

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **GUYHIRN CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Guyhirn, Wisbech,  
Cambridgeshire

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110806

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Brenda Wright

Reporting inspector: Mr. Brian Aldridge  
17454

Dates of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> February 2001 – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001

Inspection number: 206187  
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:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	High Road Guyhirn Wisbech Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE13 4ED
Telephone number:	01945 450247
Fax number:	01945 450771
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Colin Hurst
Date of previous inspection:	14 September 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
17454	Brian Aldridge	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities Special Educational Needs Mathematics Science Information and Communication technology Design and technology Physical education	What the school should do to improve further The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
14178	Patricia Willman	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
20911	Judith Dawson	Team inspector	Foundation stage English Art Geography History Music Religious education	How good are 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 smaller than average primary school and draws pupils from three local communities. The number on roll has fallen since the last inspection and is now 67 pupils (38 girls and 28 boys). There are ten children in the reception class. There are no pupils of minority ethnic heritage. Nearly half of the pupils (31) are on the school's register for special educational needs (SEN), eight of whom have statements. Both these proportions are very high. About 22 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is generally below average. There is only one permanently appointed teacher. As the headteacher is on long-term sick leave there is an acting headteacher and the other teachers are fulfilling temporary contracts until the end of the summer term.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective and improving school with more strengths than weaknesses. Standards in English and mathematics are below average but are improving. The quality of teaching is good and there are some examples of very good and excellent teaching. The school is well managed by the acting headteacher and the governors have steered the school through some difficult times over the past year. Because of the very high levels of special educational need, the improving provision and the effective use of funds, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- The quality of the teaching in three-quarters of lessons seen.
- The provision for five and six-year-olds.
- The standards of behaviour.
- The quality of leadership and management.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs

#### **What could be improved**

- The opportunities to use reading and writing in other subjects.
- The curriculum for, and consequently progress over time in, science, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and religious education.
- Assessment procedures to enable the school to track pupils' progress and set them targets.
- The relationships with parents.
- Provision for pupils' cultural development

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

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

When the school was last inspected in September 1998 it had serious weaknesses. Since then the school has maintained a good rate of improvement. The four issues identified in 1998 have been successfully addressed: attainment in English and mathematics in the junior classes has improved notably; teachers' planning has developed well and is now excellent in the foundation stage and good in the Year 4/5/6 class; older pupils are now being challenged in their work; and standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved. Generally, since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved significantly and as a result the rate of learning in lessons is now appreciably better. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress as they move through the school and many make good and some very good progress. The quality of leadership and management of the school has

improved; the acting headteacher and governors have good plans for increasing the rate of pupils' progress and improving the quality of the curriculum.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by eleven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	D	C
Mathematics	E	B	D	C
Science	E*	E	E	E

**Key**

Well above average A

Above average B

Average C

Below average D

Well below average E

The 2000 results for eleven-year-olds place the school's performance below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Compared to schools in a similar social context attainment in English and mathematics was average and well below average in science. However, compared to schools with similar results at seven, attainment in English and mathematics at eleven was well above average and average in science. The trend in results could not be evaluated because of a lack of information. At the age of seven, pupils' performance in last year's national tests was very low in reading, well below average in writing and below average in mathematics. There was a higher than usual proportion of pupils with SEN in last year's Year 2. Similar school comparisons show performance to be very low in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. However, because of the small size of the year groups and the very high proportion of pupils with SEN, many of whom join the school after the age of four, these comparisons must be treated with caution. The school has achieved its targets in English and mathematics.

Inspectors found that the attainment of this year's Year 6 pupils is broadly in line with the last set of test results. Seven-year-olds attain below average standards overall in English and mathematics, and in science they are well below average. Standards are gradually improving due to good teaching and a sharper focus on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Standards in ICT are average, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. In art and music attainment is average for seven-year-olds and below average for eleven-year-olds. Standards in physical education are average for eleven-year-olds. Insufficient evidence was available to evaluate the standards in some subjects; however, generally standards in other subjects are below average. This year children will leave the foundation stage with above average attainment in personal, social and emotional development. In communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development attainment will be at the level expected of children at the end of the reception year. The progress of pupils with SEN is very good.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and attitudes to learning are good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour in and out of classrooms is good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good although the staff changes have dented the confidence and self-esteem of some pupils.
Attendance	Attendance is above average.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and their behaviour and attendance is good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	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.*

Overall, teaching is good, and it is very good or better in 37 per cent of lessons. Good or better quality teaching accounts for 73 per cent of the lessons and the remainder were taught satisfactorily. This is significantly better than at the time of the last inspection when only five percent of the teaching was judged to be of very good quality. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Teaching in the foundation stage is very good and it is good in the class for the oldest pupils in the school. Literacy and numeracy are taught well. The level of challenge for older pupils, identified as a being weak in the last inspection, is now good. The quality and use of marking and daily assessments do not sufficiently help pupils to understand what they have to achieve beyond the current lesson. Teaching methods are good and the management of pupils and the use of time, resources and support staff are very good. The work of learning support assistants is very good. Staff meet the needs of pupils with SEN very well. Pupils are more interested in practical work than completing exercises in books or worksheets. Given the very high proportion of pupils with SEN, overall, pupils make good progress in lessons and those with SEN make very good progress. The rate of learning is improving in lessons as the new teaching team works effectively together and this will add to the rate of progress as pupils move through the school. The children in the reception/Year 1 class achieve very well in their personal and social development and well in other areas of learning. Pupils in the Year 4/5/6 class achieve well and in the Year 2/3/4 class they make satisfactory progress.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	There is a very good curriculum for under-fives but the curriculum for other pupils is too narrow.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This aspect of provision is very good and a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall although provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and procedures for helping pupils are good. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment are unsatisfactory.

The curriculum coverage for subjects other than English, mathematics, science and ICT is too narrow. All of the subjects of the primary curriculum are represented but only parts of the National Curriculum and local education authority agreed syllabus for religious education are taught. The way that learning opportunities are planned in these subjects does not help pupils learn effectively. The opportunities pupils have for extra-curricular activities are unsatisfactory. The curriculum for pupils with SEN and four-year-old children is very good and these are strengths of the school. The partnership with parents is currently unsatisfactory.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher is a good leader and is well supported by coordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors understand the needs of the school and work hard to support its work, although the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This area of the school's work is good.
The strategic use of resources	Funds are used very well.

The acting headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and a strong determination to improve the areas that they have correctly identified as being weak. Staffing and resources are good and accommodation is satisfactory. The school applies the principles of best value in a satisfactory manner.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Children like coming to school.</li><li>• Children make good progress.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The standards of behaviour and personal development of children.</li><li>• The amount and type of work children have to do.</li><li>• The information to parents about children's progress.</li><li>• Relationships with parents.</li><li>• The leadership and management of the school.</li></ul>

The school has been through a period of difficulty, particularly in relation to the appointment of teaching staff. The inspection team agrees with parents that relationships between home and school need to be improved but the school is building well on the improvements made since last September. Inspectors found that behaviour is good. The work pupils are given in English, mathematics and ICT is appropriate, although the learning opportunities in some other subjects need to be improved. Reports are good and give parents plenty of information about how well children are doing and what they have to do to improve. Parents should feel reassured that the leadership and management of the school are now good and the acting headteacher and governors are on track to improve the remaining weaknesses.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS**

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

1. Over the past few years children have entered the foundation stage with varying levels of attainment. This year the four-year-olds were broadly below average in their attainment. Last year children in this age groups attained average levels. However, many pupils enter other year groups with special educational needs (SEN). This largely accounts for the above average proportion of pupils with SEN (twice the national average) and the well above average proportion that requires the higher levels of support offered by a statement (seven times the national average). Comparisons with other schools take no account of these differences. Further, the small number in each year group means that comparisons between year groups should be treated with caution; one pupil more or less with SEN makes a substantial difference to the overall result.
2. Inspectors found that progress towards meeting the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical, knowledge and understanding, creative and physical development is good. Children arrive at school already enjoying stories and very good quality teaching ensures that pupils learn new words and children repeat these words with relish. Pupils make good progress in the development of their listening skills and pay close attention to stories and to each other when working in the 'Pizza Parlour.' Some higher attaining children read with expression and others read common words. All pupils match sounds to letters and make good attempts at writing words. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy in this class ensures that children receive a good grounding in the basic skills. In their mathematical development pupils again learn well, building on their knowledge of number and shape. Many recognise common two-dimensional shapes and count up to 10, higher attaining pupils up to 20. Children learn at a faster rate in their personal, social and emotional development than in the other areas of learning. They play and work together well, enjoying each other's company and working hard to complete the interesting tasks their teacher sets them. Children with SEN make very good progress towards the targets set out in their individual education plans, and the links and working relationships between parents, teachers, nursery nurses and learning support assistants are very important and supportive.
3. In the 2000 tests and assessments for seven-year-olds, pupils' performance was very low in reading, well below average in writing and below average in mathematics. Similar school comparisons show performance to be very low in reading, well below average in writing and average in mathematics. Performance in science assessments was very low when compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was very high compared to the national average and the results of similar schools. Girls achieve substantially higher levels than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is aware of these differences and care is now being taken to use materials and methods that will help improve boys' performance.
4. Inspectors found that seven-year-olds attain below average standards overall in English and mathematics and well below average standard in science. Since the last inspection standards have generally remained stable but low science scores are due to the narrow curriculum which did not reflect the whole of the programme of study. Pupils in Year 1 and 2 are now making at least good progress in their reading in

lessons and some make very good progress, including those pupils with SEN. An analysis of pupils' books points to a clear rise in the rate of progress in this class. This is due to the highly structured programmes in spelling, reading and writing that learning support assistants carry out with these pupils. These support groups help pupils to acquire the basic skills but pupils do not develop an interest in books and as pupils grow older they do not read by choice. Standards of writing are below average although it is evident from an analysis of work that pupils have made good progress since September and they made good progress in the lessons seen. Teachers have worked hard to ensure that handwriting and spelling are taught regularly and frequently. Seven-year-olds make good progress in mathematics lessons, counting in twos, fives, tens, fifties and hundreds accurately. They understand how to round up and down to the nearest ten although their recall of number facts is inaccurate and slow; this has to do with memory skills not being well developed. In science pupils have learned how to construct an electric circuit and understand that some materials conduct electricity and others do not. They know that to be healthy they should eat a balanced diet and sleep well. Pupils classify animals according to the conditions they need to live. However, their scientific understanding has not been developed systematically and, as a result, pupils are not working at high enough levels. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is average and well-structured programmes ensure they learn the skills they need to use computers in other subjects. Attainment in art and music is average at this age but in those subjects where it was possible to make a judgment, including religious education, attainment is below average. This is because the curriculum for these subjects has not been fully taught.

