

INSPECTION REPORT

ST JOHN'S C E PRIMARY SCHOOL

HUNTINGDON

LEA area: Cambridgeshire.

Unique reference number: 110818

Headteacher: Mr A. Norcliffe.

Reporting inspector: Mrs P. King - 7853

Dates of inspection: 29th October – 2nd November, 2001

Inspection number: 216154

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Sallowbush Road, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs L. Davies
Date of previous inspection:	20 th – 23 rd September, 1999

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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7853	Mrs P. King	Registered inspector	Art and Design; Science; Physical Education; Special Educational Needs.	Pupils' results and achievements; How well pupils are taught? How well the school is led and managed.
9030	Mr R. Love	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes values and personal development; How well the school cares for its pupils? How well the school works in partnership with parents?
1638	Mr M. Renouf	Team inspector	Design and Technology; Foundation Stage; Information and Communication Technology; Mathematics; Music.	How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are?
28007	Mrs F. Ruddick	Team inspector	English; Equality of Opportunity; English as an additional language; Geography; History; Religious Education.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The school is below average size for a primary school, with 158 pupils on roll, which includes an equal number of boys and girls. Numbers on roll have fallen since the last inspection as they have in other schools in the local area. The turnover of pupils has been very high but is now more stable. The school serves an estate of mainly tenanted housing which is in the early stages of a seven-year regeneration programme through the East of England Development Agency. The school population is predominantly white. Nine pupils have English as an additional language, which is higher than average, but only one pupil is in an early stage of acquiring English. The percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. About half of the pupils are on the special educational needs register and five pupils have learning needs that require intensive support. Both of these figures are well above the national average. Attainment when pupils enter the school in the reception class is well below average. The school has benefited from money donated by a local charity to purchase information and communication technology equipment and from single regeneration programme funds to provide an additional part-time teacher for the Reading Recovery programme.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

St John's C E Primary School provides good learning experiences for all its pupils. Attitudes to work are good and pupils respond positively to the high expectations that teachers have that they will try their best and behave well. During their time in the school pupils make good progress overall. The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff and the good quality teaching have ensured that standards have improved significantly in the last year in the national tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6. The school is in a strong position to make further improvements and offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is a strong community in which pupils are valued and encouraged to do their best.
- Good teaching in Years 1-6 has led to significant improvement in standards in English and mathematics.
- By the age of eleven standards in science are good compared with similar schools.
- Good provision for information and communication technology is contributing to improving standards.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is strengthened by the work of the learning support assistants.

What could be improved

- The progress that children make by the end of the reception year;
- Pupils' independence in learning;
- Standards in music throughout the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The headteacher and staff have been successful in addressing the serious weaknesses identified in the last inspection report in September, 1999 and have made good improvement overall. Standards have risen in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology at the end of Years 2 and 6 due to improvements in the curriculum planning and quality of teaching. The leadership, which was satisfactory, is now good overall. The governing body is more involved in life and work of the school and the headteacher works more closely with the staff to provide a clearer sense of direction to school improvements. Other improvements include the introduction of good assessment procedures in English and mathematics to track pupils' progress and even better arrangements in the already good provision for pupils with special educational needs.

STANDARDS

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	E	E*	D	C
Mathematics	E	E*	D	C
Science	E	E*	C	B

Key

well above average abc A B
 average
 Average C D
 below average
 well below average E

The comparison with similar schools is based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals and does not take account of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, which affects the standards that the school achieves. Pupils enter the reception class with well below average attainment overall and with low attainment in some aspects of English and mathematics. They make satisfactory progress in these subjects during the reception year and reach standards that are well below average by the time they enter Year 1. They make good progress in Years 1 and 2 but by the age of seven in the work seen reach standards that are mainly still below average for their age in English and average in mathematics and science. Standards improved considerably at the end of Year 2 in the national tests in 2001 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Years 3-6 now make good progress and this was evident in the marked improvement in the national tests in English, mathematics and science in 2001, despite almost half of the pupils having special educational needs. The percentage of pupils who achieved the higher levels in these national tests was much higher due to the emphasis the school had placed on challenging the most able pupils. In addition, the school had increased the support for pupils with the basic skills of reading and writing and a much higher percentage of pupils achieved what is expected for their age in the national tests. The pupils greatly exceeded the targets agreed with the Local Education Authority in English, mathematics and science because of the improvements made in the teaching. Lessons observed during the inspection show that pupils in the current Year 6 are likely to achieve similar standards in the national tests in 2002. Pupils' attainment in all other subjects is about average, except in music, in design and technology and in dance in Year 2 in which their attainment is below average. Although in design and technology standards are beginning to rise because of improvements in the teaching and coverage of the required curriculum, attainment by Years 2 and 6 is still below average. In music, however, whilst pupils' singing is of a satisfactory quality, their attainment in composing and performing using

musical instruments is below what is expected for their age because they do not have regular class music lessons to develop these skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to work. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to participate in lessons and to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and sometimes very good
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is good. They are able to take responsibility and form very good relationships with other pupils and adults. They show care and respect for others within the school community.
Attendance	Attendance is below the national average.

The school is a happy, lively place where pupils enjoy their work and play, confident in the knowledge that adults are there to help and support them. The below average attendance is due to a higher than average sickness rate and to the failure of a few parents to ensure that their children attend regularly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was good in half of the lessons seen, and in two out of every ten lessons very good or excellent. In only two lessons was the teaching unsatisfactory. Teaching in the reception class is satisfactory overall but does not always extend the children enough to ensure that they make the best progress possible. Teaching in Years 3-6 is good and is good or better in literacy and numeracy. Throughout the school teachers teach the basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. In English and mathematics lessons, they use assessment procedures effectively to match work closely to the needs of all the pupils so that those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils make good progress. A particular strength of all teaching is the management of pupils, which ensures that pupils work at a good pace and apply themselves well to the task. All teachers choose activities that motivate pupils so that they are enthusiastic learners. Pupils feel that their contributions are valued, with the result that they are confident to join in lessons. In Years 3-6 the teaching of information and communication technology is good and pupils make rapid progress. In other subjects the quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory with some teaching being good or very good. In these subjects assessment is not as well developed and teachers tend to give pupils of all abilities similar work, which means that on some occasions not all pupils' needs are met fully. However, the good support given by teachers and learning support assistants in these lessons means that pupils make at least satisfactory progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers its pupils a satisfactory quality and range of learning opportunities. It teaches all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education but does not meet statutory requirements in music. An appropriate curriculum is in place for the Foundation Stage, but there are some weaknesses in its implementation. The range of activities outside of lessons is limited.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they are able to take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum. The support given by the teachers and learning support assistants ensures that these pupils make good progress, particularly in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The school provides appropriate and relevant learning experiences for these pupils. A specialist learning support assistant visits regularly to advise on the provision and check pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision is satisfactory overall. The school promotes pupils' moral and social development well and their spiritual and cultural development satisfactorily.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a safe and caring environment in which all members of staff know pupils well and work effectively as a team to meet their individual personal, social and academic needs.

The school tries hard to build up a partnership with parents. It provides regular letters and opportunities for parents to visit the school and to be involved in its life and work. The response from parents, apart from attendance at open evenings, is limited. As a consequence the impact of the partnership on the work of the school is unsatisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher and staff with specific additional responsibilities is good. They are committed to school improvement and have put in place appropriate strategies for raising standards, which have been successful.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is very supportive of the school. Governors have increased their awareness of their responsibilities and are putting in place good procedures to ensure that they have a good range of information to support them when making decisions. Parent governors have improved the communications with parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance satisfactorily. The headteacher and staff check the progress of pupils through analysis of test results. The headteacher makes regular observations of teaching and learning and uses the information gained to plan school improvements. Monitoring and evaluation are not yet comprehensive enough to give the school an overview of the full range of pupils' learning.
The strategic use of resources	The good financial planning by the headteacher and governors supports the agreed priorities for school improvement well. Staffing levels are good and learning resources are satisfactory. The accommodation is well maintained and, except for the library, offers good support for teaching. The governors and headteacher apply the principles of best value satisfactorily.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are expected to work hard and make good progress. • The school is approachable. • The teaching is good and the school is well managed. • Behaviour is good and children are helped to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • Information about homework and pupils' progress.

The inspection findings support the parents' positive views of the school. They do not agree with concerns of a minority of parents' about the quality of information provided about pupils' progress and found this to be generally satisfactory. However, they give support to parents in the other areas that they would like improved. Insufficient information is given to parents about the timetable for homework to enable them to ensure that the tasks are completed. The range of activities outside lessons is limited. However, there is some good community use of the school, including an after-school club for parents and children, and the school has won an award for the project from which this initiative originated.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The children's attainment on entry to the reception class is well below average overall. In aspects of mathematics and communication, language and literacy such as speaking and listening, the children's attainment on entry is low. Although they make satisfactory progress in these areas of learning by the end of the reception year, their attainment remains below what is expected nationally for children of that age. Many children have limited social skills on entry to the school. They make good progress and by the end of the reception year reach standards that are average for their age in their personal, social and emotional development. In creative development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their physical development children make satisfactory progress and are on course to achieve the nationally expected goals by the end of the reception year. Whilst the progress that the pupils make is satisfactory in lessons, the children could achieve more, if the teaching extended them fully.

2 The results in the national tests over the last five years in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 have shown improvement in line with the national trend but have remained at least well below the national average. The improvement in 2001 was more marked with a significant increase in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in reading and writing and the higher level in reading. When comparison is made with similar schools, the school's results at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were average in reading and well below average in writing. This showed very good improvement from 2000 when the school's attainment in reading was in the lowest five per cent nationally when compared to similar schools. In writing in 2001, the school's results were lower relative to similar schools because, despite a much higher percentage of pupils reaching the expected level, no pupils achieved above national expectations. At the end of Year 6 over the last five years the school's standards had improved in line with national trends in English. In 2001 very good improvement was evident in the percentage of pupils reaching the national expectation and above. When compared to similar schools pupils' attainment in the national tests in 2001 was average in English and this shows very good improvement from results that were in the lowest five per cent in 2001.

3 Pupils now make good progress in Years 1-6 in literacy and this is accounting for the higher attainment seen in 2001. The majority of pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on course to reach the national expectation and some above. However, when taking account of pupils' attainment at all levels, standards are below average in English. Their current work indicates that in the national tests at the end of Year 2 standards are to be maintained and at the end of Year 6 they are likely to continue to improve. The good recent improvements in pupils' literacy skills means that they are able to use them effectively to support work in other subjects but the opportunities that they have to do so are too limited in subjects like science, religious education, history and geography.

4 In the national tests over the last five years, pupils' attainment in mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 has kept pace with the national trend but has remained at least well below the national average. In 2001 pupils' performance improved at the end of Year 2 and was average when compared to all schools nationally. When compared to similar schools, the results show very good improvement from being in the lowest five per cent nationally in 2000 to being above

average in 2001. In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 the results showed good improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level or above and moved closer to the national average but remaining below. In comparison with similar schools the school's results were average. Very good improvement was evident from 2000 when the school's performance was in the lowest five per cent nationally.

5 Pupils now make good progress in both key stages in mathematics and this is accounting for the higher attainment seen in 2001. In the current Years 2 and 6, pupils are on course to attain average standards by the end of the year. Pupils have satisfactory numeracy skills and are able to apply these skills within other subjects like science when given the opportunity to do so.

6 In science, in the formal teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2001 pupils' attainment was above average when compared to all schools at the expected level. In comparison with similar schools the results were high at the expected level and above average at the higher level. These teacher assessments show very good improvement from 2000 when standards were well below average in relation to all schools and similar schools. The trend over the last five years in the school's results has been in line with the national trend at the end of Year 6. In the national tests in 2001, pupils' attainment was average in comparison with all schools and above average when compared to similar schools. Very good improvement was made in the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level and the higher level.

