

## INSPECTION REPORT

### **ST JAMES INFANT SCHOOL**

Daventry

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121882

Headteacher: Mrs J Amery

Reporting inspector: Mr S M O'Toole  
20891

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 224603

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St James Street Daventry Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN11 4AG
Telephone number:	01327 702783
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr A Spires
Date of previous inspection:	September 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr S M O'Toole 20891	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children under-five Mathematics Art and design Design and technology	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
Mrs S Stevens 9942	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Mrs S Derrick 15837	Team inspector	Special educational needs Science Information and communication technology Geography Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
Mrs N Moss 22605	Team inspector	Equal opportunities History Music Religious education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St James Infant School is located close to the town centre in Daventry. The pupils come from a wide area and their socio-economic backgrounds are broadly average. There are a total of 159 boys and girls attending the school, a figure which is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The headteacher and almost all of the teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection. The school is smaller than most primary schools. Pupils are aged from four to seven. Almost all pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds. One pupil has English as an additional language. Fourteen pupils are entitled to free school meals a figure which is below average. An above average proportion of pupils has special educational needs (39) although none has a statement of special educational need (below average). On admission to the school, most children have benefited from pre-school educational provision; they have average levels of attainment, although this varies from year to year.

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

This is a very effective school where standards are above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The teaching is good and pupils learn successfully. The pupils' behaviour is good; they are well-motivated and keen learners. The school is led and managed very well and the governors play an effective role in shaping policy and direction. The school manages its budget prudently and ensures that financial decisions are taken in the best interest of the pupils. Parents are justifiably proud of their children's achievements and the role they play in supporting the school. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, religious education, music, physical education and history are above average.
- Children under five make good progress and achieve standards which are above those expected for their age.
- The teaching is good and pupils of all abilities make effective gains in their learning; they have very positive attitudes and behave well.
- The school is led and managed very effectively.
- There is excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Links with parents and the community are excellent.
- This is a very caring school.

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

- Some aspects of pupils' writing.
- There are insufficient staff and resources for children in the reception classes.

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

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

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection in September 1996. Good standards in English, mathematics and science have been maintained. There have been improvements in music, information and communication technology, and physical education. Teaching is better and there is a higher proportion of good lessons. Levels of attendance have risen, the curriculum is now good, pupils are supported very well and links with parents, the community and other schools are now excellent. Very effective leadership and management by the headteacher and governors have ensured that the strengths reported previously have been at least maintained. The school is in a strong position to improve further.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	B	A	B	B
Writing	B	A	B	B
Mathematics	C	B	B	C

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In the 2000 national tests at the age of seven, pupils attained above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's results in national tests have kept pace with the national rising trend of improvement. In the teachers' assessments in science the pupils attained above average standards. Although overall standards are not quite as high as in the previous year these results represent good achievement for the school, in view of the low attainment of this group of pupils on admission to the school and the almost complete change of staff in the last two years. When compared with similar schools, attainment is above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. Standards overall are sufficiently high although pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are average. In mathematics, pupils lack confidence in working with graphs. Standards in religious education, history, music and physical education are above those expected for seven-year-olds. Standards in information and communication technology are average and improving rapidly. By the end of the reception year the children attain at least the levels expected for their age in most of the areas of learning and almost all are working at levels which are above those expected. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, is good. The school sets challenging targets and has consistently raised the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen and interested learners who respond very well to the teaching.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Almost all pupils behave well both in classrooms and around the school. They have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are given and respond very well to responsibility. They get on well together and develop very good social skills..
Attendance	Very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school; attendance is well above average and there are no unauthorised absences.

Children under five settle quickly into the school's routines. They develop good working habits and are keen to succeed. Behaviour is very good in assemblies and in moving around the

school. The pupils are polite and well mannered, and in assembly show appreciation for others' achievements. There have been no exclusions.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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 teaching is good. In the lessons seen, all of the teaching was satisfactory or better. Fifty-nine percent of lessons were good with 25 per cent being very good or excellent. Lessons are planned well and teachers make good use of resources. The teaching in the reception classes is good and there is an effective balance between adult direction and child chosen activities. Reading is taught well throughout the school; the staff use a wide variety of methods to develop the pupils' confidence and competence. Good strategies are used to help the pupils to write fluently although there is insufficient attention given to spelling, punctuation and grammar. Mathematics and science are taught well. The teachers have good subject knowledge in most subjects. They make effective use of homework to extend the pupils. The pupils are keen to learn. They make good gains in most subjects, responding enthusiastically to challenging questions and working productively. The teachers manage behaviour effectively, use praise to motivate the pupils and have very good relationships which inspire pupils' confidence. There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching, although there is insufficient guidance in marking to help the pupils to improve. The teachers are dedicated and hard-working; they pay good attention to matching work to the needs of pupils of different abilities, particularly those pupils with special educational needs, the gifted and talented and those with English as an additional language.

### OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The pupils benefit from a wide range of interesting activities which promote learning well. All subjects are included and the school places much emphasis on developing pupils' academic and social skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Excellent. Individual education plans are used very well to plan work and good attention is given to sharing targets with parents. The school makes good provision for gifted and talented pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There is effective support in the classroom and from outside agencies.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school promotes social skills very well. Much attention is given to creating a purposeful, happy and positive feel to the school by developing pupils' awareness of spiritual, moral and cultural issues so that they learn to appreciate others and their own role in society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. This is a very caring school where individuals are encouraged to develop mature and sensible attitudes. The school has very good ways of assessing the pupils' progress.