5. The 2000 results for eleven-year-olds place the school's performance below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Compared to schools with similar entitlement to free school meals, attainment in English and mathematics was average and well below average in science. When compared to the results of other schools where pupils attained similar results to Guyhirn's at seven, attainment at eleven is well above average in English and mathematics and average in science. The trend in results could not be judged because of lack of information. Though there is now a higher proportion of pupils with SEN, results at eleven in English and mathematics are higher than they were at the time of the last inspection but they are lower in science. The school achieved its targets in English and mathematics. Generally, girls score higher than boys in English and science but boys score higher in mathematics. The performance in science is lower than in English and mathematics.
6. Inspectors found that attainment of the present eleven-year-olds is below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Standards are gradually improving because of good teaching and a sharper focus on teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Standards in ICT are average, a considerable improvement since the last inspection. Standards in physical education are average for eleven-year-olds. Because the school has not organised the curriculum well enough it was difficult to find sufficient evidence to judge the standards in some subjects; however, generally standards in other subjects are below average.
7. Apart from ICT and physical education, standards are below average at both seven and eleven and well below average in science. However, in English and mathematics programmes adopted last September have already begun to make a substantial impact on the rate of pupils' progress over time in these two key subjects. A scheme of work for science, which began in January, is already beginning to positively affect pupils' progress but in most other subjects standards show few or no signs of rising, largely because of the way in which the curriculum is organised. At times eleven-

year-olds find it difficult to speak fluently about what they are thinking. Although teachers require pupils to speak clearly and pronounce words well, pupils still find it difficult to use technical terms. Teachers are tackling this problem steadily by asking pupils to repeat words and to talk in complete sentences using the words that they have learned in their lessons. Reading is not a popular activity in the school and, although average and above average pupils read fluently and with technical accuracy, their reading is often 'flat' and without much expression. Pupils' writing has improved and an analysis of pupils' books shows that handwriting is improving and so is the content of their work. Pupils are using far more expressions and written illustrations in their work.

8. Average and above average pupils have a satisfactory understanding about number and mental calculations. They recall number facts accurately and use their knowledge in design and technology and science. In both the infant and junior classes there has been a lack of mathematical investigations and opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge although again this has been more fully addressed since January. The same also applies to science and although pupils understand the basic idea of conducting a fair test, they have had too little practice in applying their knowledge. Science has not been well planned by the school and parts of the curriculum have not been taught. Attainment in ICT is average and the curriculum for this subject covers all of the requirements and is well supported by a learning support assistant.
9. Pupils with SEN make very good progress towards the targets set out in their individual education plans. They receive very good support from learning support assistants and the programmes that have been developed to meet their needs are well integrated into the school day. These programmes usefully bring together learning in spelling, reading and writing and often pupils with particular needs are supported so that they can sharpen their hearing or visual skills.
10. The very good and at times excellent teaching in the reception/Year 1 class supports very good rates of progress. In this class the proportion of pupils with SEN is low which means that learning can be conducted at a faster pace. In the other classes and particularly in the Year 2/3/4 class the proportion of pupils with SEN is very high. Although these pupils make very good progress this is towards the targets set out in their learning plans and because of the generally satisfactory quality of teaching and these high proportions, progress overall is satisfactory in this class. The progress in the Y4/5/6 class is good as good quality teaching supports brisk rates of learning. Parents say that the rate of progress has increased since September and a scrutiny of curriculum plans shows that teachers are focusing their attention more sharply on the knowledge, skills and ideas that pupils need to learn to make progress. This is particularly the case of pupils with SEN. The very good quality programmes and support for these pupils are having a very positive influence on their rate of learning in their groups. The school is giving sufficient attention to constructing programmes so that pupils with SEN use their small-group learning in their classrooms. However, the higher quality of teaching, better programmes for SEN pupils and a better atmosphere in school means that, although attainment remains below average, pupils make good progress overall.

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

11. Pupils have positive attitudes to school. The majority of parents who expressed a view prior to, and during, the inspection say that their children enjoy coming to school and the pupils confirm this. Their behaviour in classrooms and around the school is generally good which is an improvement since the last inspection. Most pupils have

good relationships with each other and with the adults in the school, they respond well to the values promoted by the school and their personal development is satisfactory. These good features, which have significantly improved over recent months, create a positive atmosphere in which pupils feel valued as part of the school community. The overall quality of pupils' response to these aspects of development has been maintained well since the last inspection.

12. The children in the foundation stage enjoy their time at school and have very good relationships with their teacher, with each other and with other adults who work with them. They develop good personal and social skills and settle quickly and happily in school. They take part in the many varied and interesting activities with enthusiasm, responding well to instructions and listening carefully to each other and to their teacher. For example, when included in a literacy session with Year 1 pupils, they glowed with pride when they were able to do the same task as the older children. They understand the routines of the classroom and tidy up carefully and sensibly. They help each other and clearly understand what kind of behaviour is expected of them.
13. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), take part in school life with enthusiasm and interest. They respond well to the structure of the literacy and numeracy sessions and this makes a positive impact on the progress they make. In a Year 1 numeracy lesson, for example, sharing the objectives of the lesson with the pupils ensured that they clearly knew what was expected of them and they responded with increasing confidence. Pupils particularly enjoy the practical nature of science experiments and design and technology. This was exemplified in a Class 1 science lesson on solids, liquids and gasses. Because of the quiet and calm presentation of the class teacher, pupils listened carefully and paid close attention to instructions. The pupils who have SEN, a high proportion of whom are in Class 2, apply themselves to their tasks but many lack listening and concentration skills and need the constant supervision and support provided by the learning support assistants in order to make progress.
14. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground is generally good. A small number of parents raised serious concerns about the standards of behaviour in the school prior to the inspection. Evidence shows that improved consistency in managing the difficult behaviour of a small number of pupils has resulted in a significant improvement in overall standards of behaviour throughout the school. Pupils clearly understand what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour within the school community and know that they do not have to put up with bullying. They know the school's rules, most respect them and disapprove of those who disobey them. Pupils are motivated well by praise and try hard to earn stars and awards for good work and behaviour. They move about the school purposefully and sensibly and, although playtimes are boisterous and active, no unpleasantness or unkindness was observed. There have been no exclusions this year, which is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
15. The pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They are polite to adults and the youngest pupils particularly are keen to talk about their lessons and their friends. They treat the school's resources with care. The good relationships they have with each other and with their teachers create an orderly and happy community in the school. Many pupils are sensitive to the particular difficulties experienced by some of their classmates and make allowances for them. Most pupils enjoy working in pairs and groups and often share ideas and resources constructively. They carry out their classroom responsibilities sensibly and older pupils help in assemblies. When given the opportunity, many pupils can successfully organise their own work and make

independent choices. Although many pupils develop appropriate levels of maturity during their time in school, the staff changes in recent years have had a detrimental impact on the self-confidence and self-esteem of a significant number of pupils. The school has recognised this and there is a growing focus on encouraging these aspects of development

16. The level of attendance at school is good. It is above the national average and has improved since the last inspection. It is a very significant improvement on the previous year when attendance slumped to 84.2 per cent, which was very low in comparison with other schools. Registration is swift and efficient and pupils settle quickly to their lessons.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT**

17. At the time of inspection there was one permanently appointed teacher; other teaching staff were fulfilling temporary contracts. The quality of teaching is good, a significant improvement since the last inspection. There were no observations of unsatisfactory teaching. Inspectors found that teaching is very good or better in 37 per cent of lessons; it is good or better in 73 per cent of the lessons and satisfactory in the remaining 27 per cent. This is significantly better than the last inspection when only five per cent of the teaching was judged to be of very good quality. This improvement in the quality of teaching is having a positive affect on the rate of pupils' learning. An analysis of books showed that the rate of learning before this term was slow in subjects other than English, mathematics and information and communication technology where it was satisfactory. Inspectors found an increased sense of urgency and at least good levels of understanding about how the curriculum should be planned. Overall, teachers manage pupils' behaviour well. Interesting tasks are set, firm but fair rules are applied and older pupils are regularly reminded about the tone of their classroom and how it should reflect their wish to work hard. Parents expressed concerns about how pupils behave in lessons but they also said that there had been an improvement since the beginning of the school year and inspectors support this view
18. Teaching in the foundation stage and for six-year-olds is very good. In this class, the teacher's knowledge and understanding are very good. These high level skills are used to plan work that effectively encourages pupils to learn the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. Planning is excellent; it sets out clearly the structure of the lesson, what children are expected to learn and how the work will be assessed. The links between planning and the assessments the teacher makes are excellent and are a very useful model for the development of this aspect of teaching. Expectations of pupils in this class are very high and great care is taken to ensure that learning support assistant and nursery nurses support pupils' learning effectively. Very good methods are used, for instance, older pupils helping young children by reporting back their findings and making books of their investigations. This feeds the natural curiosity that children display and keeps them interested in their work. It also encourages pupils to work hard and learn effectively. The teaching in this class forms a very secure foundation for children's learning; it prepares them well for the work that is to follow in the other classes of the school while capturing their imaginations and interest.
19. Teaching in the infant and junior year groups is good overall. Generally, the quality of teaching in the class for Years 2, 3 and 4 is satisfactory and that for Years 4, 5 and 6 is good. In Years 2, 3 and 4 the planning and pace of lessons are satisfactory. At times the work that is planned for older pupils in this class does not stretch them enough. This is because it is very difficult to plan lessons that take into account the

curriculum from both Key Stages 1 and 2. Overall, most aspects of teaching are good in this part of the school with the exception of day-to-day marking and assessment. The analysis of work shows that, until recently, pupils have not been given the pointers they need to improve their work and see what they need to do improve beyond the immediate lesson. Targets in English have been set and these have helped in this area but records of pupils' progress have not been maintained. The exception to this is in the area of special educational needs (SEN). Learning support assistants keep good notes on pupils' progress as they are working and report back to teachers about the work pupils have completed. These are very good systems that help promote pupils' learning in lessons and in small group work.

20. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good. Literacy and numeracy are taught well and plans are based on the national strategies. There are promising signs that in numeracy at least, pupils are using their skills in other areas as teacher plan work where these skills need to be used. In the class for the oldest pupils plans for lessons are flexible and based on the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. These good quality plans and methods are derived from an assessment of what pupils need rather than based on work which is appropriate to their ages. Methods are good in these classes. Teachers give pupils good models to develop speaking skills. Quoting poetry and bringing stories from their own backgrounds, they pass on an enthusiasm and wide-ranging knowledge.
21. At the last inspection the challenge for older pupils was unsatisfactory. This has been successfully addressed and now all pupils, whatever their level of ability, are presented with work which builds from lesson to lesson. Teachers set good homework and plan its use based on the work pupils complete in lessons. Now pupils need to be informed of what teachers plan for them after the current lesson.
22. The good quality of teaching supports pupils' learning well. Teachers are keen to see attainment rise and understand the need to develop the curriculum in line with pupils' needs. The key issues identified in the last inspection have been addressed and teaching is improving. The quality of teaching is now a strength of the school.

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

23. The school teaches all the National Curriculum subjects and religious education but the provision is too narrow for most other subjects except English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. The requirements of the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus for religious education are not being met.
24. The school uses the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and this has been effective in improving pupils' progress in these subjects. There is an appropriate scheme of work for science that was adopted at the beginning of the year. The school has introduced a good scheme of work for ICT and the provision for this subject has improved considerably since the last inspection. The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is very good, as the work provided is closely matched to the individual needs of the pupils. The curriculum for the foundation stage is good and clearly identifies the early learning goals and the links with the National Curriculum.
25. The school plans the curriculum for all subjects except English, mathematics, ICT, music and physical education within themes or "topics". The teaching of science was also organised in this way until very recently. Although the class timetables identify history, geography, design and technology, art and design and religious education as



separate subjects, these are planned and taught only when they occur in the topic cycles. The complete curriculum for these subjects has not been covered and there is an insufficient development of pupils' skills as they move throughout the school. Over the last few years there has, quite rightly, been an emphasis on the core subjects of English and mathematics but the school has not been making appropriate use of the time available for the other subjects. Pupils in Year 6 have little knowledge of other countries geographical features, the chronology of the past or other religions. They have no knowledge of European or world art and music. The provision for extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory, as it was at the time of the last inspection, and there are now no sporting activities outside the school day or with other schools. Very little time is allocated to music. However, the time available for music is used well as a peripatetic music teacher provides very good music lessons for the whole school that include as many elements of the curriculum as she can teach. There is very little time for pupils to compose, perform and listen to music and there is no whole-school singing other than in assemblies.

26. The school has a sound policy for pupils personal, social and health education and makes appropriate provision for sex education and drugs awareness.
27. The acting headteacher and subject co-ordinators are well aware of the shortcomings of the curriculum. New policies are being introduced and audits of the subjects feature in the school development plan. The acting headteacher appreciates the difficulties of planning appropriate work for two key stages in one class and of the need to ensure that the pupils' skills are developed systematically throughout their time in school. There are plans to improve the extra-curricular provision and to establish more links with the community. All pupils have appropriate access to the available curriculum and the teachers now provide work for pupils before school starts to accommodate the early arrival of the school buses. About three-quarters of the pupils take this up, an opportunity that is open to all.
28. The provision for pupils with SEN is very good. Since the local education authority has spent time improving the school's procedures for the assessment and identification of pupils with SEN, carefully balanced and structured programmes of work have been introduced. These programmes are based on pupils' individual education plans and show clearly what is expected of each child. In turn these needs have been grouped together and trained learning support assistants supervise the group work. This is skilfully managed and executed and with the continuing support of local education authority support workers, the school's provision for SEN is very good.
29. The planning for the early years is good. The teacher has a good understanding of the early learning goals and the steps children need to take to achieve them. The curriculum is planned very carefully and links effectively with the first levels of the National Curriculum covered by the Year 1 pupils in the class. The planning identifies clear targets for learning for each age group in Class 3 and the teacher combines the two sets of plans very effectively. The planning is highly structured and children learn well. Personal and social skills are promoted very well and the adults in the class provide very good support. There is little provision for outdoor activities. There are appropriate links with the independent playgroup housed in the school and children have the opportunity to experience school regularly in the summer term.
30. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is sound overall. Although the provision for pupil's spiritual education remains satisfactory and is good for pupils' moral and social development, there has been deterioration in the provision for pupils' cultural development since the last inspection. The latter is now unsatisfactory.

31. The daily acts of worship provide pupils with good opportunities to reflect on the experiences of others and to apply them to their own lives. For example, pupils listened to a story about St. Francis and understood that God gives us what we need. Having heard about a teacher's fear on a boat in a storm, an atmospheric retelling about the story of Jesus stilling the waves reminded the pupils that they can put their trust in God. The pupils understood that, although the vicar's dog was not much good at playing football or doing tricks he is very good at waiting, attribute we should all develop. In a literacy lesson, the teacher shared his enthusiasm and love of poetry with his pupils and gave them time to quietly reflect on the tragedy of "The Highwayman" and empathise with the highwayman and the innkeeper's daughter. Their responses were valued and they respected the views of their teacher and each other. However, although the school is successful in promoting Christian values and beliefs, there are few opportunities for pupils to learn about the values and beliefs of religions other than Christianity. Though pupils have learnt about, for example, Greek Gods in their history topic and know that Vikings burnt their dead with their boats, they do not explore different beliefs in any depth.
32. The school is successful in promoting the principles that distinguish right from wrong. Pupils regularly discuss issues relating to the way they respond to others. There is a code of conduct and each class has their own class rules. The teachers have a positive approach to managing behaviour, praising good behaviour rather than condemning that which is inappropriate. As a result, the deterioration in the pupils' behaviour that followed the last inspection has been rectified and pupils now behave well. Adults have consistent expectations of the way the pupils behave and set a good example with the way they treat each other and the pupils in school. For example, the acting headteacher has a "Thank You" board where messages are left for adults and pupils. Pupils are responsible and honest; even the youngest take turns and all are expected to be responsible for their own actions. The award system has been very effective and pupils are proud of their achievements as they earn the bronze, silver and gold awards.
33. The provision for pupils' social development is also good. Pupils are encouraged to work co-operatively throughout the school. Pupils of different ages work well together. A strength is the way the teacher in Class 3 gives each age group responsibility for aspects of the lesson and each group is dependent on the other. For example, in a science lesson, the reception children thought of questions for the Year 1 pupils while they researched sources of light. In Class 3 the teacher frequently talks of groups of pupils as teams and when behaviour drifts, pupils are stopped and reminded of the tone which the class have agreed they wish to adopt. The questions provided the stimulus for the pupils in Year 1 to share their research with the class. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of world issues. There were prayers in assembly for the earthquake victims in India. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils to socialise outside the school day, due, in part, to the fact that many pupils come to school on the school buses.
34. The curricular provision for some subjects is unsatisfactory and this has an adverse effect on the pupils' cultural development. Pupils have not had the opportunity to learn about and evaluate the work of artists and composers. Many of the visits and activities mentioned at the time of the last inspection have ceased as the school has concentrated on the core subjects. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures is very limited due to the inadequate history and geography curriculum. The knowledge of the rites, customs and beliefs of other religions that are part of the local education authority's agreed syllabus and the school policy for religious education have not been taught as the school has concentrated on the core subjects. The acting headteacher is having a

positive impact on the art, design and technology within school and the peripatetic music teacher has introduced the pupils to orchestral instruments. Opportunities for drama have been very limited although the English co-ordinator plans to hold a drama club. The acting headteacher, teachers and governors are aware of these weaknesses and are seeking to improve the cultural provision as they restructure the curriculum to accommodate the full range of study for each subject.

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

35. The well being of all pupils, including those with special educational needs (SEN), is an important priority for the staff and governors of the school. Satisfactory systems ensure that the day-to-day welfare of pupils is safeguarded. The formal procedures for monitoring the behaviour and attendance aspects of pupils' personal development are good. However, the procedures for analysing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory overall and do not effectively track pupils' progress as they move through the school. Because of the high quality of the support provided for the large number of pupils with SEN, the overall effectiveness of their educational and personal support for pupils is good. Target setting for pupils is beginning to provide a focus on raising attainment and emphasises the responsibility of pupils and their parents for achieving the target. The recently appointed members of staff have swiftly established good relationships with their pupils and pupils say that they can talk to their teachers and would tell them if they are unhappy. This good quality of pastoral care provided for pupils has been maintained well since the last inspection. However, elements within the assessment procedures are still not fully effective.
36. The children in the foundation stage are very well cared for in a happy and stimulating atmosphere. There are good induction procedures for both children and parents and staff are very easy to talk to at the beginning and end of the day should parents have any minor concerns. The level of care provided for children with physical disabilities is outstanding. Staff have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of each child and have very good strategies to encourage each individual to do their best. The children come to school happily and settle quickly into the routines of the classroom. They understand what is expected of them and staff consistently reinforce good work and behaviour with praise, building children's confidence and self-esteem.
37. The procedures for monitoring attendance are good. Most parents advise the school promptly of reasons for absence and those who do not are contacted by the school. This has resulted in a very low level of unauthorised absence. Class teachers alert the acting headteacher to any unusual absence and the school receives good support from the educational social worker. Certificates are awarded to pupils who achieve a 100 per cent attendance record. Registration procedures fully comply with legal requirements. The school has good procedures for recording and monitoring any persistent instances of poor behaviour, bullying or harassment and pupils say that they have confidence in the way the school handles any such problems. Parents are involved at an early stage and the acting headteacher takes steps to ensure that those pupils involved have a clear understanding of why their behaviour is unacceptable. There are good policies governing behaviour and bullying and staff are mostly consistent in applying the guidelines. Simple and appropriate rules are clearly displayed in classrooms, the hall and in the playground and pupils understand them, even though some choose not to abide by them at times. The rewards systems motivate the pupils to try hard to improve aspects of their personal and academic development. Although these formal systems effectively monitor elements of pupils'

personal development, the staff changes over recent months have inevitably had a detrimental impact on the continuity of the development of personal and social skills.