7 In Years 2 and 6 pupils have made good progress in science in developing their knowledge and understanding. However, their skills in investigative and experimental science are not as well developed and progress is just satisfactory across the school.

8 In lessons seen during the inspection, pupils made good progress overall in both key stages. The rate of pupils' progress has increased rapidly in English and mathematics during the two years since the last inspection because of improved quality of teaching and better use of assessment procedures in matching work to pupils' individual needs. In other subjects, apart from information and communication technology, the improvement in progress overall has not been as consistent across all aspects of the subjects or across the school as a whole. This is mainly because the school has rightly placed more emphasis on raising attainment in English and mathematics in recent years in order to raise standards.

9 Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is in line with what is expected nationally at the end of both key stages, which is good improvement from the last inspection when standards were unsatisfactory. Pupils have made good progress in a very short time due to the quality of the subject leadership, the very good quality resources and the growing use of information and communication across the curriculum. They use their skills well within a range of subjects to present information in a variety of different ways.

10 Pupils' attainment in religious education is in line with the locally Agreed Syllabus in both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress and have a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions such as Judaism and Islam. Pupils develop an appropriate ability to reflect on their feelings and to consider their opinions.

11 Attainment in art and design, history, geography and dance in Year 6 are largely what is expected for the pupils' age. In design and technology, in music and in dance in Year 2 they are below what is expected nationally. There is evidence in all these subjects of some good recent improvements in the development of pupils' subject skills and knowledge due to the introduction of schemes of work and more systematic procedures for planning for each term and week. The school recognises that there have been gaps in the pupils' learning and

coverage of the National Curriculum in the past. There is a focus currently on the teaching of basic skills to enable the pupils to have a firm foundation on which to build. An example of the positive impact of this approach is the good acquisition of art and design skills in Year 2. However, there is insufficient emphasis in all these subjects on the application of skills within independent work to enable pupils to make choices and decisions in their learning. This results on some occasions in work that does not challenge the thinking of all pupils sufficiently.

12 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics because the work is well matched to their individual needs and teachers and learning support assistants provide regular and appropriate support. Their progress in other subjects is good overall but is more variable. It is often dependent on the level of adult support available. Pupils from all ethnic minority groups make the same progress as other pupils. During the last five years boys have attained results closer to the national average than girls in the national tests in English, mathematics and science although during the inspection no significant difference was evident in the progress made by the two gender groups. In the national tests in 2001 there was a marked improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching the higher level in reading, mathematics and science. This reflects the emphasis that the school has given to raising the attainment of the highest attaining pupils during the last year.

13 The school set appropriate targets for Year 6 pupils to achieve in English, mathematics and science in 2001, which were agreed by the Local Education Authority. They were based on the assessment procedures that the school had developed at the time. These targets were greatly exceeded in English and science and met in mathematics due to improvements in the teaching. However, the procedures for target setting have improved and are helping the school to set more accurate targets currently. Targets set for 2002 are slightly lower than in 2001 to reflect the nature of the cohort but the school is working hard to exceed these and seems likely to do so.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14 Behaviour is good and sometimes better. Pupils have good attitudes to school and to their learning. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection which noted that behaviour was 'somewhat noisy and boisterous' but generally satisfactory. Parents are very pleased with their children's attitudes and personal development and agree that behaviour and attitudes have improved since the last inspection. The pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour impact favourably on the progress that they make in their learning.

15 Children in the reception class have good attitudes to school, and to the range of activities in which they participate enthusiastically. They behave well, and they learn to share, to take turns and to do things for themselves.

16 Pupils in Years 3-6 know that they are expected to learn and are eager to participate. They enjoy their lessons. They work hard and show considerable determination, effort and perseverance. Pupils work well together and are co-operative and supportive of each other in the classes. Pupils with special educational needs generally concentrate well and try to do their best work. They join in whole-class and group activities enthusiastically because teachers and other pupils value their contributions. Very occasionally, when there is no additional adult support available, a few pupils who need very intensive support with their learning find difficulty in listening or joining in a group task.

17 Pupils' good behaviour means that they concentrate on their work and there is a calm environment for learning. When a minority of pupils are tempted to misbehave, the behaviour management strategies used by staff and the very good example set by other pupils have a very positive effect and help them to improve. Pupils behave sensibly when moving around the school. They are polite and helpful to each other and to visitors.

18 The quality of all relationships is very good. All members of staff share a commitment to ensuring that all pupils are enabled to achieve their academic and personal goals. There is a mutual respect between staff and pupils, with each wanting to do the best for others. Pupils, including those from minority ethnic backgrounds, develop very good relationships and all pupils regardless of social or cultural background are fully integrated into school life. Pupils care for each other. For example, an older pupil was seen seeking out the brother of a younger pupil who was distressed because she had lost her toy.

19 Pupils mix together well in lessons and at play. The majority of pupils are extremely tolerant and understanding of others. There is good social harmony. The school has not had to exclude any pupil permanently in the last year but has had to exclude three pupils for fixed terms. Racial incidents are very few and far between and almost always consist of name calling or inappropriate remarks.

20 When pupils are given opportunities, such as returning registers to the office or acting as 'doorkeepers' at break-times, they enjoy carrying out these duties and do so in a mature way. However, opportunities for taking responsibility in the life of the school are limited.

21 Attendance in the last completed year before the inspection was below the national average. The below average attendance is due to a higher than average sickness rate and to the failure of a few parents to ensure that their children attend regularly. The regular absence of a few pupils means that they do not make the progress of which they are capable. The school follows up cases of inappropriate absence very actively. The majority of pupils arrive on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22 The teaching of the children in the reception class is satisfactory in all the areas of learning. The teacher and other adults plan and work well together to provide activities that motivate and engage the children. They spend time working closely with groups and individual children to develop their understanding. They give good support to children with special educational needs. Their relationships with children and their management of them are good. However, the planning for lessons addresses the activities to be introduced and does not focus enough on what pupils are to learn. This means that the teaching does not always extend the children enough and, in particular, teachers' questioning does not promote children's language and thinking sufficiently. Whilst the progress that the pupils make is satisfactory in lessons, the children could achieve more, if challenged fully.

23 The quality of teaching in Years 3-6 is good overall. Teaching is consistently good or better in literacy and numeracy because work is very well matched to the needs of individual pupils through careful and regular assessment of pupils' prior learning. Marking often addresses what the pupils need to do to improve their work and teachers often discuss their targets with pupils, for example by asking, 'What would you need to do to that sentence to reach Level 4?' In other subjects, the quality of teaching is most often satisfactory overall, with some good or very good features, particularly in information and communication technology.

24 In all lessons a particular strength of the teaching is the good quality of class management, which ensures that pupils work purposefully and productively. Teachers value pupils' responses by appropriate use of praise so that pupils show respect for each other and are confident to respond both within whole-class and group tasks regardless of background or attainment. In one lesson a pupil who had special educational needs was keen to play the role of detective investigating a crime in front of the class despite his limited use of language, and the rest of the class listened attentively. Teachers select activities that motivate pupils so that they are enthusiastic learners and are keen to succeed. A good example of this was in a dance lesson when pupils had colourful streamers to create fireworks and their movements became more varied and creative as a result. Teachers use questioning very well to check pupils' understanding and to develop their thinking. They often ask questions like, "What would happen if...?" or "How does that make you feel?" They listen carefully to pupils' responses and encourage pupils to extend their answers.

25 Teachers teach the basic skills very thoroughly and effectively and enable the pupils to make good progress in this aspect of their learning. This was particularly evident in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology in Years 3-6 and in art and design in Year 2. However, pupils are not always given enough opportunities to apply their skills in more independent work. Generally, teachers do not provide them with sufficient activities in which they need to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects, although some good examples were seen of this. Limited use is made of computers in classrooms to enable pupils to work independently, for example, by carrying out individual research or using the computer out of choice for a particular purpose. In art and design, teachers make good use of sketch books to teach basic skills but pupils do not often use their knowledge and understanding to create their own designs or drawings which involve them in making choices and decisions. In science, there is generally not enough emphasis on investigative work to promote pupils asking how to find answers to questions and how to use data.

26 Assessment is used well in English and mathematics in the planning of appropriate work for all pupils to ensure good progress. In other subjects teachers use questioning skilfully to assess pupils' learning and to adjust what is taught to meet individual or group needs. Not enough use is made of this assessment when planning future lessons and work set is too often the same for all pupils. However, teachers and support assistants give a good level of support in these tasks so that pupils' progress overall is generally satisfactory. Teachers set homework that supports and extends work in class and value the contributions that pupils make.

27 The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The class teachers, part-time teachers and learning support assistants liaise closely to plan appropriate work and assess pupils' progress. The individual education plans contain precise targets for the pupils and all adults involved use these to match work closely to the needs of the pupils, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is good and enables these pupils to participate fully in class activities. A learning support assistant visits and monitors closely the progress of the pupil who is in an early stage of English language acquisition. Work is matched appropriately to his needs to enable him to make good progress.

28 Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has shown good improvement in Years 3-6. This is mainly due to changes in the teaching staff, improved assessment procedures in English and mathematics and the introduction of schemes of work to support planning for lessons to build more systematically on pupils' prior experiences.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO

29 Appropriate and relevant learning opportunities are planned for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language. The systems for ensuring equality of opportunity are well established within classes and in the school as a whole. There is no evidence to suggest that pupils are discriminated against in any way either by gender, ethnic background, religious belief or ability. Indeed, in many classes great care is taken to give pupils the opportunity to discuss experiences that they may have which are relevant to the lesson and different from their peer group. This was seen particularly in geography and religious education classes. In religious education lessons, those who belong to religious groups other than Christianity contribute well and add an extra depth to the topic being studied. Good use is made of the multi-cultural nature of the school, both through contributions from pupils and support staff, to enrich the learning of all pupils.

30 A weakness in the last inspection was the lack of systematic long-term planning of the curriculum. This has been addressed through the provision of a curriculum map for Years 3-6. The use of this and schemes of work means that the school meets statutory requirements for the curriculum except in music. Strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are good. Effective use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has led to improved standards in these subjects. Provision for information and communication technology has also improved, with a new, well equipped computer suite and the use of a nationally provided scheme of work. The amount of teaching time for pupils in Years 3-6 is below the national recommended minimum. This causes pressure on some subjects, notably music, which is not taught regularly and consistently, apart from large group singing lessons.

31 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and is in line with national requirements. The school is committed to supporting these pupils in the classroom and all pupils are able to take a full part in all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are withdrawn occasionally at appropriate times for specific language activities that require more space or specialist equipment. The support given by part-time teachers and learning support assistants is very good and adds significantly to the provision for special educational needs.

32 The school promotes personal, social and health education, including sex education and attention to drug misuse, through a programme based on the use of the Local Education Authority scheme. It contributes suitably to the good personal development of the pupils.

33 The range of extra-curricular activities is very limited and unsatisfactory. There is little on offer apart from team games. However, there is some good community use of the school, including an after-school club for parents and children, and the school has won an award for the project from which this initiative originated.

34 Links with the local community contribute satisfactorily to pupils' learning. There are few routine links with other primary schools to support teachers in their planning and professional development. A variety of links have been established with the secondary school to which most of the pupils transfer and these all help to ease the pupils' transition from one school to the other. The school has forged satisfactory links that contribute to the pupils' learning with the community and partner institutions. The school buildings and grounds are used by local organisations, for example, scouts, cubs and a martial arts club to which some pupils belong. Pupils make educational visits to the local library, supermarket and pizza restaurant and local shopkeepers have contributed to the Christmas Shopping Evening organised at the school. A wide range of visitors comes to the school, for example, police and fire brigade officers to talk

to the pupils. They make a good contribution to pupils' personal development and their health and social education. Visitors are invited to attend the annual Harvest Festival and this year's guests were from a nearby animal rescue sanctuary. The local Church of England vicar also visits to establish links with the local church. Pupils' awareness of those less fortunate than themselves in the wider community is raised by their support for charities.

