

INSPECTION REPORT

BELMONT COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Grantham

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120401

Headteacher: Mr. S. Chandler

Reporting inspector: Mr. F. Carruthers
21285

Dates of inspection: 8th – 11th January, 2001

Inspection number: 208330

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant & junior
School category: Community Primary
Age range of pupils: 4 - 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Harrowby Lane
Grantham
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr P. Armstrong

Date of previous inspection: November 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21285	Mr F. Carruthers	Registered inspector	Science, Information and communication technology, Music, Equal opportunities.	What sort of school is it? The school's results & pupils' achievements. What the school should do to improve further.
13786	Mrs S. Walsh	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values & personal development. How well does the school support its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
28011	Mr J. Porteous	Team inspector	Mathematics, Religious education, Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
19041	Mr R. Linstead	Team inspector	English, Geography, History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1951	Mrs. Y. Crizzle	Team inspector	Art and design, Design and technology, Special educational needs, Under fives.	How well are pupils taught?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school, which is broadly average in size, is a community primary school and has 271 pupils on roll aged between four and eleven. There is an equal balance of boys and girls, very few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds (two per cent) and none is learning English as an additional language. Five per cent of pupils take free school meals, which is below average for primary schools nationally. The range of the children's attainment on entry to the reception class is broad and overall it is average. Almost all pupils have had some pre-school experience, mostly in private nurseries. There are 50 pupils (19 per cent) on the school's register of pupils with special educational needs and this is broadly average for schools nationally. Most have moderate learning difficulties. Three pupils have statements of special educational need. Since the last inspection in November, 1998, there have been several changes of staff, including the appointment of a new headteacher in September, 2000.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory. Standards are currently in line with what is expected of pupils at the ages of seven and eleven in English, mathematics and science. However, some pupils are capable of achieving higher standards. Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons and provision for the pupils' personal development is good. Leadership and management of the school by the new headteacher and the senior management team are now very good and the cost of educating a pupil is broadly in line with the average for schools nationally. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are very good. He is well supported by the senior management team and there are now clear strategies for improvement.
- The quality of teaching in junior-aged classes is good and this is having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the standards that they achieve.
- The good attitudes, behaviour and attendance of pupils, which are promoted by the staff through the support and guidance they offer and the school's behaviour policy, are contributing well to the achievement of pupils. As a result, their self-esteem has improved and standards of attainment are rising.
- Provision for the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, mathematics and science by the ages of seven and eleven should be higher.
- The quality of teaching in the reception and Year 1 classes should be improved so that the pupils make better progress.
- Pupils' attainment in design and technology should be higher.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November, 1998, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. In March 2000, the school was re-visited by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and it was judged to be making satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues arising from that inspection report. Since then the school has continued to make satisfactory progress and, with the appointment of a new headteacher last September, the pace of improvement has increased. The school no longer has serious

weaknesses. At the last inspection, a key issue was to raise standards in English, mathematics and science. Progress on this has been satisfactory. Test results in English by pupils aged eleven have risen since 1998 and standards in the current Year 6 in all three subjects are better than those in the last two years. However, the level of challenge in work for more able pupils has not been increased sufficiently. A second key issue was to improve the rate of progress that pupils make. The school is making satisfactory progress with this. Pupils in all classes, except the reception class, make at least satisfactory progress. In upper junior classes, progress in lessons is often good but in the reception class, the children make insufficient progress in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics. The third key issue was to establish concerted educational direction for the school. As a result of the work of the new headteacher, progress on this has been good and, supported by governors and his senior management team, he is providing very good leadership for the school. Progress on minor weaknesses has been satisfactory overall. For example, provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) is now satisfactory and procedures to monitor attendance have improved. Financial planning is now better linked to the school's priorities and links with parents are improving. Procedures to assess pupils' progress are now satisfactory and target-setting for groups of pupils has begun to have an impact on their progress. However, standards in design and technology remain unsatisfactory. In addition to addressing the key issues, the quality of teaching has improved.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 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	C	C	E
Mathematics	C	B	D	E
Science	D	C	D	E

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards in English, when the pupils are eleven, are in line with the national average but well below those in schools with a similar level of free school meals. Reading standards are satisfactory and pupils read at home regularly for enjoyment and for information. Pupils' writing skills develop well as pupils use them in subjects such as science and history. Pupils gain confidence to speak in discussions. In mathematics and science, standards have fluctuated since the last inspection and were below the national average and well below those in similar schools last year. Standards in the current Year 6 are better than that. They are more in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds. Improvements are the result of better teaching in both subjects and, in science particularly, better co-ordination of the subject and improvements in teachers' planning. However, in all three subjects, standards should be higher and more pupils should be achieving higher levels in tests. With teachers' expectations higher, this is beginning to happen. For the tests in 2001, there are challenging targets for 88 per cent of pupils to achieve expected levels or better in English and 86 per cent of pupils in mathematics. In other subjects, pupils' attainment is similar to that expected of eleven-year-olds in all schools, but in design and technology attainment is below expectations. Younger children, particularly those in the reception class, make insufficient progress in communication, language and literacy and in mathematics, but progress is satisfactory in other aspects of the children's development. In older classes, progress is

better and it is good in upper junior classes. This variation in the rate of learning is directly linked to the quality of teaching.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils generally have good attitudes towards school and older pupils are interested and very involved in their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The great majority of pupils behave well. Some younger pupils, however, do not concentrate well and are restless in lessons. This adversely affects their progress.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are good, especially among older pupils. The pupils' personal development, for example their independence and sense of responsibility, improves as the pupils get older.
Attendance	Levels of attendance are good and have been maintained since the last inspection

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good

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

Just over half of the teaching observed was good or very good, 41 per cent was satisfactory and four per cent was unsatisfactory. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is better in junior-aged classes, where there is no unsatisfactory teaching, but there are weaknesses in the teaching of reception-aged children and pupils in the Year 1 class. In the good teaching, the pace of lessons is brisk and teachers share the objectives for lessons with pupils. There is a purposeful atmosphere and the quality of pupils' learning is good. In the reception class and in some lessons in Year 1, the organisation of lessons and management of pupils are not good enough to help pupils to make consistently good progress. A weakness identified throughout the school at the last inspection was the lack of challenge for the more able pupils and this remains a shortcoming. The teaching of literacy and numeracy in infant classes is satisfactory; in junior classes, it is good. Whereas in some lessons, particularly in junior classes, teaching focuses well on the needs of the pupils, in others the work does not challenge all pupils. The quality of learning matches the teaching and in the great majority of lessons, pupils concentrate well and get through a good amount of work. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall but varies according to the expertise of staff. There is particularly good support for such pupils in older classes provided by the classroom assistant. Some staff, including classroom assistants, have training needs in this aspect. There is more to be done if the school is to meet the needs of pupils of all levels of ability, including children in the early years and, throughout the school, the more able pupils and those with special educational needs.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	All subjects of the National Curriculum for primary schools are taught. The teaching of PSHE has improved since the last inspection. The school's use of the national strategies to teach literacy and numeracy are effective in raising standards.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is satisfactory. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils on the register of pupils with special educational needs and outside agencies support pupils as necessary. Pupils have equal access to the curriculum, the national Code of Practice is followed and any withdrawal of pupils for specialist teaching does not adversely affect their progress in other subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is good overall. It is good for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and satisfactory for their cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All aspects of policy and practice supporting the pupils' health and welfare are satisfactory and good behaviour is promoted well by the school's policy. There have been satisfactory improvements in procedures to assess how much progress the pupils are making in lessons. Targets for pupils to achieve have been introduced but they lack deadlines for achievement and often are too broad.

Partnerships with parents are improving. There is more information supplied to parents about the curriculum taught and about the general life of the school. The number of parents' consultation meetings has been increased in order to keep parents better informed about their children's progress. There is an active Parent Teacher Association, which makes a substantial contribution to funds for school and this is much appreciated by staff.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Since the appointment of the new headteacher, changes in the practices, attitudes and vision of senior managers and staff have significantly improved the overall leadership and management of the school. It is now very good.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily and is now more involved in setting targets for improvement, than at the time of the previous inspection.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is much improved. Staff and governors now have a clear understanding of how the school and its pupils are performing and there is a shared commitment to monitoring standards and provision with a view to improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of grants, such as those for special educational needs, information and communication technology (ICT) and improvements to the buildings. The school consults a range of people about important matters, obtains resources at the most economic price and uses them appropriately in raising standards. It compares its achievement with other schools. This aspect has improved since the appointment of the headteacher.

There is a sufficient number of teaching staff. The number of classroom assistants is being increased to support pupils of all levels of attainment. The accommodation is spacious and in good condition with sufficient classrooms, hall, library and a computer suite which is about to open. There is no appropriate outdoor play area for the reception children but negotiations are under way to make a suitable space available. Resources for teaching are generally satisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased with the leadership and management of the school provided by the new headteacher. • They believe their children learn well and are expected to work hard. • They feel that they finding out more about how their children are doing at school, since the appointment of the headteacher. • Pupils' behaviour is generally good. • Links with parents are improving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents have concerns about the consistency with which homework is set. • Some parents feel there is a shortage of extra-curricular activities.

Inspectors agree with the views expressed by parents, in particular their comments about the positive impact of the headteacher since his appointment. Inspectors agree that the school needs to review its policy on homework with a view to improving how it contributes to the pupils' progress. The range of clubs and activities offered is similar to that found in many primary schools.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of the children on entry to the reception class is average overall, but some pupils lack skills of communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. During the reception year, the children make insufficient progress in these aspects of development and should be achieving more. By the end of the school year, few have achieved the early learning goals for communication, language and literacy and for mathematical development. Progress and attainment are better in the four other areas of development, personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Overall, the children are not achieving as well as they should, because there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching.

2. Since the last inspection two years ago, when standards in English, mathematics and science were judged to be unsatisfactory, there has been significant improvement, especially in English. Standards are now in line with the national average for eleven-year-olds in this subject. This is evident in standards in the current Year 6 and in the results of the 2000 national tests. Standards in mathematics and science fluctuated in the past two years and were below the national average in the 2000 tests. The school's performance in the 2000 tests was well below that of schools in which a similarly low proportion of pupils claim free school meals. The school did not achieve targets for pupils to achieve in English and mathematics in last summer's tests. However, there have been improvements in provision since the appointment of the headteacher in September 2000. These include better teaching, a greater focus on what pupils need to know, improved target setting for pupils and more classroom support. The school has set challenging targets to achieve in the 2001 tests for eleven-year-olds, which are for 88 per cent of pupils to achieve expected levels or better in English and 86 per cent of pupils in mathematics. As a result of these improvements, standards in the current Year 6 are rising. More pupils are achieving expected levels for their age. However, standards should be higher in all three subjects.

