

INSPECTION REPORT

DEEPING ST NICHOLAS PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPALDING

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120407

Headteacher: Mrs A Bandey

Reporting inspector: Peter Brock
17969

Dates of inspection: 27th – 29th November 2000

Inspection number: 224443

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Road Deeping St Nicholas Spalding Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE11 3DG
Telephone number:	01775 630280
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Anthony Ivatt
Date of previous inspection:	27th January, 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Peter Brock 17969	Registered inspector	English as an additional language Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Music Physical education Equal opportunities	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Maureen Roscoe 9884	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Michael Wehrmeyer 15015	Team inspector	Foundation stage Special educational needs English Art and design Geography History Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Deeping St Nicholas Primary School is in the middle of the longest village in the country. It is on a busy main road and most children arrive by bus. Only one child comes from outside the village. The buildings are of Victorian origin and reasonably spacious. There are 49 children on roll – 25 boys and 24 girls. There was one child under five at the time of the inspection. Information from the available first assessments shows that attainment of children on entry to the school is well below average. Twelve children are on the special educational needs register. This is a slightly higher proportion than is found in many schools. None has a statement of special educational need. No children come from minority ethnic groups where English is an additional language. All pupils come from a white United Kingdom heritage background. The take up of free school meals is approximately twenty per cent and this is broadly in line with the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a good standard of education. Although children enter with standards that are well below average, they make steady progress with their learning as a direct result of the secure quality of teaching and the very good management by the headteacher. Standards are below average by the time children are seven and eleven years of age. Despite the relatively high cost of education for each child, the school is effective and provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership of the headteacher is very good and management overall is good;
- Teachers use good methods and management techniques to make sure children make progress;
- Children are taught to have good attitudes towards others and their behaviour is good;
- The personal development of children and their relationships with each other are very good;
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and moral development is good. Social development is very good;
- Procedures for protecting children and ensuring their welfare are good;
- The majority of pupils have positive views of the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in English, particularly in reading and speaking skills;
- Standards in mathematics, especially children's ability to work out numbers quickly;
- Children's ability to investigate, record and analyse information in science;
- Children's use of computers confidently and with skill;
- The unacceptable lateness or non-attendance of some children;
- The inclusion of all correct information in the school prospectus and annual report to parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January, 1998 and was found to have serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case. It has made good progress in responding to the key issues from that inspection. It now fulfils its statutory requirement to link work more closely to National Curriculum subjects and the agreed syllabus for religious education. There is now a positive improvement in the overall leadership and management of the school because of the appointment of a very good headteacher. The quality of education has been improved successfully by providing appropriate in-service training to increase teachers' competence and confidence in subjects and by reducing dependence on published schemes and worksheets. A more open-ended approach to help pupils solve problems now guides them towards a greater independence. Work in English and science is matched more closely to pupils' prior attainment, but not in mathematics. The school now consistently implements agreed plans and policies. The quality and range of the curriculum has been considerably improved by implementing agreed assessment procedures, improving planning and by identifying links between subjects to provide more coherence. The school now ensures that all children under five years of age have an appropriate entitlement by matching their tasks to their stages of development and by making sure that they are taught more often as a separate group.

STANDARDS

The standard of attainment of children currently in Year 6 is below average in English, mathematics and science. Comparisons with all schools nationally and with similar schools are based on very small groups of children and, as such, their reliability must be viewed with considerable caution. However, this said, test results indicate that, from 1996 to 1998, standards of attainment decreased rapidly in all three core subjects. However, during the last two years, including the 1999 and 2000 results, standards have shown clear signs of improvement. The climb has been rapid in English but less so in mathematics and science. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum scores, based on figures for the last five years, has been above the national trend. Although the 2000 results suggest an unfavourable comparison with similar schools, the relatively recent changes in teachers and leadership, combined with the successful introduction of the literacy hour, show that the school is moving in a positive direction in raising standards. The introduction of the numeracy hour is more recent and has yet to make the same positive impact as the literacy hour in English.

Levels of attainment in information and communication technology are lower than those expected for children of this age. This is primarily because teachers do not provide sufficient direct teaching of this subject or give pupils enough regular experience on computers to allow their skills to develop. In all other subjects of the curriculum, and religious education, attainment is at a level expected for pupils of this age. The school sets realistic targets for improvement overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are positive. Pupils enjoy learning and work hard in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	This is good. Children respond well to the school's reward system and learn to be self-disciplined and to consider how their actions affect others.
Personal development and relationships	Children's personal development is good and their relationship with each other and with other adults is very good.
Attendance	Poor because some parents do not understand the importance of ensuring that their children miss as few lessons as possible.

The overall quality of children's relationships and behaviour is a strong feature of this school. Children are good at caring for each other and are polite and pleasant to others. However, the level of poor attendance is unacceptable because some children are educationally disadvantaged by their parents' inability to ensure that they attend every day unless they are ill.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and has a positive impact on the quality of children's learning. Teachers work closely together as a team and have a secure knowledge of National Curriculum subjects except in information and communication technology where their planning for its development remains at an early stage. They make good use of teaching methods, including their use of the literacy and numeracy hours, and their management of children is strong as is their use of time and resources. The main weakness lies in the insufficient planning for higher attaining children within each year group. However, the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teaching seen during the current inspection was satisfactory or better in one hundred per cent of lessons. In forty-six per cent it was good or better and in five per cent, it was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is adequately broad, balanced and relevant in all areas of the school except for information and communication technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The help for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. They are supported effectively in and out of classrooms.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This is good overall. A particular strength is the very good provision for pupils' social development. Spiritual and moral development is good and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of support overall. It makes sure that children are safe and checks carefully on the progress made.

The school works in partnership with parents successfully. It provides them with a good level of information to tell them about what is happening in school. However, reports do not always provide sufficient information to tell parents how their children can improve their work and advance notice of teaching topics is limited.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and she is firmly supported by her teachers who share her clear and strong vision of how a good school should function and of what needs to be done to improve it further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	They do this in a satisfactory way. Governors are becoming increasingly aware of the need to be fully involved in the working of the school and are making positive moves in the right direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school, especially the headteacher, is clear about how well it is doing and, through regular evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses, knows what has to be done next to improve the quality of education.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes sensible use of its resources overall and links decisions on spending to educational priorities. However, computers are not used enough.

The school has enough suitably qualified and experienced teaching and support staff and the accommodation is satisfactory. The range and quality of learning resources is also satisfactory as are the school's procedures for ensuring that it gets best value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children make good progress at school;• Behaviour is good;• Teaching is secure;• They are well informed about progress;• High expectations of teachers;• Helps children to be mature and responsible;• Attitudes and values of children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Range of activities outside lessons;• Closer work with parents;• Amount of homework. Policy guidance;• Topic guidance on what taught;• Standards could be better;• Children are not good enough at information and communication technology.

The inspection team agrees with most of the positive views of parents although it does not agree that teachers have sufficiently high expectations of higher attaining children. It considers that the range of activities outside of lessons is reasonable and that the school does work closely with parents. The amount of homework is appropriate for children of this age. The team does agree with parents that standards in information and communication technology are not good enough yet and that more guidance could be given to parents on topics to be taught.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school's baseline assessments show that it admits children from across the full range of attainment although there are few higher attaining pupils. However, when they start full time education, most pupils are well below average for their age. Attainment is at a level expected in children's physical development but well below in personal, social and emotional growth, communication, language and literacy, mathematical awareness, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
2. Standards of attainment are below average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science by the time that pupils are seven years of age. Based on a system of allocated points, teacher assessments and test results for the 2000 Year 2 pupils indicate that the attainment of pupils in that year in reading and writing was well below average and very low in mathematics. These results indicate that attainment is also very low when compared with levels reached by pupils in similar schools. However, as these results, and those of earlier years, are based on very small groups of pupils, any comparisons have to be made with caution as the achievement of just one pupil can alter the overall picture in a disproportionate way. Nevertheless, it is important to note the long-term trend. Levels of attainment in reading and writing dropped significantly until 1999 after which they stabilised and began to improve. This is a direct result of the combination of a change in teaching staff and the introduction of the literacy strategy. However, the long term trend in mathematics has continued downwards until 2000. The work of current pupils indicates that this negative direction has now been halted as a result of the introduction of the numeracy strategy and an improvement in teaching quality
3. The standard of attainment is below average in English, mathematics and science by the time that pupils are eleven years of age. Based on a system of awarding points, teacher assessments and test results for the 2000 Year 6 pupils indicate that the attainment of pupils in that year was well above average in English, average in science and well below average in mathematics. These results indicate that attainment is well below average overall when compared with schools in similar contexts. However, as these results, and those of earlier years, are based on very small groups of pupils, their reliability for comparative purposes must be viewed with considerable caution. It is, however, important to note that, in all three subjects, levels of attainment decreased significantly until 1998 after which point they have continued to climb. Over the past five years, the trend in the school's National Curriculum points gained for all core subjects is above the national trend. The significant change to a positive direction is a direct result of the change in the overall quality of teaching since 1998 and the introduction of numeracy and literacy strategies. The numeracy hour is more recent and has yet to make the same positive impact as the literacy hour in English.
4. Pupils' attainment in religious education is at a level expected for pupils of this age by the time they leave the school and this is similar to that obtained during the last inspection. However, the level of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) has decreased since the last inspection and is below that expected when pupils are seven and eleven years of age. There are two main reasons for the unsatisfactory level of attainment in ICT. Insufficient planning for direct teaching of the subject means that specific skills are not introduced or extended. Pupils do not have regular experience on computers to enable them to develop their

skills and to use these to support their work in other areas of the curriculum.