35 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall. This reflects the findings in the last inspection, but there has been improvement in the provision for pupils' social development

36 A sense of wonder and spirituality is engendered in some lessons when the pupils respond to music and create 'fireworks' by whirling streamers around their heads. Singing together at the end of the day in one class has a good reflective dimension. These moments are incidental rather than planned for, and there is no school guidance on how spiritual development might be promoted effectively across the curriculum. The daily assemblies and acts of collective worship provide valuable opportunities for reflection, for example, on the natural world through words, hymns and prayers. The celebration of pupils' achievements each week provides opportunities for pupils to appreciate the value of personal effort and care. However, some opportunities for spiritual development are lost, such as when music was played in assembly, and pupils were not encouraged to think about it, and have an opportunity for reflection.

37 A strong moral ethos is evident in the school. Pupils are taught to care for one another and to distinguish between right and wrong actions. They are encouraged to think how their actions affect those of others. The impact of this is seen in the generally thoughtful way pupils behave in class.

38 Pupils' social development is a strong feature of the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate well in class and in other situations in the school, and they share materials and apparatus well. Teachers help pupils to respect the opinions of others and not to interrupt when someone else is speaking. Pupils are encouraged to think of themselves as part of a community. There is a very strong sense of community in some lessons, and teachers model respect for others very effectively. Pupils know that they, and their views and feelings, are valued. Relationships across the school are friendly and supportive, enabling pupils to feel confident. The good provision for pupils' social development contributes well to the conditions for learning.

39 Pupils come from a variety backgrounds and all are included fully in the life of the school. Adults from other cultures work naturally in the school, providing a sense of unity and a model of cultural harmony. In religious education, pupils study other faiths and are aware that other people have customs and beliefs that are different to their own. In music lessons, pupils have some opportunities to listen to music from other times and places, and can record any comments in a book beneath the picture or painting of the week. The school invites visitors to the school, for example, to play musical instruments, and pupils take part in music festivals, to extend their appreciation of music from different cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40 The general ethos of the school makes a valuable contribution to the provision of a safe and caring environment in which every pupil can feel secure and valued. Members of staff know the pupils very well and they work as a team to promote the pupils' personal development and welfare. The vast majority of parents are happy with this aspect of the school.

41 Pupils with special educational needs and the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups are well integrated into the school and receive good care and support from the staff and outside agencies.

42 The school's health and safety policy forms a good basis for ensuring the safety and welfare of pupils and staff. The governing body is involved in monitoring health and safety matters. Regular risk assessments are carried out but these are not sufficiently well documented. Electrical appliances, fire extinguishers and physical education equipment are checked regularly for safety. Good procedures are in place for fire safety but it is some time since a fire drill was held. There are suitably trained first-aiders on the staff. The school's programme of personal, social and health education provides a good framework for raising the pupils' awareness of healthy and safe living.

43 The child protection practices are good overall and are based on the locally agreed procedures. The headteacher is the designated teacher for child protection matters and all members of staff know this. The designated teacher has good working relationships with other professionals who might have to become involved should concerns arise. Not all staff have received up to date training in child protection matters, although new members of staff are made aware of the procedures as part of their induction.

44 Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. The school ensures that parents understand the procedures for reporting absences and uses the education welfare officer to follow up cases of poor attendance very actively. Teachers and the headteacher know pupils and their families well and through positive relationships encourage the vast majority of pupils to attend regularly.

45 Policies and procedures for promoting positive behaviour are very good and sometimes excellent. Consistently high expectations that pupils will behave well both in class and around the school and very good relationships with pupils are the main features of the school's successful approach. Pupils, staff and parents are confident that bullying is not a problem because on the few occasions that it does occur, there are good procedures in place for dealing with it. The prevention of bullying, racism and sexism and the promotion of good behaviour are underpinned by the ethos of the school, which is summarised in the prospectus as 'Don't blame the children for what they are, help them to be what they can'. This philosophy is promoted through a variety of means such as the personal, social and health education programme and assemblies.

46 The assessment co-ordinator has a good grasp of how the school assesses pupils' work and what needs to be done to tighten the procedures. The systems in place for assessing pupils' standards of work and measuring progress in literacy and numeracy are very thorough. These give valuable information, which is used to influence changes in curriculum planning to meet the pupils' learning needs. The school has recently started using a software computer program, which enables them to carry out these functions more efficiently and this is proving to be an effective tool. For example, analysis of the progress of different groups, such

as

gender

groups and ethnic minority groups as well as the progress of individual pupils, is providing the school with an overall picture of how it is meeting pupils' needs. Each pupil is tracked on a yearly basis so that predictions can be made as to the expected standards by the age of eleven, although the approach to predicting end of year attainments for each pupil is not yet consistent across all classes. Information about each pupil can now be more easily passed from teacher to teacher as they move through the school. This is particularly valuable for setting targets for pupils in their last year of primary schooling. The school development plan includes a timetable to introduce the use of this program across the school, with appropriate training for the staff to enable them all to gain from the approach.

47 Pupils are given formal tests regularly in mathematics and literacy and their work is measured against the national expectation for the age group. There is some inconsistency in levelling work in science but a scheme to cater for this deficiency has recently been introduced. The school is aware that other subjects in the curriculum do not have a sufficiently structured approach to assessment at the moment and that teachers and pupils do not have a clear enough understanding of the individual targets that need to be met to raise attainment further. There are plans for the immediate future to follow the County suggested guidelines to tighten up the assessment of all other subjects.

48 In the Foundation Stage new record sheets have been introduced, based on the 'Stepping Stones' towards the national expectations for children at the end of the reception year. These include good procedures for making the planning of the work for the children more sharply based on clear assessment of their attainments, and on the identification of what they need to do next. However, it is not possible to judge their impact at this very early stage of implementation.

49 Good procedures for identifying and assessing the progress of pupils with special educational needs are well established and involve the co-ordinator for special educational needs, the teachers and the learning support assistants fully. The individual education plans are detailed and contain clear targets for the pupils' learning. These are used and assessed regularly by all adults involved to plan work that builds effectively on pupils' previous learning. They are also reviewed formally twice each year so that pupils' progress is monitored by the co-ordinator for special educational needs and parents. Annual reviews are undertaken for pupils with statements of educational needs and the objectives in these are met. Pupils with special educational needs are often involved in setting their own targets and evaluating their progress in meeting them. This approach lets pupils know how well they are doing and how they need to improve, which they find motivating.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50 The school works hard to encourage parents to become involved in their children's learning and links with parents are satisfactory. Parents say that their children like coming to school, that behaviour is good and that their children work hard and make good progress. They think the school is well managed and that the quality of the teaching is good. They feel comfortable about approaching the school and think it helps their children achieve maturity and responsibility. The judgements of the inspection team support these positive views of the school.

51 A few parents have concerns about the range of activities outside lessons and the information given about homework and the progress that their children make. The inspection team supports the parents' view that the information given about homework and the range of activities outside of lessons are limited. The school's homework policy does not offer a clear timetable for each year group and the statement about homework in the prospectus is too brief. This causes a mismatch between the expectations of the parents and those of the school.

52 The inspection team does not share the concerns of the minority of parents' about the quality of information provided and found this to be generally satisfactory. The information provided for parents in the form of newsletters, including those on curriculum matters, and review statements is good. The annual end of year reports meet statutory requirements and contain information about the curriculum topics covered during the year and the individual pupil's attainment and progress. The statements in the reports, however at times, contain too much professional language to make them easy for parents to read.

53 Parents have the opportunity to meet with teachers, if they wish, to discuss specific or unclear elements of the annual reports. Unfortunately not many parents take up the offer. The parents' meetings held in the autumn and spring terms are well attended. Parents of children with special educational needs are conscientious about attending the meetings where their children's progress is considered and are pleased with the information they receive. They are kept well informed and are advised about helping their children at home. The learning support assistant for pupils with English as an additional language encourages parents, whose mother tongue is not English, often through home visits, to come into the school and thus to play a more significant part in their children's learning.

54 Parents are made welcome in the reception class at the start and end of each day, and this helps children to settle quickly. The teacher and the nursery nurse are on hand to answer any questions, and want parents to feel welcome. A recent project has had a good focus on helping parents to feel more involved in the school, especially at the time their children start for the first time.

55 The governors' annual report to parents and the prospectus contain much useful information but do not meet statutory requirements in every respect. They do not give a sufficiently detailed breakdown of the National Curriculum test results

56 One of the school's published aims is 'To establish an effective and constructive partnership between home and school'. The school tries hard to fulfil its stated aim but has only been moderately successful because only a small proportion of the parents are prepared to make the effort necessary to establish an effective home-school partnership. As a consequence the impact of the partnership on the work of the school is unsatisfactory. A home-school agreement is in place which most, but not all of the parents have signed. Very

few parents help out in the school. There is no parents' association or similar body and it is left to the committed parent governors to arrange fund-raising events and discos for the pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57 The leadership of the headteacher and senior staff is good and provides an environment in which all pupils are able to benefit from the good learning opportunities offered and in which relationships with parents are very good. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators are committed to raising standards and have been successful in improving pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science since the last inspection. The strategies introduced to improve pupils' attainment, such as an additional part-time teacher in Key Stage 2, the Reading Recovery programme and the focus on meeting the needs of the higher attaining pupils, have had a positive impact.

58 The deputy headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection and is making a significant contribution to the leadership of the school. The headteacher is now delegating more to the deputy headteacher and the subject co-ordinators. However, more use could be made of staff expertise in the promotion of school improvement, particularly in teaching and learning.

59 The headteacher and staff have identified appropriate priorities for development in the school development plan through analysis of national test results and contributions made by subject co-ordinators and Local Education Authority advisers. The actions to meet these priorities are well documented, with precise success criteria to support monitoring and evaluation of their impact. However, dates for monitoring are not stated to give co-ordinators a clear timetable for monitoring and reporting to the headteacher and governors. The school's procedures for monitoring have shown improvement since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Co-ordinators for the core subjects check teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work. The headteacher makes regular observations of teaching and learning across all staff. The information gained from these monitoring activities is used to give feedback to individual staff and to inform planning for school improvements. However, the monitoring and evaluation is not yet comprehensive enough to give the school a clear overview of the full range of learning opportunities offered to the pupils.

60 The management of special educational needs is good. The governor with responsibility of oversight of special educational needs has made regular visits to discuss the provision. The co-ordinator for special educational needs monitors the progress of individual pupils, advises teachers on meeting pupils' individual needs and liaises closely with parents. The time available to provide professional guidance for the learning support assistants and to monitor the provision in classrooms is limited.

61 The governing body, which has many recently appointed governors, is very supportive of the school. Since the last inspection the governors have increased their awareness of their statutory duties and are putting in place good procedures to ensure that they are well informed when making decisions. In particular, they are now better informed about teaching and learning and standards through the curriculum committee and presentations given by the headteacher about the national test results. They are beginning to take a more active role in monitoring by asking more searching questions. Their role in strategic planning remains limited because they are not yet involved in the preparation of the school development plan. This is a priority that is to be addressed when the next plan is formulated.

62 Financial planning is good. The governors and headteacher have given careful consideration to matching the money available to the school's identified priorities. For example, they have maintained good levels of staffing and in particular additional adult support

for special educational needs, which has had a positive impact on these pupils' progress. The balance currently in the budget is six per cent of the total income but is to be used mainly for extensions to the school office and improvements to security, both of which are necessary.