There is an excellent relationship between the school and parents. Parents play a very significant part in supporting their children's learning through homework, helping in school and raising funds. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and the school provides equal opportunities for all. Many examples of care for pupils through positive comments and reassurance were observed during the inspection.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. There is a strong sense of teamwork and staff are very supportive and hardworking. The headteacher leads by example and rigorously pursues higher standards, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, staff and governors.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effectively. The governors ensure that all requirements are met and take an informed and constructive part in shaping the direction of the school. The governors set challenging targets for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school analyses its performance well and plans effectively to improve standards. The headteacher and staff monitor teaching and set targets for improvement which are met.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Finances are in good order and funds are used well to benefit the pupils. Prudent and well planned spending has resulted in good improvement.

There is an adequate number of teachers, however, there are insufficient support staff working in the reception classes. The accommodation and resources are mostly good with some gaps in the equipment for under fives. The school has coped well with a significant fall in numbers and the resulting reduction in its budget. The governors and headteacher work hard to ensure that the funds provided are used to best effect.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That their children like school:</li> <li>• The good progress made in academic and social development:</li> <li>• The approachability of all staff:</li> <li>• The strong leadership and management of the school:</li> <li>• The good quality of the teaching:</li> <li>• How the school has improved since the previous inspection:</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More extra-curricular activities</li> </ul>

The inspection team endorses the positive views of parents. The school provides a good range and number of extra-curricular activities for Year 2 pupils. Parents' confidence in the school is fully justified by inspection evidence.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

- 1 The school has been through significant changes since the previous inspection but overall has at least maintained standards as above average in most subjects. Standards in physical education and music are better than before and the pupils now make good progress in information and communication technology. Parents speak positively about the standards achieved and say that their children are encouraged to work hard. Almost all of the teachers, including the headteacher, have been appointed since the previous inspection. Attainment on admission to the school in most years is about average and almost all children starting in reception have benefited from pre-school educational provision. However, there is some fluctuation in attainment on admission. The pupils who took the national tests in 2000 started school with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding in language and mathematics which were below average. In view of this low attainment on admission the school's results at the end of Year 2 in the national tests in 2000 were good and sufficiently high. The school has set well-focused targets to raise standards. It has met with good success in increasing the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 in reading, writing, mathematics and science. This percentage has risen steadily due to more challenging teaching, awareness of the needs of gifted and talented pupils, effective schemes of work and careful tracking of the pupils' performance in each year group. When compared with schools with similar intakes, standards are above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The school is aware of this difference in performance in mathematics and has introduced more effective planning, a new scheme of work and tracking of pupils' progress to improve standards. Inspection evidence shows that good headway is being made.
- 2 Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress. Careful planning of work and matching of tasks to the different abilities in the classes ensures that all pupils make good gains in learning. Children in the reception classes are supported well by the teachers who carefully analyse their attainment on admission to the school and plan work at an appropriate level. The balance achieved between practical activities and direct teaching pays good dividends so that by the end of the reception year the children are equipped well for the National Curriculum. By the time they start in Year 1 the children attain good levels of skill, knowledge and understanding in their work. In communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development the children achieve above average levels for their age. Creative skills are average. The children make good gains in their personal and social development and are keen learners who are confident and secure in relationships. There are no significant differences between the performance of boys and girls although results for these groups of pupils vary slightly from year to year.
- 3 The good start made in reception is built upon effectively in the infants. Teachers are well aware of the pupils' capabilities and through effective teaching promote good progress. The excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs contributes much to the good gains in learning made by these pupils. They are supported well by classroom assistants and the teachers use individual education plans successfully to pinpoint areas for development. It is a mark of the school's success that through their policy of identifying special educational needs early and intervening with effective

teaching several pupils make sufficient gains to be removed from the register of special educational needs. The school makes good provision for those with English as an additional language and receives effective support from outside agencies. The strong emphasis on developing these pupils' spoken skills and regular practice of basic reading enables the pupils to achieve appropriate standards for their age by the time they leave the school. The school has identified several pupils who are gifted and talented and provides challenging activities for these pupils. These pupils make good progress, particularly in English and mathematics, and a few have achieved level 4 in national tests.