5. The school sets realistic targets for improvement overall. These are appropriate for the level of ability of most pupils but are not high enough for higher attaining pupils in mathematics in both key stages and in English in Key Stage 1. They are developed after careful analysis of the previous and current levels of attainment that pupils reach within each year group.
6. Children in the foundation stage make satisfactory progress overall. They improve their ability to socialise and to listen carefully although they continue to lack confidence with their speaking. They enjoy hearing stories and reciting nursery rhymes that help to increase their vocabulary. Children work with a variety of mathematical items to help them increase their ability to count, sort, and make various patterns. They increase the level of their knowledge and understanding of the world through work in the school grounds. They increase their physical skills through gymnastic lessons in the hall on a regular basis. Children do not find creative development easy but make good progress with their learning through various practical activities.
7. In both key stages, most pupils make satisfactory progress. However, exceptions include ICT where progress is unsatisfactory, aspects of learning for higher attaining pupils in mathematics in both key stages and in English in Key Stage 1 and variations in progress for pupils in Year 2.
8. In English, younger pupils have difficulty keeping to the point when speaking but, by the time they are in Year 6, they have grown in confidence and enjoy making presentations and listening to comments about what they have said. By Year 2, pupils are enthusiastic readers but have a limited range of skills at their disposal. They have difficulty in working out unknown words quickly but, by Year 6, are well on the way to achieving higher levels. They express opinions about authors and books but still have limitations in their wider use of vocabulary when they are talking about various aspects of style. Younger pupils write at length in a lively, personal way, but the structure, punctuation and use of a wider more adventurous vocabulary is limited. Older pupils increase their ability to write in their own style and learn how to apply this in the planning and drafting of their work.
9. By the time they are eleven, pupils' ability to solve simple money and measurement problems has increased although their confidence in doing this is not strong. They increase their knowledge and understanding of basic tables but their ability to remember them quickly and efficiently is weak. Pupils learn how to estimate distance and to use smaller measures of length with reasonable accuracy. Higher attaining pupils understand the concept of negative numbers and fractional parts and most add two digit numbers accurately.
10. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of basic chemical elements of air in science and relate the importance of these to living things. They begin to gain an understanding of the importance of scientific experiments and of the need to conduct fair tests. They know how to represent their findings in various forms although their skills in this aspect of science are limited. Pupils have a basic understanding of food chains and other aspects of animal and plant life and know about various phases of the moon and of some of the characteristics of shadows.
11. The school places appropriate emphasis upon the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. Examples are seen in work with recording of evidence of experiments on the effects of heat on chocolate buttons in science, discussions about the differences between Tudor and Windsor rulers in history and the importance of rhythm work

in music.

12. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets in their individual education plans. Teachers are particularly good at settling in new pupils. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls overall and all pupils have equal opportunities to participate in all subjects of the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils have good positive attitudes both to school and to their learning to which they bring a sense of enjoyment. Parents report that children enjoy their bus journey to school and wave excitedly to teachers, as they are themselves waved off at the end of the school day. Pupils consistently work hard in lessons and teachers make full use of this strength to encourage them in their learning. This has a strong impact on the quality of relationships that are very good throughout the school.
14. This is very much an improved situation since the last inspection when attitudes to learning were satisfactory. Improvements have been made in providing interesting lessons and increasing parental confidence in approaching the school with their concerns. Pupils' aspirations, positive attitudes and co-operation are valued and extended wherever possible.
15. Pupils' behaviour in lessons, at play and at lunchtimes is good. They respond well to the school's reward system. They copy examples set by adults and, as a consequence, are polite and respectful to all adults and to fellow pupils. Teachers have involved pupils in the updating of policies on behaviour as they focus on the development of self-discipline and consideration for others. Staff and parents agree that bullying will not be tolerated, and pupils have defined their own views on what constitutes persistently unkind acts. Parents describe behaviour in the school as excellent. No instances of bullying were reported to inspectors and there have been no exclusions.
16. Pupils' personal development is good because they respond well to the many opportunities provided for them to use initiative. They are trusted with everyday tasks and they willingly undertake jobs that are changed round each half term. They readily help each other out, for example by sharing games equipment out carefully. Sensible use is made of the playground so that break times are harmonious and friendly. Pupils respect the feelings of others and celebrate success. This may be during assemblies or in class when they share particular values, listen to explanations about special places or express their pleasure at the success of others during Golden Book Assemblies, for example. The clearest indication of very good relationships and personal development is seen in the growth in confidence of pupils and in their willingness to describe their school to visitors. They do this proudly and talk about it as a friendly place with fun activities and where all get on well together.
17. Attendance levels are poor and have fallen since the previous inspection from a very good level. Now they are well below average. This downward trend is a cause for concern. Registers are completed as required, but there is a delay in following up each absence. Opportunities are missed to encourage parents to support the regular attendance of their children. For example, documents published for parents do not comment on the low attendance rate or urge them to help the school improve its performance. The majority of pupils arrive by bus so, except in severe weather conditions, punctuality is good for most pupils. Most pupils are eager to start lessons.
18. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy their work. They develop their self-esteem and a more positive attitude to school. They are equally eager to learn and, with help, concentrate for

increasingly longer periods. Pupils, whose behaviour is initially a concern, make good progress towards improving and developing a calmer approach to listening and working together.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with a considerable number of strengths and few weaknesses. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in most subjects in all key stages. Teaching was satisfactory or better in one hundred per cent of all lessons seen. In forty-six per cent it was good or better and in five per cent, it was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching seen during the inspection. This quality of teaching is much better than that seen during the last inspection when twenty-five per cent of lessons observed were unsatisfactory.
20. The quality of teaching for children in the foundation stage is good overall. The teacher develops effective teamwork with other adults in the room that creates a positive place in which children learn. Children's work is carefully monitored and sound routines are developed to ensure that their listening and behavioural skills are developed securely. The teacher encourages children to enjoy reading through lively story telling sessions that help to extend their limited vocabularies. Organisation of practical activities is good and helps children to consolidate their learning of number in particular. Also, the use of a variety of suitable objects around the room is successful in stimulating children's curiosity and interest.
21. The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the requirement for the National Curriculum subjects is satisfactory in all subjects except ICT where their level of expertise is variable across the school. As a result, the progress that pupils make in this subject is unsatisfactory. Teaching of literacy and numeracy, and the progress that pupils make with their learning in these aspects, is also satisfactory. Teachers have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the technical aspects of their subjects. An example of this was seen in a history lesson on the Tudors in Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils developed a clear understanding and grasp of chronology relating to this period of time.
22. The quality of planning is also sound overall and, in most lessons, teachers define what they expect pupils to achieve by the end of their lessons. They often make their objectives clear to pupils at the beginning of the lesson. This helps pupils to develop a positive insight into how their own learning is progressing. A good example of this approach was seen in a physical education lesson in Key Stage 2 on dance. Here the teacher made sure that pupils understood how to develop their skills of sprinting, throwing and hurdling, how to discuss their actions and to evaluate their performance.
23. Planning is secure because it takes account of different levels of attainment from year to year. Teachers set progressively higher levels of work for each age group of pupils within their class. However, they do not make sufficient allowance, both in planning and teaching, for pupils of different abilities within the same age group. This applies to higher attaining pupils within an age group in particular. This weakness in planning is evident in mathematics in both key stages and in English in Key Stage 1. As a result, higher attaining pupils do not reach the maximum level of progress of which they are capable. However, where such differentiation of work for pupils of different abilities within the same age group is good, as in science in Key Stage 2, pupils of all abilities make secure progress at appropriate levels. There are good examples of differentiation according to ability as in one mathematics lesson seen in Key Stage 1 where a Year 2 pupil worked with the Year 1 group. However, this example is an exception to the general rule and was also noted in the scrutiny of work seen across the school. The school is aware of the need to develop this aspect of teachers' planning and has already made a start by placing pupils in ability groups for the teaching of English.

24. Teachers make good use of a range of methods of organisation and teaching techniques to help pupils learn effectively. They use a mixture of approaches that include whole class, group and individual teaching. There are many good examples. In Key Stage 2 English, questioning techniques are strong and stimulate pupils to think clearly and to discuss what they think about particular issues. Teachers speak to pupils in quiet and confidential tones that increase the level of pupils' confidence in their own ability to succeed. In Key Stage 1 physical education, the teacher makes good use of the technique of reminding pupils' about previous skills learned. This sets the scene clearly for the current lesson and helps pupils to understand their starting point and the target to be reached.
25. Teachers' management of pupils is good. This is because they are firm but also perceived to be fair by pupils. As a result, most pupils behave and respond positively to others and to their work. On occasions when pupils do not act in a reasonable manner, teachers respond quickly and professionally to ensure that the minimum of disruption occurs and lessons return to normal as soon as possible. The school's system of warnings written on the board, golden time and one minute sanctions support this strong aspect of teaching in the school.
26. Teachers' use of support staff and resources is also good overall. The main exception to this has been the lack of regular use of computers to help pupils with their learning. As a result, pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of computer techniques to help them in their work and in their daily lives is limited. However, since the recent arrival of the new computer hardware, teachers have started to take advantage of this facility and this weak area appears set to develop in a positive way. The use of other adults to support pupils' learning is particularly strong in Key Stage 1 where the teacher makes sure that all present know exactly what is required of them so that they provide maximum support for pupils during lessons. Most lessons move at a reasonable pace to ensure that pupils make the most of the time available. Where the pace is fast, as in a lesson on punctuation, conjunctions and story endings in Key Stage 2, pupils respond with enthusiasm and increase the rate of their learning.
27. The quality of teachers' daily assessment of pupils' work is secure when they make verbal comments to pupils during lessons. All teachers make positive and constructive comments that help pupils to increase their learning. Some, but not all, do this with their written marking so pupils know what to do next to improve their work. Good examples of positive marking are seen in Key Stage 2 mathematics books where comments guide pupils towards what they need to do next to improve their work.
28. Teachers keep secure and informative records of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics and follow a whole school format to achieve this. In other subjects, systems of recording are variable and, generally, not up to the same standard. As a result, they are of limited value in providing appropriate information that will support future lesson planning.
29. Teachers and support assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and this has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers are anxious to ensure that these pupils make suitable progress in lessons. They make sure that support assistants are deployed to help pupils with their work in the most effective way. Staff use patient explanation well to put teaching points across, particularly when they are emphasising basic skills. Teamwork between teachers and support staff creates good learning conditions that ensure pupils feel confident, valued and make secure progress as a result.