3. Standards of literacy and numeracy are satisfactory overall. In Year 6, most pupils speak clearly and confidently and they read regularly at home and school for enjoyment and interest. Most are fluent readers, though some less able pupils are less confident. Pupils write effectively in subjects such as science and history. They can draft and re-draft their work to improve punctuation and spelling. All pupils are capable of writing more and finishing their work more quickly in English lessons, however. In mathematics, pupils confidently compute using all four rules of number, work in fractions and decimals, and use negative number competently. Pupils complete some good work on collecting data and displaying their results in graphs. Pupils begin to understand the relationships between number, pattern and shape. In science, pupils in Year 6 achieve well. They develop good skills of scientific enquiry and carry out investigations on, for example, dissolving. Their knowledge of concepts develops satisfactorily and this is an improvement, resulting from the more focused teaching. Teachers identify gaps in their knowledge better and standards are rising.

4. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in the current Year 2 are broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in national tests in English have fallen since the last inspection and this is mainly because younger pupils are not making sufficient progress in developing their skills in speaking, reading and writing. In mathematics and science, pupils in Year 2 are developing skills and knowledge satisfactorily but more able pupils should be achieving higher levels.

5. Girls achieve higher than boys in English and boys achieve higher than girls in mathematics and science. This follows the national pattern. Pupils with special educational needs make broadly satisfactory progress in relation to prior attainment throughout the school but this depends on the quality of support they receive by teachers or assistants and whether the task is well matched to their needs. More able pupils should be achieving higher standards than they are.

6. In information and communication technology (ICT), the attainment of seven and eleven-year-olds is in line with that expected of pupils and this is a similar finding to the last inspection. By the age of eleven, pupils can use the computer to gather information, word process their writing and draw various types of graphs for work in mathematics and science. Attainment in religious education meets the required levels of the agreed syllabus and is satisfactory. In art and design, geography, history, music and physical education, attainment is similar to that found in most primary schools. In design and technology, attainment is poor and progress is unsatisfactory, especially in junior classes. Progress since the last inspection in this subject has been unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils generally have good attitudes towards their schoolwork and this finding is similar to the last inspection. Where behaviour is managed well, for example in a lesson on religious education, pupils in the mixed Years 1 and 2 class wait their turn and wait to be asked before answering a question. They all listen carefully to each other and this promotes good learning. Children in the reception class are pleasantly curious but examples of disruptive behaviour are not always well managed. Similarly pupils in a Year 1 class were very enthusiastic to learn about The Great Fire of London. However, they kept calling out their answers so that no one could be heard properly.

8. Most older pupils have very good attitudes to their school. A good working atmosphere exists in their classes. Pupils are interested and involved in their work. They work hard and try to please their teachers. Older pupils can share ideas well. For example, Year 6 pupils worked very well in pairs to demonstrate balance and counter balance in a physical education lesson. They really enjoy practical work. As in a science lesson when pupils in Year 5 were able to discover how musical instruments make sounds. Pupils with special educational needs behave well and concentrate reasonably well but the quality of their learning is directly influenced by the quality of teaching. Occasionally supervision by teachers and adult helpers is insufficient.

9. Relationships are good; they are especially good between older pupils and their teachers. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and support. This allows pupils to gain the confidence to express their ideas freely. Pupils respect each other's feelings and beliefs. Pupils in Year 3 made shields which recorded their personal qualities. Other pupils were appreciative and sensitive when pupils talked about them and expressed their love for their families. During lessons, there are good examples of pupils working together and supporting each other.

10. Behaviour is good. Younger pupils generally behave well but they can be boisterous on the playground and this can spill over into corridors and the classroom if these tendencies are not checked. Consistent, high standards of behaviour have not yet been established in the reception class but are developing amongst the older infant pupils. Older pupils generally behave very well both in and out of the classroom. There is little bullying but when pupils do fall out, staff resolve matters quickly. There have been no exclusions.

11. There have been significant improvements in opportunities for personal development since the last inspection. Pupils find that their work is valued and this raises their self-esteem. More independent work and research is encouraged, especially for older pupils. Older pupils have been given a greater

range of responsibilities. They have responded very well and pupils in Year 6 especially enjoy helping the reception pupils with their packed lunches.

12. Levels of attendance are good and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. Parents appreciate the new arrangements for allowing pupils into school for a longer period in the mornings. This encourages punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Overall, there is a balance of good and satisfactory teaching. In just over half of lessons it is good or very good. Another 41 per cent of lessons are satisfactory and 4 per cent are unsatisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection. Since the appointment of the headteacher, his focus on developing the quality of teaching and the achievement of the pupils has been the catalyst for speeding up this improvement. The majority of the best teaching is in junior-aged classes and this age group has been his immediate priority for improvement. However, there are weaknesses elsewhere.

14. In the reception class, teaching is satisfactory but with significant weaknesses. When the whole-class work is interesting, this establishes a sense of purpose and a harmony. In these lessons the teacher uses questioning well and this supports the children's understanding of the work appropriately. This has a positive impact on children's behaviour and personal and social development. However, this is not consistent throughout the lesson. There are weaknesses in how well the children are managed and routines are not well established. This was evident in an unsatisfactory lesson where the focus was on music. There was insufficient progress because the teacher spent too much time dealing with children misbehaving. The work of support staff is not of sufficient quality to support the teaching satisfactorily. The headteacher has organised useful support from a specialist teacher of the Local Education Authority (LEA) but this has not been enough to develop the quality of teaching at a rigorous pace. Staff have training needs in teaching a curriculum appropriate for reception-aged children.

15. In infant-aged classes, teaching is satisfactory overall. About one third of lessons are good or very good. One mathematics lesson in Year 1 and a lesson involving the teaching of pupils with special educational needs were unsatisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the curriculum taught and teaching methods are sound. Planning is satisfactory overall although not sufficiently linked to what pupils need to learn next in order to progress at a good pace. Management of pupils varies across classes but at its best it is consistently guiding and encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions. The good features in teaching are characterised by good subject knowledge, clear explanations, good routines, and shared learning objectives. These features support pupils well in their understanding of what is expected of them and set a purposeful atmosphere which motivates pupils to learn and encourages them to persevere. In one unsatisfactory lesson, pupils made insufficient progress because their attention was not wholly engaged for large parts of the lesson. Pupils did not concentrate sufficiently well and the teacher did not manage them well enough. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is broadly satisfactory and is at its best when the activities prepared meet specific needs and set appropriate challenges. However, this is not always the case. Teachers are not always sure how to properly meet pupils' needs. Support staff have a varying range of expertise and experience and the quality of their work varies according to their knowledge and expertise and the quality of the teachers' guidance.

16. Teaching is good in junior-aged classes and is a strength of the school. Twelve per cent of teaching is very good, 65 per cent is good and 23 per cent is satisfactory. In the better lessons planning meets the needs of all pupils well, and takes good account of their previous learning. Explanations are clear and good questioning techniques are used effectively to check that pupils have good

understanding. Relationships are good and the pace of lessons maintains a good brisk sense of purpose. Resources are used well. Pupils who have special educational needs are well supported, particularly in English, mathematics and science. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects and teach basic skills well. The support from classroom assistants is generally good and this is because they are given clear guidance by teachers. Assessment is successfully used to set targets and to plan future work. Pupils are becoming very aware of their targets for improvement and this has benefits for their achievement. However, the targets are generally too broad and the time-scale for achievement too long so that it is difficult to judge progress properly.

17. A weakness identified in the last inspection was the lack of challenge for the more able pupils, including gifted and talented pupils, and this remains the case in a large minority of lessons. There is still a tendency for adults to provide resources and to do most of the thinking for pupils. Throughout the school, teachers' expectations of what the children and pupils can do are not high enough. As a result, pupils' expectations of themselves could be higher.

18. Work is planned well to support subjects across the curriculum and this is a strength. For example, pupils have opportunity to consolidate their learning on shape when they work on pattern in an art lesson. Work on the planets in science is supported by work in English and ICT, developing the pupils' skills of research. In general, however, ICT does not support work in other subjects as well as it should. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and make valuable contributions to pupils' learning, for example when they are used purposefully in other subjects such as science and history. Good planning, using the National Literacy Strategy, thorough preparation and up-to-date resources are helping to raise standards of literacy. Teachers' good mathematical knowledge helps them to develop the pupils' standards of numeracy. This helps both the better and the less able pupils to make good progress.

19. Pupils' learning in infant-aged classes is satisfactory and in junior classes it is good. Pupils have a satisfactory interest in the work and greater enthusiasm when the teaching is good. Many develop satisfactory levels of perseverance and attention to detail particularly when they are encouraged to take responsibility and use their initiative. However, there are instances when pupils lose concentration and produce little by the end of a lesson. A minority of pupils lack concentration. They lack a strong sense of commitment and responsibility if they are to take a full part in their daily lessons.

20. From an analysis of pupils' work it can be seen that marking occurs regularly but does not generally draw pupils' attention to untidy handwriting and presentation. Generally, pupils do not correct errors identified. The quality of marking improves in upper junior classes where teachers make constructive comments to take the learning further. Although the marking system is used rigorously, it is not always followed up by teachers to ensure pupils make the necessary adjustments to their work.

21. The setting of homework is inconsistent and does not reflect the school's policy. This is an area which concerns some parents. The best homework opportunity is in mathematics but the implementation of the policy lacks vigour to support all pupils, particularly those in Years 5 and 6 to prepare them for the next stage in their learning.

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

22. The school gives pupils and children under five a satisfactory range of subjects, lessons and other learning activities. These meet legal requirements and are appropriate to pupils' ages and abilities. The school teaches all subjects of the revised National Curriculum, and religious education

according to the new locally agreed syllabus. The reception class provides activities and resources for the children appropriate to the early learning goals in the Foundation Stage of their education.

23. Times for the subjects are close to national recommendations. A third of the week is for English work and a quarter for mathematics. These lessons are mostly in the mornings. A tenth of time is for science. The rest of the subjects, and personal, social and health education share the remaining teaching time. There is an assembly each day which includes an act of worship of a broadly Christian character. However, there is barely sufficient time for religious education. Teachers therefore find it difficult to present some aspects, such as opportunities for reflective writing, in sufficient depth.