63 The school makes good use of all grants available, such the Single Regeneration grant to provide a teacher to deliver the Reading Recovery programme and the Standards Fund to provide a part-time teacher to raise standards in Years 3-6. Both of these teachers were judged during the inspection to be effective in raising standards. The funding for special needs provision is being directed appropriately to the allocation of time for the special needs co-ordinator to monitor pupils' progress, for the provision of resources, which are good and for additional effective adult support for pupils with statements of special educational needs.

64 The governors give careful consideration to obtaining value for money when purchasing services. They are not yet however, comparing the school's expenditure with schools nationally. Administrative procedures are good and support the smooth running of the school. The secretary manages the finance well on a daily basis and provides the headteacher and governors with appropriate information about expenditure, which they monitor carefully. Good use is made of technology to analyse pupils' progress and to plan and prepare the curriculum experiences for pupils.

65 The number, qualifications and experience of the teaching staff are good and meet the needs of the pupils and requirements of the curriculum across the year groups. Almost all the co-ordinators have appropriate expertise to lead their subjects. The expertise in teaching special educational needs is good in all key stages and the part-time teachers and the learning support assistants make a significant contribution to the good progress that these pupils make. The learning support assistants are suitably deployed to meet the needs of individual pupils and are generally appropriate in number to support pupils with particular learning needs. However, a few pupils who have no support for part of the day find difficulty in participating in lessons as a result. The school's arrangements for the professional development of staff are planned carefully to meet individual staff needs and are closely linked to whole-school priorities for improvement.

66 Resources for information and communication technology are very good. The computer suite set up since the last inspection is well equipped. It is a valuable resource that contributes significantly to the improvements in standards in information and communication technology. Resources for physical education, and particularly games, are good. They have been increased in quantity and range recently and are well organised. In all other subjects the resources are satisfactory. Resources have recently been improved for literacy through the purchase of carefully chosen books to supplement existing schemes. Since the last inspection the school has improved the resources for design and technology, information and communication technology, science and outside play for the reception class.

67 The last inspection report noted that accommodation was adequate for the number of pupils. The accommodation remains satisfactory but the main area in need of improvement is the library. It is located by the main entrance and is separated from the classrooms by the hall. It is too small to accommodate a class for teaching library skills and few pupils use it for independent research. The outdoor play area for pupils is attractive and provides opportunities for quiet and active play and the reception class now has its own outdoor play area. The outdoor environment has much scope for scientific investigation but is not used fully enough. The school is currently developing the pond area, with the support of the after-school club. Access for the physically disabled is adequate to the ground floor but the first-floor classrooms can only be reached by a staircase. The buildings are well maintained, clean and in good decorative order and they provide a bright and cheerful environment for learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68 In order to build on the good improvements made since the last inspection, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- ◆ **improve the progress that children make by the end of the reception year by: planning precise learning intentions for all areas of learning;**
 - ensuring that there is a focus to free play activities and suitable adult intervention to make them purposeful;
 - ensuring that questioning extends children's thinking and quality of response;
 - providing more opportunities for investigating and exploring in all areas of learning, and reducing the dependence on worksheets.
(Paragraphs 22, 71, 74, 75, 76, 80, 81, 86, 87)

- ◆ **improve the pupils' ability to learn independently by putting in place:**
 - systematic procedures for monitoring and evaluation to provide an overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the full range of learning opportunities offered to pupils;
 - procedures to ensure that the most effective teaching and learning to promote decision-making and choices are shared fully;
 - a wider range of opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum and to use investigative approaches within science.
(Paragraphs 3, 7, 11, 25, 58, 59, 97, 98, 107, 113, 118, 128, 129, 135, 156)

- ◆ **raise standards in music across the school by:**
 - ensuring that National Curriculum requirements are met fully;
 - teaching the subject in classes more frequently and regularly;
 - ensuring that that class work does not repeat learning experiences in the large group singing lessons, except to consolidate and extend them;
 - reviewing the overall teaching time at Key Stage 2 to support development of the subject;
(Paragraphs 142, 144, 146)

69 In addition to the key issues, the school should consider the inclusion of the following less important weaknesses in the action plan:

The extension of the range of activities outside of lessons.
(Paragraph 33)

The provision of more information for parents about homework so that they know what their children are expected to do.
(Paragraph 51)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	6	23	10	2		
Percentage	6.52	13.04	50	21.74	4.34		

Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points. These percentages do not make 100% in total as 2 lessons observed were not graded.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		158
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		37

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		87

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	9

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.9
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

***In the tables below the numbers of boys and girls have only been included if there are eleven or more in a year group.**

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	*	*14	24
	[2000]	[12]	[14]	[26]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 or above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	* [11]	* [11]
	Total	22 [16]	22 [20]	23 [19]
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	[92] [61]	[92] [77]	[96] [73]
	National	[84] [83]	[86] [84]	[91] [90]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 or above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	19 [17]	22 [17]	23 [17]
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	[88] [65]	[95] [65]	[97] [65]
	National	[85] [84]	[89] [88]	[89] [88]

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	*	*	15
	[2000]	*	*	[24]

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 or above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	11		14 [11]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	[73] [43]	[67] [39]	[93] [52]
	National	[75] [78]	[71] [76]	[87] [89]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 or above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total			[11]
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	[53] [43]	[53] [39]	[61] [52]
	National	[72] [70]	[74] [72]	[82] [79]

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	3
Pakistani	7
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	111
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	9	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)	7.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	26.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	127

Financial information

Financial year	2000/1
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	£
Total income	401,865
Total expenditure	371,024
Expenditure per pupil	2,236
Balance brought forward from previous year	23,592

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	158
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	34	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	27	2	2	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	41	5	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	43	7	0	11
The teaching is good.	73	18	2	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	60	31	7	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	73	23	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	25	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	52	29	7	0	12
The school is well led and managed.	67	21	7	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	23	0	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	39	11	5	18

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

70 Children start school at the beginning of the term in which they are five and are placed in a reception class in which they remain until the end of the academic year. The overall attainment of children on entry to the school is well below average, with some low attainment in aspects of mathematics and communication, language and literacy such as speaking and listening. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory although there are some weaknesses. The teacher's expectations of what the children can achieve are not always high enough and this means that they do not make as much progress as they could in some aspects of their learning, and this is particularly evident in their language development. Many children will not have met the expectations for their age group, the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage, particularly in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development, by the end of the reception year despite the satisfactory progress that they make overall. These findings broadly reflect those at the last inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

71 Many children have limited social skills on entry to school. These children make good progress and are on course to achieve the early learning goals in this area by the time they leave reception, and overall standards meet the national expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher provides some good opportunities for pupils to work and play together, although there is not always a focus to them to enable pupils to gain as much as possible from their learning, particularly in respect of their communications with each other. Routines and good relationships are well established between adults and children. On arrival in the mornings children leave their parents or carers confidently, and settle quickly into the daily routine.

72 Good, expectations of behaviour and responsibility ensure that most children listen to adults and each other, take turns, share equipment, such as art materials and ride-on toys, put away resources at the end of an activity or play together in the 'doctor's surgery'. Children follow stories read by the teacher with interest, contributing ideas and thoughts without calling out inappropriately. They manage themselves independently in activities with water and sand and when using computers, and carefully put completed pieces of art work aside to dry. Some persist for extended periods of time at an activity, for example, when playing with small world materials. They help themselves to dressing-up clothes, and, with guidance, tick against their names when going to play outside.

Communication, language and literacy

73 Many children have difficulty with language skills when they start. They make mainly satisfactory progress, but some could achieve more. While some children are on course to meet the national expectations for their age by the end of the reception year, overall standards are well below average, as at the last inspection.

74 Early in the year, children have been matching pictures, sequencing pictures to tell a simple story, and developing their writing skills through drawing lines, patterns and some letter shapes. They begin to form recognisable letters independently, and some can write their names. There is an inappropriate dependence on worksheets to provide mark-making opportunities, and opportunities to introduce a range of free early writing activities, such as 'prescriptions' in the 'doctor's surgery', are missed.

75 Children's speaking and listening skills are particularly low on entry. The nursery nurse provides some good opportunities for the children to speak and listen, such as when they spoke in turn about what makes them happy or discussed mixing colours. A discussion between a student and a group playing matching bingo encouraged children to develop their ideas in sentences. However, discussions led by the teacher do not encourage children to extend their responses and build up their vocabulary sufficiently. For example, the teacher's questions too often only require a 'Yes' or 'No' answer or are used simply to assess the accuracy of children's prediction when asking them to state whether an object will float or sink. Children recalled facts from a story they had just watched on video, but the teacher's questions did not push them to add to their responses.

76 Many children are willing listeners and are keen to answer questions because of the encouraging and positive manner of the teacher. The teacher reads stories expressively and this promotes children's interest in literature. Generally the teaching is satisfactory, but opportunities to extend the challenge are missed. On one occasion, there was a good class lesson on rhymes, with some children filling the pauses in the good telling of a rhythmic story with appropriate rhyming words. Groups of children in turn then coloured a limited worksheet as a consolidation and assessment activity. Opportunity to extend the rhyming theme through the day's work and through a range of fun learning activities was not taken, and overall the teaching was unsatisfactory.

77 Some children show little awareness of the words widely displayed around the room, and their attention was not seen being drawn to them at any stage to reinforce their appreciation of the written word. Some pupils show appropriate levels of competence in developing their communication, language and literacy skills, but there are significant weaknesses reflecting the low overall attainment on entry.

Mathematical development

78 Standards are well below average, and despite the satisfactory progress children make in their mathematical development from their attainments on entry, standards are on course to remain overall well below average by the end of the year. There has been no improvement since the last inspection. Some children do well at an early stage of the school year, and can, for example, put a number above five in its correct position on a blank line. Two children were counting to ten when using a computer program, and identified the correct numeral for six objects. While some children attain appropriately for their age, and may exceed some of the early learning goals, the overall profile of attainment of children is low, and some do not count or use number names accurately, and achieve success only with help. In the lesson seen, the satisfactory teaching provided good, enjoyable games involving verse that enabled children to join in the actions and develop or consolidate their understanding of counting to five.

79 Children learn about simple two-dimensional shapes, are introduced to vocabulary such as fewer and more and identify things that are long compared to short. They count and match sets of objects of the same number, and decide whether they have enough bones, for example, for the number of dogs in a picture. They begin to represent numbers using numerals, tracing over numeral shapes provided for them.

80 Worksheets in files show that children have had a range of work in appropriate areas of mathematics. The teacher's interactions with individuals and groups in lessons seen can be effective and support learning, but when they are focused on a worksheet, they provide insufficient opportunity for children to explore and investigate mathematical with games and apparatus.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

81 During the inspection, children were showing curiosity about objects, and predicting whether they might float or sink. They did not describe the characteristics of these objects, except sometimes in response to a question, and their comments were limited. The teacher was noting the accuracy of their predictions, but missed the opportunity ask them to try and explain their thinking, however simply. Nevertheless, the teacher had prepared the activity well, and gave each child the opportunity to examine and select the five objects they would like to test. The teaching seen in this area of learning was generally satisfactory, and enabled children to investigate, for example, with the help of the nursery nurse, the dispersal of seeds. With her assistance they were making paper helicopters that replicated the flight of sycamore seeds, and testing them outside. They showed curiosity and talked with different degrees of success about what was happening.