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

30. Curriculum weaknesses were a key issue in the previous inspection. The school has, over the last two years, set about systematically eradicating the weaknesses, and has taken effective steps to strengthen the curriculum. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies, together with the adoption of the national guidance to underpin the scheme of work for science, ensures full coverage for these subjects. Schemes of work based on national guidance are in place for the remaining subjects. These provide a sound framework for planning, and promote a secure progression of skills and knowledge teaching, and continuity of learning across the key stages and from year to year. The narrowness, described in the last inspection, has disappeared from the English curriculum.
31. The curriculum now provides a sound quality and range of learning opportunities, with balanced coverage of the programmes of study except in ICT where there are still weaknesses. All subjects are taught and therefore statutory requirements are now met including provision for religious education. The school provides a good breadth of experience, including enrichment of the curriculum by its programme of extra-curricular activities, visits to centres of educational interest and the contribution of visitors to share their expertise with pupils, including many from the local community. Aspects of personal, social and health education are planned effectively. Pupils receive appropriate teaching on matters relating to health, sex and awareness of misuse of drugs.
32. The school has adopted a pattern known as a 'spiral curriculum', where pupils from all four years in Key Stage 2 hear the same basic lesson introduction but work at levels appropriate for their age. Each time pupils meet a topic, they tackle it at a higher level. The subject content is repeated over a four-year cycle to avoid repetition. The system is working effectively. Skills within subjects such as art, history, and geography are receiving appropriate attention. Those in design and technology and ICT are not sufficiently developed in terms of pupils evaluating their designs and structures to identify how they may be improved. The school monitors the success of its curriculum by means of teachers' comments about their lessons written in the appropriate column of their planning documents. This is a strong strategy and has enabled staff to identify that planning for matching work in English to pupils' ability needed to be even more precise. As a result, a new organisation of pupils in Key Stage 2 into ability groups promotes a better rate of progress by setting higher challenges for all pupils, and makes the curriculum more relevant to their needs. Overall the curriculum prepares pupils appropriately for the next stage of their education.
33. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 1 has weaknesses. In solving the problems of securing a firm start for the foundation stage and planning good continuity for Year 1 pupils, planning for Year 2 has not made sure that they consistently face a sufficiently high level of challenge in their work. The clear targets set for the under fives and pupils in Year 1 are not so evident in planning and teaching for Year 2. As a result, the level of their progress is not always high enough.
34. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. It has improved since the previous inspection because individual education plans are developed for pupils and are of good quality. Targets and activities are closely linked to pupils' needs, and show clearly how successful achievement is to be measured. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils effectively to promote their development in small steps over short periods of time. The arrangement of English teaching into ability groups works to the advantage of pupils who have special needs because they receive a higher level of individual attention as a result of being in smaller

groups.

35. The headteacher has embarked on a valuable programme of communication with partner schools. These are constructive and work to the benefit of pupils, by creating curriculum links and providing an effective induction of Year 6 pupils into senior schools. Members of the local community play a distinctive part in the overall curricular provision and include regular visits from ministers of religion and visiting students from the local college.
36. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and has improved greatly from a position of weakness at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils have good opportunities to reflect on important issues such as the value of peace and tolerance as they debate different religious and ethnic identities in assemblies. Many areas of the curriculum inspire pupils to think about their own place in the world. Fund raising for charities provides good opportunities for pupils to consider the responsibility they have to other people. Pupils are encouraged to raise their own questions for debate on topical issues relating to social justice. Year 6 pupils did this effectively in writing letters of complaint when they felt that insufficient notice had been taken of their eligibility to take part in a local competition. Teachers successfully encourage pupils to develop self-knowledge by asking them to reflect on their own actions and by providing them with sufficient thinking time before questions are answered.
37. Daily acts of collective worship meet and surpass the standard required and are often enriched by ministers from Christian traditions. Assemblies enhance the school's strong family ethos by allowing pupils to share emerging feelings about themselves as members of a local and global community. At these times, pupils' spiritual awareness is raised because they are asked to co-operate to create a contemplative and special atmosphere. Parents are effectively informed of their right to withdraw their children from daily worship.
38. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. Their understanding of rules for the benefit of the community group is fostered well, and teachers remind them of their high expectations whenever rules are not kept. Citizenship, self-discipline and consideration for others are effectively promoted. Pupils are encouraged to be active members of the group and to report any instances of unpleasantness to an adult. Parents are happy with this provision, and support the school's code of behaviour, because they see it working well in practice, particularly when pupils are on school trips.
39. The provision for pupils' social development is very good. At the last inspection it was judged as satisfactory and improvements are plain to see. Teachers strongly encourage pupils to become self-reliant, and opportunities exist for pupils to look after younger children. They are asked to participate in the school community by working alongside others in various ways and to complete various tasks for the benefit of all as with the tidying up process after assemblies. Many opportunities are taken up to involve pupils in community activities connected with the local church, businesses and national charities. Pupils speak highly of the Golden Time that gives them chance to negotiate play activities as part of the reward structure and also of their visit to The Dome. Additionally, the Helping Hands group is organised so pupils have the opportunity to speak with adults on an individual basis in an informal setting. The school plans for pupils' personal social and health education well, and sets time aside in the timetable for teaching these important aspects. Parents say they are well informed about their children's personal development and are confident that teachers know their children well. This contributes very effectively to the very good relationships found in the school. These are building pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
40. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory and developing well. At the previous

inspection, it was judged to be unsatisfactory because pupils' knowledge and understanding of the diversity of other cultural traditions was under-developed. Pupils are now taught about major world religions and understand aspects, for example, of the customs and traditions of the Hindu faith. Parents feel that their children are taught to appreciate different religious beliefs in an appropriate way. It was noteworthy that in assembly pupils were given a choice whether to pray (or not) in a Hindu or Christian style of worship, because both traditions were presented as equally valuable. For a school situated in a rural area, the problems of organising educational visits are overcome well because of the teachers' total commitment to pupils' personal development. A suitable range of activities occur and are organised with the good co-operation from parents who often provide support with transport. The school also joins with others for sports tournaments. This active approach encourages the development of pupils' awareness of their own culture and those of the wider world. The local church is a popular venue through which religious education is supported and developed. Pupils are taught about countries that are less well developed than their own and they learn about similarities between England and others such as China, St. Lucia, India and Kenya. Pupils have the opportunity to develop their acting skills as with their productions based on the life of Jesus and appreciate opportunities to attend concerts and watch visiting theatre groups. Some parents feel that provision for extra-curricular activity is inadequate. Inspectors understand the point that parents are making but note that school space is at a premium during break times. Lunch times are short and the majority of pupils are collected each afternoon by bus for their homeward journey.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are good and are similar to the findings of the last inspection. There is no doubt that the school cares well for all its pupils. They are happy about coming to school as seen with the singing on the bus and in the sensitive manner that pupils' welfare is promoted within a secure happy environment. Parents are satisfied with pastoral care and report that their children like and enjoy school.
42. However, procedures for monitoring attendance patterns are unsatisfactory because immediate action is not always taken when absences occur. Attendance levels are well below those found countrywide and not enough is done to increase them.
43. Procedures for child protection are good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge and understanding of how to deal with various situations and parents are made aware of the school's responsibilities. Teachers pay close attention to the safety aspects of life as with the good arrangements in place for supervision of pupils using the school bus service.
44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour are good, and supported by effective use of the Golden Rules system that is well known to all pupils. Staff react quickly and positively when pupils need help in class. Pupils are encouraged to behave well in and out of lessons and most succeed in this. Parents report that effective measures are in place to prevent unkind behaviour. Inspectors agree, and note that staff consistently reward pupils for good work, positive attitudes and kindly behaviour towards others.
45. Parents indicated in questionnaire returns that they found the school successful in helping their children to become mature and responsible. Inspectors agree, and judge the monitoring of pupils' personal development to be good. Awards are given regularly in assembly and 'stickers' of praise are used effectively to encourage effort. Pupils explain helpful comments are sometimes written on their work that helps them to know what to do next.