24. Since the last inspection there have been several improvements to the curriculum. Fine-tuning of the timetable has given an extra 40 minutes of teaching time a day. This allows teachers to give extra time for most subjects to meet the needs of their classes. Pupils get time in this slot to practise handwriting, spelling and composition, for example. Each class now has a weekly personal, social and health education lesson (PSHE) appropriate to their ages. Sex education and drugs awareness are included in science. Teachers also link these topics to PSHE. Improved planning and effective use of the latest national guidance result in clear learning aims in each lesson. The school has therefore met nearly all curricular issues from the last inspection. However planning does not always ensure enough challenge in work for pupils of all abilities. Because of the big reductions in the time given to them, the expressive arts of art, dance, design, drama and music make less contribution to pupils' personal development than at the time of the last inspection.

25. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have equal access to all subjects of the curriculum. Individual education plans for pupils with statements of special educational need are satisfactory but they generally do not have specific information about the time and frequency a specific aspect needs to be practised, nor do they identify short-term targets which would move pupils on faster in their learning.

26. The school continues to link subjects effectively so that they make more sense to pupils. For example, in history, teachers use imaginative writing to deepen pupils' understanding of daily life in the past. All teachers also build up pupils' understanding of ideas through careful learning of key subject words. This is most marked in mathematics and science. There are also helpful links between history and art and design, mathematics and design and technology, and English, science, religious education and history. Sound standards in English and mathematics and the big improvements by the end of the juniors show the effectiveness of teachers' use of the literacy and numeracy strategies.

27. Educational visits, visitors and growing links with the local community continue to enrich learning. The whole school visits The Church of the Ascension for seasonal services. Grandparents come into school to tell pupils of their memories of the Second World War. Last term pupils enjoyed a pantomime presented by a local drama group and music from a jazz band. Visits in the current programme include a residential weekend of outdoor activities and computer work for pupils in Year 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in role-plays during a Victorian day at a local museum. There are visits to various heritage sites to broaden pupils' appreciation of the past. Year 2 pupils visit the local library to improve early research and reading skills.

28. Extra-curricular activities involve about a third of pupils. Teachers run clubs and teams for football, netball, rounders, athletics, cross-country, drama and recorders. Pupils take part in local leagues for football, netball and cross-country. This range is broadly typical of what most primary schools offer. However, at the time of the inspection there was no choir, band or opportunities for individual instrumental tuition.

29. The school's links with local pre-school groups are good. They help teachers to give children a secure start in their first days at school, and to assess individual needs promptly. Sound links with the local secondary school to which most pupils transfer support their smooth transition to secondary education.

30. The school continues to make good provision for these aspects of pupils' personal development. Provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good. There is satisfactory provision for their cultural development.

31. Worship of a broadly Christian character in assembly each day is central to pupils' good spiritual development. Assemblies give all pupils and children in the reception class opportunities to reflect on important human values such as friendship and family. A new school prayer asks for love and peace to be at the centre of all the school's work. Pupils say the prayer sincerely. It is also a school tradition for pupils to say grace together before the midday meal. Religious education lessons further their knowledge of Christianity and world faiths, and their insights into beliefs. Other subjects such as English also deepen understanding of spiritual values. For example, after studying the Bible story of The Fall and the Greek myth of Pandora's box, Year 5 pupils created their own powerful stories of temptation and its consequences.

32. Teachers continue to give pupils good moral guidance. Pupils have good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Each class agrees and follows through its set of rules. Teachers do not have to keep spelling them out. Whole-class and individual talks with their teachers help pupils to understand and use the principles which are the source of good conduct. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils throughout the school support pupils' moral education. Thoughtful teaching of both scriptures and stories also strengthens pupils' understanding of moral issues.

33. The good provision for social development is evident in behaviour which is nearly always good. As a result orderly classrooms with purposeful atmospheres improve the quality of learning. For example pupils work sensibly when the teacher is with other groups. Pupils support charities for children less fortunate than they are. Teachers encourage them to share and care one for another. All staff consistently follow a positive behaviour policy, which successfully promotes considerate conduct. Weekly celebration assemblies praise and value good deeds as well as good work. Older pupils learn to look after younger ones and to take on increasing responsibilities within the school community. For example older pupils help organise assemblies and work as library monitors. Younger pupils quickly learn to listen to each other, take turns, and work both in groups and as a class. Tidying up is quick and careful, and pupils look after resources sensibly. The midday supervisors look after lunchtime and playtime well. The midday meal is a pleasant social time. Many pupils are ready to seek and give help in lessons. For example a Year 3 girl asked a boy how to use her atlas index – 'How do you find Australia?' He replied, 'Australia begins with A not O', and added later, when she was searching, 'Not Austria.' Pupils have a strong sense of their own class and welcome visitors. The school responds promptly and effectively to occasional instances of bullying. Pupils and parents appreciate this.

34. Cultural provision is similar to that found in most primary schools. Pupils' understanding of different cultures widens in lessons in geography, history and religious education. Art and music give pupils practical experience of order and beauty in sound, colour, pattern and form. The pupils meet the works of great artists and composers. For example pupils listened to the music of both Mozart and Borodin in the course of assemblies, and Bach and Vivaldi in music lessons during the inspection. Religious education and geography lessons introduce them to eastern cultures. A visit to the Leicester cultural centre gives older pupils an awareness of the multi-ethnic character of today's society. However, there are insufficient resources to teach about the multi-ethnic aspect of society. The school also has an award for its links through pupils' letters with other European countries. There are after-

school drama and recorder groups. At the time of the inspection rehearsals had started for a musical production, which provides a further opportunity for pupils to appreciate dance, drama and music.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The recently appointed head teacher aims to create an atmosphere where pupils, staff and parents are equally valued. This is encouraging pupils to gain confidence and to realise that they can achieve more. The school has been recently redecorated and pupils have had some choice in the style and colour of the décor. This has also encouraged a sense of ownership and pupils are encouraged to be proud of their school, which provides a cheerful and welcoming environment. The school has recently introduced a new health and safety policy and the school is generally safe. There is however a need to remain vigilant and to ensure that safe procedures, for example in the dining hall at lunchtimes, are consistently applied. The school's arrangements for child protection are satisfactory and locally agreed procedures are followed. The school recognises that there is a need for a second named person with appropriate training and a need to deliver child protection training to the whole staff.

36. Procedures to promote good behaviour are very effective. The school has recently introduced a positive behaviour policy. It is consistently applied by the majority of staff. Teachers of junior age pupils have very good relationships with their pupils and they have earned their pupils' respect. They provide very good role models, they do not have to raise their voices and can control their pupils with just a word or even a look. Some teachers of younger pupils, however, are less successful at managing behaviour. This can sometimes result in chatter and calling out which prevents pupils from learning. There are few strategies for managing pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour and this can result in these pupils not learning properly. The school recognises that occasionally minor cases of bullying such as name calling occur. These incidents are dealt with appropriately. In order to help pupils realise that this is not an acceptable way to behave and to change attitudes the school has introduced a programme of personal and social education, including reference to racial discrimination, throughout the school.

37. There have been significant improvements in the recording and monitoring of attendance, which was a minor issue at the last inspection. All but one of the registers meet legal requirements and all now clearly distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absence. Parents are now asked to provide reasons for absence. Pupils coming into school late or leaving early are now documented and there is an accurate record of which pupils are in or out of school.

38. The school has made satisfactory improvements to its assessment procedures since the last inspection. Procedures to assess progress in English and mathematics are now satisfactory and end-of-units tests and termly assessments have been introduced for science. Assessment procedures for other subjects are currently being introduced. There is now adequate monitoring of each pupil's academic progress, especially in junior-aged classes. The use of assessment to help teachers in their lesson planning is improving and it is now well used in some junior classes. For example, when some work in draft was marked in a Year 5 class the teacher recognised that a small group of pupils had not really understood the lesson. These pupils were then taught in a small group and this ensured that pupils were able to understand and make good progress. This does not happen in all classes, however. The school has made satisfactory progress in developing individual targets for pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils understand these targets and reference is often made to them in lessons. However, they are too broad and lack an agreed time limit. Targets in the individual education plans of pupils with special educational needs are similar. The monitoring of personal development is satisfactory but it remains informal. The school is aware that there is the capacity for improvement in this aspect.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The new headteacher has worked hard to create more positive links with parents and to ensure that parents can easily approach staff at the school. Parents appreciate the subtle changes in attitudes in the school and how the headteacher is readily available for them to speak to. They have faith in his ability to move the school forward and their views, as expressed in the meeting with inspectors and in questionnaires, are positive and supportive. The active Parents Teachers Association has continued to organise well-supported, fund-raising events. They have made a substantial contribution towards the redecorating of the school and creating a cheerful pleasant environment. This is helping to raise the pupils' self esteem and feeling of self-worth. There is a core of very supportive active parents who help in the classroom and with such activities.

40. Information for parents is satisfactory overall. Substantial improvements have been made to the quality and the amount of information that parents receive. Parents now receive regular information about what is being taught. There are regular newsletters and extra parent consultation evenings have been introduced. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved soon after initial identification of difficulties and regular reviews for pupils with statements involve parents and outside agencies appropriately. Parents have positive views about the support their children receive, so that they can make progress in lessons. The school is aware that improvements need to be made to the Governors' Report to Parents and that the prospectus should inform parents of their rights to withdraw their children from religious education lessons and collective worship if they so wish. The school has wisely discontinued the practice of negotiating the content of reports with parents. Reports are now distributed to parents prior to the consolation evening in the summer term. The content of the report, however, is unsatisfactory. The format provides teachers with an insufficient space for an adequate report on English or mathematics. Reports do not clearly inform parents about what their children know, understand and can do in all areas of English and mathematics nor tell them about the progress that has been made. Although target-setting is well used in the classroom it has not yet been incorporated into reports.