- 4 Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science were above average in the national tests and assessments in 2000 for seven-year-olds and inspection evidence shows that standards are above average. The pupils are good listeners and they have good skills in speaking. The pupils read well, have a good understanding of a wide variety of texts and thoroughly enjoy books. Parental involvement in reading, the effective use of the library and regular practice of skills ensures that standards are at least as high as they should be. The pupils write well using a good range of vocabulary and imaginative phrases. They improve their basic skills in handwriting, punctuation, grammar and spelling which are average. However, this knowledge is not applied sufficiently to work in other subjects. In history, geography, religious education and science there is insufficient emphasis on applying these skills effectively. As a result, although overall standards in writing are above average there is some ground to be made up in closing the gap between reading and writing in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy and it has begun to impact on pupils' achievement. The recently appointed subject leader for English is aware of the variations between reading and writing and has begun, through the monitoring of pupils' learning, to develop good strategies to improve pupils' basic writing skills. Most pupils are competent mathematicians and have a good understanding of number, shape, space and measures and using and applying mathematics. They have a very good mathematical vocabulary. However, their skills in handling data, in for example, making and interpreting graphs are average. The school has improved the teaching of science since the previous inspection and standards are above average in all aspects of the subject. The pupils have a wide scientific vocabulary and understanding.
- 5 Standards in information and communication technology are at the level expected of pupils aged seven. Standards are rising since the introduction of a new computer suite and more effective teaching. In religious education, the pupils have an above average understanding of festivals and religious traditions; their ability to discuss sensitive issues is well developed. In physical education, music and history standards are better than those normally seen at the end of the infants. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and enjoy playing musical instruments and performing in front of adults. They have good skills in gymnastics. Pupils have a good understanding of historical personalities. They use their literacy skills well in history to find information from a variety of texts. In art and design, geography and design and technology standards are appropriate for the age of the pupils. There are some gaps in pupils' modelling skills, although they produce good work in the style of famous artists. Their mapping skills are good. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to work with wood and to cut and shape materials but they develop good skills in food technology.

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

- 6 Pupils' attitudes and personal development are very good and their behaviour is good. These high standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The level of attendance is very good, being well above average and has improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are keen to come to school and are rarely late. The overwhelming majority of parents who replied to the questionnaire agree that behaviour is good and that their children enjoy coming to school. The pupils enthusiastically take part in all the school's activities and thoroughly enjoy the experiences offered to them.
- 7 Children under five settle into school routines quickly and adjust to school life well. They make good gains in their approach to learning. The children are keen to take part in all the school's activities and soon develop mature and sensible attitudes. They mix well in the playground and behave well on formal occasions such as assembly, where they sit quietly and show appreciation for others. Children with English as an additional language are supported well and grow in confidence in using English and joining in activities with their friends.
- 8 In the infants, pupils show positive attitudes towards learning, which are stimulated by good teaching. These attributes are among the school's strengths and have a positive effect on pupils' progress and contribute to the good quality of education at the school. In English lessons, the pupils concentrate well showing particular pleasure in listening to and joining in with stories. They apply themselves well to homework for example in learning spelling. In lessons in mathematics, pupils respond well to the teachers' questions, being keen to answer quickly and accurately. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils responded excellently to a game involving multiplication; they excitedly gave answers and explained how they had achieved them. In a science lesson in Year 2, the pupils showed much delight in learning about forces and there were gasps of amazement as they discussed and investigated the solution to a problem. In a very good physical education lesson, the pupils took great care, concentrated intensely and rigorously pursued ways of refining their sequences of movements. Pupils with special educational needs have equally positive attitudes to learning. They behave well and work hard. They have very good relationships with other pupils and the staff who support them.
- 9 The standard of pupils' behaviour is good. There have been no exclusions. Occasionally, teachers are called on to check the behaviour of a few boys to prevent them from disrupting other pupils. The boys respond well to these interventions. Throughout the school, pupils are polite and courteous. Their orderly and considerate conduct continues when unsupervised and extends to the playground. Relationships between pupils are very good and instances of bullying are rare. Pupils show appreciation for each other's achievements and are quick to offer friendship or comfort to each other. They respond well to the school's procedures and rules and enjoy earning praise, especially at the weekly assembly at which awards are made and achievements celebrated. Pupils respect the adults in the school. They value and respond positively to the constructive relationships they have with their teachers and helpers. When required, pupils take responsibility for special tasks, such as acting as class monitors, and competently organise themselves and their working materials. Pupils show considerable initiative, and are confident, happy and well prepared for the next stage in their education.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

- 10 Good standards of teaching have been maintained since the previous inspection. There is now an increased proportion of good and better teaching and no lessons were

unsatisfactory. Twenty-five per cent of lessons were very good or excellent with 59 per cent being good and 17 per cent satisfactory. This good picture has been achieved against the background of an almost complete change in the teaching staff in the last two years. The quality of teaching is influenced strongly through rigorous monitoring by the headteacher, good schemes of work to guide staff, and effective planning for the needs of pupils of all abilities. Teaching has a strong impact on the rate and depth of pupils' learning as the teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects and match work carefully to the needs of all, basing their planning on assessment. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching, although more emphasis is needed on the development of skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar. There are inconsistencies in applying the school's good marking policy. Pupils' work is marked regularly and frequently includes encouraging comments. The teachers set targets for overall improvement but marking does not give pupils a clear understanding of how they might improve their work.