82 Children assemble construction kits at an appropriate level, with an intention of what they want to achieve. They use the computer with varying levels of skill in controlling events with the mouse, and some are able to make adequate progress through a simple program when working independently. They investigate through play with sand and water. Children make satisfactory overall progress in relation to their prior attainments and many are on course to broadly achieve the nationally expected goals at the end of the reception year. However, the limited attainments of a significant number to talk at an early stage about what they are doing and what is happening, and to show curiosity beyond their immediate experiences indicates that overall attainment now is below average. It is on course to remain so at the end of the year. This reflects the findings at the last inspection.

Physical development

83 Children's attainment is broadly in line with what is expected for their age and they are on course to maintain these standards by the end of the year. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and pupils make appropriate progress. Most children respond well to music, clapping and moving around, varying their speed, and running, marching, and walking on tiptoe appropriately. They are confident and expressive in their movements.

84 Children also develop their skills on large ride-on toys, which were not available at the time of the last inspection. They ride them with reasonable control and show awareness of space and of others when using them. They now have access to a grassed and hard-surfaced secure area immediately outside the classroom, with gated access to the playground when it is available. These activities take place under good adult supervision. Children handle small world play equipment and small tools, such as scissors and the computer mouse, with reasonable precision. They explore materials, such as play dough, appropriately, filling trays with 'cakes' of a fairly even size, and dress themselves carefully with dressing-up clothes. They use construction kits appropriately, assembling the parts with some good dexterity.

Creative development

85 Children's attainment matches the levels that would be expected at the start of the reception year, and most children are on course to meet the early learning goals at the end of the year, reflecting the standards seen at the last inspection. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and children make appropriate progress. Children respond well to music, for example, by clapping and by changes of speed when moving around in the hall. Simple illustrative activities help pupils to develop their manual skills, tracing pictures, drawing around an animal shape, and sticking shapes together to make a picture, for example, of a rocket. At the time of the inspection, children were making collages with autumn materials of leaves, seeds, seed cases and twigs, and assembling squirrel masks with adult guidance.

86 The teacher provides opportunities for children to work with art and craft materials, making leaf prints and designs in wet paint. During the inspection week children were working with the nursery nurse, and mixing powder paints well for themselves, using the three primary colours. They were handling smaller size brushes with some care to apply the paint to the shape of a hedgehog provided for them. Children also colour worksheet pictures, but these do not provide opportunities for them to represent images independently as a means of communicating their ideas. There were occasions when their own efforts to depict, for example, a happy and sad face would have been more appropriate than colouring a printed image with felt pens. Overall learning activities do not offer enough opportunities for exploration, such as colour-mixing, and individual expression.

87 The planning of children's work for the term is satisfactory in taking account of all the areas of learning, and in organising activities to provide balanced attention to these areas. However, lesson planning is unsatisfactory. There is too much emphasis on noting the activities that the children will undertake rather than on what it is intended they might learn, especially through exploring and investigation. Some activities are not of sufficient quality to help children to develop their learning enough. For example, whilst children often have useful experiences in free play with sand and water, in playing with ride-on toys, and using the role-play area, there is insufficient direction and challenge. The lack of clear learning objectives inhibits faster progress and higher attainment. The school has adopted the Local Education Authority guidance document for teaching children in the Foundation Stage but they are not following it closely enough. The accommodation for the reception class enables the teacher to provide for all the areas of learning required for the age group and has improved since the last inspection in that there is now a suitable outdoor area, which is used well. Good links with parents and the playgroup on the same site help the children to settle quickly into school routines.

ENGLISH

88 Standards of attainment have improved significantly since the last inspection in reading and writing in terms of the percentage of pupils achieving the national expectation. The school's results for seven-year-olds in 2001 were below the national average in reading and writing, and pupils are on course to reach similar standards at the end of the year. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, many pupils will achieve the national expectations in English, and some will exceed them. However, the overall attainment of the year group is below average. In test results in 2001, the performance of the pupils in Year 6 was average when compared to similar schools, and the pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to achieve a similar result. Taking into account the progress Year 2 pupils have made from their

attainment on entry, and the progress of Year 6 pupils from their results as seven-year-olds, the achievements of pupils in both these year groups are good.

89 In Year 1, many pupils are beginning to write short stories of one or two sentences in sequence. Presentation of work is variable but satisfactory overall. Most pupils attempt to write the date and form letters that are recognisable, if sometimes reversed. Spelling is often insecure but most words follow their phonetic sound. There are still quite a few whose sentences lack structure but often they can explain orally what they wanted to write.

90 By Year 2, there is a noticeable improvement in presentation and some pupils' stories illustrate the features of a particular style. For example, some can retell a familiar fairy story beginning with 'Once upon a time' and understand that stories have a beginning, a middle and an end. Some can use phrases like 'later on' or 'the next day' and add descriptive words to give extra depth to their writing. Some are able to edit their work and correct mistakes. Many make a good attempt at writing reviews of books they have read and are able to identify what they liked or disliked about them quite perceptively. Some of these are done on the computer to demonstrate different ways of presenting their work. Most know that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop. Some pupils can work together within groups to produce poetry with a good grasp of the effectiveness of rhyme and rhythm. Most produce a greater volume of written work and make good progress as they move through Key Stage 1. The majority of pupils listen attentively in class but speaking skills are not highly developed. Some can express their ideas clearly and in sentences but a significant number answer in single words or phrases. Many read simple texts with confidence and can make sensible suggestions as to what might happen next. Some read frequently at home to an adult, which greatly increases their confidence, but some only do so rarely.

91 As they move through Years 3 and 4, many pupils begin to join up their letters and presentation improves. Most can identify whether a text is fiction or non-fiction and give the reasons for their deductions. Many are beginning to skim through a text to pick out the main ideas. Most know the purpose of the contents, index and glossary. Some can write imaginatively to set a scene well with phrases such as 'clouds that growled their way across a thundery sky'. Some begin to use a variety of literary techniques effectively, as in 'stony, slimy, slippery staircase'. Punctuation becomes more accurate and speech marks are often used correctly.

92 By Years 5 and 6, pupils write in a wide variety of styles, including informative writing, myths, legends, fables, retelling the same incident from different viewpoints and science fiction. Most are aware of the differences between various newspaper styles and can adjust their reports of the same event, perhaps a foxhunt or description of London during the Great Plague to match differences between various newspaper styles. Presentation is mostly neat with the majority of work titled, dated and written in a joined handwriting style. Spelling of commonly used words is mostly secure but pupils do not regularly use dictionaries to look up less familiar ones. Speaking and listening skills progress well and many pupils are able to express themselves in quite mature ways. A few remain more diffident but will contribute in class if pressed. Many read unfamiliar texts with confidence and use a variety of different approaches to work out new words, but not all are able to deduce their meanings from the context. By Year 6, pupils can draft and redraft their work, improving on the original with a greater depth of language or more rounded phraseology, often using the computer for this purpose. As they move through Years 3-6, progress for most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is never less than satisfactory and often good.

93 The quality of teaching in English is good overall in Years 3-6 and this has made a noticeable impact on improving standards. Teachers teach the basic skills consistently well

and pupils learn systematically as they move through the school. Where teaching works best, lessons start briskly and pupils are immediately drawn into the subject in hand. There is a high expectation of good behaviour and this, coupled with very good relationships between teacher and pupils, creates a good working atmosphere. The teacher's enthusiasm is imparted to the pupils, sometimes through very expressive reading of a shared text. This increases pupils' understanding and stimulates interest and willing co-operation. At the start of most lessons, the teacher shares what the pupils will learn and this is then written at the top of the set task. Pupils can see the point of what they are doing and both teacher and pupils can assess at the end of the lesson if this has been achieved. In many classes, questions are carefully worded to challenge pupils to think more deeply about their answers, which extends their thinking and powers of deduction.

94 In Years 5 and 6 pupils are encouraged to measure their work against National Curriculum levels of attainment. This helps the pupils to be aware of their own learning and to see how their work could be improved. The pace of lessons is often well sustained and there is an appropriate balance of teacher input to pupil activity which ensures pupils do not become disaffected.

95 Throughout the school, teachers often use suitably mature language and correct technical terms which helps pupils to become more accurate in their own language use. At the end of lessons, pupils are often asked to discuss what they have learnt and to evaluate their own work and that of others which again helps them to understand how they can improve. Comments made when pupils' work is marked are usually helpful and give a clear indication of how the work could be better.

96 Where teaching is less effective, pupils are not often given the opportunity to learn independently, although they follow instructions well. When pupils are kept too long sitting on the floor area, they become restless and uncomfortable and often become inattentive as a result. Insufficient use is made of role-play on a regular basis to add an extra dimension to the way pupils learn. Occasionally the shared text is too small for all to see clearly and a few pupils lose interest. Teachers are not always careful enough to model handwriting and how work should be set out on the board. Pupils do not then learn that presentation of work is always important and not just in handwriting lessons.

97 The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has been in post for only one year but already has a clear vision for how the subject should develop and has identified areas that need further attention, like writing, spelling and the more effective use of drama. She does not have the opportunity to observe teaching to promote even higher teaching quality but monitors pupils' books and oversees teachers' planning to ensure full coverage of the literacy scheme. The procedures for assessing pupils' standards and monitoring progress are well in place and the information gained from these is used to plan appropriate work for pupils. Formal assessments are carried out regularly and all members of staff assess continuously how well pupils are learning. A portfolio of pupils' work over a period of time is being compiled, with work assessed against National Curriculum levels to give an important overview of long-term progress.

98 The National Literacy Strategy is well established and many new initiatives are having a positive effect on raising standards. The Reading Recovery programme, for example, identifies pupils in Years 1 and 2 who most need support in this area. This is very successful and pupils who go through this often achieve well beyond expectation. Last year saw the beginning of a scheme to boost standards of reading in Years 3 to 6 where pupils were divided into fifteen groups and given intensive help in reading skills. This also proved successful in raising pupils' reading ages. Members of the learning support staff are well deployed and

greatly add to the benefits of the good teaching throughout the school. However, the member of staff responsible for raising standards in Years 3-6, although giving a good level of support, has only a short time during the year with each group of pupils as she works with all classes. The recent focus on raising standards in literacy has had a positive impact but pupils' literacy skills are not being

developed well enough across the curriculum to give many more opportunities for pupils to use their growing knowledge of different styles of writing in a wider context. Good use is made of information and communication technology and pupils are encouraged to experiment with many different ways of presenting their work. Teachers use this technology effectively to record and assess data and sometimes in the classroom to display poems or other texts on the screen from a database on the computer.

99 Noticeable improvements are evident since the last inspection. The volume of writing produced at both key stages is now greater than it was before and the rate at which pupils work has greatly increased, with a resultant improvement in standards. Progress is now much more marked and is often good. Most pupils have a much better attitude to their work and show that they want to improve and reach the targets set for them. There is no evidence of the 'apathy' referred to in the last inspection report. The quality of teaching has improved and is good and sometimes very good or outstanding in both key stages. Systems for assessing pupils' standards and recording their progress are now implemented more.

MATHEMATICS

100 Standards of attainment have improved significantly since the last inspection. At Year 2 they are in line with national expectations, and pupils are on course to attain as well as they did in the tests in 2001. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 6, many pupils will achieve the national expectations, and some will exceed them. However, the overall attainment of the year group is below average. In test results in 2001, the performance of the pupils in Year 6 was, however, average when compared to similar schools, and the pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to achieve a similar result. Taking into account the progress Year 2 pupils have made from their attainment on entry, and the progress of Year 6 pupils from their results as seven-year-olds, the achievements of pupils in both these year groups are good.

101 By Year 2, many pupils are able to complete number sequences up to 20, count forwards and backwards, and in tens up to 100. Some can make sequences out of numbers given to them, and can count on in steps of numbers up to 5. Many pupils can complete number sentences, including two-digit numbers and add combinations of the full range of coins. When working mentally, most are confident with number bonds to 10, and can subtract from a number between 11 and 20 to make 10, and know to which numbers they must add 10 to make given results. Pupils explore putting numbers into sets of 2, 5 and 10, learn the properties of shapes, and begin to measure in centimetres.