41. Some parents express concern about arrangements for setting homework. There are inconsistencies and the setting of homework varies according to the practice of individual teachers. The school is aware that the present homework policy is not working effectively and that in order to raise standards and to ensure that pupils are well prepared for secondary school, appropriate homework needs to be set on a regular basis. The school wishes to fully involve parents in their children's learning and has plans for courses in literacy and ICT will commence shortly.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. As a result of the appointment of the headteacher, the establishment of the senior management team and the progress made since last September, the leadership and management of the school are now very good. This is a great improvement since the time of the previous inspection when the leadership of the school and its management were judged to have serious weaknesses. The headteacher has been the catalyst for rapid but well-founded changes in the practices, attitudes and vision of both senior managers and the governing body. School managers and governors have confronted and resolved some difficult problems. They are now in a good position to continue the drive to improve both teaching and learning and thereby raise academic standards. Similarly, recent initiatives have given renewed thrust to the school's aims of providing all pupils with a full and stimulating education and this has the potential to grow as new practices become part of the day-to-day life of the school.

43. The over-riding characteristic of the work of the managers and staff is teamwork. This is a considerable change since the last inspection when school managers were described as working hard

but only as individuals. At that time the flow of information between people was described as poor. This is no longer the case. Formal and informal communication systems work well so that everyone working in school has clear ideas about what needs to be done and how improvements can be achieved. The headteacher has involved teachers, governors and all other staff in the review of the work of the school. This has resulted in a sense of purpose and determination that had been lacking previously. Everyone, including pupils, has a clear idea of what needs to be done and of the part they need to play in the future. Priorities for improvement are set and are known to all. The headteacher has clear, sensible and realistic ideas about what needs to be done in order to ensure that the school improves. He is well supported by the governing body and teachers, especially the school's two senior teachers.

44. The role of the governing body has improved and it now plays an important role in overseeing the work of the school. When the school was last inspected it was stated that governors worked hard to support the school but did not fulfil the much needed role of critical friend. There is still some way for the governing body to go in its involvement in asking important questions and making hard decisions. For example, the school has failed to improve the standard of work in design and technology since the previous report. Neither governing body minutes nor discussions with governors indicate that the governing body has expressed concern over this lack of progress. The governing body is beginning to be involved in setting long and medium term targets for improvement. Governors are members of important, decision-making committees and this helps them to fulfil their statutory duties. Named governors are designated to important parts of the school's life such as special educational needs, numeracy and literacy and the governing body is involved in the forming of the school improvement plan. Governors are fully aware that standards of attainment are not high enough, especially for the more able pupils, and have worked with teachers to analyse the reasons for this and to suggest ways to improve. The governing body's involvement in setting short and long-term targets and in planning for improvements will take some time to bear fruit. This is a new and important challenge for governors.

45. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators monitor teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons. They also scrutinise teachers' planning and pupils' books. This is having a positive impact on provision and the quality of pupils' learning. The head teacher has identified the need to raise the quality of teaching in the reception class and has invited specialist staff from the LEA to provide advice. So far this has not been enough to develop the quality of teaching at a rigorous pace. Staff identify gaps and weaknesses in pupils' understanding. Co-ordinators for other subjects have not yet had an opportunity to observe the quality of teaching and learning. More than half of the teaching staff has been at the school for less than two years. This means that the role of the co-ordinator for most subjects is still developing. The current practice in co-ordinating the curriculum is, however, a good example of the new spirit of cooperation, which exists in the school.

46. The school improvement plan supports the school's drive to raise standards very well. The plan is detailed and indicates several areas where improvements need to be made. In some areas, such as the analysis and interpretation of test scores, the school has made very good progress indeed. Teachers and governors are fully aware of the need to set targets for individual pupils as well as year groups. The plan is written in general terms and does not contain specific detail about targets or the methods to be used for groups such as the most able pupils. Some parts of the plan are still waiting to be developed. For example, much work has been undertaken to identify good practice in teaching throughout the school but this good practice is still not being shared with colleagues in any systematic way. Nevertheless the priorities identified in the school improvement plan to raise standards, to improve the rate of pupils' progress and to establish a clear educational direction for the school are beginning to be seen in the school's daily life.

47. The new vision and drive that the headteacher has brought to the school and the greater involvement of the governing body mean that the school's strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified. There have been several changes of staff in the past twelve months, including the headteacher and deputy headteacher. The new headteacher has revised the school's management system so that more people are included and this works very well. Members of the senior management team co-ordinate literacy and numeracy and this places these two subjects at the head of the school's determination to raise standards. Teachers take their roles as subject co-ordinators very seriously and are making important decisions about national guidelines for the curriculum in most subjects. Good use is made of the advice from the LEA to support the school.

48. There is a committed team of teachers who are deployed effectively. There is a new, enthusiastic co-ordinator for special educational needs implementing an action plan, which includes training for staff in setting appropriately challenging work for pupils. At the time of the inspection there were relatively few classroom assistants but two additional support staff have been appointed to begin work very soon after the inspection week. The contribution of support staff varies in quality. Some have training needs, especially in relation to how they support pupils with special educational needs. The assistant who works in junior classes, taking pupils for additional literacy lessons is particularly well deployed and makes a good contribution to pupils' progress. There is good accommodation with sufficient spacious classrooms and good outdoor areas. The buildings and site are well looked after and cleaned to a good standard by the caretaker and her assistant. There is no outdoor area for reception pupils but negotiations are under way with the appropriate authorities to convert nearby land into a play area for the school's youngest pupils. Some well-planned alterations to classrooms mean that the school now has a generous and well-equipped computer suite. Resources are generally satisfactory. Money has been spent in recent months to improve resources in subjects such as literacy but some such as science, music, physical education and religious education still require further resources.

49. The school makes good use of grants and seeks additional funding from outside agencies. For example, a number of refurbished computers have been bought for classrooms to supplement the new computers bought through government grant. Funds for special educational needs are used well and the school has considerably increased the amount of money available to support these pupils. Governors and staff monitor the benefit brought to the school from spending grants.

50. The finances of the school are well managed and the school budget is closely monitored. The headteacher and governors consult closely about spending priorities and seek to link spending to the school development plan. Recently, for example, it has been decided to spend money employing classroom assistants to support pupils' learning rather than maintain the existing reserve fund. The school obtains resources at the most economic price, as can be seen in the money spent to convert an area of the school into a computer suite. The work for this was satisfactorily completed at a saving of several thousand pounds compared to the original estimate. The school secretary unobtrusively ensures the efficient day-to-day running of the school office and supplies the governors and headteacher with essential financial information whenever required. The school's spending is about average. Given the improvements in the management and educational direction of the school, the improving quality of teaching and the standards that pupils achieve, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. The headteacher and staff should

- (1) Raise standards * further in English, mathematics and science (Paragraphs 2, 4, 5, 63 – 74, 74 – 83, 84 - 89) by
 - providing better challenge for all pupils, especially the more able (Paragraphs 17, 25, 63, 78, 81, 85)
 - using assessments of pupils' progress better so that they have greater impact on teachers' planning and on the work set for pupils * (Paragraph 38)
 - making targets for pupils to improve more focused with shorter deadlines. This includes targets for pupils with special educational needs in their individual education plans * (Paragraphs 16, 38)
 - and reviewing the policy on homework and improving how it contributes to pupils' learning. (Paragraphs 21, 41)
- (2) Improve the quality of teaching in the reception and Year 1 classes * and consequently the rate of progress that the pupils make by
 - sharing good practice evident in other infant classes
 - developing the expertise of staff, both teachers and assistants, to teach this age range through training (Paragraphs 1, 10, 14, 15, 53 - 62)
- (3) Raise pupils' attainment in design and technology * (Paragraphs 6, 94 – 96)

52. In addition, staff should

- (1) Improve reports on pupils' progress to parents. (Paragraph 40)
 - (2) Review the time allocated to religious education. (Paragraphs 24, 120)
 - (3) Develop a scheme of work in English for speaking and listening (Paragraph 66)
- features in the school development plan

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	73
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	11	44	41	4	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll	271
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	14

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	50

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	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	16	36

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	19
	Girls	15	14	13
	Total	34	33	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94 (87)	92 (92)	89 (89)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	18	19
	Girls	15	13	15
	Total	33	31	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	86 (87)	94 (92)
	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	22	23	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	17	18
	Girls	19	14	18
	Total	35	31	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (82)	69 (75)	80 (85)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	18
	Girls	17	15	17
	Total	31	32	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (81)	71 (75)	78 (81)
	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	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	235
Any other minority ethnic group	4

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.8
Average class size	26.5

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	57

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	465 195
Total expenditure	449 718
Expenditure per pupil	1573
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	15477

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	286
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	27	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	35	3	3	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	56	6	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	37	21	6	3
The teaching is good.	46	45	1	3	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	49	11	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	34	0	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	41	0	3	1
The school works closely with parents.	34	45	8	7	6
The school is well led and managed.	54	39	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	48	4	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	46	15	6	11

Some parents have concerns about the consistency with which homework is set. Some parents feel there is a shortage of extra-curricular activities.

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

53. Children enter the reception class in the September of the school year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were 27 in the class full time. A high proportion of children have pre-school experience. The range of attainment on entry is average overall although a significant proportion of children are below average in mathematical development and communication, language and literacy. The children make broadly satisfactory progress in personal, social and emotional development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development, and the majority are on course to reach the nationally expected early learning goals by the end of the school year. However, progress is unsatisfactory in the two other areas of learning and the majority of children are not on course to meet the nationally expected early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development. Children who have special educational needs are included in all aspects of learning and the progress they make is broadly in line with the progress of all the children.

54. In the last inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be satisfactory and the progress children made was judged to be satisfactory in all areas of learning. This inspection finds that standards of attainment by the end of the reception year have declined, as has the quality of teaching. In most lessons teaching was satisfactory but this reflected a balance of strengths and weaknesses. There was one unsatisfactory lesson.

Personal, social and emotional development

55. Children's personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory. This area of learning is the teacher's current focus. Children have opportunities to work together as a whole class, in small groups, with partners and to share space and equipment. They learn to take turns in discussion, to work together using construction kits and to share at the sand tray. They are beginning to do this successfully. Some children sustain their concentration well and others begin to demonstrate a growing understanding of what is expected of them. Teaching is satisfactory and often supports children well in whole-class work particularly when it is interesting, such as in a religious education lesson when they listened to the story about Zaccheus. At these times, when children are reminded of how to behave they respond appropriately. However, there are weaknesses. At times whole-class work and small group work are not sufficiently well planned to meet the specific needs of the children, many of whom have a short attention span. When children are involved in small group work closely supervised and led by adults, they respond well but this is not sustained when the adult moves away. In some instances, children have good levels of patience as they wait for the adult to explain work to another child. The school has recently introduced a programme to manage behaviour to support children in their development but it is too early to judge its impact.

