given the opportunity are prepared to demonstrate their skills and respond well to suggestions for improving their performance.
127. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including football, Morris dancing, cross-country running, volleyball, athletics and cricket. All activities are open to both genders. They are well organised and popular. The pupils also take part in competitions against other local schools. The subject is managed satisfactorily. The school has adopted the government's recommended guidance complemented by local education authority guidelines and other published schemes. There is now good quality guidance in place to support teachers in providing the full range of physical activities, a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, there has been no formal monitoring of teaching in order to raise standards. Resources are satisfactory overall. The school has a large playing field and wooded area, which are well used.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. By the end of Year 2, the standards attained are broadly in line with those outlined in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, as is the quality of teaching pupils usually receive in these classes. Some very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 means pupils achieve well and their attainment exceeds what is expected by the end of Year 6. Three lessons were observed during the inspection and the work on display, in photo albums and in pupils' books was also examined.
129. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the main events in the Christian faith such as Christmas and Easter and events that are common to several faiths such as harvest and the Jewish 'Succoth'. They hear stories from both the old and new testaments of the Bible and visit the local church to find out about the main features of the building and their purposes. Good links are made with their literacy work when they are asked to prepare questions to ask the local clergy. Their personal development is also enhanced by opportunities to think about issues such as what makes them happy or unhappy and who they can talk to when they are worried. In an unsatisfactory lesson observed in Year 2, pupils were keen to contribute what they knew about life in the time of Jesus but they did not know that Jesus went to school as a boy nor how people got water at that time. There were insufficient resources, such as books and pictures available for them to find out more and build on the knowledge they already had. They were not

actively involved in the work and many became restless so that the majority made little progress in their learning.

130. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn about key figures, events and festivals of faiths such as the Jewish and Muslim faiths and Hinduism. In Year 3 for example, a very well-labelled display helps them recognise the important artefacts and customs of the Muslim faith such as the Koran, prayer mats and clothes worn. Older pupils investigate ceremonies, such as marriage, of different faith groups and recognise that there are both similarities and differences between the religions. Teachers show very good knowledge and understanding which ensures pupils learn the correct vocabulary and are well informed about different religions. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils recalled many details about Hinduism and were very keen to talk about what they had learnt. Pupils continue to study Christianity including the main events of the life of Jesus. For example, in Year 6, pupils explore in depth the events leading up to Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. Very good teaching helps them to consider the events from the point of view of different characters who were involved. They show considerable insight when taking on different roles and ask each other perceptive questions about the events. This also makes a very valuable contribution to the development of their speaking and listening skills. The very good relationships ensure they are able to put forward differing points of view with confidence. Overall, teaching in the classes for Years 3 to 6 is good and the lessons observed were very good.
131. Religious education is taught in all classes and generally follows closely the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Significant emphasis is placed on first hand learning experiences so that, for example, pupils visit Ely and Peterborough cathedrals and benefit from visitors from other faiths. On Shrove Tuesday they take part in pancake races in the playground. As well as the contribution religious education makes to the development of literacy skills, it also contributes effectively to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. For example, when studying Hinduism, pupils have the chance to dress up in saris. Pupils use the Internet to carry out research into Hinduism and they use an art program to make effective pictures of Joseph's coat of many colours.
132. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well. She is very enthusiastic and experienced and has a clear view of the strengths and areas for development in the subject. This is due to the very good review system established in the school to which all staff contribute and from which an action plan is drawn up and implemented. The co-ordinator monitors standards both informally by looking at displays and talking to the teachers and more formally by scrutinising samples of work. She has reviewed and updated resources to a good level. As a result, improvement since the last inspection is very good. At that time standards across the school were below expectations as the subject did not receive sufficient emphasis in the curriculum. Work was not consistently planned in appropriate depth and resources were inadequate. All these issues have been successfully addressed.