46. The school has improved its arrangements for assessing pupils' attainments and progress since they were a key issue in the previous inspection. Teachers are committed to following the guidance in the new policy. The school has rapidly put into place a wide range of testing, recording and monitoring procedures. The teacher responsible for the foundation stage uses a system recommended by the local education authority, as well as her own, for recording information to establish a baseline of attainment for children under five early in the year, and a comparison is made at the end of the year. A valuable informal record of social development is started, but not yet continued into the older years.
47. The strongest application of assessment is in literacy. Teachers use standardised tests to measure pupils' reading in Years 3 and 4 and plan to build this up into a whole school approach. They are beginning to track progress effectively through their comprehensive reading records. Profiles of pupils' strengths and weaknesses are being built up in reading and writing. Spelling records enable teachers to allocate pupils to spelling groups. Samples of pupils' work are assessed and kept in subject portfolios. Teachers discuss the levels they have given these samples and reach agreement so that marking is consistent across the school. Pupils' work is saved in their own record of achievement.
48. Teachers set summary tests to see how much information pupils recall at the end of numeracy teaching units. They have started to use optional standard tests in Year three, and will, in time, be able to track all pupils' performance towards National Curriculum levels. Appropriate arrangements are made for the statutory National Curriculum tests to be carried out. Overall, the range of new procedures is good.
49. Evaluation of this information enables the school to identify trends such as that writing is relatively weaker than reading. As a result, teachers take positive action, such as introducing groups based on ability for older pupils and increasing the match of tasks to their levels. The information also gives the school a broad picture of how much value has been added as, for instance, the extent that pupils' reading scores have increased year by year. Teachers use assessment data as a reasonably precise tool to guide their planning and teaching in English. The application of assessment information to mathematics and science is not as strong, and assessment in most of the other subjects is still at an early stage of development. Assessment data does not effectively identify the level of challenge needed for higher attaining pupils in mathematics and science, or for the Year 2 pupils.
50. The headteacher is aware of the need to increase the use of assessment information. She has started a monitoring procedure whereby pupils are made aware of individual targets for improvement and are given satisfactory guidance on how to achieve them. This monitoring is particularly effective for pupils who have special educational needs. Teachers use assessment information effectively to identify pupils with special educational needs at an early stage, and when matching work to their needs in many lessons. They regularly monitor the pace at which these pupils are progressing. They can show, for instance that these pupils make steady progress from the standard test results, and from progress through the work materials. This is a particularly significant improvement since the previous inspection.
51. The very good relationships established with specialist services, particularly the Special Needs Support Service, brings a high level of expertise to the support arrangements for pupils. The help in the very detailed assessment is an important step in ensuring that pupils are correctly placed on the support register. However, the school has to wait a considerable time for help for those with behavioural difficulties, which means that there are pupils currently on a lower level of support than they should receive.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

52. The school has developed an effective working relationship with parents. The majority of parents report that there is a good partnership in place between this friendly school and themselves. As a result, parents are satisfied and knowledgeable about the standard of teaching, behaviour, and the progress their children make. Some however are dissatisfied with the amount of homework set.
53. Parents find staff helpful and report that concerns or suggestions are always acted upon quickly. Parents expressed their confidence in the recently appointed headteacher and appreciate being consulted on a number of issues. Additionally, information provided helps parents to understand the school's responsibility for the welfare of its pupils. The quality of information provided for parents is good, and serves to inform them fully about the daily life of the school. Despite the school's size, the importance placed on the exchange of information clearly makes a positive contribution towards the strengthening of the links between home and school. Newsletters are frequent and of impressive quality, as are published documents that, except for omissions in the Governor's Annual Report to Parents, meet the required standard. The exchange of information is promoted effectively because children enjoy preparatory induction visits and parents are consulted on school matters and events.
54. Reports on pupils' progress are of satisfactory quality. However, there is a weakness. They do not always clearly explain to parents where improvements need to be made in their children's learning. Also, although general information is of a high quality, there is insufficient information given to parents in advance of which topics their children are to study so that those who wish, can prepare to help their children in advance. This was an area of some concern to parents at the time of the previous inspection.
55. Good links ensure that parents of children with special educational needs are informed and consulted when reviews of provision occur. A considerable number of parents now help out regularly with school activities such as working alongside their own children in the 'Helping Hands Club' or in lessons, and by providing transport to places of cultural interest. Similarly, parents were pleased to co-operate in drawing up and supporting the home-school agreement. They value the regular opportunities provided to see school assemblies and concerts and many make an effective contribution to the progress their children make with their reading at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. The leadership and management of the school is good overall and the leadership of the headteacher is very good. She has a very clear vision of the direction that she expects the school to take. Since her appointment to a school with serious weaknesses two years ago, she has worked exceedingly hard and successfully to build up a secure teaching team and to develop a new and positive ethos. She is a firm leader with a high level of professional knowledge and expertise. She has moulded together a team of dedicated and hard working teachers who share ideas, support each other and follow an agreed agenda in their united efforts to increase the quality of education provided in this school.
57. The small size of this school means that each teacher has a number of areas of responsibility to cover. The headteacher has ensured that co-ordinators are in place for the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and religious education. However, apart from English, these specific areas of responsibility are very recent additions and have yet to have a significant effect upon the work done in these subjects. In all other subjects, teachers take joint

responsibility as a team with the headteacher taking the lead role to ensure that all aspects of each subject are developed securely. Overall, the team does this effectively although their ability to monitor the success of each other's teaching is limited by the size of the school and the number of staff available.

58. The management of provision for special educational needs is very good. The co-ordinator encourages the raising of staff expertise in the use of pupils' individual programmes through suitable training. She has established dedicated teamwork within the school with a mission to provide the best support possible. Paperwork is complete and up to date in an efficient electronic format. Funds available to the school for special needs are used efficiently in the best interests of the pupils.
59. The headteacher and all teachers are successful in ensuring that the school's aims and values are reflected in all that they do. They place a high level of importance upon the need to develop pupils' self esteem and work extremely hard to ensure that all feel happy and comfortable about coming to school. A good level of care is taken to ensure that new staff are introduced quickly and professionally to school routines.
60. An experienced chairman leads the governing body. It has taken the school through a difficult time between permanent headteachers and now the majority of its members fully support the actions that the headteacher is taking to move the school forward. The effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities is satisfactory. Governors are aware of what is going on in the school and they are now beginning to increase their involvement in the life of the school in a positive and constructive way. The three parent governors, who join lessons from time to time, are an example of this. Various effective sub committees meet at appropriate times and include finance, curriculum performance management, premises and staffing. The governing body has all the policies in place that are needed to comply with statutory requirements and the majority of their documents are in proper order. Exceptions are the school prospectus that had the incorrect year's test results included for last year and the annual report that did not include the rates of authorised and unauthorised absences, arrangements for disabled pupils or the school's targets for key stage assessments in English and mathematics.
61. The school's development plan is clear and identifies appropriate priorities for development. It contains a five-year overview that states in broad terms what is planned in various areas of focus over the long term. This overview is supported by a current plan for 2000-2001 that is broken into eight action plans, each with a suitable sub division that identifies the target to be achieved. It identifies appropriate strategies, people involved, time scale for completion, costings, success criteria, evaluation and monitoring guides and space to record what has actually been achieved. The finance committee monitors the progress of expenditure on a regular basis.
62. The school has made good progress with improvements in most areas of concern since the last inspection. It now fulfils the statutory requirements linking work more closely with the programmes of study for National Curriculum subjects and the agreed syllabus for religious education. A new strong headteacher has been appointed and is now having a positive impact on the overall quality of the school. The quality of education has been improved. Teachers now are offered a range of in-service training to improve their competence. There is a reduced dependence on worksheets and the school is now focusing on more open-ended tasks of a problem solving nature – particularly in mathematics and science. Teachers are also seeking to provide more challenging tasks and activities in order to help pupils to become

more independent and agreed plans and policies are now consistently implemented. One area of weakness is, however, the matching of work more appropriately to pupils' prior attainment. This applies specifically to higher attaining pupils in mathematics in both key stages and in English in Key Stage 1.

63. The school has been successful in improving the quality and range of the curriculum through the implementation of agreed assessment procedures. It has also improved planning to concentrate on building upon what pupils already know and can do and it has identified links between subjects that are beginning to provide a greater degree of coherence.
64. The school now ensures that all pupils under five have an appropriate entitlement by matching tasks to stages of development and by increasing the discrete grouping of these pupils as a cohort. This has, to a large extent, been achieved through the appointment of a teacher with considerable experience with this age group of pupils.
65. The leadership and management of the school – the headteacher in particular, has a clear understanding of what needs to be achieved next for the school to continue to improve. This is largely because she analyses each step of the progress being made, makes changes as necessary and ensures that positive action follows.
66. Monitoring and evaluation of the school' performance and taking effective action is good. The in-service training record for staff is positive and there is close contact with other small schools that helps the school to monitor its own performance. A strong team spirit is evident within the school and ensures that teachers feel comfortable about sharing their strengths and weaknesses with each other. The development of the curriculum is monitored by the headteacher on a regular basis and is having a positive effect on the growth of literacy in particular. The school has concerns about the development of numeracy but is taking action to evaluate and improve the standards in mathematics. The governing body sets targets for the headteacher on a regular basis but it has yet to feel comfortable with this aspect of its responsibilities. Currently, the headteacher sets the targets, sets out to achieve them and reports back to the governing body. However, governors are not sufficiently involved at this stage to provide the headteacher with appropriate feedback on the progress that both she and the school are making.
67. The school is making effective use of new technology and also has the added bonus of a school secretary who has specific skills in computer technology. She provides very good support for the school, both in the office and in the classrooms. All resources and specific grants and other funding are used correctly. The school applies sensible principles of best value when purchasing stock and the financial and administrative aspects of the school's management are secure.
68. The numbers and qualifications of the staff are adequate to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. There is a good blend of experience and an effective team is in place. There is an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced support staff who carry out their roles and responsibilities with confidence.
69. The quality of the accommodation provided by the school is satisfactory. The areas available are adequate for the number of pupils on roll and enable an appropriate coverage of the curriculum to be achieved. The outside areas have recently been improved and the hard

surface area is now in good condition. The school is very fortunate to have an excellent caretaker who takes a personal pride in the school and keeps it in good condition throughout.