Communication, language and literacy

56. In communication, language and literacy, children have opportunities to listen to stories, respond to questions and develop their understanding through role play. The teaching of this area of development is satisfactory overall, but there are weaknesses, especially in developing the children's skills of literacy. Skills of speaking are satisfactory and the children make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They enjoy listening to stories particularly when they are well read or well told. In the story of Zaccheus, the teacher used her voice well and used the illustrations to good effect to keep children focused. When the story came to an end

they remained quietly absorbed. A child called out 'That was a good story' and all the children murmured their appreciation. Teaching continued to focus children's attention through effective questioning and helped them to recall the events of the story well. Through the guided role play the teacher ensured all were involved and children added to their understanding of the story as well as to a sense of right and wrong and forgiveness.

57. Many children have some understanding of initial letter names and sounds and recognise upper and lower case letters. They begin to learn about the middle letter sound in a three letter word and to stretch the sound to hear it more easily, such as in 'bin' and 'pig' and clearly enjoy the hand movements to demonstrate the 'stretching' of the sound. However, this method alone is not entirely successful in developing early reading skills well. The majority of children do not recognise many whole words and do not use letter sounds to tackle unfamiliar words. They know the terms 'title' and 'author' and, even if they cannot read the words, point to the title and to the name of the author correctly. Less able children ask precise questions about the pictures to help them understand the story. All children develop very few useful strategies to support their reading. Overall, the teaching of skills of literacy is unsatisfactory. Books do not have a high profile in the classroom. Children are heard to read at school regularly but adults are mistaken in thinking that 'hearing reading' is the same as 'teaching reading' and as a consequence, all children make unsatisfactory progress in this work. The majority of children have few experiences of using books and of going to the library. Their attitudes to reading are varied and some have little enthusiasm. Children read at home with varying degrees of frequency.

58. Many children have a reasonable understanding of how to write letters of the alphabet and to put these together to make words. Some children write sentences to explain their drawing, while others trace over or copy the adult's writing reasonably well. With adult support and supervision, teaching is satisfactory. However, the children have too few experiences of returning to pieces of work to improve them, such as looking at letter formation, spacing and size of letters. The worksheets generally limit writing opportunities, and the booklets prepared by the teacher restrict children in developing a sense of doing their best work, particularly those who have a readiness to write.

Mathematical development

59. Children improve their understanding of number and simple addition through number stories told by the teacher. This provides a good opportunity to develop listening as well as mathematical skills. All children listen with good attention and many offer correct answers. Depending on their level of attainment, children can use simple addition to 3, 11 and 15, for example. When they worked with 'magic beans' they learnt about estimating being a reasonable guess. When the teacher shook the bag of beans they estimated the number of beans in the bag. Most offered reasonably accurate estimates, but one child said '100' and the teacher used this well to give them opportunity to discuss this answer. Many had a firm idea that 100 is a big number and so that many beans could not fit into the bag. Others thought that 100 beans would sound different. The teacher supported accurate counting of objects by encouraging children to arrange them in a pattern of their choice. The children chose a straight line and counted accurately. Children begin to learn different ways of making ten, as they look at a group of ten objects and see that however the group is divided there are always ten objects. A minority of children know the names of basic shapes, such as circles, triangles, squares and rectangles but the majority are not confident in naming these. When the teacher works with the whole class, teaching is satisfactory. However, it is unsatisfactory when the children work in small groups with an adult. The opportunity to explore numbers further, through estimating, recording and using their own initiative is restricted and this results in unsatisfactory progress.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Children take a good interest in this work as was evident by the torches and lamps brought in by them for their work on light. They know that batteries contain power and developed an early understanding of grouping objects as they sorted the different light sources. They talked with enthusiasm and listened carefully to each other as they found out how torches work. When they looked at the torches they drew on considerable personal knowledge, experience and awareness, which they are keen to share. Children working with the sand imagined they were making an apple crumble and demonstrated skilfully the method to make the crumble, having seen adults do this at home. The children make satisfactory progress and achieve the early learning goals for this aspect of their development by the end of the reception year. The quality of teaching is satisfactory but occasionally there are missed opportunities for children to make progress. For example, many of the children's useful experiences are from home but these are not always well developed through schoolwork.

Physical development

61. Children develop their spatial awareness well as they learn how to use space in activities such as walking, skipping, changing direction and in limited space when they work with a partner during their dance lesson. They show good interest in the work and clearly enjoy moving to music and working with their partner. The majority of children had no difficulty sustaining concentration for the whole lesson. The taped music with instructions supported the children very well. Children had the opportunity to recall sequences as they put the many stages of a dance in order. Not all were sure which is their right or left hand but with help they managed to follow the instructions on the recording. In large apparatus work they moved across mats and benches and balance in a variety of ways. They developed a good understanding of the purpose of exercise and joined in well with the activities to warm up their muscles. They enjoyed following the adults' movement and actions and the pace of work held their interest well. In class, the children handle tools and construction equipment well. Teaching is satisfactory and almost all the children achieve the early learning goals in this aspect by the end of the year. The children do not, however, have access to a suitably equipped outdoor area and this limits what is possible for this area of development.

Creative development

62. The children have experience of using glue, scissors and adhesive tape as they use cardboard rolls and circles to make a lighthouse. Children enjoyed working with building blocks to create tall lighthouses. When the slim models fell, others learnt from this and created sturdier and slightly shorter models. The children sing tunefully and can follow a simple rhythm pattern using parts of their body and instruments. They know a selection of children's songs and nursery rhymes. Teaching is satisfactory. There are opportunities to develop social skills through guided role-play, for example of the Cinderella story, and others for the children to develop skills of painting and drawing. In a music lesson, however, insufficient progress was made because the teacher failed to manage the pupils and keep their interest focused on the singing and playing.

ENGLISH

63. Standards have changed a lot since the last inspection two years ago. They are now typical for seven and eleven-year-olds. However standards are not yet high enough. This is because not enough able pupils reach the higher standards of which they are capable. Girls achieve higher standards than boys, following a national pattern. Standards in writing are lower than those in reading. Two years ago standards were very low when pupils left school at 11. This was a serious weakness. The reason for the improvement at this stage is the present good quality teaching in all the junior classes. The school has set challenging targets in 2001 for 86 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected level or better in national tests. Improvements mean the pupils are on line to achieve them.

64. Two years ago seven-year-olds' reading and writing standards were well above average. There are two reasons for the drop in standards. Children in the reception class do not make enough progress in reading, speaking, listening and pencil skills. Also the quality of language teaching in the infants is lower than in the juniors.

65. Standards in the 2000 national tests showed the same picture. There was a big improvement in eleven-year-olds standards, but seven-year-olds' reading and writing standards went down. Their performance in the writing tests was lower than in most schools. There are two main reasons for the difference between test results in seven-year-olds' writing and their present writing standards. Teachers are now giving more time and attention to writing in the infant classes. Although results in both infant and junior classes were similar to those in most primary schools, they were well below those in schools with similar contexts.

66. Speaking and listening standards are typical for pupils at the ages of seven and eleven. Given children's lack of confidence when they start school this is a good achievement. The reason for this improvement is teachers' skill in developing pupils' speech. They listen carefully to each pupil's words and set good examples of expressive speech. Teachers also lead class discussions very well through skilful questioning that includes pupils of all abilities. As a result pupils speak clearly and confidently by the time they are 11. For example, Year 6 pupils gained a good understanding of the meaning of 'responsibility' and 'decision' in a discussion lesson. This was because the teacher expected a lot of them and carefully guided their conversations in groups. The aims were 'to practise critical thinking and decision making'. The first half of each literacy lesson also contributes well to the development of speaking and listening. This is because the whole class work together in lively discussions. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs often make good progress in this work. They gain both ideas and confidence by listening to other pupils' comments and examples. Teachers also often talk to each member of their classes individually. Pupils therefore gain increasing skill in saying what they notice, remember, think and feel. Year 2 pupils had lots to say as the teacher sensitively helped members of her class to describe favourite things they had brought to school. However, there is no scheme to develop such work in each class through talks, debates, role-play and drama.

67. Reading standards are typical for seven and 11-year-olds. After a slow start in learning their letters at the beginning of the infants, pupils make steady progress. By the age of seven, more able pupils read simple stories by themselves with enjoyment and understanding. Other pupils read enthusiastically but continue to need some help. Slower learners are still often unsure about basic letter patterns and sounds. As a result they sometimes get stuck, or find it hard to make sense of sentences. Nearly all pupils use simple dictionaries, read back their own writing and follow directions on work sheets and computer screens. Most pupils know how to use indexes to find facts in simple information books.

68. By the age of 11 nearly all pupils read regularly at home and school for enjoyment. They discuss and compare books, writers and characters with interest in appropriate detail. More able pupils readily point out key evidence for their views. Other pupils, including slower learners and those with special educational needs, give clear reasons why they like particular writers or stories. Pupils of all abilities have the expected skills in finding books in libraries, and pinpointing information in them. A few pupils with special educational needs are a year or two behind when they leave school. The great majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in reading while they are at the school.

69. Writing standards are also typical for pupils' ages. However, they are lower than those in reading, following a national pattern. For example, in last year's national tests, no Year 2 pupil reached standards above those expected for seven-year-olds. Standards in spelling, handwriting and presentation are not high enough. This is because pupils do not maintain in day-to-day work the sound

standards they achieve in tests and practices. There are also variations in the quality of marking from one class to another.

70. By the age of 11, pupils' skills in writing have developed. Pupils have appropriate standards in sentence control, choice of words and organisation of ideas. They understand how to use a good range of forms such as stories, drama scripts, letters, poems, reports, memories, plans and notes. Teachers develop pupils' skills in organising and presenting information well. As a result, there is good development of writing skills in science, religious education and history. More able eleven-year-olds create realistic atmosphere and characters in nicely crafted stories. Pupils of all abilities have an appropriate understanding of grammar and plan and draft stories effectively. However, first drafts do not use enough punctuation or paragraphs. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs write slowly and so sometimes do not finish work. Nearly all pupils are capable of speedier writing. This is because teachers do not always give them enough to do, tell them how much to do or say how long they have to do it in.