- 11 The teaching of children in the reception classes is good overall and satisfactory in developing creative skills. Particular strengths are in the way that basic skills of reading and writing are taught. There is an effective balance between teaching the children to read new words and developing their knowledge and skills in building words from letter sounds. The teachers have a secure grasp of how young children learn to read and build consistently on previous learning. They provide good opportunities to share stories and to participate in recounting well-known tales. Regular practice of words and involvement of parents in reading at home inspires confidence in the children who learn to love books. The children enjoy using the library and its good stock of books helps to encourage reading. In most lessons, the teachers focus on extending the children's vocabulary and this results in rapid gains in the breadth and depth of language and results in good competence in speaking and listening. The teachers provide good opportunities for the children to practise writing. They encourage correct letter formation and reward good attempts with praise and encouragement. Similarly in mathematics, the teachers concentrate on promoting secure counting and adding skills by using resources effectively to support learning. The children are taught a wide variety of number rhymes. The teachers use questions to check on the children's understanding and then use the information to plan the next lesson. For example, in mathematics children who found difficulty in sequencing numbers correctly were taught a rhyme to improve their skills of ordering and built towers of different heights to see how numbers "grew". The teachers have a good understanding of recent government initiatives regarding work with young children and also have a good understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In the other areas of learning there is a balance between child chosen and teacher directed activities and consequently the children become adept in making choices, working independently and co-operatively. In the experiential room a nursery nurse makes helpful observations of the children at work and intervenes in directing them to activities they may not have previously experienced. In both reception classes, the staff show much care for the children. Relationships are very good and although there are a few isolated incidents of unsettled behaviour the staff manage them well.
- 12 Most of the teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good. A fifth of lessons were satisfactory and a third were very good or excellent. English and mathematics are taught well, although there is insufficient emphasis on extending the pupils' knowledge of spelling, punctuation and grammar. English and mathematics lessons follow the guidelines in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Planning and preparation are thorough. In their lesson plans the teachers include clear objectives. They share these with the pupils and refer to them during and at the end of lessons. As a result, the pupils are very clear about what is expected of them and how well they have achieved. This

approach helps to promote effective learning as the pupils immediately focus on the tasks set for them and are sure what resources they should use and how much time they have to complete their work. The detailed planning also assists teachers in keeping lessons well paced. Most lessons follow a structure of introduction, group work and conclusion and this pattern is successful, particularly in mathematics. In a very good lesson in mathematics in Year 2, the teacher fired questions at the pupils expecting and getting an immediate response, she introduced several new words for multiplication and then gave the pupils practical opportunities to make sets and to record their answers. Questions at the end of the lesson showed that the pupils had made good gains in their learning. Similarly in another Year 2 class, the teacher used difficult texts to extend the pupils' language, set demanding but well matched tasks and pupils made significant gains in using vocabulary successfully to express their ideas.

- 13 In most subjects the teachers have good subject knowledge and they use their expertise to make lessons interesting. They make good use of resources and visits to add sparkle to learning and are keen to use visiting experts to add depth to the pupils' understanding for example in history lessons. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge of art and design and technology. The teachers have benefited much from training in how to use computers and teach this subject well. The teaching of religious education is good. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher held the pupils' attention very well by unwrapping a variety of precious items. The discussion that followed was sensitive and thoughtful and the pupils gained a clear understanding of the difference between cost and value. Very knowledgeable teaching of science has helped to raise standards consistently. A particular strength in the teaching is the emphasis given to promoting pupils' understanding and use of vocabulary for example in an art lesson the teacher made excellent links with literacy by using illustrations in books to get the pupils to sequence a story in pictures. The teacher's focused use of specialist vocabulary such as images, creativity and depth captured the pupils' imagination and by the end of the lesson they were using such words correctly and confidently. In a very good lesson in physical education the Year 2 teacher expected high standards from the pupils in listening attentively and in observing others' performances. She then encouraged, with good success, the pupils to refine their own movements. In an excellent music lesson the pupils were held spellbound by imaginative teaching and then responded with excitement and intense concentration to produce a good standard of work.
- 14 Pupils' learning benefits much from the teachers' enthusiasm and challenge. The way that teachers match work to the needs of the individual pupils is a credit to their professional and dedicated approach to teaching. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, receive effective support and teachers use very good individual education plans to set tasks. Similarly those who are gifted and talented are given additional challenge and extra work to ensure that they build on their successes. Although there is limited additional classroom support available, due to budget constraints, assistants work hard, focus very well on specific tasks and help to move the pupils on at good pace. Their friendly and purposeful relationships with the pupils contribute to learning. There is a consistent approach to maintaining good order and discipline in lessons. Teachers use praise well and celebrate kindness, good behaviour and hard work. If necessary they apply sanctions and the pupils are left in no doubt about what is acceptable behaviour.
- 15 The pupils enjoy learning. They are very keen to complete homework which is given regularly for reading, mathematics and spelling, and occasionally for research. The teachers' clear explanations and patience mean that even the most insecure pupils make good gains in their learning. Pupils have a thirst for knowledge and apply themselves very well to tasks. In a computer lesson pupils compared their own

drawings in pencil with that of their friends, done on the computer. They discussed the similarities and differences and made good suggestions about how to improve their work. In a design and technology lesson in Year 1 the pupils listened attentively to instructions and then worked well to a time limit to produce a card containing a moving picture. Pupils also apply themselves well in physical education and music lessons by striving to improve their performance. Evidence in books shows that the pupils are productive workers who take care in presenting their work.