38. The procedures established in school for ensuring the health and safety of all pupils are satisfactory. There is a draft health and safety policy which is currently under consideration by staff and governors and is due to be ratified shortly. Formal risk assessment has not been carried out on a regular basis in the past but plans are in hand for this requirement to be fulfilled in the near future. Regular fire drills are carried out and equipment checked. First aid provision is satisfactory, and the particular medical needs of specific pupils are very well provided for. Appropriate records of accidents are kept and parents are advised if appropriate, with a note sent home at the end of the day. A few parents were concerned that they were not always informed if their child had been involved in an accident and the school is responding to this concern by examining ways in which to improve the system of notifying parents. Elements of personal safety are covered during science lessons and health professionals come into school to talk about personal safety and hygiene. The acting headteacher is the designated member of staff for child protection and has received an appropriate level of training. The school follows recognised guidelines and staff are aware of their responsibilities in this important aspect of care. The quality of supervision during the mid-day break is good. The mid-day supervisors are well organised and kind.
39. The school makes very good provision for supporting those pupils with statements of special educational need. The quality of care provided by the members of staff with responsibility for these pupils is of a high standard and allows them to take a full part in the lessons. There are very good links with outside agencies which provide professional guidance and help.
40. The procedures for assessing the achievements and monitoring the progress of children in the foundation stage are excellent. Each adult in the class has a diary in which they make detailed notes of the progress the children make during the lesson, measured against the objectives for each child's learning. Any other gains in learning are noted. The teacher uses these notes and her own observations, including the results of planned assessments of individual children at the end of the lesson, to plan future work. The whole class discusses whether the aims of the lesson have been achieved.
41. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are unsatisfactory throughout the rest of the school. The teachers assess pupils' reading and spelling skills regularly. The school uses some standardised tests to measure pupils' achievements against national norms. The results of these tests have been used to set targets for English and mathematics. However, these assessments and the results of the national tests at the end of the infant years have not yet been used systematically enough to enable the teachers to track the progress of pupils as they move through the school. The school has started to set individual targets for English but, without knowledge of the rates of progress of individual pupils, these are not as effective as they could be. Similarly, informal monitoring in the lessons is very general.
42. The assessment of the needs of pupils with SEN is very good, as the school has had a major input from the local education authority's support services. These assessments have enabled very effective individual education plans to be drawn up. As a result the work is closely matched to the needs of individual pupils and they make very good progress.

43. The acting headteacher plans to use nationally recognised tests regularly to enable the school to track individual pupils' progress over time. This will enable the teachers to identify any weaknesses. There are records of pupils' progress updated at the end of science topics and records for information and communication technology have enabled the acting headteacher to fill the gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers record the work the pupils have covered in the other subjects. The school now needs, as a matter of some urgency, to identify the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education, art and design, design and technology, history, geography and music in order to fill the gaps in the curriculum.

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

44. Many of the parents who expressed a view prior to the inspection had serious concerns about a number of aspects of school life. Talks with parents during the course of the inspection show that whilst some of these worries, particularly about the future stability of the staff, are still of major concern, many of the other issues raised are being dealt with effectively. Behaviour, for example, has been seen to improve considerably over recent months. Whilst the overall effectiveness of the school's partnership with parents is currently unsatisfactory, restoring confidence in the work of the school is a high priority for the acting headteacher and the governors. Inspection evidence shows that there are encouraging and positive signs of improvement. The school views a good partnership with parents as essential in improving the standards the children achieve and the quality of the experiences they have during their time in school. The school has responded well to the minor criticisms identified in the last inspection. However, because of the problems that the school has experienced over the last few months, at this time the quality of the school's partnership with parents is not as good as it was at the time of the last inspection.
45. The school promotes the links with parents by providing them with a good range of information about the school and about the progress their children make. The prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented and contain practical and comprehensive information. They give parents a good picture of the work of the school. The annual reports on children's progress are of good quality. They tell parents what their children have been doing, identify particular strengths and clearly state what needs to be done to improve. A new programme for consultation evenings is to be introduced, providing parents with three opportunities during the year to discuss their children's progress. This is a significant improvement on previous years. Parents receive regular newsletters that keep them up-to-date with activities in the school, and information about what children will be learning is sent out every term. Parents of pupils with SEN are fully involved in the decision making process and are kept well informed about the needs of their children.
46. The impact of parents' involvement on school life is satisfactory. The home/school contract has been received well by parents and the majority take their responsibilities seriously. Many help their children with their homework, and a small number of parents provide very valuable assistance in classrooms. This has a good impact on the progress the children make. Although, in the past, the views of parents have not been formally canvassed, the school is planning a consultative process to offer parents, pupils and staff the opportunity to express their views on important aspects of school life. There is an active parent teacher association that provides an interesting social dimension to school life. Funds raised are used to supplement resources.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

47. The leadership and management of the acting headteacher and senior staff are good. Since taking up the post at the beginning of the year, the acting headteacher and coordinators have built well on the work since the last inspection. The acting headteacher quickly and accurately summed up the strengths and weaknesses of the school and began to address the problems she identified. This was done with the full support of the staff and the governors and with great enthusiasm. There is now a good quality and properly costed school development plan that charts how the weaknesses will be addressed.
48. In the short time available much has already been achieved. Thorough audits have been completed for English, mathematics, science, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT). The weaknesses in curriculum planning have been identified and plans made to adopt the schemes of work developed by the local education authority. The staff and governors are very aware that the good relationships with parents need to be restored as soon as possible. The local education authority has worked extremely effectively to support the school and of particular note is its work in supporting pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Last term pupils were assessed and the school now has proper procedures for the identification and assessment of educational needs. The assistant headteacher has built very well on this work, constructing programmes that link pupils' needs so that learning support assistants support groups of pupils with similar requirements. This is very flexible and includes the use of computers. All of this is very effectively managed and with local education authority personnel, the provision for SEN is very good.
49. The governing body is keen to be involved in these developments. The committee structure helps to monitor the work of the school and ask questions which help to clarify the issues the school faces. Governors, too, understand the need to improve communications with parents and understand their concerns but over the past few months they have managed a difficult staffing situation well. They have used the extra funding from the local authority to recruit and retain good quality teaching staff and have overseen many of the improvements including that for the provision of ICT. The curriculum for some subjects does not meet statutory requirements and although the governing body has been made aware of this fact recently, there has not been sufficient time to put into action the acting headteacher's plans to right the situation. Governors, teachers and support staff are very keen and see the next few months as providing opportunities for the school to continue its improving track record.
50. The monitoring of teaching is good. Already this term the acting headteacher has made visits to classrooms to supervise the work of teachers and learning support assistants. These observations have given rise to good advice and targets for improvement. There are good levels of understanding, shared in particular by the parent governors, many of whom are in the school frequently, about the rising quality of teaching and how this is making a positive impact on standards of attainment and behaviour.
51. Financial planning is managed well. There are clear links to the school's priorities for improvement and the school development plan charts the improvements that can be expected. These are then used to judge the success of the action taken. A very good example of the school's work in this area is the improvement made in the provision for ICT. Resources were acquired and a learning support assistant with good levels of knowledge was appointed. This was a very good strategy and has resulted in considerable, very cost effective improvements.

52. The levels of staffing are good, and the level and commitment of learning support assistants is very good. The school has adopted very good training processes for these workers and they, along with administrative workers make a very positive and significant impact on the work of the school. There is a good link between training and the needs of the school and individuals. The school's performance management procedures are at the initial round of planning meetings.
53. The accommodation is satisfactory and good quality displays provide a stimulating and well-maintained place for pupils to learn and play. There is a sufficient number of well organised classrooms and other areas are used effectively; for example, as small class-based ICT suites. However, the school does not have an enclosed outdoor play area for reception aged children. The playground and learner swimming pool add to the school's building resources. Learning resources are good with the exception of some musical and cultural resources; well stored and maintained they are sufficient to teach the curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

54. The governors, acting headteacher and staff should:

- 1) \*Improve the standards of spoken and written English by:
  - providing more opportunities for pupils to practice their speaking skills;
  - ensure teachers concentrate on the development of pupils' skills, including reading, writing and research skills in other subjects;*[See paragraphs 4, 7, 20, 23, 70-72,*
- 2) \*Improve the curriculum and thereby increase the rate of pupils' progress over time particularly in science, art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music and religious education. Specifically:
  - without delay implement the school's plans to meet statutory requirements in the foundation subjects;
  - maintain and develop the recently introduced scheme of work in science;
  - review class grouping to avoid splitting key stages.*[See paragraphs 3-8, 23-25, 49, 70, 72, 78, 82, 95-103, 118-121]*
- 3) \*Establish systematic assessment procedures to track pupils' progress over time so that pupils are informed of their targets for improvement.  
*[See paragraphs 19, 41, 42, 77, 94]*
- 4) \*Restore effective relationships with parents by
  - informing parents well in advance of changes in the school's circumstances;
  - involving parents in decisions.*[See paragraphs 44-46, 49]*
- 5) \*Ensure that pupils' cultural development, including that for music, receives more effective stimulation.  
*[See paragraph 34]*

Other issues the governors should consider for inclusion in the action plan:

- \*improve the provision for extra-curricular activities *[See paragraph 25]*
- \*formal risk assessments are regularly scheduled and carried out. *[See paragraph 38]*
- improve the outdoor provision for children in the foundation stage. *[See paragraph 63]*

**\*These issues have been identified in the school's development plan.**



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
9	27	36	27	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR-Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		67
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR-Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		31

#### 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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000			13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
	Total	6	9	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	46 (44)	69 (56)	85 (44)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	6	11	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	46 (44)	85 (44)	54 (44)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000			15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	11	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (50)	73 (63)	80 (50)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
	Total	13	11	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (63)	73 (75)	80 (75)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	67
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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

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

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

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

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

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y7**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Average class size	22

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	149

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	215489
Total expenditure	214489
Expenditure per pupil	2715
Balance brought forward from previous year	10694
Balance carried forward to next year	11694

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	67
Number of questionnaires returned	26

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	54	35	4	8	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	58	4	8	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	19	50	23	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	27	23	15	4
The teaching is good.	8	58	15	4	15
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	15	23	35	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	38	38	15	8	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	31	50	15	4	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	19	15	35	8
The school is well led and managed.	0	35	8	31	27
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	12	62	12	12	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	4	8	35	42	12

Parents are very concerned about the lack of permanent teaching staff over the past few months. Parents at the meeting also reported that the school has made significant improvements since September and particularly in the standards of pupils' behaviour. Parents at that meeting expressed their concerns about the quality of special educational needs work to support their children. This has improved, largely due to the work of the local education authority and the appointment of an experienced special educational needs coordinator.