71. The overall quality of teaching is good. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This finding is similar to that at the last inspection. During the inspection there was good teaching in two thirds of the lessons. Teaching was very good in a quarter of them. Teaching quality is good in the junior classes and satisfactory in the infants. This reverses the findings of the last inspection. Pupils' achievements reflect the quality of teaching, and so they are making better progress in the juniors. The best teaching quality is in Years 5 and 6, where it is often very good. Pupils' learning speeds up in Year 6. This is because the school provides an extra teacher, sets up three ability groups and gives extra support to pupils who have fallen behind. The assistant who works in junior classes, taking pupils for additional literacy lessons is well deployed and makes a good contribution to pupils' progress. There are also very effective extra support groups for pupils in Years 3 and 4 who have difficulties in language learning.

72. In the good and very good lessons, teachers know the subject well. As a result they are confident and enthusiastic. Lively and stimulating introductions get all pupils involved. For example, a Year 6 teacher's thoughtful reading of a poem about an evacuee set a fine tone at the start of a literacy lesson. There was then good concentration, which enabled pupils to write sensitively on the same subject at the end of the lesson. Expert questioning skills encourage pupils of all abilities to answer. Teachers' good knowledge of books and the steps of language development ensure that pupils learn new skills well. Good planning, using the National Literacy Strategy, thorough preparation and up-to-date resources strengthen pupils' interest and then allow them to work by themselves. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. These lessons effectively link and use thinking, feeling, speaking, listening, reading and writing. A Year 6 teacher encouraged her class with the comment: 'Isn't it great when some of us know bits of this and we all do it together. . . . We need one big brain.' Even the more hesitant pupils began to join in.

73. Teaching is less effective in a small number of lessons. There are several reasons. Teachers do not always settle pupils enough or get full attention at the start of lessons. There is sometimes not enough to do and tasks do not challenge all pupils. Chatter then reduces pupils' concentration, particularly in group activities. In most classes, strategies for improving spelling and handwriting are not effective enough. The school is meeting these last two problems by changing methods and resources.

74. Management of the subject is good. In two years standards by the end of Year 6 have gone from poor to sound. The literacy co-ordinator has a close eye on both standards and needs. She has observed teaching and learning in all classes. A clear action plan gets to grips with the present need to improve writing throughout the school. When they leave, pupils now have the language skills needed for their secondary education.

MATHEMATICS

75. The achievement of eleven-year-olds was slightly below schools nationally in the 2000 tests. Scores are well below those found in similar schools because too few pupils reach the higher levels. Test scores were below those in the previous year but since 1996 scores have risen overall. The achievements of seven-year-olds rose slightly in the 2000 national tests compared to the previous year. This reversed an earlier decline and standards were similar to those found nationally. Scores for seven-year-olds are well below those found in similar schools. The reason for this is that, like the scores for eleven-year-olds, too few pupils reach the higher levels. The latest test scores for eleven-year-olds are similar to those at the time of the previous inspection but scores for seven-year-olds are not as good as they were at that time. Standards in both age groups should be higher.

76. The findings of the inspection are that the attainment of eleven-year-olds in the current Year 6 is better than these figures suggest and standards are typical for eleven-year-olds. The principal reason is that better teaching and better analysis of pupils' abilities have resulted in higher targets being set for individuals than has previously been the case. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels is likely to be very close to the current national picture. The practice of consulting pupils about their individual targets has had a very positive affect on the attitudes and application of the pupils and is an additional reason why the current Year 6 pupils are likely to do well. Another reason is that there is a slightly higher percentage of more able pupils in the present year group. The attainment of pupils in the current Year 2 is similar to that expected for all seven-year-olds. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected levels is similar to that found nationally. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels is below that found nationally. By the age of eleven, boys perform better than girls, in line with the national trend. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons, especially where they are well supported by their teachers.

77. Pupils usually learn well in lessons throughout the school and make satisfactory progress over time. There is a heavy emphasis on number knowledge and recognition in Year 1 and pupils work hard at learning to count and order numbers. They find several ways of combining numbers to make twenty and understand the difference between odd and even numbers. They count in tens and twenties up to one hundred and use these skills to total money to £1. They know and recognise halves and use words such as 'longer' and 'shorter' in the correct mathematical way. The correct use of mathematical vocabulary is emphasised in most classes and this helps pupils to become more confident and competent when thinking about mathematical ideas. Seven-year-old pupils experience a wide range of mathematics. They continue the work learned in the previous year and apply their ability in number to 'real-life' situations such as shopping and measuring. Early multiplication and division skills are learned through making sets and good use of numbers set out in order to form a square squares helps pupils to see patterns in number. Practical work in measurement is usually accurate and pupils are familiar with two and three-dimensional shapes and some of their properties.

78. In Year 3 pupils continue to extend their skills in number. Although the highest attaining pupils are able to add and subtract in hundreds, tens and units they are not greatly challenged in mathematical skills other than number. All pupils, however, become increasingly confident in using their knowledge of number in different ways. The emphasis on number tasks continues through Years 4 and 5 where increasingly difficult multiplication and division work is completed successfully. Pupils increase their knowledge of the properties of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and they have good understanding of line and reflective symmetry. The work in these year groups is sometimes hindered by poor presentation. Year 6 pupils complete a large amount of interesting, high quality mathematics. The emphasis on number in earlier years bears fruit as pupils confidently compute using all four rules of number, work in fractions and decimals, and use negative number competently. There is a strong emphasis on the practical application of mathematics and pupils complete some work of good quality on collecting data and displaying their results in graphs. Pupils begin to understand the relationships

between number, pattern and shape. Work in books is usually well presented and mostly correct. Throughout the school pupils have good skills in computation when they have time to work things out in books. They are less confident in oral sessions because many do not know simple number facts well enough.

79. Teaching is good or very good in eighty percent of lessons. It is good overall in both infant and in junior-aged classes. However, there was one unsatisfactory lesson. This is an improvement since the last inspection when teaching was described as generally satisfactory. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers keep very close to the national guidelines when planning their lessons. They are careful to provide a wide range of good strategies that help pupils learn and remember fundamental skills. Pupils in Year 1, for example, solve problems such as $2+8$ by putting eight 'in their head' and counting on two more. Teachers' good planning also ensures that pupils make good progress during lessons and over a series of lessons. Teachers throughout the school share the aims of the lessons with pupils. This gives pupils clear targets and helps them to understand how much work must be completed within the lesson. In the best lessons, teachers give pupils clear time targets for each section of their work. A notable feature of most lessons is teachers' proper emphasis on correct mathematical language. Year 3 and 4 pupils use words such as 'vertex' and 'equilateral' correctly when describing two dimensional shapes while Year 6 pupils are adept at using phrases such as 'working in the fourth quadrant'. The correct use of mathematical language is seen in other subjects such as physical education when six and seven-year-old pupils talk about the quality of shape on the diagonal. In the unsatisfactory lesson in Year 1, pupils were not well managed and some were allowed to misbehave and call out inappropriately. This resulted in most pupils wasting time and some pupils not learning what they should during the lesson.

80. Teachers' good mathematical knowledge helps them to provide pupils with a good range of activities matched to their ability. This helps both the best and the less secure mathematicians to make good progress during the lesson. Good teaching in a lesson on value of digits in large numbers helped pupils to see the connections between hundreds, tens and units and between tenths, hundredths, and thousandths. The good, often very good, relationships between pupils and their teachers is a significant factor in the good work seen in lessons. Teachers want the pupils to do well and pupils want to do well for their teachers. Behaviour in lessons is almost always good and often it is very good. There are often times of quiet, gentle humour in lessons involving the oldest pupils. Strategies learned in introductory sessions are used well during the main part of lessons. For example, the skills of halving and doubling were used in a Year 5 lesson to help pupils solve multiplication and division problems and to complete questions involving money. In the best lessons new, often difficult ideas, are taught at a brisk pace by enthusiastic teachers. Teachers' enthusiasm is infectious and pupils respond by being totally absorbed, working with great concentration and wanting to know more.

81. Introductory sessions are not done well on the whole. They are often too slow and pupils are given too much time to work out things which they should know. Pupils do not know number facts by heart well enough so that they can then be taught how to use them in different situations. In some lessons teachers ask pupils to explain their strategies and this helps less confident pupils to see ways in which problems can be solved. In one lesson a pupil was asked to explain how she was able to add 10 so quickly and she replied 'I see a number square in my head and I go up and down'. In some lessons the most able pupils are given work that they complete comfortably. The challenge for the best pupils is not consistent. ICT was not used during the inspection to support the learning of any group or individual.

82. Teachers change their plans sensibly to suit the needs of the pupils. Younger pupils had problems trying to measure using single centimetres and so the following day 10 centimetre strips were introduced which made the task of measuring much easier. Teachers' marking in books, however, usually indicates only whether work is right or wrong. There are few occasions, except in Year 5,

when teachers' marking helps pupils to put things right or when it shows them exactly where they are making mistakes. Teachers' assessment procedures and the detailed analysis of national tests in order to set individual and group targets are significant improvements since the last inspection.

83. The school is working well to help pupils understand the three main areas of number, shape and space, and data handling, and how to use and apply the facts and skills learned in different situations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when the use and application of mathematics were described as a relative weakness. There is a determination to help pupils do well, especially in enabling them to see how the subject relates to all areas of life. The co-ordinator is effective in helping colleagues to implement the national strategy for numeracy and is resolute that pupils will achieve increasingly high standards.

SCIENCE

84. Standards achieved in national tests by eleven-year-olds have been below the national average and well below those of similar schools since the last inspection and there have been few pupils achieving above the levels expected in the tests. Boys have performed better than girls in tests and this is in line with the national trend. The first key issue at the last inspection was to raise standards and this did not happen. This was because there was ineffective co-ordination of the subject, so that weaknesses in pupils' learning were not identified and corrected. This was identified by HMI on their visit to the school in March, 2000. However, little progress was made until the current school year. Standards achieved by seven-year-olds in national assessments in 2000 were above the national average and in line with those in similar schools. They have been maintained since the last inspection.

85. Since last September when the recently appointed headteacher took on the role of temporary co-ordinator, provision has improved. Teaching has become more focused, classroom support has been provided where necessary and gaps in pupils' learning filled. As a result, standards in current junior classes are now in line with rather than below those expected of pupils in the age range. The more able pupils, especially in upper junior classes, are achieving more. This improvement is evident both in lessons and in a scrutiny of pupils' work. Standards of attainment by seven-year-olds in current classes are broadly in line with, rather than above what is expected and there is a satisfactory proportion of pupils achieving higher than this. This is because there are more pupils with special educational needs in the class than in last year's. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. However, throughout the age range, pupils could be achieving more, especially the more able.