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

- 16 The school provides a good curriculum that includes all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The curriculum contributes effectively to the pupils' academic, social and physical development and prepares them very well for the next stage of education. It has been developed well since the previous inspection. Appropriate emphasis is given to creative development through art, design and technology, dance and drama. The National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been introduced and are having a beneficial impact on raising standards in English and mathematics. Religious education is taught well and conforms to statutory requirements. Standards are good in most subjects, however, there is insufficient emphasis on care in handwriting, spelling and punctuation. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop their independence and initiative through group and class discussions and allocated school duties. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. Pupils receive appropriate sex and drugs education. Health education is promoted through class time, personal and social education lessons and in aspects of science. The very good rapport seen between staff and pupils has a positive effect on many aspects of school life and successfully develops pupils' confidence and self esteem. The school is fully aware of the statutory requirements for educational inclusion of all pupils.
- 17 Children under five in reception classes benefit from a good curriculum that effectively promotes their personal, social and academic skills. The effective teaching of basic skills in all areas of the curriculum prepares children well for the next phase of education. The children benefit from all the resources available in the infant school. Assessment of children's personal and learning needs is very good, is used to plan effectively and helps to ensure that progress is good. The children benefit from opportunities to explore a variety of tasks and experiences in the experiential classroom that allows them to experiment freely with a range of materials.
- 18 There is an appropriate amount of time allocated to each subject. The good long-term plan for the curriculum ensures coverage of all subjects for each year group. Teachers work together in year groups to develop termly planning. Topic work is used well to interest and motivate pupils and good standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. Planning is monitored effectively to ensure continuity of work between year groups and to avoid repetition. The school has made significant headway in developing the curriculum since the last inspection. There has been good progress in developing pupils' skills in information and communication technology. The introduction of the computer suite and the emphasis on teaching basic computer skills has helped to raise standards in the subject. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities available to Year 2 pupils. These have a positive effect on pupils' personal and social skills and benefit learning. Pupils are involved in indoor and outdoor games and enjoy musical opportunities including singing in the choir and playing the recorder. Visits to Twycross Zoo, the local church, a re-cycling plant and the country park enhance curricular provision and further pupils' knowledge of the locality in which they live. Staff

give freely of their time and the activities are well attended. Educational visits to places of local interest make an important contribution to pupils' learning.

- 19 The school ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, have equality of access to all aspects of the curriculum and to extra-curricular activities. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent, support staff and voluntary parent helpers make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Staff co-operate with the special needs co-ordinator to write very good individual education plans that are reviewed and up-dated regularly. The staff give good attention to identifying the needs of gifted and talented pupils. They are identified early and benefit from individual planning for work that is challenging. The school involves outside agencies in supporting pupils who have English as an additional language. A strong focus on developing speaking and social skills ensures that the pupils build successful relationships and make good gains in communicating in English.
- 20 The school has a clear homework policy that is implemented effectively. There is consistent use of homework to support pupils' learning, particularly in reading. The school recognises the valuable role of parents in supporting their children with homework and there are good channels of communication. Parents say that they are happy with the amount of homework and with their contribution to it. Pupils respond enthusiastically to homework and it makes a good contribution to their personal and academic progress.
- 21 The school has excellent links with the local community. There are very good business links that have helped to extend pupils' learning in information and communication technology and enriched the environment around the school building. There are very strong links with other schools in the cluster group. Links with the junior school are excellent, ensuring a smooth and happy transfer. Pupils visit the junior school and staff from that school visit them in their classes. After a few weeks the infant teachers visit their former pupils and this helps to ensure that good curricular links are maintained.
- 22 The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is very good. The school fulfils requirements for a daily act of collective worship and pupils enjoy the opportunities to think, reflect and sing in a calm and friendly atmosphere. Every opportunity is seized by teachers to convey a sense of the wonder of life, as seen when a squirrel showed its beauty and agility by running around the hall windows, as if to illustrate the message of the song the headteacher was teaching pupils. Pupils regularly contribute to and conduct assemblies. For example, Year 2 pupils led an assembly, and used drama well to explain the meaning and practices of the Jewish Shabbat. All talked briefly on the meaning of this celebration and did so with keen interest in other people's faiths. Spiritual development is provided in the main through assemblies and religious education lessons. The teachers take every opportunity to develop pupils' spiritual awareness through lessons in science and English. The effective use of a wide range of literature encourages pupils to explore feelings and emotions.
- 23 A strong sense of morality underpins the aims and ethos of the school. Pupils are taught to have a very clear sense of right and wrong, and to appreciate the impact of their actions on others. Staff act as very good role models and reinforce good behaviour and thoughtfulness. The school's rules are clearly stated and staff are consistent in enforcing them. The school's mascot, Spencer, is highly regarded by the pupils and used well to promote kindness and good behaviour. Staff work effectively to promote effective personal skills. Pupils are provided with the opportunity for moral

development in specific subjects of the curriculum, such as English and science, where they explore such issues as concern for the environment.

- 24 The staff promote very good social skills. Pupils are expected to get on well together and they respond well to these high expectations. They are taught to treat their environment in a respectful manner and to be courteous to visitors. Pupils are given a good grounding in understanding their role in society and in understanding good citizenship through the many visitors to the school. They are made aware of their responsibility for others and the school provides them with opportunities to share harvest with older members of the community. Pupils raise money for national and local charities, entertain the elderly community at Christmas time, visit their local church and enjoy trips to the zoo. Many pupils take part in community competitions and their recent success at the new superstore in town was celebrated in a special assembly during the inspection. One competition winner was dwarfed by the size of the giant bear she had won, to the delight of the whole school. Through effective teaching, most pupils, including those with special educational needs, develop skills of working well both independently and collaboratively.
- 25 The quality of pupils' cultural development is good. Most pupils share a common cultural background, and are given opportunities to appreciate their local culture and environment. Geography lessons provide pupils with opportunities to consider and appreciate a range of different lifestyles in other countries and cultures around the world. In history, pupils explore cultures from other times. In English lessons, the teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to explore literature. In religious education pupils are taught about different faiths, cultures and beliefs. While pupils acquire a good understanding of a range of cultures, the school is aware that there is little opportunity for pupils to develop a first-hand understanding of the multi-cultural society in Britain today.