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

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

55. At the time of the last inspection some children in the reception class had been in school for less than a week and it was not possible to make any judgements about progress. The children's abilities on entry to the school vary considerably from year to year. This year ten children started school with levels below those of children nationally. They make good progress in all areas of learning and very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. The children are likely to achieve the early learning goals for all areas of learning and exceed them for their personal, social and emotional development. This is due to the very good teaching, excellent planning and systems for assessing children's progress to plan for both class and individual learning. Children with special educational needs make very good progress. All but one child has had some form of pre-school provision; most are from the independent playgroup housed within the school.

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

56. When the children started school just over a half of them played collaboratively, half were independent and keen to contribute to class discussions while over three-quarters willingly expressed their own opinions with a range of adults. Only half sustained concentration without an adult for more than ten minutes. Now, all children play and work collaboratively. For example, children using the sand work alongside each other, discussing the shapes they are drawing and sharing equipment. Three children take it in turns to be the teacher with the "feely" bag as they describe the shapes they feel for the others to guess. When the class is taught together, all the children now listen attentively, sometimes for long periods and are very keen to offer opinions. They have well-established social skills, taking it in turns to speak and not interrupting either adults or other children. As a result they have high self-esteem and share in each other's achievements. They also give credit to the teacher when she gets it right! Where physical support is needed, this is done unobtrusively and gently and children with a statement for special needs confidently join in all aspects of life in Class 3. Behaviour is very good. If standards do slip, children respond to a quiet word from an adult. Children understand that other people may feel differently from themselves. When reading "Bad Day, Good Day" children showed they understand how circumstances effect how people feel, and were quiet and reflective on the "sad day", frowning on the "cross day". Children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.

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

57. Children enjoy listening to stories and join in with confidence. The teacher shares her delight in the sound that words make and encourages the children to extend their vocabulary beyond the day-to-day words they use in conversation. All the adults in the class ensure that the technical vocabulary related to, for example, shape, is used throughout the school day and within all activities. In the 'Pizza Parlour' children refer to the triangular shape of the pizza slices and the round plates. They become, in turn, customers, waitresses or cooks and adjust their voices to suit the roles. Some children already read with accuracy and expression and achieve the first level of the National Curriculum. Others read many high frequency words accurately and deduce the rest from clues in the pictures, already achieving the early learning goal for reading. All children use books appropriately, recognise text on the page and talk with

some authority about the plot deduced from the pictures. All match some letters to the sound they make and words that begin with the same sound. Most make a good attempt at writing familiar words, some write sentences with well-formed letters and spelling that is feasible. When the children started school, nobody could read simple texts. Children spend some time reading to an adult daily and several have made very good progress in reading.

58. The teaching of literacy in Class 3 is very good. In the lesson observed during the inspection the teacher started the lesson with the reception and Year 1 pupils together. Appropriate targets are set for both groups and details of the learning outcomes expected of individual children are included in the planning. Expectations are very high for both reception children and those in Year 1. The teacher assumes that the children will, for example, use the correct vocabulary for ordering words, identifying the third word in the sentence. Relationships with the children are delightful. In a lesson she read a muddled sentence amidst squeals of delight from the children accompanied by an almost desperate desire to correct her.
59. The work the teacher sets is closely matched to the needs of the different abilities. The adults assess the children's success in achieving the objectives and very carefully targeted questions in the plenary session show exactly what each child understands. Each adult has a diary that is used to record individual progress and in which the teacher gives guidance for the activity. The teacher uses these assessments as well as her own to set future work. Specific time is set aside in the literacy lessons to focus on both reception children and the Year 1 pupils. Each group shares their work with the other and the reception children are encouraged to join in with the Year 1 plenary. They glow with pride when they achieve Year 1 work! In the literacy lesson seen during the inspection the children learnt a great deal and were totally committed to their tasks. Handwriting is taught very well. Children are taught how to use a joined script from the time they start to write and their patterns and paintings are designed to encourage continuous lines. Some children achieve fluency as they form words.

### **Mathematical development**

60. The teacher uses the same meticulous planning when teaching mathematics. Higher-attaining children count accurately, match numerals and put numerals up to 20 in order. All count and match accurately within ten although the lower-attaining children do not yet identify which of two amounts within ten is the greater. Only half of the children counted objects accurately when they started school. The teacher knows exactly what each child needs for his or her next step in mathematical development and matches the activities to individual needs. Knowledge of both the foundation curriculum and the National Curriculum is accurate and there are clear targets for each group in the class. Each lesson starts appropriately with the development of numeracy, with carefully matched questions that encourage the children to think.
61. The focus was on shape during the week of the inspection and all the classroom activities reflected this theme. In this way the learning introduced in the lesson is reinforced throughout the week. Almost all children name triangles, squares, circles, rectangles and diamonds accurately and some describe the properties of these shapes well. In the plenary session at the end of the lesson during the inspection some reception children, encouraged by the enthusiasm of the teacher, made brave attempts at contributing to the Year 1 discussion. The teaching of mathematics is very good. In this particular lesson the children made very good gains in learning due to the teacher's high expectations, planning and the children's exposure to the tasks

set for the Year 1 pupils. Children have made good progress in their mathematical development since September

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

62. Children have an appropriate understanding of the structure of families and all talk confidently about their own. All explain how they come to school and almost all name the village where they live. All the children know how old they are and most know the age they would be on the next birthday. One or two have some awareness of the differences between their own lives and the lives of people in fairy stories. The class has been learning about different sources of light and many of the children list sources of light. All understand that a torch will not work without batteries and that a light needs to be switched on before it will work. They know that the sun is a source of light, as are the stars. The teacher skilfully forms questions to encourage the children to hypothesise. In a very well planned lesson the teacher encouraged the reception children to ask questions about a light bulb that was handed round. The Year 1 pupils made books about sources of light using the materials available and books for research. The plenary united the groups as the reception children put their questions to the pupils in Year 1. Both groups gained from this approach and felt valued as they "taught" the teacher as well. Children have plenty of access to the computers in the class and all control the mouse well, clicking it appropriately to control the program. They know the properties of paint and glue and that, for example, some buttons do not stick onto their pictures well as there is too small a surface in contact with the paper. Brushes and scissors are used accurately. Where extra support is needed it is given in a way that promotes confidence and the desire to "have a go". The provision for children with special needs is very good and they make very good progress. The 'Pizza Parlour' contains a book for booking and a till for paying and all children have a good understanding of the processes involved in shopping. Their attainment is in line with that of other children of the same age and they have made good progress.

### **Physical development**

63. The school does not have a designated outdoor play area for the foundation stage or large wheeled toys. However, all children have appropriate skills for their age. In their physical education lesson three-quarters of the children balanced on one leg for more than 3 seconds. They curl up and stretch well, use space appropriately and carefully and combine two or more movements to form a sequence. The teacher made very good use of demonstration in the lesson, and asking children to demonstrate their skills. Children run, skip or gallop to command and are still when asked. The nursery nurse gave the child with special needs excellent support, joining in, providing security and promoting confidence. The children control pencils, scissors and small equipment with skill and their physical development is appropriate for their age. The teacher has a collection of small apparatus, for example ropes and balls, that the children use but these were not used during the inspection. The teaching in the physical education lesson was good and the children learnt how to join movements together but there were too few opportunities for energetic movement.

### **Creative development**

64. Children make collages and paint pictures. Their paintings show appropriate skills with well-formed figures, "Mungle Flap" monsters and portraits of "Mum" on display in the classroom. There are shadow puppets and sea-creatures and monochrome collages of a windy day. During the inspection the children made "Mood" faces with wool, buttons and paper plates, selecting their materials with care.

65. In the music lesson taught by the peripatetic music teacher children clapped an accompaniment for "Twinkle, twinkle little star" very accurately and identify the differences in the way brass instruments are played. They sing tunefully with clear diction, following the piano well. This was a very good lesson. The teacher has very good relationships with the children and the children listen very carefully and respond with enthusiasm and control. They distinguish between high and low pitch, long and short and loud and soft sounds.
66. Although children took their roles in the 'Pizza Parlour' seriously there were few other examples of pupils developing their role-play during the inspection as all the activities were highly structured and designed to promote specific learning outcomes. Children's creative development is in line with other children of the same age but there are few opportunities for them to develop their creativity independently and in their own way.