102 By the end of Year 2, pupils have worked with simple fractions and found the halfway points between two numbers. They extend their knowledge of place value when sequencing three-digit numbers, learn about analogue and digital ways of showing time, and investigate money when making up and costing out different menu options, and pay for them with the right coins. Pupils learn to recognise regular shapes with up to five sides, explore rotating patterns and make graphs of, for example, their favourite drinks.

103 In Years 3 and 4, pupils learn about inverse operations. The majority are working at appropriate levels, with number sentences including numbers up to 100, with addition and subtraction, and multiplication and division. Some pupils, working with smaller numbers achieve appropriately, but a minority are not clear about the different operations. Most pupils in Years 4 and 5 are working towards the expectations for their ages in learning about equivalent fractions and just beginning to recognise patterns in such fractions. They are introduced to the correct vocabulary of numerator and denominator, and begin to try and use

the terms accurately. Previous work includes learning about three-dimensional shapes, such as tetrahedrons, prisms, cuboids and pyramids.

104 In Year 6, pupils consolidate their earlier use of protractors to measure angles, and some are able to measure accurately to the nearest degree. Some are able to calculate mentally the complementary angles to 360° . In number, the more able pupils can work out mentally the difference between, for example, 63.5 or 70.5 and 100. Previous work done by the oldest pupils shows that they have worked successfully with negative numbers, explored the area and perimeter of simple shapes, investigated symmetry and carried out calculations with the 24-hour clock. Pupils have used graphs to support work in a history project, recording data from Victorian gravestones.

105 The quality of teaching is never less than good across the school, and some of the teaching in both key stages was very good. Class management is very effective, and a good working ethos is established which sets the right conditions for effective learning. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' application and effort, and the pupils respond positively to this. The work is usually matched well to the needs of all pupils, although on one occasion, some pupils could not check their answers because they had no number line or number square to help them. On another occasion, a pupil was unable to proceed because he needed some counting materials.

106 Good use is made of the National Numeracy Strategy, and teachers generally have a good knowledge and understanding of what they are teaching. This helps them to respond quickly to any misunderstandings and explain the work in a different way. Such on-going assessment of how well pupils are responding to the teaching contributes well to the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils consolidate and extend their knowledge and understanding, and improve their accuracy as a result of well judged teaching of specific skills identified as needing attention during the progress of the lesson. Regular marking, sometimes with particularly good detailed comments and guidance for improvement, encourages learning, and pupils' attention was seen being drawn to the comments when books were used the next time.

107 Lessons are well paced, and resources, such as individual number paddles, and information and communication technology, are used effectively. Learning support assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning, and supplement the teaching and give support to individuals, including the significant proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils from all backgrounds make equally good progress as a result of the adult support they receive. The use of information and communication technology to support learning is very effective, with the clarity of the programs used, and the easy access by all pupils to the computers in the information technology suite, enabling them to work steadily and productively. The co-ordinator is seeking to improve the use of the individual computers in classrooms to enable them to contribute further to learning. Teachers make opportunities for pupils to practise and apply their numeracy skills outside of numeracy lessons, but there are no specific planned approaches to developing numeracy across the curriculum. Homework, set at the discretion of teachers, helps to consolidate learning in school satisfactorily.

108 Leadership of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work across the school, gives feedback to teachers, and provides staff training. Class teachers assess pupils' progress termly, and annual test results are monitored to check on pupils' progress from year to year. These factors, along with the improved quality of teaching, booster classes for the older pupils and the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy have all contributed to the improved standards in the school.

SCIENCE

109 Standards of attainment have improved significantly since the last inspection. In Year 2 they are in line with national expectations, and pupils are on course to attain as well as they did in the teachers' assessments in 2001 by the end of the year. By the time pupils leave school in Year 6, most pupils will achieve the national expectations and some will exceed them. The overall attainment of the year group is average. In test results in 2001, the performance of the pupils in Year 6 was above average when compared to similar schools, and the pupils in the current Year 6 are on course to achieve a similar result. Taking into account the progress Year 2 pupils have made from their attainment on entry, and the progress of Year 6 pupils from their results as seven-year-olds, the achievements of pupils in both these year groups are good.

110 By Year 2 pupils are able to identify natural materials, such as wool and wood and man-made materials, for example glass and plastic. They understand that some materials like butter, chocolate and candle wax melt when heated. At the beginning of their study of electricity, pupils knew that batteries are a source of power and that these power sources vary in size. They were able to sort household items of equipment according to whether they were driven by mains electricity or batteries. Some pupils were using the word 'mains' accurately. Pupils record their work using charts, drawings and sometimes written descriptions. They can observe and decide which criteria to use to sort objects. However, from current work seen pupils have limited ability to carry out scientific enquiry with appropriate independence for their age.

111 By Year 6 pupils have progressed to sorting solids, gases and liquids according to their properties using a Carroll diagram. They are able to use scientific terms correctly, such as 'evaporation' and 'dissolving'. They can name flower parts and their functions. They can position and name the main organs in the human body and explain the effects of exercise and healthy eating. Pupils use a variety of methods of recording their work, such as plant keys, labelled diagrams and line graphs. They are able to draw and interpret line graphs well to explain the effects of exercise on the body. When carrying out a test of dissolving salt in water of different temperatures, they are aware of the need to add the same amount of salt each time to keep the test fair. Generally pupils have satisfactory or better knowledge and understanding in science but their ability to enquire, whilst developing rapidly in Year 6, is only just satisfactory for their age. This is because they have not had a programme of practical activities to build systematically on their learning in investigative approaches across the school.

112 The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory in Years 1-6, with some that is good. This is an improvement since the last inspection in Years 3-6 when teaching was found to be unsatisfactory. All teachers have high expectations that pupils will behave well and work hard. Pupils generally respond positively to this and try to do their best. On a few occasions, pupils become restless when the teacher's explanation or the class discussions are too long for them, particularly pupils with special educational needs. A strong feature of all lessons is the teacher's good questioning skills to check pupils' understanding and to promote their scientific thinking. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and use scientific vocabulary accurately. For example, in Year 1 when the pupils did not initially have an understanding of quiet sounds in contrast to loud, the teacher persevered, using the vocabulary in a range of contexts until understanding was reached for most pupils. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work in pairs and groups and pupils collaborate and gain from sharing their ideas. Where the teaching is good, lessons have good pace and pupils move from whole-class discussion to

practical work so that they maintain their interest and concentration. Good use is made of resources to extend pupils' understanding, such as when the teacher demonstrates to the pupils using a variety of containers that the water takes the shape of the container but the volume of water remains the same each time.

113 In almost all lessons pupils are set the same work regardless of their prior learning. Teachers often use questioning skilfully to match the work more closely to the needs of the pupils but on some occasions the tasks are not appropriately challenging for the wide range of ability within the class. The recording of pupils' work is supported through worksheets so that all pupils are enabled to complete the task to a similar level but sometimes work is left unfinished. When asked to write independently pupils can use their literacy skills throughout the school to communicate their ideas but they are not asked to often enough to challenge and extend the thinking, particularly of the highest attaining pupils. When learning support assistants are available, they give good support to pupils with special educational needs who make good progress overall. Pupils from all backgrounds are enabled to make equally good progress because all adults involved value their responses and promote their confidence. Teachers provide well-structured opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding but there is not the same clarity in planning for investigative work. In Years 3-6, teachers make good use of information and communication technology within science. A group of pupils talked enthusiastically about its use and were able to discuss the relationship between the length of jumps and the length of parts of the body presented in line graphs. By Year 6 pupils can use their numeracy skills to support their work in science, for example finding the average and estimating appropriately. Teachers use homework regularly to extend pupils' learning.

114 Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and teachers' planning across the school and gives feedback to the staff as a whole and individually. However, her subject knowledge is not secure for all key stages and further training is needed. The recently introduced scheme of work is helping to ensure coverage of all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum and to provide a framework for assessment. The improved quality of teaching and the implementation of the scheme of work have contributed significantly to improved standards since the last inspection. However, the school's provision for the development of investigative science was in need of improvement at the time of the last inspection and this remains an area for further development.

ART AND DESIGN

115 Pupils' attainment in art and design in Years 1-6 is average, which is the same as it was at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made rapid progress this term in the acquisition of skills, such as colour-mixing and drawing with pastels, and in this aspect of art they are attaining above what is expected for their age in Years 1 and 2. Their knowledge of the work of artists is limited. In Years 3-6 pupils' attainment is average in drawing, using paint and pencil. They build on previous learning satisfactorily to show appropriate use of line and tone. They can name a range of artists and express some opinions about the style of a painting. In both key stages pupils' ability to apply their skills to creative work is unsatisfactory.

116 The quality of teaching in Years 1-6 is satisfactory, with some good features. In Years 1 and 2 teachers plan lessons carefully to teach the basic skills. They demonstrate techniques well. Pupils observe them closely and, as a consequence, improve their skills effectively. Teachers use the vocabulary related to techniques accurately and regularly and pupils are beginning to use words like 'hatching' and 'cross-hatching' in relation to the use of pastels.

They question pupils carefully by asking, “What will happen if I put yellow on blue?” to build on previous learning in colour-mixing and to develop the language of colour.

117 In Years 3-6, teachers plan lessons thoroughly but work does not always build appropriately on pupils' previous learning, for example when pupils were asked to draw a simple landscape using perspective when their grasp of perspective and proportion was not secure.

118 In Years 3-6, teachers manage pupils well so that they are keen to learn. Pupils respond well to the high expectations teachers have that they will work hard and behave well. Teachers value pupils' contributions and promote confidence so that all pupils are willing to participate. As a result, pupils from all backgrounds are enabled to make similar progress and pupils with special educational needs make good progress when supported by a learning support assistant. Teachers assess pupils' acquisition of skills as they work but their comments are sometimes restricted to vague encouragement and not always precise enough to tell the pupils what they do well and how they need to improve. The approach to pupils evaluating their own work and that of others is inconsistent. This means that pupils are not developing their ability to appreciate art or to use the related language sufficiently. Opportunities for combining the teaching of skills and art appreciation are missed, for example when pupils were studying Charles Sheeler's painting they were asked to concentrate on producing a similar effect as the artist without commenting on his style. Teachers make good use of sketch books for practising skills but these are not yet used as a basis for pupils to develop their own ideas. Some good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in art and design. A group of pupils in Years 5 and 6 talked enthusiastically about their graphic designs based on the work of Andy Warhol and were able to give their opinions about his use of colour.

119 The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to promote greater consistency in teaching and more comprehensive coverage of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Teachers are emphasising the teaching of skills to give pupils a firmer foundation on which to build their creative work. However, there is currently too little time given to creative activities to ensure an appropriate balance in pupils' learning experiences and to give pupils opportunities for making decisions and choices in their work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

120 Since the last inspection, a new and capable co-ordinator has taken on responsibility for the subject, and has taken steps to improve the quality of pupils' learning and their standards of attainment. However, although appropriate standards are now evident in some of the work seen, there are still gaps in pupils' attainments, which overall are below average at Year 2 and Year 6, reflecting the standards seen at the last inspection. Their achievements are below what could be expected, but have shown recent satisfactory improvement.

121 Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 were making clay decorations linked to their work on Vikings in history. They were basing their work appropriately on designs they had researched in books. Pupils are not yet suitably confident with a range of materials, and the good teaching encouraged them to use and evaluate their use of the clay, which some found difficult to manipulate to meet their design intentions. As a result, although standards were below what would be expected, the pupils were learning well in the lesson.