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

- 26 The pastoral care which the school provides for its pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, is very good. Parents appreciate the very effective relationships between staff, parents, governors and pupils which ensure that pupils feel secure and develop mature attitudes. This care has been maintained successfully since the last inspection. Pupils' academic attainment and progress are monitored effectively and the data used to promote progress and set individual targets. Staff successfully provide all pupils with appropriate support and advice in their learning, and encourage personal development and social skills effectively.
- 27 Children in the reception classes are very well cared for in a pleasant, friendly atmosphere which contributes much to them settling happily into routines. There are very good procedures to introduce the children and their parents to school life. Parents are encouraged to bring their children into the school on time in order for pupils to begin their lessons promptly. Staff are sensitive and reassure parents and children in a calm, professional manner. For example, the school telephoned a mother at her place of work following a particularly stressful parting, to assure her that her child was now 'all smiles and singing happily'.
- 28 Good records are kept of pupils' progress. Targets are set and any learning or social difficulties are identified quickly. Parents are involved and kept well informed of ways in which they can help their children. Class teachers welcome pupils, often with parents, into the school in the morning, and make time to talk to parents with an immediate

concern, to admire a piece of homework or socialise before registration. Adults in the school know the pupils well. The pupils are confident in approaching staff or other adults with any worries. The quality of the supervision during the midday break is good and there are consistent procedures for communication between midday staff, class teachers and the headteacher.

- 29 The school has very good procedures for health and safety and child protection. Monitoring of the procedures and practices are secure and staff are vigilant and trained appropriately. All staff have been trained in effective behaviour management. The headteacher records any significant incidents of poor behaviour, with emphasis on early parental involvement and assistance from outside agencies where appropriate. Monitoring of attendance is good; registers are completed twice daily in accordance with statutory requirements. Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance daily; the headteacher and education welfare officer regularly check the registers. Parents are very supportive of the requirement for regular attendance and inform the school at an early stage of reasons for absence. The school discourages parents from taking their children on holiday during term time and parents are supportive of their efforts.
- 30 The school provides consistently good support and advice for pupils in their social and personal development, reinforced through personal and social education lessons. The emphasis is on building confidence, self-esteem, keeping healthy and being aware of the needs of others. Problems that arise are recognised quickly and appropriate support provided. Class teachers and staff have good procedures for dealing with any incidents of bullying and pupils know the school is a safe and comfortable place to be. The good system of awards with encourages pupils to work hard and be fair to others is strengthened by the school mascot 'Spencer', who sets out clearly what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
- 31 The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. The testing and recording system has been effectively developed and the school is using the information to plan accurately for pupils' learning needs. Analysis of teachers' assessments of science led to focused development of this area of the curriculum and standards in science have improved to match the good standards achieved in English and mathematics. The school regularly tests pupils in English, mathematics and science. The information is used effectively to plan lessons. As a result, work generally matches ability and is sufficiently challenging for all pupils; individual targets are set and these are discussed with pupils and with parents through homework tasks and parents' meetings.
- 32 A tracking system has been established, and results of attainment levels in National Curriculum tests are analysed over time and targets for improvement are set. The school is successful in meeting these targets. The school keeps good records of pupils' progress in the subjects. These are used well to pass information between classes and year groups. There are regular assessments of the progress made by pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. This information is used in the careful preparation of individual education plans that are used well in planning pupils' work and give good guidance to teachers and support staff.

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

- 33 The school has an excellent partnership with the parents and carers of the pupils. The genuine quality of this relationship has a very beneficial impact on pupils' attainment

and their learning. This relationship has been extended and strengthened since the last inspection with the forging of strong links with local businesses, largely through the work of the Friends of the School and parental support. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school; they value the educational opportunities provided and at the parents' meeting spoke warmly of the care and support the school gives to their children.

- 34 The school provides very good information for parents, which is very well written, comprehensive and attractively presented. Day-to-day activities in the school are covered in monthly newsletters, supplemented with letters from class teachers on specific subjects, such as information about what is to be taught. Parents feel very welcome in the school, and comment that they are well informed and able to approach the staff and headteacher whenever they wish. Pupils' annual reports provide good indications of individual strengths and weaknesses and set targets for improvement. There are regular parents' evenings each term and parents comment that their views are sought, listened to, and acted upon by the school.
- 35 Parents are fully involved in all aspects of the life of the school. There are a number of parent helpers in the classrooms assisting in the library or in the office. The very active Friends of the School raise considerable funds through social activities and by sponsorship to supplement resources in the school for sport, music and physical education. Volunteers, using practical skills, have painted the hall and refurbished areas around the school with colourful murals. These activities enhance the pupils' learning and add to the family atmosphere of the school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs comment on the quality of the support provided for their child by the school and are fully involved in all aspects of their child's education.
- 36 Most parents are satisfied with the level of homework set by the school and involve themselves in helping their children at home. This has a good impact on standards in reading. Parents comment favourably on the value of the home/school reading communication and the ongoing assessment of the work children do at home. The school has set up a homework working party with parents to explore areas where there may be a conflict between what can be achieved at home and parents' expectations of the school's requirements for each year group. Parental support at home has a positive effect on pupils' attainment, particularly in their early reading skills and enhances the effective partnership between home and school.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