## ENGLISH

67. In the 2000 national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds attainment was very low in reading and below average in writing when compared with other pupils nationally and similar schools. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels in reading was very low compared to the national average and similar schools. In writing the proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was average compared to schools nationally and above average compared to similar school. Girls' attainment is generally better than boys. The inspectors found that seven-year-old pupils' attainment is below average.
68. The 2000 results of national tests for eleven-year-olds were below average compared with other pupils of the same age and average when compared with pupils in similar schools. The rate of progress made by eleven-year-olds in this school is well above average when compared to the progress made by pupils who scored similar levels at the age of seven. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was well below average nationally and when compared to similar schools. There is not a complete set of information to make an accurate judgment about trends in attainment. The inspection team found that by the time pupils are eleven attainment is below average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Progress in English has improved since the last inspection and it is now good. The school achieved its targets in the Year 2000 national tests. Girls generally achieve better than boys. The school is aware of this and care is taken to ensure that the materials used to teach English are relevant for both sexes.
69. There is considerable variation in the skills of those children who join the school in the reception class. For example, skills in communication, language and literacy range from above to below the national average and it must be remembered that many pupils with special educational needs join the school after the age of five. For this reason, and because of the small number of pupils in each year group, comparisons between the years do not provide a reliable indication of school improvement. However, the weakness in the progress of the older pupils at the time of the last inspection has now been addressed. Pupils now make good gains in learning in Years 4/5/6. Learning was satisfactory in the two lessons observed for Years 2/3/4. Year 1 pupils made good gains in learning during their literacy lessons.
70. At the ages of seven and eleven listening skills are average and speaking skills are below average. Pupils in Year 1 are confident and articulate and thoroughly enjoy



sharing their opinions and research with others. Most pupils listen well and respond to the teacher's questions and other pupils' comments. In a literacy lesson in Years 4, 5 and 6, pupils were on the edge of their seats waiting for their teacher to read "The Highwayman", a poem they had been introduced to the day before. Their faces reflected both the excitement and the tragedy of the poem and there was a hush as their teacher made gentle comments on the implications of the outcomes. Pupils have more difficulty when expressing their own ideas, although they understand and use technical vocabulary. Teachers encourage their pupils to contribute to discussions. They all question their pupils effectively, rarely asking a question that requires a simple "yes" or "no". There are one or two pupils who are reluctant to speak to adults and teachers and learning support assistants deal effectively by encouraging and supporting. Adults, including learning support assistants, throughout the school support pupils well, encouraging them to express themselves clearly and encouraging pupils with special educational needs to contribute to the discussions. In spite of the continuous support from these adults the rest of the class listen attentively to their teacher. Teachers often ask pupils to repeat mispronounced words and poorly constructed sentences. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to speak in formal situations through debate and opportunities for drama are limited.

71. Standards in reading are below average at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils in Year 1 are very eager to read, as they are the pupils who have had a greater proportion of their time under the recently introduced systems but from Year 2 onwards pupils' attainment is below average. In spite of this, pupils are making good progress in improving their technical skills. The school has recently introduced additional support for many pupils and the provision for pupil with special educational needs is very good. Support staff have been trained and the school has introduced a structured reading programme throughout the school. Reading diaries enable parents to contribute to pupils' learning and teachers' records track progress. Pupils' technical skills, their memory of high frequency words and their skills in decoding unfamiliar words have improved. Pupils have few opportunities to read to an audience and although reading is accurate it often lacks expression and does not inspire the listener. There is an unusual lack of enthusiasm for reading, especially amongst pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 and pupils do not choose to read. Although in this class the majority of pupils have special educational needs and the recently introduced programmes for these pupils are now demonstrating how much fun and how successful, reading can be. Library skills are below average throughout the school and have not improved since the last inspection, although the planned reorganisation of the library will help pupils to improve their skills. Pupils need more opportunities to apply their reading and research skills to other curriculum areas.
72. The school has worked hard to improve handwriting and spelling since September. There is regular handwriting practice throughout the school. The Year 1 teacher expects her pupils to use a joined script from the start. This not only improves the appearance and flow of the writing but also aids spelling, as pupils become familiar with combinations of letters. Spelling is a regular homework task throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy is taught well throughout the school. Pupils are developing a clear understanding of the structure of the English language and their punctuation and grammatical skills have progressed well during the year. The teaching and planning of literacy lessons is at least good in the classes for Years 1, 4, 5 and 6 and pupils are exposed to a good range of texts and styles. This is reflected in their writing where pupils use, for example, connectives, alliteration and onomatopoeia to enrich their work. Older pupils understand the function of prefixes and suffixes and are beginning to evaluate their own and other people's texts. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of the support they

receive. Teachers plan work to accommodate the different abilities of the pupils in their classes but this is less effective in Years 2, 3 and 4, where the two key stages within the class make it very difficult to meet the needs of all pupils.

73. Throughout the school there are some good examples of the use of information and communication technology to support pupils' writing. There is poetry, fiction and account writing on display as well as the work of adult poets. However, there are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to other curriculum areas. There is very little written work for any subjects other than English and science and pupils rely on exercises to support and consolidate their learning. This is due to the lack of planning for subjects other than English, mathematics and science. This is a missed opportunity to make the subject relevant. Pupils have little knowledge of the work of authors, playwrights and poets and do not, for example, compare first hand accounts of historical events or newspaper reports of current affairs.
74. In all the literacy lessons observed during the inspection the teaching was at least satisfactory. All the teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the structure of the literacy lessons. At its best, the teaching approach is varied to meet the needs of the pupils and the content of the lessons. For example, the older pupils were studying the use of rhythmic pattern, alliteration, onomatopoeia and simile in "The Highwayman" and "From a Railway Carriage". It was appropriate in this lesson that all the pupils should work at the same written task with the teacher concentrating on just three pupils with particular needs. His obvious enthusiasm and knowledge of these poems and others provided an inspiration for the class.
75. All teachers have good relationships with the pupils and behaviour in the classes is good. Where the teachers' expectations are high, pupils make good progress in the lessons. Progress was good in the poetry lesson pupils made excellent gains in learning during a lesson in the class for Year 1. Their teacher knows her pupils' abilities very well. In September, the higher attaining pupils were writing single sentences. Now she expects, and gets, a page of written work that is presented well, spelt with some accuracy, interesting and, in some cases, with accurate sentence structure. In the lesson the pupils sorted out muddled sentences using their knowledge of the structure of sentences. Later they discussed, with some success, ways of making writing more interesting. They worked enthusiastically and were very proud of their efforts and were a tribute to the teacher's enthusiasm, her high expectations and her sense of fun. Her teaching of literacy is excellent
76. In both the lessons observed in Years 2, 3 and 4, the teaching was sound. The two part-time teachers knew the pupils well in spite of the fact that they are new to the school. Relationships are good and the teachers' joint planning is appropriate and builds on previous learning. However, because of the wide range of both ages and abilities in the class, where about three-quarters of the pupils have special educational needs, it is extremely difficult for them to challenge all pupils in the class. The pupils with special educational needs receive very good support from the classroom support staff but the work set is not appropriate for the higher attaining pupils and the teachers' expectations are not closely matched to the desirable levels for Years 2, 3 and 4. The school has employed an additional teacher to support Year 2 pupils but this has not yet been established.
77. Teachers set regular homework to support reading and spelling. Books are marked accurately, but very little guidance is given as to how pupils could improve their work. The quality of marking has not improved since the last inspection. Oral assessments in the lessons are effective. Teachers question their pupils carefully and know where there is a need for reinforcement or support. Teacher praise pupils effectively and all

pupils feel valued when they work well. In Class 3 the teacher has excellent systems for both assessing what her pupils have achieved and for using these assessments to plan future work. All adults in the class measure the pupils' progress during the day and make both oral and written comments in their diaries. The teacher uses these to set individual targets for her pupils. Her planning includes targets for individuals and assessments to establish if the targets have been met.

78. The school is beginning to organise better the procedures for assessing pupils' progress throughout the school. A system of setting targets in English for individual pupils has been introduced and there are plans for regular standardised testing to measure progress and to set targets for each year group. The co-ordinator for English has audited the subject to identify any weaknesses in provision, and the new acting headteacher has a very good understanding of the action that needs to be taken to raise standards, including the need to rearrange the classes to improve the provision in the lower juniors. Already, the action taken to improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs has had a major impact on standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

79. In the 2000 national tests and assessments for seven-year-olds attainment was below average when compared with other schools nationally. When compared with the results of similar schools attainment was average. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was above the national average and well above average compared to similar schools. Girls' attainment is generally better than boys. There was a larger than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs amongst those who took the tests last year. The inspectors found that seven-year-old pupils' attainment is below average. Children leave the reception class with mathematical skills that are in line with the early learning goals but many pupils with special educational needs join the school after they are five years of age. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress.
80. The 2000 results of national tests for eleven-year-olds were below average compared with other pupils of the same age and average when compared with pupils in similar schools. The rate of progress made by eleven-year-olds in this school is well above average when compared to the progress made by pupils who scored similar levels at the age of seven. In the juniors there is very little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was well below average nationally and average when compared to similar schools. There is not a complete set of information to make an accurate judgment about trends in attainment. The inspection team found that by the time pupils are eleven, attainment is below average, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress and there are very promising signs that the rate of learning is increasing in lessons as pupils' behaviour improves and they buckle down to the work that is set for them. Learning is improving in lessons; however, because this needs time to build through the school, attainment remains below what is expected.
81. Teachers apply the National Numeracy Strategy effectively and the way pupils work with numbers is a strength in the subject. Six-year-olds learn quickly and put the numbers from one to twenty into the correct order. They define two-dimensional shapes by the number of sides and corners and identify similar shapes around their classroom. The enthusiasm pupils have for learning and the high levels of

concentration they show is a direct response to their teacher's very good methods and consistent praise for doing well.