86. In infant-aged classes, the progress that pupils make is variable. In the Year 1 class, the pupils develop an understanding of their bodies and the importance of our senses. They explore the effect of forces when they push and pull toys and they know that some light sources are natural and some are man-made. However, their understanding of concepts is often uncertain and this is because teaching is not sufficiently rigorous and challenging. Follow-up activities, such as drawing a cave lit with different sized lanterns, do not challenge the pupils enough. Progress is better in the other infant classes. Pupils can classify creatures by different characteristics, such as the number of legs they have. They know how infant-aged children can perform more tasks than toddlers, who in turn can do more than babies. By the age of seven, they know about a healthy diet and they can carry out a simple experiment testing how well toy cars will travel on different surfaces. In a lesson testing the brightness of light sources, they showed a sound grasp of how to make the test fair. The pupils present their work neatly. Pupils of average and above average ability make a good effort at writing their own sentences. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs find writing difficult and need much support.

87. The progress that pupils make in junior-aged classes is more consistent and this is because the quality of teaching is good in all classes. Because improvements in provision are only recent, the

impact on pupils' progress is yet to be fully felt. It is satisfactory overall and there is evidence from a scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 5 and 6 that the rate of progress is accelerating. In the mixed Years 4 and 5 class, pupils investigate the insulating properties of materials and record the cooling of liquids by using thermometers. They gain a good understanding when they record their findings in the form of line graphs. Pupils in Year 5 explore the separation of mixtures, evaporation, dissolving and condensation. They are involved in plenty of investigations and talk about their work well. Pupils in Year 6 are achieving well. They learn quickly, because of the good focused teaching and emphasis on investigations. They begin to use their knowledge to answer problems. This was evident in a well-designed lesson on plant life. Initially pupils were unsure naming the parts of a flower but by the end of the lesson, they had a good understanding of their function. More able pupils and those of average ability could answer written questions with a good degree of detail. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in the Year 6 classes, because they are well supported by the classroom assistant who helps them in all science lessons to take a full part and to write their answers carefully. Throughout the school, pupils have good attitudes to the subject and this was evident in the interest they took in a lunar eclipse, which took place during the week of inspection.

88. Teaching is good overall and this is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory. In infant classes the quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. Good teaching is evident in the mixed Year 1 and 2 class, where the teacher manages the pupils well and makes the lessons enjoyable by her enthusiasm. Where teaching is only satisfactory, the pace of lessons slows, there is insufficient challenge and pupils become restless as they sit and listen. Teaching is consistently good in junior-aged classes and this is reflected in the quality of learning. Lessons have a good focus and the teachers manage the pupils and the work well. There are opportunities for pupils to carry out investigations and pupils show interest and work together well. The level of challenge in lessons is improving. At the end of one lesson on light, for example, the teacher asked the Year 3 pupils to consider what happens to shadows when a light source is directly overhead. A feature of all lessons is the positive benefit the pupils gain from having a clear understanding of what the objectives for each lesson are. A particularly good example was in a Year 6 lesson, where pupils were encouraged to reflect on what they were achieving as the lesson proceeded. This helped them to recognise how much they had found out. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' skills of literacy and numeracy. Pupils write up their investigations well and they use a variety of different bar charts, block and line graphs to record their findings. They learn how to use instruments, for example, to measure temperature. However, there are only a few examples, such as graphs about forces in the Year 2 class, to show pupils using their skills of ICT to good effect in science. The marking of pupils' work varies in quality. It is satisfactory overall and there are examples of teachers, especially of Years 5 and 6, making constructive comments and posing interesting questions. Homework assignments include scientific topics, but they are not consistently set across all classes.

89. Improvements in teaching are the result of the improved co-ordination in recent months. An action plan of good quality is being implemented well. Teachers' planning, following nationally recommended guidelines, provides a good basis for pupils to make progress. Termly assessments and post-topic testing are helping the teachers to track the pupils' progress. Some teachers, for example in junior classes, are using this information well to help them to plan challenging work but this is not consistent across the whole school. Monitoring of the quality of teaching by the co-ordinator is beginning to have a positive effect on raising standards. An audit of resources included in the action plan indicated a need for more resources for teaching and learning and money has been made available for this purpose.

ART AND DESIGN

90. The attainment of pupils aged eleven is as expected for the age group. Because of timetabling arrangements, no art lessons were seen in infant classes during the inspection. However, from speaking to pupils and staff, scrutinising school documents and analysing pupils' work, there is sufficient evidence to make a judgement on pupils' attainment at the age of seven but not on the quality of teaching. Pupils' attainment is in line with that expected and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. There is a weakness in figure drawing in both junior and infant classes. The quality of painting is unsatisfactory also. Pupils learn techniques in isolation but they have few opportunities to use them to develop their skills. The design aspect of the work is also a weakness. Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment has declined in the infant age range and remains about the same in the juniors.

91. From a young age pupils learn about printing techniques, such as block printing. They draw lines, straight and curved, to fill in spaces attractively. They develop their understanding of pattern through symmetry and wax resist work. They learn about major artists, such as Paul Klee, and produce their own work in his style. There is evidence of drafting in pencil and the quality of their sketches is better than the quality of the finished painted piece. By the end of Year 2, there is evidence that pupils build on previous learning well and have good experiences of working with a range of media. Progress is good in some aspects of the work, particularly in developing skills through learning new techniques with different media and creating texture.

92. Junior-aged pupils build on many aspects of their earlier learning well. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils effectively illustrated feelings linked to colours as they worked with pastels. Older pupils use grids and regular and irregular shapes to create patterns and explore the effects of rotating a shape. While they practise cutting and sticking from prepared materials and do this with good attention to detail, they have limited opportunities to organise their own work and create their own grids and templates. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils looked at containers carefully. After discussion as to their purpose and use of decoration, they drew some reasonable containers successfully using shading to represent depth. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils worked on designing a panel to depict the life cycle of a plant. The idea was drawn from works from history, such as, the Overlord Embroidery. Pupils struggled with the design element to a large extent because they have few experiences on which to build. The lesson presented too many challenges for these pupils.

93. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers manage pupils well, are organised and use resources well. Planning is reasonably satisfactory and often with appropriate learning objectives although it does not always meet the needs of all pupils well. There is a tendency for teachers to provide too much guidance and to over-prepare the activity, which prevents pupils from having to make some effort and think for themselves. Teachers are unsure how to teach the design aspect of the revised curriculum and use national guidance documents without sufficient understanding to teach pupils who have poorly developed skills in design. They also have limited understanding of the teaching of figure drawing and painting and of how to extend learning through well-taught techniques pupils have learnt. The quality of learning is satisfactory. Pupils generally behave satisfactorily although many lose concentration when not supervised closely. When teachers intervene to provide guidance, pupils normally take heed but do not always return to the task quickly. In group work, pupils who persevere are pleased with their own efforts but disappointed that classmates have, in the meantime, been chatting and have not done their share.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Only one lesson was observed during the inspection period. However, from speaking to pupils and staff, scrutinising school documents and analysing pupils' work, there is sufficient evidence to make a judgement on pupils' attainment but not on the quality of teaching. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment is below that expected, and by the age of eleven it is poor. Throughout the school all pupils

make insufficient progress. Pupils have few useful experiences to support them in this work, and by Year 6 they continue to struggle with the design process and also have limited experience of making products. In the last inspection, standards in this subject were unsatisfactory and were highlighted as a minor key issue for action. Standards remain unsatisfactory in infant classes and have declined in the junior classes

95. Teaching was good in the only lesson seen, which was in Year 2. The work was well planned to meet the needs of all pupils with a good emphasis on building on previous learning. Good links were made with other subjects, especially mathematics, which helped pupils to consolidate their learning on shape. The teacher started the lesson by encouraging pupils to consider their behaviour and this had a positive impact on the way in which pupils concentrated on their work. Although some of the less mature pupils were not concentrating from time to time, there was a clear expectation from the teacher that pupils had to make decisions and take responsibility. All necessary prompts and resources were available and pupils collected what they needed. When pupils asked for a spelling they were encouraged to think about where they would find it. This supported them well in taking responsibility and they were motivated to find the words, sometimes with help from another pupil. The teacher supported pupils who had special educational needs in a similar way, by giving sufficient support but never did their thinking for them. The computer software chosen to support the work was appropriate and the pupil working at the computer was interested to learn how to save her work. The lesson was well paced and the atmosphere purposeful. The teacher's demonstration to support pupils in the next stage of their design work was clearly explained and pupils listened very carefully knowing that it was important to do so.

96. The subject is now satisfactorily organised with very good guidance to support pupils and teachers. However, there is a need for training to raise teachers' awareness and understanding of the design process and to improve their confidence to teach the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

97. There was not enough evidence to judge standards or the quality of teaching and learning. There had been few lessons in the autumn term, and there were only two during the inspection. In the course of the year, teachers give equal amounts of time to geography and history. By the end of the summer term, time for the two subjects balances out. Planning is appropriate, using the latest national guidance, to give pupils the knowledge, understanding and skills required by the revised curriculum.

98. In the two junior lessons seen, pupils' attainment was similar to that expected in all schools. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 understood how different climates changed holiday activities from one country to another. Skills in using atlases to find countries with different climates were also as expected for this age group. They knew why globes represented the earth as a sphere and that the United Kingdom was made up of islands. More able pupils used pictures and symbols from the computer to make illustrated weather dictionaries. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs sorted pictures of countries into hot and cold groups and made them into collages. The remaining pupils made holiday postcards of good quality to tell parents about imagined holidays using brochure photographs and their own sentences.

99. The quality of teaching in these lessons was satisfactory. Teachers had satisfactory knowledge of the topic. They had planned and resourced the lessons well. Questioning, classroom organisation, management of pupils, and expectations of what pupils could achieve were satisfactory.

100. There was no geography co-ordinator at the time of the inspection. The situation is under review and the headteacher manages the work effectively. Resources are satisfactory.

HISTORY

101. Pupils' attainment is similar to that found at the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding are typical for their ages by the end of Years 2 and 6. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have appropriate understanding of passing time and of different ways to find out about the past. They also have the knowledge expected for their ages of important civilisations, people, periods and events in history.