70. Resources for the delivery of the curriculum are satisfactory overall. The recent addition of a number of new computers has placed the school in a strong position to develop this subject quickly and this is already beginning to happen. The library is suitably stocked with fiction and non-fiction books. The school makes sensible use of the services of outside agencies and visiting adults such as the learning support teacher to supplement the teaching resources provided.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff with management responsibilities should:

A. Continue to raise standards in English by focusing on development in:

- Key Stage 1 by building a stronger basis of phonic knowledge and by planning a simpler organisation of classroom activities to give the teacher more time to follow up more challenging learning objectives with pupils in Year 2;
- Key Stage 2 by creating more opportunities for pupils to read quietly and by developing pupils' vocabulary so that they can speak more fluently and confidently in a variety of situations.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 23, 62, 83, 84, 86 and 87.)

B. Raise standards in mathematics by ensuring that :

- teachers plan work at an appropriate level for pupils of different abilities within the same year group;
- a greater emphasis is given to teaching pupils to work out number combinations quickly.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 23, 62, 91, 92, 95 and 96)

C. Keep on raising standards in science by continuing to:

- place increased emphasis on pupils' ability to investigate and experiment;
- develop and consolidate pupils' ability to record and analyse information.
(Paragraphs 2, 3, 10, 99 and 100)

D. Increase the level of attainment in information and communication technology by:

- increasing the level and frequency of whole class teaching of specific computer skills;
- providing regular opportunities for all pupils to develop proficiency in their use of these skills;
- ensuring that a greater emphasis is placed on planning to ensure that information and communication technology is actively used to support other subjects of the curriculum on a regular basis.
(Paragraphs 4, 7, 21, 88, 96, 104, 107, 111, 114, 117, 119-124 and 129)

E. Raise attendance rates further by following up all absences immediately they occur to make clear to parents that late or non-attendance is unacceptable to the school.
(Paragraphs 17 and 42.)

F. Ensure that all statutory requirements are met in the school prospectus and in the annual report to parents.
(Paragraphs 53 and 60)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- *Records of achievement in subjects other than English and mathematics.*
(28,104,111,123,129,134)
- *Appraisal of headteacher by governors* (66)
- *Marking of work, advising pupils so they know what to do next to improve their work.* (27,

101)

- *Reports to parents to show what next needs to be done for improvement and general advice to parents on topics to be taught.(54)*

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	22
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	35

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	5	41	54	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	49
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	12

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.6
National comparative data	5.4

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.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	49
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	2.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60

Financial information

Financial year	1999-00
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	£
Total income	131080
Total expenditure	125126
Expenditure per pupil	2662
Balance brought forward from previous year	2520
Balance carried forward to next year	8474

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	49
Number of questionnaires returned	18

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	22	11	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	56	39	6	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	61	33	0	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	22	17	6	0
The teaching is good.	67	28	0	6	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	44	0	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	22	0	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	50	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	50	33	0	6	11
The school is well led and managed.	56	22	0	6	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	39	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	39	17	6	11

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

71. The previous inspection found serious weaknesses in the provision for children under five years of age. The school has considered these seriously and has worked hard to improve the teaching arrangements. It now provides an effective education for children throughout the foundation stage within the constraints of small school numbers, staffing and finances. Past weaknesses centred round unsatisfactory progress, reception children being taught too much with the older pupils, inappropriate planning, over-direction by teachers and a dull classroom. In response to these criticisms, the governors have since appointed a teacher with particular expertise in early years education. As a result, planning for children in the foundation stage is now on a secure footing with interesting and appropriate activities provided for most of the school week.
72. The system works because of the flexible deployment of staff. Children have their own lesson introductions. Sometimes, they work with a student assistant and, at others, they receive further input from the class teacher to allow them to work independently for a while. They have regular opportunities to discuss their work with the ancillary helper. They learn through play in the sand and water area or on construction kits and are sometimes supervised by a parent helper. They come together with the rest of the class at the end of the lesson to hear how others have been getting on and this system is effective. This can be seen in the intense concentration on the faces of the children as they pursue their own activities, oblivious to older pupils, as they learn to make their own decisions and solve their own problems.
73. Children under five are admitted to their first class in September. A sensitively planned induction programme allows them to visit the class before they start officially thus easing their start into school life and increasing their confidence. The school achieves its aim to establish good links with home from the earliest days. With limited pre-school experience, children are well below average in the various areas of learning when they start school. By the time they reach the end of the foundation stage, their level of achievement is below average overall except for physical education where it is appropriate for this age group. They are assessed at a suitably early stage to identify attainment groupings. This includes the use of the reception teachers' own informal measures in the first weeks in the reception class, as well as the system recommended by the Local Authority. The results from these assessments are similar to the inspection findings. Children with special educational needs are identified at this stage and are given time to settle before decisions are made regarding the future help and guidance that they may require to support them with their learning.
74. Children make good progress through the foundation year because of the good teaching they receive particularly as a result of the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the needs of children of this age. The development of their early learning prepares them well for the formal National Curriculum in due course. Staffing levels are suitable and very good teamwork creates a positive learning atmosphere for all children. They react positively to the brightness and interesting environment of the classroom. At the end of the reception year, the teacher repeats the original tests to see how much progress children have made. The school is monitoring its provision closely, and will use the findings of its review of the first foundation year to guide the arrangements for subsequent years.

75. Children make satisfactory progress with their personal, social and emotional development. They improve their ability to socialise, to mix appropriately with older pupils and to have a confident sense of belonging to the school community. They learn to sit still and listen, often with rapt attention, but some are still very hesitant in speaking. Well-planned routines train the children in polite behaviour and older pupils provide them with good examples to follow.
76. Literacy is an exciting time for children as staff tell stories in a lively manner. Through the fun of reciting nursery rhymes, teachers ensure that detailed teaching of the key basic skills about letters and sounds occurs. Children have 'big books' to look at, discuss and thereby extend their vocabulary. Good teaching promotes effective progress.
77. The teacher builds in good practical activities to give children the hands-on experience that is at the heart of their early learning. This supports children's mathematical development where they use apparatus for sorting, ordering and making patterns. They also practise using numbers in their heads and make satisfactory progress.
78. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is promoted by a good learning environment filled with objects to stimulate their curiosity and interest. Their level of knowledge is limited but they make good progress as they work at various practical tasks. They learn about the world in and around the school and make good use of the school grounds and sometimes further afield when they visit the local church. They begin to gain some limited experience on how to use the computer as an aid to learning. They develop an awareness of past times from events they recall in their family lives.
79. Children's physical development takes place in the school hall with their own timetabled gymnastic lessons. They display average balance and control when on the apparatus and teachers guide them to use equipment to stimulate adventurous activities and physical investigation. As a result, they make good progress in improving their control and use of space. The school has planned the creation of a small, secure outdoor play area that will extend the opportunities that children will have for the development of their physical skills. They are agile, alert and enthusiastic. They also make good progress in the physical development of their co-ordination and use of smaller equipment such as scissors and other tools.
80. Children's creative development is not as strong as expected for children of this age. Through the well-structured curriculum, and the encouragement of the staff, children develop the necessary enthusiasm and confidence to explore their own ideas. The rainbow fish, paper collages, and computer generated pictures that they have on display, represent good progress made in an area that they find quite difficult. In music they show the capacity to learn words of songs alongside older pupils. They become more confident in role play and learn to use their initiative to develop their own story lines. The lively classroom displays are evidence of the extensive range of experiences provided.

ENGLISH

81. Standards in English are below average overall by the time pupils are seven and eleven years of age. On the surface, this appears to be a weaker position than at the previous inspection, when standards were described as average. After several years of very weak results, standards began to show improvement in 1999 and again last year. Pupils are no longer well below average. They made good progress in lessons seen during the inspection because the school has put in place a much stronger planning base and has adjusted its teaching organisation to match work more closely to their present ability. This changeover is recent, but

worked very effectively during the inspection.