82. By the time pupils are seven they count accurately in twos, fives, tens, fifties and hundreds from a number given to them by their teacher. They were challenged to calculate how many hundreds they would need to add to 500 before they came to 1000. When the teacher was ready to start teaching she pointed out clearly 'I'm going to tell you a rule now' and pupils stopped what they were doing and paid close attention. In the main part of the lesson they applied the rule they had learned that numbers ending in five or more are rounded up and those ending in four or less are rounded down. By the end of the lesson pupils had applied their new learning well and could explain why they were rounding up or down. In this class having two key stages in the same class is a limiting factor and the school needs to review the age range in this class. Pupils in the infant classes make satisfactory progress overall.
83. By the time pupils are eleven-years-old they can add two, two-digit numbers mentally and understand that fractions, decimals and percentages are equivalent. Pupils find fractions and percentages of sums of money and calculate accurately the area and perimeter of shapes. In lessons in this class the teacher adapted the structure of the lesson well to meet pupils needs. Rather than start the lesson with a brisk mental session the teacher asked pupils to define shapes by describing their properties and once these shapes and their characteristics were fixed then appropriate work was set. In the main part of the lesson, pupils in different year groups drew and learned the properties of the four types of triangles and recapped the properties of quadrilaterals. It was then that the teacher launched into a very quick session, winding up the lesson by recalling the properties of trapeziums, parallelograms and isosceles triangles. Lessons in this class work well because the teacher uses a variety of methods. For example, when a pupil had difficulty in pronouncing isosceles, the teacher turned the practice into a game and asked the child to say the word standing up, sitting down and turning round. As the pupil laughed and managed to say the word correctly, he was asked at the end of the lesson to repeat his new learning. In this class, clear, straightforward explanation, instructions, asking pupils to copy the teacher and training are all part of the teacher's methods.
84. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. There were no lessons observed in which the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory. In most of the lessons observed the quality of teaching was at least good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers' plans show opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical learning in science, design and technology and information communication technology, notably in the classes for the youngest and oldest pupils, as plans set out the skills pupils should use. A good example was observed in design and technology. In this lesson for Years 4/5/6, pupils made the chassis of what were to become the trolleys for their Trojan horses. In order to draw accurately, a pupil used a protractor to measure  $90^\circ$  and construct very accurate right angles for the corner joints. Expectations of pupils are rising and an analysis of work showed that until this term marking had not helped pupils to know what was expected of them. Now pupils are told what they are to learn during lessons and have longer-term targets to help them aim at high standards. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, insisting that pupils listen to each other and their teachers'. This is stronger in the class for the youngest and oldest pupils, but an improvement is underway throughout the school.
85. The good quality of teaching has a positive effect on pupils' learning. As lessons are planned to contain more practical activities so pupils' curiosity and levels of interest climb. The rate of learning is very good in the class for Year 1, satisfactory in the class for Years 2/3/4 and good for Years 4/5/6. At times older pupils with behavioural

difficulties can show that they are not interested in their work but the teacher is quick to sense this and make sure that they supported. A key factor in this is the very good quality of work from learning support assistants and nursery nurses. Carefully structured individual programmes of work help pupils to work together well and almost all lessons contain some aspect of work in which pupils have to work together. This helps pupils develop social skills and to recognise how important it is that they work together in a good atmosphere of support and trust.

86. The coordinator for the subject is new to the post although the quality of leadership and management is very good. The school has a very good understanding about how mathematics needs to improve and the coordinator's and acting headteacher's plans for improving assessment systems and ensuring curriculum plans show how knowledge, skills and ideas are learned are well founded.

## SCIENCE

87. In the 2000 assessments for seven-year-olds attainment was very low when compared with other pupils nationally and in similar schools at the end of the infants. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was very high compared to the national average and the results of similar schools. The inspectors found that seven-year-old pupils' attainment is well below average. There was a larger than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs amongst those who took the tests last year, and there are clear signs that attainment is rising. Now teachers prepare lessons ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are given work which stretches them and which is based on the whole curriculum.
88. The 2000 results of national tests for eleven-year-olds were well below average compared with other pupils of the same age and with pupils in similar schools. The attainment of eleven-year-olds is average compared to that of pupils who scored similar levels at the age of seven. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher levels was well below the national and similar school average. There is not a complete set of information to make an accurate judgment about trends in attainment. The inspection team found that by the time pupils are eleven attainment is well below average. In all classes of the school attainment is not high enough.
89. The rate of learning is increasing in lessons as teachers plan practical activities that help pupils see the importance of the ideas that they are investigating. Progress in this subject has been slow until recently because teachers did not teach the entire curriculum. An analysis of past work shows that investigations and experiments had not taken place and teachers selected the aspects of the subject to teach according to the topic being studied. The acting headteacher and new teaching team understand this difficulty and have undertaken new methods of planning and working.
90. Lessons were observed in each class and discussions were held with pupils and teachers. Six-year-old pupils identified the sources of light and classified them as being man-made or natural. Pupils understood that artificial sources of light need power to make them work. As their teacher skilfully led them to defining natural and artificial almost all of them were able to find natural sources. In this class the six-year-old pupils made a book to share with their five-year-old classmates. This was an imaginative method of recording and symptomatic of the very good planning and assessment techniques used by the teacher. Pupils' learning was very good in this lesson. Full of enthusiasm and curiosity, pupils worked with the nursery nurse to investigate how circuits could be made with clips, cables, batteries and bulbs.

Ensuring that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, were supported very well, pupils completed their work and reported back to the class about their findings. This was a very good lesson marked by interesting work, careful preparation and a final session in which pupils were asked searching questions to assess their knowledge.

91. In the lesson for Years 2/3/4, the theme of investigating electricity continued. In this lesson pupils were asked to remember the first lesson in the series when they made circuits using the usual materials. However, before they began their teacher asked them to predict what they would find if they placed a range of objects within the circuit. Having made their predictions pupils were sent off to work in groups, construct their tests and report back their findings. Pupils showed great enthusiasm in this lesson. During the introduction, when pupils were demonstrating that twigs and plastic would not pass electrical current, there was great anticipation as a spoon was placed between the cables and cheer went up as the bulb was lit. They demonstrated plenty of interest as they worked well in their groups to test their materials. In this class 18 of the 25 pupils have special educational needs and learning support assistants give these pupils great support as they explained the tasks and how pupils were to record their answers. When the teacher asked pupils questions about their work, most found it difficult to answer in sentences and with clearly pronounced words. The teacher made some pupils repeat the correct answers. This modelling helped them to understand what they were doing and to improve their spoken English. The practical nature of the task and the interest it generated produced satisfactory rates of learning.
92. In the lesson for Years 4/5/6 the rate of learning was good. Pupils had begun to consider the behaviour of solids, liquids and gasses. They understood how molecules behave in each of the three states and some higher attaining pupils talked of how artificial materials exhibited some properties of two states, glass, for example. The teacher spent time refreshing pupils' memories about how to record their work. This was a necessary exercise as pupils' books showed little evidence of practical investigations. Pupils were asked to hypothesise how liquid would react in certain containers. After their predictions and observing the results of their experiments they recorded their results. They concluded that liquids would maintain their volume but not shape. This was a relevant exercise in terms of the scientific process as most pupils could describe how to conduct a test but could not talk at any length about how it should be fair or how to control variables. In this lesson most of the eleven year-olds worked at the level of an average nine-year-old.
93. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers understand the need to plan work, which includes the entire National Curriculum and particularly the investigations and experiments that help pupils develop a thorough understanding of the scientific process. Because of the lack of investigations pupils' attitudes to science have not been positive; now pupils are excited during lessons. Management of pupils is good in lessons and as pupils' interest grows standards of behaviour rise.
94. The acting headteacher is coordinating the subject and has very good subject knowledge. In the few months since she has taken up her post she has recognised the weaknesses in the curriculum and has adopted the local education authority's scheme of work. The school has good plans to raise attainment based on good quality assessment practices.

## ART AND DESIGN, HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

95. No art and design, history or geography lessons were observed during the inspection, although some of these subjects were taught. Discussion with the pupils and an examination of their books indicate that pupils' attainment in art and design and history is below average at the end of the juniors, while their attainment in geography is well below average.
96. The artwork on display, discussion with pupils in Year 2 and an examination of their sketchbooks indicates that pupils in the infants make sound progress in art. Their sketchbooks show that they have developed their skills in drawing and shading although there is little evidence of their use of colour. A portrait of each pupil greets visitors to the school and there are examples of collage monochrome and landscape work throughout the school. Pupils in Year 6, however, have no knowledge of the work for different artists or cultures or of the history of art. There are examples of interesting paintings and drawings but the pupils have not used malleable materials such as clay to produce three-dimensional art. The work in their sketchbooks shows little development in technique from the work of pupils in Year 2
97. There is very little evidence of any history or geography work in the infants although there are displays of people in the past. Older pupils have studied life in Anglo-Saxon times and have described life as a monk. Pupils in Year 1 have made maps and plans with mathematical apparatus. Discussion with pupils in Year 2, however, indicates that they have little knowledge of their local area. They were unable to name the nearest town. Only the higher-attaining pupil named the countries of the British Isles and none could distinguish between a county and a continent. Discussion with pupils in Year 6 indicated that they had more knowledge. They accurately indicated the direction of major cities in England but were inaccurate when placing countries in their continents, putting, for example, China in Europe. Pupils explained the rain cycle. They have no knowledge or opinion of environmental issues and did not categorise climate. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have not studied geography this academic year.
98. Pupils in Year 6 have more knowledge of history. They have studied the Aztecs, the Anglo-Saxons and Vikings and are learning about Ancient Greece. They know that the work of archaeologists help us to understand about the past. However, they are unsure of the timescale of the periods they have studied and have no opinion about the objectivity of different accounts of historical events. The work in all the pupils' books is the same and there is little evidence of any individual research.
99. The curriculum for all three subjects has been planned through a series of topics. While this provides some logic to the curriculum it means that only the aspects of the subject that "fits" the topics have been taught. The skills required for all three subjects have been taught spasmodically and pupils have been unable to build on their previous learning. For example, pupils are unable to identify geographical features on maps or give opinions on the sources of historical evidence. They have made few comparisons between periods of time or environments. Pupils have no knowledge of the traditions of art in history or from different parts of the world. The school uses the Cambridgeshire schemes of work to plan the curriculum but have only taught aspects of these.
100. The acting headteacher is aware of the deficiencies in the provision for these subjects. She plans to ensure that the teachers plan for the discrete subjects and that the pupils have access to the full range of the curriculum. Teachers record the work the pupils have covered but do not plan for the different age ranges in each class. The resources for each subject are appropriate and there is a good range of books but