102. By the age of seven, pupils correctly sequence the dates of the Great Fire of London, Victorian age, the year of their birth and the present day. They know the difference between the recent past and 'a very long time ago'. Study and discussion of pictures of 17th Century London, and portraits of Charles II and Samuel Pepys stimulate interest and prompt questions such as: "Is the shop still there?" and "Is he dead now?" Year 2 pupils shared excited comments on what the King was wearing when the teacher asked them to discuss the pictures in pairs. Observation, discussion and drawing of differences between Victorian toys and houses also develop pupils' understanding of changes in family life.

103. By the age of 11 pupils have sound understanding of the invaders of the country, settlers, aspects of Roman culture and daily life, rich and poor in Tudor times, aspects of the Victorian period and the Second World War. They record and remember key facts about important people from the past such as Boudicca, Henry VIII, Pepys and Florence Nightingale. Pupils research life in Grantham in the last century using copies of the 1841 Census. Imaginative letter writing as if they were young Spartans or Athenians shows good understanding of the contrast between the two states. In English lessons, study of novels set in World War II leads through imaginative writing to understanding the experiences of evacuees. Role-play and observational work at a local museum give pupils direct experience of Victorian schooling.

104. Teaching quality is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the topics, manage classes well and make good use of interesting resources and activities. Using the latest national guidelines, they encourage pupils to learn effectively from a good range of sources. By the end of Year 6 pupils are therefore in a position to compare and weigh up the value of different types of evidence and representations of history. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils then had limited understanding of the different ways in which history was represented. Varied questions stimulate thoughtful work. A Year 5 teacher started off with: 'What does the word history mean?' This led to dictionary research into Greek elements in the English language. Teachers develop literacy skills well in history lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote moving diaries as if by Victorian child sweeps and maids of all work. Year 4 pupils used art skills well to make striking mosaics with coloured paper of a Roman charioteer. Teachers are currently trying out some of the topics proposed in the new national guidance. The school has yet to write a policy and its own scheme of work.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Pupils' attainment at the age of seven and eleven is in line with that expected of pupils and this is a similar finding to the last inspection report. By the end of Year 2, pupils can use programs to help their work in spelling and mathematics. Most use the mouse skilfully and learn how to save and print their work. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson in design and technology, in which the pupils designed a house, using a graphics program. Pupils in Year 1 develop their skills in reading, using interactive CD-ROMs, and can use the cursor to move through the program. To support their work in science, pupils in Year 2 used a simple data-handling program to produce block graphs of the results of work on forces and friction. Less able pupils and those with special educational needs require much support to become skilful with the computer.

106. In a Year 3 lesson, the pupils learnt how computers help people to store and retrieve information. They understood correct terminology, such as file, record and field, and could use their knowledge to find information from simple records about children in their class. In a mixed class of Years 4 and 5 pupils, the pupils learnt how to find information from a CD-ROM, how to skim through the contents and find the appropriate aspect to research. This knowledge was taken further in an English lesson, which was linked to work in history. Pupils successfully located information they wanted about the Tudor period, skimmed through section headings and then collected specific dates and events. Pupils in Year 6 use a word processing program well and know how to select and change font size, type and colour. They produce work of good quality for display in classrooms and on corridors. They know how to make large captions for display boards and during the inspection pupils referred to examples on display. They produce line graphs and a range of charts to support their work in mathematics and they can describe how they achieved the results. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in developing their skills.

107. Direct teaching of skills in ICT was observed twice during the inspection and both were in junior classes. In addition, pupils were observed using the machines in lessons such as English, science and design and technology. The quality of teaching and learning was good in both lessons. Teachers organised the lessons well, for example teaching half the class at a time in order to maximise the involvement of pupils. The remaining pupils were productively engaged in other work. Planning, using nationally recommended guidelines, provided clear objectives and the teachers had good subject knowledge to teach concepts. The teachers shared lesson objectives with pupils, questioned pupils well and taught technical terms clearly. Management of pupils was a particular strength. Pupils were keen to learn and they carried out follow-up activities efficiently.

108. At the time of this inspection, improvements to provision for ICT were taking place. A new computer suite from an existing classroom was about to open and the school was taking delivery of machines. A clear action plan produced by the co-ordinator was being implemented very effectively and takes account of requirements for software and staff training. In addition, the school is purchasing upgraded machines for classrooms, so that pupils will have the benefit of both lessons in the suite, developing skills and understanding, and opportunities in classrooms to use their skills to support work in subjects across the curriculum. The new facility is designed to provide appropriate access to electronic mail and the Internet. The school has arranged for parents to learn skills in an award-bearing course after school hours. A recent initiative introduced by the headteacher is an assessment checklist in which pupils record what they can do. This helps pupils to be aware of their skills and know what they must do next to develop further.

MUSIC

109. There is insufficient evidence to judge the attainment of seven and eleven-year-olds. Two lessons were observed during the week of the inspection and the pupils' attainment in them was similar to that expected of pupils in the age range. Discussions also took place with a sample of pupils in Year 6 to confirm their knowledge and experience of the subject.

110. In a mixed Years 1 and 2 lesson, pupils learnt about pulse and tempo. They were able to recognise that the tempo of a piece of music could be slow or fast. They listened to two contrasting pieces of classical music and described which was which. They kept the beat by clapping. One pupil compared the slower piece to a lullaby and most pupils could comment appropriately on the different mood of the two pieces. They knew a variety of children's songs and during the lesson learnt a new one well. While half the class kept the tempo by clapping, the other half sang the new song tunefully.

111. In a Year 5 class, the pupils were asked to respond to three different pieces of twentieth century music, try to describe their type and say what they could about instruments they could hear, the tempo and mood of the pieces. Their awareness of the type of music they heard was appropriate for their age. For example, most were uncertain about the genre, swing / jazz, though one pupil recognised it was popular during the Second World War. Pupils responded well to the lesson and were keen to discuss their views in pairs. Pupils in Year 6 described exercises they have completed composing music using non-standard notation, which groups of pupils then performed and sometimes recorded. They have good attitudes to the subject and are particularly excited by a project this term which includes work in music, dance and drama and which will be performed for pupils and parents.

112. The quality of teaching in the two lessons was good. Both teachers had good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject and successfully conveyed this to the pupils. Lesson plans had a good focus and clear structure. The quality of learning in both lessons was good. Pupils concentrated well and by the end of both lessons had increased their knowledge. The subject makes a good contribution to their cultural development.

113. Since the last inspection, there has been a change of co-ordinator and several staff. The new co-ordinator, with the support of the headteacher, has produced a good action plan for compensating for the loss of some specialists and for developing the subject across the school. The staff are following national guidance for a scheme of work with additional aspects. This provides good guidance for the non-specialist teachers. This year there are recorder clubs and a choir but no individual instrument teaching, though this features in the subject action plan. There is a good range of resources, including some from other cultures. There is a shortage of recorded material and music systems however. There is little use of computers to support work in the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114. The attainment of seven and eleven-year-olds is typical for their age. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. Infant-aged pupils learn to throw and catch using bean bags. They make limited improvement in catching skills because they are not shown how to use hands and arms to cradle the bean bag. Greater progress is made in throwing skills as pupils become more confident in throwing over ever increasing distances. Infant pupils make satisfactory progress as they begin to learn to move in time to music. They listen carefully but sometimes have difficulty coordinating both hands and feet as the music changes pace. They enjoy movement lessons. They work at three levels of height and combine movement and shape well to interpret the teacher's description. Pupils evaluate one another's work and enjoy demonstrating their success to their friends. This is in contrast to younger junior pupils who move well but are reluctant to share their work with the rest of the class. Older juniors, on the other hand, are very happy to show how well they perform in gymnastic lessons. Swimming is taught and most pupils reach the required standard by the time they leave school.

115. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and all essential activities are taught. Pupils expect lessons to begin with a session to warm up their muscles before strenuous exercise and know why this is important. Junior classes join together for games lessons so that teachers' expertise is shared. Fundamental techniques for soccer, hockey and netball are taught successfully and both boys and girls enjoy the games. In the games lesson with younger juniors, teachers are able to demonstrate control skills and correctly emphasise the need to be aware of other players' use of space. Teachers' planning is variable in quantity but the quality of the teaching is uniformly satisfactory whereas at the time of the last inspection teaching was described as good. Pupils enjoy lessons but there are too many occasions when the noise level detracts from the pupils' efforts. In the best lessons pupils work quietly and show good concentration either on the skills they are learning or in improving their performance in

movement. The noise in some indoor lessons is unsatisfactory. It is a potential hazard and pupils need to understand the reasons why this is important.

116. The school is using national guidelines as a basis for pupils' work but there is little guidance for the non-specialist to help them to develop pupils' skills. Progress in gymnastics is hindered by a lack of suitable mats that would give pupils some protection as they work at floor level. Older pupils have an opportunity to participate in outdoor pursuits during a residential visit to Norfolk and this widens their experience of outdoor activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. Pupils' attainment is in line with the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus at the ages of seven and eleven. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

118. In one lesson, infant pupils looked at the school badge as a symbol of the community to which they all belong. They understood the idea of family and teams and this led them to think about the fact that people belong to different faiths. Teachers use the stories of world faiths to help pupils understand that while faith ideas may be different, the religions share many common ideas and ideals. Pupils know, for example, that the major world faiths have strong ideas about good and evil but that the stories from the world religions are vastly different from one another. Pupils gain greater understanding of difficult ideas when teachers' questions are within the pupils' experience. Older junior pupils began to grasp the idea of a role model as the teacher probed the notion that there is more to being a role model than good looks or skill at soccer. The teacher encouraged the pupils to look beneath the surface and they began to suggest that attributes such as good attitudes and sportsmanship are important. This led to a short discussion on why the major prophets are important to their followers.

119. Teaching and learning are both satisfactory throughout the school. Teachers rely heavily on national guidelines for religious education when they plan lessons. Lessons are livelier and more relevant when teachers include ideas that apply particularly to the pupils in their class. Pupils are taught the basic facts about Christianity and the other major world faiths well, but they have few opportunities to write about their own ideas in lessons. Very little reflective writing was evident in books. One pupil considered how she felt on special occasions and she wrote, 'When I feel happy I feel like a bright yellow sun'. Opportunities for recording such thoughts are restricted by the little time allocated to religious education in most classes.

120. The school policy suggests that there should be sixty minutes for infant lessons and seventy-five minutes for junior lessons each week. In practice most classes have only forty minutes per week and this seriously limits the time available for thoughtful discussion and writing. The co-ordinator leads the subject well but feels frustrated by the low status currently given to the subject. The school has sufficient artefacts but lacks some resources that would help non-specialist teachers.