122 A file of photographs of some previous work and some small pieces of work themselves is being compiled to support the development of an assessment system. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have worked on textiles, learning about the characteristics of yarns, and have designed and made model trains, for example, to carry a cuddly toy. Pupils in Year 1 were designing birthday cards, to be made at a later time, but it was not clear that they would review the ideas they had drafted. Pupils in Year 2 recall with enthusiasm making model cars, robots, houses out of recycled materials, and models from clay. They understand the value of designing before making, for example, in the case of making shields. They are less skilled in talking about choices of materials or considering improvements they might make to their work.

123 In Years 3-6, pupils have used rolled paper cylinders to construct ancient Egyptian shadufs, or water lifters, and considered the need for strength and supports in the construction. Younger pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had a good opportunity to visit a pizza restaurant. They learned how pizzas are made, and made some of their own. Pupils reflected appropriately on the experience, but their written comments tended to be more descriptive than evaluative. In Year 5, pupils have constructed and decorated boxes with tuck-in lids, but the emphasis has been on skill development within a set task, as pupils have not generally built up the ability to generate realistic designs based on a wide experience of methods and materials. The oldest pupils have had some appropriate activities during their time in school, including the recall by one pupil of making a model house with an alarmed door, but pupils are not knowledgeable and confident enough in talking about the designing, making and evaluating process.

124 The co-ordinator is keen to improve provision for the subject, and has drawn up a suitable action plan to do this. She has undertaken training for herself, and has bought in new resources. A new scheme of work has been introduced to improve the pattern of pupils' learning experiences, and the co-ordinator has monitored the introduction of this. Resources overall are satisfactory, and have improved since the last inspection, but there was no evidence of the use of information and communication technology to support work in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

125 Standards of work of pupils aged seven and eleven is broadly in line with the average for these age groups. Pupils in the first year of the juniors begin to learn the idea of place through looking at their own environment, for example their journey to school, the different types of buildings in the estate around them and the idea of direction. They learn that people have addresses which pinpoint where they live and most learn to copy these out correctly. Most are able to draw pictures showing how we dress for different kinds of weather. By Year 2, pupils extend their understanding of place to the wider world such as Russia, Australia, China and Japan. Most pupils can fill in a diagram of a country village showing land use, for example fields, houses, church, farmyard.

126 As they reach Years 3 and 4, many pupils show that they can use an atlas to gain factual information, about such things as the largest settlements in the United Kingdom or the land area of various countries. Most develop their factual knowledge of Great Britain and can name and locate the continents, major countries, the oceans and large mountain ranges throughout the world. By the last two years of the primary school, many can produce informative projects on general topics such as water. Most can describe the development of rivers using correct terminology, such as spring, waterfall, meander and oxbow lake. Many show an understanding of how flooding can affect roads, communication, wildlife and the

quality of life for the inhabitants of these areas. Some show considerable understanding of the

hardships living in harsh environments must bring, like the high Andes or arid areas. Some carry out their own research into these projects using the Internet or reference books but others simply copy information or restrict their writing to answering questions. Most make steady progress as they grow older and by Year 6 a few show some maturity in their approach. They can make sensible suggestions about major world problems, such as why some areas need to be irrigated to avert famine and starvation and how this should be achieved. Most pupils seem interested in the subject and apply themselves well to their work.

127 Due to the timetable arrangements, it was possible to observe only two lessons in geography. Judgements about the quality of teaching are based on these lessons, discussion with staff and pupils and scrutiny of pupils' work. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good or very good. The most successful lessons start with a clear explanation of what is to be studied and pupils can then understand the reasons for what they are doing. If the text used for information has unfamiliar words or concepts, pupils are skilfully drawn into discussing what these could mean. Pupils respond to the teacher's enthusiasm and enjoy their studies. Good use is made of the immediate environment to illustrate points and bring the area of study into the pupils' own experience. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 looked at the school and its grounds in order to understand why it is important for planners to think very carefully about how an area is to be used most effectively. This led pupils into a consideration of aspects like health and safety in an effective, practical way. Pupils are often challenged to explain their answers more fully to develop their powers of observation and deduction. Most members of the staff use the correct terminology to encourage the pupils to develop an accurate use of language. Constant reference is made to previous learning, both in geography and in other related subjects like science or history to give pupils a fuller picture of the particular point being discussed. Often the teacher asks pupils who have experiences of different parts of the world to contribute their point of view, for example how life in the High Andes might compare with life in parts of Pakistan. The session at the end of lessons is well used to consolidate what has been learnt and to extend pupils' learning further.

128 Some lessons give different tasks to different groups but these are not always matched appropriately to what pupils can already do. Higher attaining pupils are not always stretched fully and some tasks are too difficult for others to grasp. In these cases, pupils occasionally begin to lose interest and the impact of the lesson is lost. In some classes, too frequent use is made of worksheets which often restrict the amount of work pupils can accomplish and reduces pupils' independence in recording their own ideas. When this happens, the skills pupils learn in literacy are not applied in enough depth, which affects the quality of both their writing and oral discussion.

129 Geography has not had a high profile in the curriculum over the last few years because of the school's focus on literacy and numeracy. The co-ordinator has prepared an action plan to establish priorities for immediate development. The management of the subject ensures that the programmes of study required in the National Curriculum are covered. However, no plans are in place for the co-ordinator or a senior member of staff to observe teaching and learning to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the provision. Formal assessment of pupils' progress and standards of work take place annually and there are plans to make assessment more regular. Informal assessment is inconsistent and this is the main reason for work not always being matched closely enough to all pupils' needs in lessons.

130 Since the last inspection, a scheme of work has been introduced which covers the teaching of geography throughout Years 1-6 and this is helping teachers to ensure that they plan to build on pupils' learning experiences from year to year. Curriculum planning is now more systematic.

HISTORY

131 Standards of pupils' work at the age of seven and eleven are in line with the expectation for those age groups. In Years 1 and 2, most pupils begin to realise that time passes and things can change. Most relate this to their own experiences of the passing of the year, for example from birthday to birthday and recurring events like harvest or Poppy Day. Many can think of themselves as they are now, and compare this with how they were as toddlers or babies. From this many begin to look at how things were for their parents and grandparents and gain some idea of 'the past' from studying, for example, the changing nature of toys or the contribution of famous people like Elvis Presley. By Year 2, some understand that Christmas has not always been celebrated in the same way as it is now. Many begin to learn about buildings in the past and can name parts of a castle. Some can understand why they were built.

132 By Years 3 and 4, many pupils become aware of other ancient civilisations, like the Egyptians. A few understand, at a simple level, the power structure in Ancient Egypt stemming downwards from the Pharaoh and the differences in their way of life. Many can identify the changes that have taken place in their local area over the last few hundred years, going back as far as the Anglo Saxon and Viking invasions. By studying the more recent past, some pupils in Years 5 and 6 begin to understand some of the reasons why modern Britain is as it is, developing as it has from the Tudor and Victorian eras, among others. For example, most can describe the purpose of the Great Exhibition, and compare the lives, food, housing and occupations of the poor with those of the rich at that time. Some understand a little of the effects of the Crimean War and some can identify with the hardships of the street children in Victorian times. From the latter, a few gain a small insight into why people's attitudes to the care of children have changed. Pupils seem enthusiastic about the subject and most have a good attitude to the work that they do in each area of study. Progress is satisfactory across Years 3-6.

133 It was not possible observe any history being taught so overall judgements about the quality of teaching are based on discussion with staff and scrutiny of work. From the evidence available, the quality of teaching is judged to be sound in both key stages. In most classes, teachers are able to engage the pupils' interest and to make them want to learn more about the past. Pupils are encouraged to set out their work so that it is pleasing to look at and this helps them to feel a sense of pride in what they achieve. Each group of pupils in class is often asked to do the same task and there tends to be an over reliance on worksheets as a means of recording information. This limits the opportunities for higher attaining pupils to write more extensively or to engage in independent research.

134 Teachers use a variety of sources of information to help pupils understand the period they are studying and sometimes to see things from a different point of view. However, there is little evidence of pupils being encouraged to evaluate the usefulness of these sources or to take on board the concept of bias in reporting events. In some classes there is insufficient development of pupils' awareness of the differences between fact and opinion. Visits to sites of local interest are well used to give an extra depth to pupils' learning. For example, the realities of life for Victorian children were brought home to pupils in Year 2 when they visited Stibbington Hall. Similarly, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were excited about their experience of life in Iron Age Britain when they visited a local Celtic village.

135 The management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who has been in post for only one year, is aware that history has had a low profile of late because of the emphasis on raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Since the last inspection, a new scheme of

work has been introduced. This is helping teachers to ensure that the programmes of study laid down in the National Curriculum are covered and to provide activities for pupils to develop their skills as they move up through the school. Formal assessment procedures are based on the suggested guidelines in the scheme of work and take place yearly when an area of study has been completed. Informal assessment happens continuously in class but the information that this gives tends not to be fed back into planning, with the result that work is not always matched closely enough to pupils' prior learning. This remains an area for improvement. There is no time allocated for the co-ordinator or any senior member of staff to observe teaching and learning in history to evaluate the effectiveness of the methods being used.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

136 Pupils' attainments at Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with the national expectations. This is an improvement in the relatively short time since the last inspection, when they were below average, and the school has recovered the satisfactory standards identified in the inspection before the last one. Pupils achieve well in Years 3-6.

137 By Year 2, most pupils log on confidently and, where required, retrieve work from their personal folders. They open files and enter and save information methodically. When introduced to a new program, pupils navigate confidently through the various icons. They try out, for example, the facilities in a draw and paint program with relative ease because they have good experience of controlling the mouse, and know how clicking and dragging might be used to access and achieve what they want. Pupils were planning shapes, lines and colours with thought, and making their intentions come to life on screen. Pupils are able to change the sizes, styles and colours of fonts readily when using a word processor. They compose and edit text on screen appropriately. Pupils talk with understanding about the range of experiences they have had, including investigations, the use of information and communication technology in their work in mathematics, for example, using geometric shapes to construct pictures and abstract designs. They have also researched for information.

138 By Year 6, pupils have continued to develop their word-processing skills. They enter numerical data to create graphs, and have created multiple images and combined text with graphics to support their learning in art and design. They understand the need for accurate spelling when searching for information on the Internet. They begin to recognise the importance of accurate data, for example, when a significantly different graphical representation appeared of how far pupils can jump in relation to their body dimensions. Pupils present information in a variety of ways, using graphs, text and images. They have combined text and graphics, for example, when captioning their design work, and when producing class news in the style of a magazine. They have explored control with screen turtles and a floor robot. Pupils talk confidently and with reasonable understanding about the various uses of information and communication technology in the world beyond school, and know, for example, that word-processing is not quicker or more effective than writing with a pen in some situations. Pupils use the Internet but have not yet used e-mail or extended their work in control or sensing facilities. However, resources have been acquired, there are plans for the pupils to have their own school-based e-mail addresses, and the school is using a nationally provided scheme of work. At this early stage of the school year, pupils in Year 6 are on course to meet the national expectations by the time they leave school.

139 Information and communication technology is used increasingly well to support different areas of the curriculum, and was seen in mathematics, science, English, art and design and, on one occasion, in religious education. The lack of this cross-curricular use was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. Relatively little specific teaching of information and

communication technology skills was seen during the inspection, but when teaching was seen,

it was at least good and on one occasion very good. Teachers who were seen using information and communication technology in other lessons, as well as in the teaching of specific information and communication technology skills, are becoming increasingly confident with its use. There are shortfalls in pupils' knowledge and skills in the subject, but these are being addressed at a good rate, and the quality of teaching is helping pupils to learn well and to make good progress.