these have not been used regularly. The quality of the provision has deteriorated since the last inspection due to the emphasis on the core subjects and the lack of rigour in the curriculum planning.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Only one lesson was observed in this subject and evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils and teachers, a scrutiny of the curriculum plans and an analysis of pupils' work. Standards are below average at both seven and eleven, although there are promising signs that older pupils in particular are beginning to learn at a faster rate than was the case. Insufficient evidence was gathered at the last inspection to be able to make a reliable judgment. The scrutiny of work and long-term plans show that only elements of this subject were taught on a regular basis. Aspects were chosen because they fitted the title of a topic rather than being based on the knowledge, skills and ideas that pupils need to learn. This fault has been recognised by the school and is being addressed in a systematic way by the acting headteacher.
102. In the one lesson observed, which was taught well, pupils made good gains in learning as they designed and began to make the chassis of their Trojan horses. The teacher demonstrated techniques very well and this helped pupils to understand what they were to do and how to mark and cut accurately. Pupils were encouraged to select type and size of materials to best fit the job and asked to predict what type of slope would be needed to propel the chassis most effectively. Lots of humour was used in this lesson to keep the pupils focussed on their work and a firm approach to discipline helped the lesson move along at a brisk pace. For example, the teacher's instruction that there should be 'lots of designing, making and researching and no milling or chatting' made sure that pupils got off to a good start. The teacher's very good subject knowledge was obvious in the printing tasks that were set out if pupils finished their design and technology work. Pupils designed their trolleys, measuring accurately and adding two, two-digit numbers mentally. They understood the need to draw to several views of their designs and tried hard to make sure that their drawings reflected their final designs. Pupils halved and doubled measurements and used protractors to measure right angles for the corners of their trolleys. Younger pupils have made bell pulls using yarns and plaiting techniques. Their bookmarks showed a range of stitches and were carefully completed. Pupils have made papier-mache to make faces and Greek drama masks. These are of sound quality and pupils understand why ancient Greek actors needed the masks.
103. Although pupils understand how to design and turn their designs into models, their skills are below average. This is because there are not enough opportunities planned to enable them to develop these skills. The long-term curriculum plan selects elements of each subject rather than covering the subject completely. The acting headteacher is coordinator and has very good subject knowledge and skills. Resources are very good in terms of quantity and quality.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

104. Standards in ICT are average at the age of seven and eleven. This is considerable improvement since the last inspection when standards and the curriculum were judged to be below average. The school has worked hard and has bought in new equipment to meet these weaknesses. The appointment of a learning support



assistant who maintains the equipment and supervises groups of pupils as they use the computers has proved to be a very effective measure. Discussions were held with pupils and one lesson for seven-year-olds was observed. An analysis of pupils' work and the curriculum plan for the subject show that all aspects are covered well. Like English and mathematics, ICT is well planned and the curriculum does not select certain areas to cover at the expense of others.

105. In the lesson observed seven-year-olds had collected data about how pupils journey to school. This was one of a series of lessons that taught pupils how to use an information handling program. Over the past few weeks pupils have made graphs about their eye colour and used coloured eyes to construct block graphs and pictograms. They constructed graphs based on the members of their families. In this class pupils understand how pie charts display information in a circular form. Pupils entered how pupils in their class travelled to school and selected the type of graph they wanted to print. With very little prompting from the learning support assistant, pupils used the mouse accurately to click on icons, load the program and save in their own files. They used the correct fingers when typing and soon entered their information. Pupils worked well together as the learning support assistant asked them questions based on their data. They were able to say which was the most used form of transport and interpret their results accurately.
106. This is just one example of how well computers are used throughout the curriculum. For example, programs are used to encourage pupils to make choices and work together to form opinions. Older pupils use word processing programs well to display their work. They use a spreadsheet program to plan a party and apply formulae to cells so that they can find the cost of their party provisions. They use the Internet for research and have built their website with support from a community member. They understand how to control and program objects on the screen. In an excellent example of how computers support the progress of pupils with special educational needs, a pupil used a program that repeated certain words and the pupil had to correctly identify them by the spellings that appeared on the screen. This was extremely well managed by the learning support assistant and the pupil made very good gains in learning.
107. The acting headteacher is the coordinator and has very good subject knowledge. She has correctly identified that this subject is a strength of the school and has rightly turned her attention elsewhere. The resources are very good and well maintained.

## **MUSIC**

108. Pupils achieve average standards in music at the end of the infants. However, as very little time is allowed for music each week and pupils in Year 6 have not had access to the whole curriculum for music, their attainment is below average. Pupils have few opportunities to perform and compose music and their knowledge of European and world music and the history of music is very limited.
109. A peripatetic music teacher teaches music to each class. These 30-minute lessons are very well planned so that several aspects of the curriculum are included. During the inspection the teacher had brought in a collection of brass instruments. Each class, at an appropriate level, discussed the instruments and the sounds they make. The teacher's expertise and enthusiasm enabled the pupils to learn swiftly. They remembered previous lessons well and demonstrated an appropriate knowledge of how sound is produced. Pupils in Year 1 remembered the names of the instruments.

The higher attaining pupils maintained a rhythmic pattern to accompany "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and the whole class enjoyed joining in. Pupils sang clearly and tunefully and with discipline, stopping instantly at the teacher's signal. This was a very good lesson; the teacher's expertise, enthusiasm and high expectation enabled the pupils to make very good gains in learning.

110. Pupils in Class 2 also learn very well. They identified the rhythms of different phrases and all were very accurate as they performed the rhythms of the contents of a meal in different orders. Pupils understood that, for example, tea had one beat, coffee two half-beats and cola had four quarter-beats. The lesson clearly showed the progression from Class 1. Pupils distinguished between ascending and descending scales and differences between the slide trumpet, cornet and trombone. Pupils sang enthusiastically and the teacher had high expectations of pupils' performance and posture. This was another very good lesson, with rapid pace, very good relationships with the pupils and a very good variety of activities. The older pupils identify changes in pitch, dynamics and pace as they listen to the teacher playing the brass instruments. The teacher insisted that the pupils use the correct vocabulary when describing what they hear and pupils use words such as "vibrate" when describing how the sound is made. Again, pupils echoed the teacher's enthusiasm and concentrated well.
111. Pupils with special needs make very good progress. When appropriate, the learning support assistants sit with the pupils and encourage them to join in. The teacher makes sure that she includes pupils of all abilities in all aspects of the lesson, including "having a go" on the instruments.
112. The pupils had very little music education until the beginning of this academic year when the then new acting headteacher enlisted the help of the peripatetic music teacher. Pupils have made good progress since then, but the lessons have not yet been followed up in the classrooms. Teachers refer to the music played each week in assemblies and the classes are involved in the Christmas production. Pupils enjoy their singing in assemblies but, at the time of the inspection, there are no other opportunities for the older children to sing or perform. Pupils in Year 1 sing songs in their classroom during the day.
113. There is a range of musical instruments in school and an appropriate variety of recorded music including music from other cultures. However, the instruments are rarely used outside the specialist teacher's lessons. There are no music clubs. There are plans to introduce a singing practice and a guitar club, which will help to address the weaknesses in the school's provision for pupils' cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

114. Only one lesson of physical education, an indoor games lesson, was observed in this subject and in that lesson nine, ten and eleven-year-olds attained average standards.
115. The teachers' good subject knowledge ensured that pupils warmed-up their muscles with stretches and vigorous exercises. They jogged and were reminded not to over-stretch and hurt themselves. Before they began a series of games their teacher told them that the games were not only to practice their skills but also to form team relationships to help them in the game coming up. In this game they practiced their invasion, intercepting and dodging skills. They played well together; trying to help other teammates be in a position to tag opposing team members.

116. Pupils enjoyed this game. They moved into space and as their teacher encouraged a greater range and variety of movements they listened and reacted well. Pupils' behaviour was managed well in this lesson. The teacher took a quiet but firm line throughout and made sure that all pupils participated to the best of their ability. Expectations were high, not only of pupils using the available space in the school hall but of behaviour and team spirit. The teacher was correctly dressed for the activity and this acted as good example as some had forgotten their kits. Not only did the teacher remind them of this he also set a good example in his own work rate in the lesson, joining in with the stretches and warm-up exercises and demonstrating well.
117. The pupils swim each day of the summer term in the school's learner sized pool and most pupils are able to swim before they leave the school. The coordinator has taken up the responsibility for the subject at the beginning of this term and has made a useful audit of the well-stocked resource area. The school has good accommodation. There are no sporting extra-curricular activities and this does not help motivate pupils in developing healthy lifestyles or see sport as an enjoyable part of a wider lifestyle.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

118. At the time of the last inspection, attainment for pupils at the age of seven and eleven was in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has been concentrating on the core subjects of English mathematics and science over the last two years and other subjects, including religious education, have had less focus. As a result, the school is not now meeting the requirements of the agreed syllabus. Although pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus for religious education at the end of the infants, it is below average by the end of the juniors.
119. Pupils throughout the school have a sound knowledge of stories from the Old and the New Testament. Much of this knowledge comes from the good acts of worship that use illustrations from the Bible to encourage the pupils to reflect on the relevance of the life and teaching of Jesus and the prophets of the Old Testament impact on their own lives. Pupils in Year 1 know that there are two books in the Bible and that there are other special books for other religions. In a lesson observed during the inspection they listened to the parable of the Good Shepherd. The lesson was very short but the teacher managed to explain the meaning behind the parable. Pupils in Class 2 are beginning to learn about Hinduism and use their knowledge of Christianity to compare the symbols of each faith. Pupils listened attentively and the higher attaining pupils completed their work about the four symbols of the faith. The lower attaining pupils completed their worksheet but had little understanding of the work they were doing. By the end of the lesson, a few pupils made good comparisons between the faiths. In the two lessons observed during the inspection, the teaching was at least satisfactory. The teachers have good relationships with their pupils and encourage discussion with sensitive questions. They have high expectations of their pupils which results in pupils producing thoughtful comments.
120. Pupils in Class 1 have not had any religious education lessons yet this term. Discussion with a group of Year 6 pupils indicated that they have no knowledge of faiths other than Christianity. Their knowledge of the Bible was insecure and they were unable to place, for example, Moses, in the Old Testament. Only the higher attaining pupil knew that the New Testament was written after the birth of Christ. Pupils indicated that they had learnt about other gods but could not name them or identify any of the major world faiths.

121. During the last year the subject has been planned to fit in with the school topics. Many aspects of the local education authority's agreed syllabus for religious education have been omitted from the curriculum, especially the knowledge of faiths other than Christianity, although pupils have a good understanding of the beliefs and values of Christianity. The new co-ordinator for religious education is aware of the shortcomings in the provision and is in the process of producing a scheme of work for the school that meets the requirements of the agreed syllabus. The resources for the subject remain good but are not sufficiently used at present. The vicar takes assemblies regularly and the school performs in the local church at Christmas.