82. Past results compare unfavourably with those of similar small schools but new teaching arrangements make the possibility of this unfavourable comparison appear increasingly unlikely to continue. Furthermore, the small number of pupils involved in each year group makes precise comparisons with similar schools unreliable. It is important to note also that the level of permanent staffing has been low over recent years. This problem is now resolved and the quality of teaching is now satisfactory. Particular attention is paid to pupils who have special educational needs. Their programmes of work focus precisely on their individual needs, so that, with quiet but effective support, they make sound progress.
83. By Year 2, pupils are enthusiastic readers but do not get sufficient time with the teacher to extend those skills that will extend their reading even further. Their attainment in reading and speaking is below average. Pupils talk excitedly and at length, but they dodge from one point to another and are not aware of the more formal aspects of speaking that they should have mastered at this stage. They give the impression of listening closely, because their behaviour is good. When asked questions, it is clear from their answers that they have not taken in all the information. They are not yet in the habit of asking questions when they do not understand something. The level of their attainment in writing is also below average. They write at length in a lively, personal style, but the structure, punctuation and use of a wider more adventurous vocabulary is limited and prevents them from reaching a higher level.
84. In lessons observed, Year 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. Their progress over time is less consistent. Part of the reason lies in the organisation of lessons. Teachers have rightly identified that, sometimes, pupils need to see and handle objects to give them the experience on which to base their writing. These experiences are introduced at different times within the lesson to different ages or ability groups. As a result, this makes interactions between the teacher and pupils and movements around the classroom complex. The teacher's expertise ensures that pupils under five receive a solid foundation for learning. It also makes sure that Year 1 pupils receive a satisfactory level of teaching and appropriate attention to support the progress that they make. However, the same level of teaching is not evident for pupils in Year 2. The demanding objectives set for Year 1 pupils, that enables them to make good progress, are not matched by similarly challenging targets for Year 2. For instance, when pupils work directly with the teacher, Year 2 pupils produce quality handwriting of a higher standard. When they work independently away from the teacher, because they are sensible enough to do this, their handwriting falls back to an almost unsatisfactory level. The range of work tackled by the pupils is wider than at the time of the previous inspection. The school system of evaluating lessons shows that there is a need for a simplified approach in the infant class, and teachers are currently investigating ways of achieving this.
85. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the junior years although, in lessons seen during the inspection, they made good progress as a direct response to good teaching. The narrowness of content found during the previous inspection has disappeared because teachers now plan for breadth of experience for all pupils. Teachers were not satisfied with the progress that pupils were making in the early months of this term so they moved to a system of setting where higher attaining pupils of Years 4, 5 and 6 work together in quiet surroundings on more difficult work appropriate for their respective abilities. The new arrangement was working effectively during the inspection. The remaining pupils benefit from smaller groups and by receiving closer attention as a result. They also gain because teachers set tasks that are more precisely matched to their needs. They discuss work with pupils in more detail and make sure that pupils understand what they are expected to learn and to achieve.

86. The previous report found pupils' speaking standards were low. In response to this, the school has introduced a weekly lesson with a specific focus on speaking and listening. This is working particularly well. Though pupils find it a challenge they enjoy it and try hard. Their growth in confidence is clearly visible and when they finish their presentation, they are happy to take comments from their audience without feeling in any way threatened. However, the standard of their speaking and listening remains below average. Their audience listens avidly with increasing attention spans and the ability to take in details. These are useful skills, which feed into other subjects like physical education when instructions need to be followed carefully. This initiative is leading towards good progress in speaking and listening.
87. Standards in reading are below average by Year 6. Many pupils make satisfactory progress in reading but, overall, they do not advance rapidly enough. The teaching of the basic skills in the literacy hour is sound. Teachers manage pupils very well and create good learning conditions where pupils can concentrate and think but not enough time is allowed for quiet reading. Opportunities are missed when books used for lesson introductions are not read aloud by pupils. Weaknesses exist in pupils' ability to use phonics quickly to aid recognition of unknown words, and in their skill in breaking longer words down into their syllables. However, pupils enjoy reading, express opinions about their book and its author and are beginning to look at the meaning below the surface of the text. Several Year 6 pupils are well on the way to achieving higher levels. They are particularly enthusiastic although they have not explored different forms of writing as widely as they could. They are full of ideas about plot and character, but do not have a sufficiently strong technical vocabulary to talk accurately about an author's style and intentions. They refer to the text effectively in order to answer questions asked of them.
88. Standards in writing are below average for Year 6. Pupils make sound progress because teachers have eradicated other weaknesses from the previous inspection, by reducing the number of worksheets used and by encouraging pupils' own style in planning and drafting. Computers are now used more widely, as with spell checkers for example, although this use is not yet sufficiently frequent and varied to make a positive impact upon the quality of pupils' learning. The school sees literacy as a vital tool to use and extend learning in other subjects because it allows pupils to increase their range and use of various styles of writing and help them to benefit from the growth of their research skills that are now being introduced in English.

MATHEMATICS

89. Standards are below average by the time that pupils are seven and eleven years of age and are lower than those reported at the last inspection. The national test results for the last four years, including the results for the year 2000, indicate a downward trend in Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2, the same pattern is evident until 1999 when the year 2000 results indicate the beginning of an upward movement. However, as these results, and those of earlier years, are based on very small groups of pupils, their reliability for comparative purposes must be viewed with considerable caution. A combination of factors that include the low standard of attainment on entry, the indication of improved results in Key Stage 2 in the year 2000, and the work of current pupils, indicates that this negative trend has been halted. This is a result of the introduction of the numeracy strategy and a change in the quality of teaching over the last two years.

90. The school has gone through a period of considerable difficulty with staffing. The current Key Stage 2 teacher has been in post for two years and the positive effects of her work are now showing in the reversed trend at this level. The current Key Stage 1 teacher has only been in post for one year. The secure quality of teaching seen during the inspection supports the view that the positive effects of her work have yet to show through in Key Stage 1 given the background experience of pupils.
91. Although the quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory and most pupils make steady progress with their learning, there is a variation in the level of planning and expectations for higher attaining pupils that detracts from the progress they make. Over time, teachers have planned work at progressive levels of difficulty for pupils within each age group in both mixed age group classes. However, they have not altered the difficulty of work within an age group to cater sufficiently for pupils of different abilities of the same age. The school is aware of the need to improve this aspect of teaching and, as seen during the inspection, changes are evident. In the Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher made a clear distinction between the work set for pupils of different abilities and, in the Key Stage 1 lesson, a lower attaining Year 2 pupil joined the Year 1 pupils for work that was at an appropriate level.
92. Teachers have a secure basic knowledge of mathematics and make regular use of correct subject specific words. As a result, pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematical vocabulary is extended. Teachers make secure use of the numeracy part of lessons to emphasise the development of pupils' skills of number, but many find it difficult to work out sums quickly in their heads.
93. Teachers use an effective range of teaching methods to make sure that pupils concentrate on their work. They make good use of searching questions to stimulate and extend pupils' intellectual and creative mathematical skills, both of which are considerably underdeveloped when pupils first come to school. There is now a clear emphasis placed upon the investigative aspects of mathematics as teachers focus on teaching pupils to develop their own strategies for solving number problems. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A good example of this was seen in a Key Stage 2 lesson on multiplication. Pupils were encouraged to try different approaches towards solving problems through the use of a grid system.
94. Teachers' management of pupils is good. They are firm and fair in their approach and make sure that all know exactly how they are expected to behave and respond. They speak positively to pupils about the progress that they are making help them to gain in confidence. The quality of marking is satisfactory overall. Where it is good, teachers make positive comments that inform and guide pupils in their work and suggest ways in which they can improve. Teachers keep satisfactory records of how well each lesson has gone so that later work is based on what pupils understand. Records of individual pupils' progress are updated each term. Teachers place appropriate emphasis upon the development of pupils' skills of number in other subjects of the curriculum.
95. By the time they are in Year 2, pupils know how to count in tens and have a basic understanding of tens and units. They know how to add small amounts of money and have a broad grasp of simple number patterns. Higher attaining pupils have a reasonable idea of how to estimate simple lengths in centimetres and most are able to add single digit numbers up to twenty using simple written equations. Pupils have difficulty recognising the names of a

number of common shapes although they identify some of their common properties. They have a limited understanding of the difference between odd and even numbers but they are

not yet proficient in telling simple time. When they first enter Key Stage 1, pupils' attitudes to work are not good. They lack concentration and the ability to work together with consideration for each other. By the end of the key stage, their approach to mathematics and to each other is satisfactory.

96. By Year 6, pupils are beginning to develop the ability to solve simple money and measurement problems but lack confidence. They know how to complete basic tables up to ten times but their ability to do this quickly and efficiently is weak. They have a broad understanding of large numbers up to 1000 and higher attaining pupils begin to use and predict prime numbers. They develop the ability to estimate distances and to use linear measure to the nearest centimetre with reasonable accuracy. Pupils understand the basic differences between metric and imperial measures and they have some experience in developing bar and line graphs to represent measurement of weight. Higher attaining pupils understand the concept of negative numbers and fractional parts and most can add two digit numbers successfully. By Year 6, pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They are positive about what they are doing and work well together. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities to make use of computer programs to extend their work in mathematics.

SCIENCE

97. Standards are below average by the time pupils are seven and eleven years of age. These results are similar to those identified at the last inspection for Key Stage 1 but lower than those for Key Stage 2. Teachers' assessments for Key Stage 1 for the Year 2000 pupils indicate that standards were well below average and test results for Key Stage 2 pupils of this year are the same. However, as these results, and those of earlier years, are based on very small groups of pupils, their reliability for comparative purposes must be viewed with considerable caution. Nevertheless, the Key Stage 2 results since 1998 show a significant increase in standards attained. This supports the findings of the inspection with reference to current standards and the quality of teaching of science.
98. The progress that pupils of all abilities make with their learning is satisfactory. Teachers have deliberately focussed on the development of pupils' ability to develop their own ideas through various forms of investigative work. They have moved away from the excessive use of printed published work sheets criticised in the last inspection. They now encourage pupils to develop their own systems of recording with the help of basic planning sheets that take pupils through each stage of the investigation and guide them towards reaching their own scientific conclusions. This is a positive step and is helping pupils to develop confidence in their own ability to make decisions about what they are observing and testing.
99. Younger pupils are aware that magnets may repel or attract depending upon the ways in which they are placed. They know how to group various materials, like basic foods, into groups according to simple properties. Pupils are aware of the five senses and relate these to the appropriate parts of the body when discussing what they do. Higher attaining pupils are not always extended in the work that they do although there are occasional examples where the teacher expects them to produce more work on a given topic and to explain, in written form and through pictures, how various processes work. Work with buzzers and simple electrical systems is an example. Pupils have a limited knowledge and understanding of forces and of

how they cause objects to move. They see, for example, that water turns the water wheel in their experiments with water and wind but have difficulty understanding the various relationships between variables of height and pressure.

100. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are aware of the essential elements of oxygen and carbon dioxide and the connection that these have with living things. They begin to understand that scientific ideas are built on experiments and evidence collection as with their tests on balloons. They are clear about the basic differences between solids, liquids and gases but they do not have a secure understanding of how a variety of substances may be separated through various physical processes like heating. Pupils begin to understand the concept of a fair test and of how to represent their findings in graphic form as with their thermometer representations. However, their recording through graphs of various forms is limited. They have a basic understanding of food chains and use appropriate scientific language as with the recording of the details of the life cycles of plants and the names of specific parts of animals. They know about the phases of the moon and some of the characteristics of shadows. Higher attaining pupils produce detailed work on how the heart works with considerable writing to support their drawings.
101. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject that enables them to extend pupils' learning of various aspects of science with confidence. In their planning, teachers make clear what they expect pupils to learn by the end of the lesson but do not always make this clear to pupils. As a result, pupils are not always sure about what they are expected to do and this limits the level of progress that they make. Examples of this lack of definition were seen in science lessons observed in both classes.
102. In Key Stage 2, the teacher is clear about what is expected for pupils of different abilities to achieve and this makes a positive contribution to the progress that they make. Such a clarity is not so well developed in Key Stage 1 because higher attaining pupils in particular are not always provided with sufficient direction about what they are expected to achieve by the end of the lesson as with the work with the water wheel, for example.
103. Teachers use an effective range of methods to ensure that pupils maintain interest, concentration and independence in their learning. As a result, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils is good in this subject. Where the good use of science recording sheets is encouraged, as in Key Stage 2, pupils work with excitement, enthusiasm and enjoyment as they seek to find out what happens to various substances like chocolate buttons when they are heated by various methods.
104. Teachers' management of pupils is good. They respond positively to pupils' suggestions and speak to them pleasantly. They encourage an enquiring and investigative approach to scientific studies and encourage pupils to make careful observations. However, they do not make sufficient use of computer programs to enhance pupils' learning in this subject, particularly with reference to collating and recording results for further analysis. Teachers do not have a secure and positive method of recording how well each pupil is progressing in science although a portfolio of work for each pupil has been introduced this term. Although this is designed to provide samples of pupils' work, it shows no evidence of providing a secure measure of what pupils can achieve in relation to the National Curriculum targets for various areas of study.

ART AND DESIGN

105. No lessons were observed during the period of the inspection. However, teachers' planning shows that a full and interesting range of activities is planned for the year ahead. A good quantity of evidence exists in the displays around the school and in the pupils' sketch books and work folders to show that pupils of all abilities reach levels of attainment that are expected by the time they leave the school. Since no teaching was observed a judgement on the quality of teaching cannot be made. The school has successfully overcome the weaknesses found during the previous inspection. The new scheme of work, that guides the teachers' planning, ensures that basic skills and techniques are taught in a logical order. Teachers have attended appropriate training courses and the impact of the greater expertise shows through in the range and quality of work attempted.
106. Younger pupils have mastered colour mixing and the effective use of shading with different types of pencils. They enjoy art and have taken considerable care with their bold leaf prints. Older pupils use more of their work to illustrate other subjects. Their pencil skills are controlled and detailed and put to good use to show different kinds of rocks in a science display, for example. Pupils use similar care and close observation in all their work. More importantly, in their printing, collage, painting, drawing, fabric and clay work, their individuality shows through. Art provides a good opportunity for pupils with special educational needs to achieve success. Their work is some of the best in the delightful 'Rainbow Fish' display, and they also have lively sewing samplers in the bright back-cloth on the back of the piano.
107. Pupils make satisfactory and consistent progress throughout the school. Some of their new learning is work in the style of famous artists, for instance, cut paper collage in the straight line patterns of Mondrian, or spray paint effects and marbling like Jackson Pollock. However, pupils do not know much about the lives and work of a wide enough range of artists although they do know considerably more about their own local artist whose style has influenced much of their work in composition and colour. Although younger pupils have learned how to use the computer to draw and colour pictures for their project on houses, the use of computer programs to enhance pupils' art is not sufficient overall. Pupils' technical language and use of speech is not sufficiently developed to enable them to express their ideas confidently about appreciation of their own and others' work. Teachers value pupils' efforts and take considerable care to ensure that work is displayed in an attractive form.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in design and technology by the time they are seven and eleven. By the time they leave the school, the quality of their work in designing and making is at a level expected for pupils of this age. This quality is similar to that at the time of the last inspection.
109. As pupils move through Key Stage 1, they become aware of a range of materials that can be used for making various models. They work on developing ideas in connection with various topics such as 'ourselves' and 'celebrations'. Currently they are working on a unit of study related to developing their own moving pictures that incorporate a slide or lever in the end product. They are required to develop their own ideas and talk about how simple moving products work. There is no evidence in the work seen to indicate that pupils at this age have experience of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of what they create or of being able to indicate how their work may be improved.

110. In Key Stage 2, pupils have recently completed the design and making of a structure that will hold a kilogram weight without collapsing. They have produced some good work in terms of setting out clearly what has to be achieved to be followed by the development of careful plans that show both labels and step by step directions on how the product is to be made. They are then required to make a careful analysis of their product to decide what could be improved should they choose to repeat the process. Pupils are aware of the importance of making a product that will satisfy the needs of the user as with their work on photo frames. They are aware of the value of comparing what they wish to make with established examples in the wider world in order to provide them with hints and guidelines about the best ways of tackling their designs. Pupils are keen to discuss what they have achieved in this subject and show a clear interest in their work.
111. Although no direct observations of lessons were seen, interviews with pupils and observations of their finished products, such as the photograph frames, indicates that teaching of this subject is satisfactory. Weekly lessons occur in Key Stage 1 and six separate sessions are taught throughout the year in Key Stage 2. These follow a two-year cycle that ensures that pupils receive a reasonable balance of experience within these mixed age and ability classes. Teacher do not make sufficient use of appropriate computer programs to help pupils with the design aspects of their work and procedures for assessing the progress that individual pupils make have not been developed.

GEOGRAPHY

112. By the time they leave the school, pupils' knowledge and skills are broadly at the level expected for their age. This is a stronger position than that found at the previous inspection where the overall attainment was limited and Year 2 pupils in particular were below average because of the shallow coverage of the programmes of study. The school has taken effective steps to strengthen its curriculum for geography and now provides a sound range of opportunities to ensure that pupils' progress is satisfactory.
113. Teaching of younger pupils in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and contributes to the sound progress made by the pupils by the end of Year 1. The progress of Year 2 pupils is not as consistent. Because they work well independently, these pupils are, at times, given tasks to complete away from the teacher. While this encourages good personal development, it means that they do not get sufficient guidance to bring out the full extension of knowledge or skills. The close attention given to Year 1 pupils enables them to benefit from their study of real maps and photographs of the area as part of an information communication technology lesson. They look enthusiastically for features that they recognise and point to fens, dykes, roads and railways. They increase their understanding by comparing how the features appear on maps and photographs, discuss them excitedly together and share their ideas with the teacher.
114. No judgement can be made on the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 because no lessons were seen during the inspection. However, teachers' planning indicates that they intend to cover the requirements of Curriculum 2000 appropriately. Samples of pupils' work show that they have made satisfactory progress in extending and deepening their knowledge of distant places such as Kenya and China, or of places closer to home but different in character to the Deepings. From Years 3 to 6, they grow in their ability to present reports about river studies or the weather. At first they write simple accounts of how land is used and later they are able to link maps and tables of figures. Older pupils develop their research sources in neat booklets, such as the China project. However, Year 6 pupils are not sufficiently skilled in

map reading, in their use of four and six figure co-ordinates, in their interpretation of scale or in incorporating graphs in their data handling. They do not use the computer sufficiently as a tool to display their findings. The books of the pupils who have special educational needs show that they are keeping up fairly well with the work of the class, with evidence of a good level of support and encouragement in teachers' marking comments.

HISTORY

115. Lessons were only observed in the Key Stage 2 class, but good samples of pupils' past work are kept by the school and indicate that levels of attainment are generally in line with those expected for the pupils of this age by the time they leave the school. This is an improved position since the previous inspection when attainment was judged to be below average. The school has studied the findings of that report and has successfully tackled the specific weaknesses relating to the development of specific skills and the lack of progress made.
116. Teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory. Older pupils no longer cover study units at a superficial level through the overuse of worksheets. Teachers take care to ensure pupils look for the reasons why events happened in considerable depth. They make sure this happens by providing pupils with clear and purposeful lesson introductions. They guide pupils to look at a number of sources including posters, information books and computer disks, which they have checked for suitability in advance. This is a good strategy for learning that is training pupils to be increasingly independent. As a result, they work quietly with good concentration. As they introduce pupils to historical information teachers also develop pupils' ability to carry out more rigorous research by selecting information instead of simply copying facts. Year 2 pupils develop an understanding that the past means hundreds and even thousands of years ago. They begin to remember the important features of past events and understand how pictures and old photographs show clear differences between the past and the present time.
117. Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Teachers' planning is in an effective spiral form, which means that all pupils hear the same clear lesson introduction but do different tasks related to their age, so that their skills develop according to their ability. Each time a topic is repeated, pupils approach it at a higher level. For instance, in the present work on the Tudors, Year 3 pupils concentrate on basic facts and on getting the Kings and Queens in the right order on their timeline. Year 4 pupils are taught to realise that some sources are first hand and others are secondary such as information gained from books. Year 5 pupils are beginning to learn to find correct information in greater detail from subject based computer programs although such programs are not yet used sufficiently regularly to enhance the quality of pupils' learning in this subject. Year 6 pupils learn to recognise the difference between data that is factual and data that is simply an opinion. When pupils with special educational needs encounter difficulties, they receive extra help from their teacher that enables them to progress at the same rate as their peers.
118. Teachers use and develop the pupils' literacy skills effectively by setting different tasks such as writing as a character in the event, in a journalistic style or as a diary. Pupils' skills in numeracy have not been so well developed in this subject particularly with reference to dates and lengths of time connected with the reigns of monarchs, for example. Pupils do not get sufficient opportunity to handle artefacts from the past to exercise and extend their investigation skills based on solid evidence.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

119. Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is below the level expected for pupils both at seven and eleven years of age. The quality of pupils' use, knowledge and understanding of the subject has decreased since the last inspection. There are two main reasons for this. Insufficient planning for direct teaching of the subject means that specific skills are not introduced or built upon. Although pupils have a taught lesson in Key Stage 1 each week, overall, they do not have regular experience on computers to enable them to develop their skills and to use this ability to support their work in other areas of the curriculum.
120. Pupils of all abilities make unsatisfactory progress with the development of their computer skills as they move from year to year. This includes pupils with special educational needs. Younger pupils have a basic understanding of how to use simple word processing programs to recognise letters and words. They know how to use the mouse to move the cursor and to eventually find the word or letters that they are looking for but they do not do this with any degree of confidence. They are unable to explore ways of getting information from a number of sources or to talk knowledgeably about ways in which other technological devices can be used to provide them with information.
121. By Year 6, pupils are not skilled in keyboard use in any form. They know about basic word processing techniques to a limited degree and are aware of the use of the Internet as a means of gathering information. However, they are unable to talk at length about how information systems of any sort may be used to provide them with facts to support them with their studies in other subjects of the curriculum. The encyclopaedia program on Henry V111, seen on screen during the inspection, provided an example of a very recent introduction to the concept that such programs have a place in their work. However, discussions with pupils and teachers show clearly that regular use and development of specific skills has not yet happened.
122. Pupils do know the basic principles behind computer research based studies. They know how to print their work through a variety of commands but they are uncertain about saving and retrieving their work. They have recently been introduced to the e-mail system through the school's contacts with Australia, but this experience has not been sufficiently developed to ensure fluency and confidence in the use of this aspect of modern technology. Pupils do not know how to cut, paste and re-draft their work. They have no experience of using computer programs to develop a series of movements on the screen, control actions of robots on the ground or of how to measure temperature in connection with science, for example.
123. No actual class teaching of ICT was seen during the inspection. However, discussions with teachers and pupils about their work, observations of documentation and the very limited available work of pupils, show that this subject is not taught well throughout the school. There are significant gaps in teachers' planning for its use both as a direct teaching of specific skills and for its use as a subject to support others on a regular basis. Pupils are not provided with regular opportunities to practise their skills and their progress suffers as a result.
124. There is not a curriculum co-ordinator for this subject because the school's policy is that the development of this subject should be a team effort. Although the situation is unsatisfactory at present, the school is aware of the need to take steps to develop this subject with a degree of urgency. To this end, it now has a new suite of computers in place and teachers are soon to embark on an in-service training programme to enhance their own skills and ability to teach this subject successfully. At present, however, the scheme of work is under-developed and is

not applied so that the development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is both

continuous and progressive in terms of difficulty. The school does not have a secure assessment system in place that records what individual pupils can do. This detracts from teachers' ability to guide and prepare pupils for the next stage of their learning.

MUSIC

125. The progress that pupils of all abilities make is satisfactory. By the time they leave the school, the quality of their playing, composition, listening and singing is at a level expected for pupils of this age. The quality of their singing reflects the enjoyment that pupils have for this subject. They are happy to sing and do so with pleasure whenever the opportunity arises. Their attainment in music is better than that achieved at the last inspection when it was less than normal for their age.
126. It was not possible to see sufficient lessons in music to make a clear judgement on the quality of teaching and learning. However, discussions with pupils and teachers about their work, and observations of teachers' documentation, show that music is appropriately taught. During assemblies, and in class, pupils demonstrate the ability to sing songs from memory with a reasonable degree of quality. They know how to back up their singing with hand actions and produce a rhythmic performance that is tuneful and given with considerable expression. Pupils listen carefully and sustain their concentration throughout their songs.
127. Younger pupils interviewed show they can pitch their voices comfortably to follow the contour of the melody. They form words reasonably clearly and show, through their actions, that they can vary the dynamics of their singing to fit the mood of the song. They remember simple patterns and clap the beat of the song with reasonable accuracy for their age. They listen carefully to the singing of others and have some ability to make comment about how the singing of others in their group could be improved. Pupils know the names of instruments used at school and can also identify a few of the instruments of the orchestra.
128. Pupils in Year 6 sing with expression and use improvised patterns to combine several levels of sound. They know how to sing two and three part improvisations of simple rounds and can maintain their own part with reasonable accuracy. They understand how to combine simple non-tuned instruments successfully to support their work although this experience is limited. Pupils understand the difference between the beat and the pattern of a tune and know a reasonable number of songs by heart. They sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment. They have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of how music from different cultures varies and give examples when asked. They know about various instruments of the orchestra and understand how they fit into various groups according to their structure or the way in which they are played. As with Key Stage 1 pupils, their singing experience is stronger than their experience of composition.
129. The teaching of music is starting to develop. The headteacher firmly believes that this subject should be taught by individual teachers rather than by a specialist and, to support this belief, has introduced a comprehensive published resource pack to help teachers develop their expertise. Teachers use a lesson plan design that is common to a number of other subjects of the curriculum and the school is currently experimenting with a combination of guides and experiences taken from their own use of a published scheme and that suggested by other experts in the field. Insufficient use is made of appropriate ICT software programs to support the compositional side of pupils' music development and there are no formal systems in place by which teachers can assess accurately the progress that individual pupils are making in this subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. By the time pupils leave the school, their physical skills are at a level expected for pupils of this age in the aspects of the curriculum observed during the inspection. This is similar to the levels attained by pupils during the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in both key stages and the school provides a suitable range of activities for pupils of this age group to ensure that all the appropriate elements of the curriculum are addressed.
131. The quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good. Teachers have a suitable knowledge and understanding of physical education and apply this appropriately during lessons. They teach pupils to listen carefully and to respond quickly and safely to instructions as in the Key Stage 2 lesson on practising old skills and developing new ones.
132. They make good use of a variety of teaching methods that ensure pupils remain on task and interested in what they are doing. In both lessons observed, teachers made clear to pupils what they expected them to achieve by the end of the lesson and ensured that pupils worked hard throughout. As a result, the pace of the lessons was fast and this ensured that pupils developed their self control and team game skills effectively.
133. Teachers maintain good control of pupils because they set the ground rules clearly and simply. As a result, pupils enjoy their physical education and behave sensibly both independently and in a group. Teachers lead by example and show pupils how to develop specific skills successfully as with the lesson on how to roll a hoop without losing control of it. Older pupils are encouraged to think carefully about what they are doing so that, through discussion and experimentation, they learn to develop new movements and skills.
134. Long term planning ensures that appropriate aspects of the National Curriculum are suitably covered during the year but there are no clear assessment systems in place to ensure that teachers know how well each pupil is developing with specific skills. The school also takes up various opportunities to extend pupils' experiences as with short tennis sessions and Kwik Cricket on occasions. The physical aspects of the school have been improved – the floor to the school hall and the surface of the playground in particular.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. By the time pupils leave the school, their knowledge and understanding is at the level expected by the locally Agreed Syllabus for pupils of this age. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection that judged levels to be below average and progress to be unsatisfactory in both key stages. The quality of teaching of this subject is now satisfactory. Teachers have adopted a stronger, more systematic planning structure to ensure that pupils have sufficient and regular religious lessons. They plan to promote a good depth of thinking about a wide range of topics. No lessons were observed during the present inspection but a good range of pupils' work was available for scrutiny. This indicated that pupils are particularly good at presenting their own ideas in a variety of forms. Work seen shows evidence of pupils' individuality showing through in how they think and respond. Sometimes pupils record their impressions in poetry, as a diary, as a story of one of the participants, like a newspaper or as a table of information. This variety enhances pupils' interest, which is reflected in the neat presentation of their work.
136. Year 2 pupils also have a thoughtful and caring attitude although their ability to remember details of past learning is not so well developed by the end of Key Stage 2. This does not make their progress unsatisfactory, but it is less consistent than that of the older pupils. Their

standards are broadly those expected for their age but they do show an element of confusion when they are talking about their learning. They have a sound knowledge about Christianity, the life and death of Jesus, about churches and why people go to them. While they are aware of festivals and celebrations, Santa Claus, the Holy Spirit and Divali lights are a jumble of connected but unclear ideas to them. Teachers are aware of this problem and are currently seeking ways to correct it. Part of the solution lies in the regular assessment of what pupils understand. The co-ordinator has the new Agreed Syllabus, and it is part of the school's action plan to revise the policy for religious education to meet its aims, which include an assessment procedure. Teachers are increasing their use of videos to support their teaching, but pupils' use of computer programs to extend their learning of religious education remains underdeveloped.

137. Teachers encourage older pupils to reflect on the deeper meaning of texts they read by writing good questioning comments in the pupils' books. Pupils develop a responsible attitude, a growing awareness of cultures and faiths different to their own, and a willingness to listen to the ideas of others. They gain a good understanding of religious principles and demonstrate them within the happy and calm atmosphere of the school and the way in which they show concern for younger pupils.