- 37 Since the previous inspection the headteacher, most of the staff and governors have changed. The school has made good improvement due to the successful co-operation and teamwork which are evident throughout. Issues raised in the previous inspection report have been taken seriously and the school has built upon its many strengths. It is well placed to become even better. The success of the school is due in no small measure to very good leadership and management, decisive and determined pursuit of high standards and a realistic and purposeful long-term strategy which is incorporated into the very good plans for development. The headteacher provides inspiration and support for her colleagues through rigorous monitoring and evaluation of their performance, effective delegation of responsibilities for the subjects and enthusiasm and interest in each individual. There are focused aims which underpin the work and ethos of the school. All associated with the school share common goals which centre strongly on providing high quality education for all pupils. In view of the average costs of educating the pupils, the good teaching and above average standards attained the school provides very good value for money.

- 38 There has been a high turnover of staff due to retirement and promotion. The rigorous appointing procedures, additional support provided for new staff, effective use of appraisal and high quality performance management have enabled the school to improve. The school's plans are the result of good consultation between staff and governors and all are clear about their roles and responsibilities in supporting the school. Staff willingly take charge of subjects and other areas of school life such as the excellent provision for pupils with special educational needs. They have begun to monitor their colleagues' work, analyse planning to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered and provide good guidance through schemes and policies. The successful management of the introduction of national guidelines for literacy and numeracy have helped to improve standards. With so many staff changes, the school attaches much importance to supporting new staff and those who are starting their careers. In-service training is linked well to the school's priorities but there are good opportunities for all staff to improve their skills. This policy of including everyone is illustrated well in the school's training in behaviour management which included midday supervisors as well as teaching and support staff. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent with rigorous monitoring by the co-ordinator and very effective support for her colleagues. The school manages the provision for those pupils with English as an additional language and the gifted and talented well.
- 39 The governors show a strong commitment to the school and fulfil their responsibilities very effectively. Many are regular visitors to the school and they monitor some subjects, particularly English and mathematics. They have a clear understanding of how well the school is doing and make very effective use of data to target improvement. Performance management procedures have been in place for two years and the governors are rigorous in ensuring that targets are met. The school sets targets to raise standards in English and mathematics and has met with good success in increasing the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 3 in national tests. The Governing Body works well with the staff of the school and takes a key part in shaping its direction. They communicate with parents very well through the annual report which is of high quality. Governors have an in-depth knowledge of the school's finances. They have made best use of the funds available to provide good resources and suitable levels of teaching staff. The governors have managed the school's falling numbers well and, through robust financial control and creative use of funds raised by parents and the community, have improved the school's accommodation. Decisions about spending are considered carefully and tenders to ensure that best value is obtained are an integral part of the school's procedures. The school's previous audit raised few issues and they have been dealt with appropriately. Day-to-day administration has improved recently and works well, freeing time for the headteacher to be involved in teaching and monitoring performance. The school has temporary staff in the office who provide effective and efficient support. Good use is made of computers and other office equipment to minimise paperwork and provide good quality information to parents, staff and governors.
- 40 The number, qualifications and experience of the teachers adequately match the demands of the curriculum. There is, however, an insufficient number of support staff to meet the needs of the school, particularly in the reception classes. Arrangements for the mentoring and induction of new staff are excellent, as are the procedures in place for professional development and training of all staff. The school has detailed job descriptions for staff so that all are aware of their duties and responsibilities and carry them out in a committed and enthusiastic manner. Classroom teaching is monitored, ensuring that teachers have the chance to share good practice and methods.

- 41 The accommodation is good, apart from the size of some of the classrooms, which limits the range of pupils' learning activities and teaching methods. The school has some good new features, such as the new computer suite, the experiential room, and the sand and water room. The hall, following the efforts of the parents, is now bright, inviting and well equipped. The whole school is clean and attractive and great efforts are made to make it a comfortable and interesting environment. Another improvement is in the outdoor play area which has been supplemented with good new equipment and playing space. The work of pupils and other displays in the school are used successfully to enhance the building and promote the pupils' pride in their work.
- 42 Resources are mostly good and are used to support pupils' learning effectively. There is now good access to computers allowing pupils to make effective use of their computer skills to enhance their work. The supply of books and the use of audio-visual equipment are good in most subject areas. The library is a bright, pleasant area, which contains a good range of books, particularly fiction. However, the school lacks some resources for children in the reception classes. Pupils make good use of the library for pleasure and to develop the habit of reading. Parents are encouraged to select books with their children in the library and this helps to raise standards in reading.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

43 In order to build upon the good quality of education provided and raise standards further the headteacher, staff and governors should:

### **Improve standards in writing further by:**

- Insisting on better punctuation, grammar, spelling and handwriting:
- Guiding pupils more effectively through marking of written work which helps them to identify their mistakes and improve.