140 Good, clear teacher demonstrations, using an interactive display board in the information and communication technology suite make clear to pupil what they are expected to learn in lessons. As a result, teachers spend more time extending the skills of individuals and helping them to make good progress, rather than showing them what to do. The good quality of class management also ensures that pupils work purposefully and productively, and the good challenge in the tasks keeps pupils interested and engaged, whether working in pairs or individually. Most teaching in the subject or in the use of computers in other subject areas tends to take place in the new information and communication technology suite. Teachers make limited use, however, of the computers in classrooms to provide opportunities for pupils to work independently, for example, when carrying out individual research, using the computer out of choice for a particular purpose, or when carrying out a task set by the teacher.

141 The improvements to pupils' learning and to their attainments have come about because of the very good resources, the quality of the leadership of the subject, and the growing use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. The enthusiastic and knowledgeable co-ordinator provides very good leadership of the subject. He has supervised the setting up of the new suite, acquired additional resources and bid for funding to bring in further resources to extend the use of information and communication technology outside of lessons in the suite. All teachers have had some training and the co-ordinator plans to lead more training to extend further teachers' skills and confidence. A technical assistant in the suite provides very good support to teachers and pupils.

MUSIC

142 Pupils' overall attainments are below average at the end of Years 2 and 6. At the last inspection standards in singing were judged to be average, and this is still the case. The provision then was weekly singing lessons for all pupils together in each key stage, with occasional class music lessons, none of which were observed. This loosely structured pattern of provision has continued, and this has contributed to pupils not meeting the expectations for their ages or achieving as well as they could.

143 The good teaching in singing lessons for both infants and juniors led by a subject specialist contributes to the generally appropriate quality of singing at these times. These lessons include some good attention to improving pupils' skills in singing, and gives pupils opportunities to develop their understanding of, for example, pitch. Younger pupils develop their understanding of beat and rhythm through clapping activities, and older pupils learn about the structure and phrasing of songs. Pupils have some opportunities to use a variety of percussion instruments, but in such large teaching groups the opportunities are limited for each pupil to use instruments. The correct technical vocabulary, such as 'pitch', 'tempo' and 'percussion' is used throughout. Singing in assemblies is not led actively, and tends to be less confident and effective.

144 Discussions with pupils show that the lack of regular class lessons with music-making opportunities does not enable the learning in these singing lessons in larger groups to be either consolidated effectively or to be extended. Pupils talk about singing in class but cannot recall the use of instruments, opportunities which they have had for improvising or making simple musical compositions, and recording these with made up symbols. Older pupils show limited experience and understanding in music. They remember using taped singing lessons, but have no recall of improvising and composing, or about listening to a range of music to develop their skills of listening and appraising, apart from opportunities in assemblies. Pupils have a negligible musical vocabulary. While their recall may not be accurate, their learning has clearly been limited. It represents below average standards and the lack of routine and consistent attention to the subject outside of the large group singing lessons.

145 A scheme of work for the subject meets requirements, and teachers are responsible for planning opportunities over the year to address this. However, the allocation of time and the provision for music do not enable the school to meet the National Curriculum requirements. Only one class had a class music session timetabled during the inspection and that was a short one. Good events, such as termly festivals in the local church, and yearly participation in the Ely Cathedral schools music festival give a sense of occasion and purpose to pupils' singing. These events reflect the approach to teaching music in the school, namely that music, apart from the singing lessons, is taught in blocks and tends to be based on events rather than on regular and consistent learning opportunities that enable pupils to make sound progress. The short amount of teaching time in the afternoon sessions is an inhibition to such regular lessons, especially in Years 3–6. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology in music.

146 The school has had a focus on improving pupils' performance in the core subjects, and music has not been a priority for development. There are no extra-curricular music activities, although it is intended that a recorder group will be started. The co-ordinator recognises the weaknesses in provision. Nevertheless, there is a need to ensure the effective implementation of the scheme of work adopted in the last year, and that arrangements for teaching music are sufficient and consistent.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147 It was only possible to observe lessons in dance during the inspection because that was the aspect of physical education included in the programme for the term. In the last inspection, observations were made in gymnastics so that it is not possible to compare standards reached. Pupils' attainment in dance at the end of Key Stage 1 is below that expected nationally for the age group. This is mainly because pupils have not had a structured programme of activities to build satisfactorily on their learning as they have moved through the Years 1 and 2. In the current Year 1 there is evidence of higher attainment, which shows the impact that the introduction of the scheme of work and staff professional training are having on improving progress and raising standards in dance. At the end of Year 2 pupils' attainment is average in dance. The progress that the pupils make across Years 3-6 is satisfactory overall. The average attainment in Year 6 is due to recent rapid acquisition of skills. Standards in swimming are above average, with almost all pupils reaching the national expectation by the end of Year 6 and some exceeding it.

148 The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall in Years 1-6 with some teaching that is very good or good and a little that is unsatisfactory. In all lessons, teachers use appropriate warm up activities and pupils are beginning to become aware of the effects of exercise on their bodies. They are involved in the activity with the pupils, using demonstration effectively to improve the quality of pupils' work. They promote dance as a way of expressing feelings and conveying ideas by discussion with pupils and asking, 'What story are you trying to tell?' or 'How do you feel when you see the fireworks?' Teachers assess pupils' work through careful observation and give regular feedback. In one lesson the teacher made comments like 'Reach higher, bend lower' and this had a significant impact on the quality of the pupils' response. Some teachers involve pupils in assessing others' work but this is not a consistent feature of all lessons so that pupils are only just gaining an early understanding of how to relate this to skills that they have been focusing on in their learning.

149 Where teaching was good or better, the lessons were well organised, with a smooth transition from whole-class to group or paired work with the result that pupils worked at a good pace and were physically very active. The resources, such as streamers for pupils to use to represent fireworks and lively music by The Beach Boys, motivated the pupils to perform enthusiastically and to apply themselves to the task. In the unsatisfactory lesson, the pace was too slow because too much time was spent listening to music rather than responding to it. The pupils were not active enough and became inattentive.

150 Teachers work hard to involve pupils equally in the activities available and give appropriate encouragement to all pupils, with the result that pupils from all backgrounds make similar progress. The attainment of the girls is higher than that of the boys in dance in Years 2 and 6. The progress that the boys made in Year 6 in the lesson seen was good but in Year 2 they were less confident than the girls and made slower progress overall. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress due to the adult support, which they receive from the teacher or a learning support assistant. In one lesson there was insufficient additional adult support to enable the teacher to meet fully the needs of the pupils with special educational needs.

151 Leadership of the subject is good. The co-ordinator is clear about what needs to be improved in the subject. The recently introduced scheme of work and staff training are helping to ensure more consistency in teaching and learning and are beginning to raise standards. Pupils have some opportunities for competitive sport through football and cricket and sports afternoons but overall these are limited.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

152 Standards of work in religious education for pupils aged seven and eleven are broadly in line with the expectations laid down in the locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils make satisfactory progress overall. There are no discernible differences between groups of pupils either by age, gender or ethnic background. Pupils in Year 1 become aware of the importance of celebrating 'special' days like their own birthdays and Christmas. Most learn to listen to others and to take part in class discussions confidently. As they move into Year 2, pupils extend this into thinking about friends on their birthdays and why it is important to realise what will please them. This leads to a wider understanding that different people like different things and we must respect this. Pupils also discover that churches can exist in many different designs and from this many begin to realise that it is not the building which makes a church but the actions and thoughts of the people who worship there. They begin to learn of other faiths,

like the story of Mohammed's escape from Mecca to Medina and the names of some Hindu gods. From the Old Testament they can retell the story of David and Goliath.

153 In the first two years of the juniors, many pupils begin to understand that the Bible was written in different languages originally and that the version they have is a translation. Some can appreciate that there are many different kinds of literature contained in it, for example stories, poetry and description of events. Many become aware that there are many different beliefs in the world and that these must be respected. As they move into Years 5 and 6, most pupils can recall some of the stories they have learnt from Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism and Buddhism. Most can identify Jesus as a healer and the Son of God but a few are confused and describe him as a wizard or an Egyptian king. By Year 6, some pupils are able to understand that there are symbolic references in prayers, which convey more than just the words themselves. This was seen in a Year 6 class, when many pupils understood the reference to the apple in the Garden of Eden in the words of the Jewish prayer for Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish new year. Some pupils are able to use computer programs to find out more about this festival. Many can begin to compare similar elements in a variety of religious faiths. For example, most pupils realise that many different faiths have tried to describe the story of the creation ranging from the version in Genesis to the American Indian version of how light came to the world. Most pupils can see how different the lives of the people of Palestine at the time of Christ were from their own. They learn something of the history of the great cathedrals, for example Ely.

154 From the age of five onwards, many pupils are able to compose their own prayers. Some of these are prayers of thanks for the beauties of the world. Others show that some pupils can relate to the feelings of anguish people must feel at times of trial. Some telling prayers resulted from the dreadful flooding last year. One begins with a cry from the heart, 'Heavenly Father, WHY?'

155 The quality of teaching is mainly satisfactory, with much teaching that is of good quality. Where teaching works best, the teacher shares with the pupils what the outcome of the lesson will be so that the pupils can understand the purpose of their study. The teacher sets up stimulating discussions, often based on well chosen resources, so that the pupils' interest is aroused and most pupils feel that they can contribute. Many classes are encouraged to experience an activity, such as eating apples dipped in honey as the Jews do at Rosh Hashanah. This approach was further emphasised in the same lesson when one pupil was asked to extract the sound of the ram's horn and chanting of prayers from a computer software programme. In this way they learn through different senses and not just by hearing and seeing. Teachers use appropriate terminology and mature language to encourage pupils to do likewise. Activities chosen are mostly suitable for each age group and maintain pupils' interest throughout the lesson. Constant reference is made in lessons to previous learning, comparing what is being discussed with what pupils already know. This helps to consolidate pupils' learning, which they can then apply more widely. Pupils who come from different faiths are often asked to describe their experiences, which gives all pupils a chance to learn first-hand from others. Good use is made of visiting adults who are asked to talk in more depth about their religious beliefs and help pupils understand, for example, how Muslims view the Koran. Pupils are often given the opportunity to reflect quietly on various aspects of their study, like the qualities of friendship or their hopes for the coming year. This helps to develop a sense of spirituality.

156 Where teaching is less effective, all pupils are given the same task to do. This can restrict higher attaining pupils and an opportunity is lost to extend their choices as to how they present their work. Sometimes tasks may be too difficult for some pupils and they lose interest and are denied an opportunity to achieve. The skills developed in literacy are not sufficiently

applied in religious education, to the detriment of both subjects. Too much work is based on reproducing given facts, using worksheets or answering given questions. This inhibits independence of learning.

157 The subject management is adequate to ensure that the scheme of work receives full coverage and meets statutory requirements. Each class is timetabled to have a lesson in religious education each week so that pupils have their knowledge and understanding constantly reinforced. The co-ordinator has had some training in the teaching of world religions to enable her to give support to the staff if required. There is little time available for consistent monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, particularly in Years 3-6. Assessment procedures are not applied consistently to provide the co-ordinator with a clear overview of standards or progress. Information and communication technology is often used effectively to add an extra depth and widen the available sources of information. Sometimes in lessons where religious education is taught as part of a theme being studied and linked to other subjects, there is insufficient focus on the knowledge, understanding and skills related to the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and pupils do not make enough progress.

158 Since the last inspection there have been satisfactory improvements. Teaching quality has improved due to the provision of additional artefacts and books and improved planning to meet the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus. Improved teaching has resulted in the pupils having a more positive attitude to the subject. There are few overt references to the fact that the school has strong links with the Church of England but the ethos of morality, respect for others and a caring community pervades the whole school.