(The school has identified this issue in its future plans).

(Paragraphs 4, 10, 12, 16 and 56)

### **Improve the provision for children under five by:**

- Providing more classroom support:
- Improving resources.

(Governors have plans to increase staffing as funds become available)

(Paragraphs 14, 40, 42, 44, 51 and 52)

### **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to use graphs and charts in mathematics.
- Extending the range of opportunities for pupils to work with a wider range of materials in art and design.

(Paragraphs 5, 73 – 75)

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to work with a wider range of materials in design and technology.

(Paragraphs 5, 76 – 78)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	19

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
5	20	59	17	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 – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	159
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	14

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	39

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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	0

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	26	28	54

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	24	26
	Girls	25	24	26
	Total	50	48	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (92)	85 (95)	96 (97)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	26
	Girls	25	25	26
	Total	50	50	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (93)	92 (95)	96 (93)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	103
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 – Y2**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.7
Average class size	26.5

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y2**

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	30

### **Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	301,280
Total expenditure	291,100
Expenditure per pupil	1,693
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,200
Balance carried forward to next year	16,380

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	159
Number of questionnaires returned	50

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	22	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	50	44	2	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	58	2	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	46	10	0	12
The teaching is good.	66	30	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	44	48	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	30	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	66	32	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	26	10	0	2
The school is well led and managed.	60	34	2	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	44	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	22	30	20	2	26

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents of reception children would like more information about how their children have settled into school.

Parents were pleased that the school's staff appears to be more settled.  
There were mixed views on splitting classes some think it develops friendships, other thinks it hinders the children.  
Parents feel more involved in the school now.

#### **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**

44 Children in the foundation stage are taught in two reception classes. On admission to the school they have average levels of attainment for their age. Most are able to communicate effectively and have appropriate social skills. Since the previous inspection the school has extended opportunities for the children to take part in practical activities in the experiential room, but there are limited resources for creative play. The school has sufficient teachers but, due to the reduced budget, caused by the falling number of pupils at the school, has insufficient support staff. Nevertheless, the teaching is good and has a positive impact on the children's learning. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1 the large majority of children attain the early learning goals in each area of their development. About two-thirds of the children achieve beyond these levels and have good skills in all aspects of their work with the exception of creative development which is at the level expected for their age. All children, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make good progress.

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

45 The staff attach much importance in encouraging the children towards independence and in developing their social skills. By the time they leave the reception classes the children have exceeded the early learning goals in this area. They are confident, well motivated and able to work together well. This is due partly to the effective balance achieved in lessons between well-planned direct teaching of skills and good opportunities for the children to make decisions, choose some of their activities and develop an awareness of each others' needs. This was illustrated well in a physical education lesson when the children were given careful instructions, encouraged to use their imaginations and behave in a controlled and purposeful way. The children behave well and are good listeners. They enjoy one another's company and willingly share equipment. They have a good appreciation of care for living things and take much interest in the school's guinea pig. Adults treat each other with courtesy and respect and provide good role models. They emphasise responsibility and kindness and allow the children opportunities to take charge of important jobs around the classroom such as taking the register to the office. In the experiential room, the children are encouraged to make choices, work together in role-play and take turns when modelling with clay.

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

46 The staff place much emphasis on developing these skills through regular practice of early reading skills, providing good opportunities for the children to experiment with writing and encouraging good speaking and listening through story times and play activities. By the time they start in Year 1, most children have mastered these early

skills and many are able to read simple texts, write their names and other short words and phrases correctly and speak clearly and confidently about their work. Their good social skills help them when discussing their work with their friends and almost all listen carefully to others' views. In the lessons seen, the teaching was good, as there was a strong focus on developing children's knowledge of the sounds that letters make. The children responded with enthusiasm and delight when they predicted the next sound that the teacher gave them. The teacher emphasised the need to speak clearly and gave the children opportunities to list words which began with each sound, praising their attempts. This approach worked very well with less able children and helped to build their confidence. Lessons are planned well and the teachers make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to provide structure to developing knowledge of sounds and letters. The effective use of a wide range of story books and lists of words around the classroom help the children to appreciate the importance of language in everyday situations. The teachers carefully monitor and record the children's progress and planning is matched to the needs of all abilities. The activities provided are wide ranging and children are encouraged to take part in all of them. The listening centre is used well and children frequently use it and show much pleasure in listening to stories and rhymes. The reception classes have good access to the school's library and parents are encouraged to choose books with their children. Good guidance is given on reading at home and parental support plays a significant part in the development of confidence in communication skills.

### **Mathematical development**

- 47 The teaching of this area of learning is good and the children make good progress so that by the time they start in Year 1 they have above average levels of understanding of number. All of the children count confidently to 10 and many go beyond this. The most able add numbers together and recognise patterns. Most children describe a variety of shapes and know that some will roll. They grow in confidence in using mathematical vocabulary such as more or less than and form numbers correctly. When using threading beads they carefully count and sequence by colour adding the numeral at the correct point when making a string of numbers. In the "toy shop" the children play happily together. They take turns as the shopkeeper, scan the price and give change.
- 48 The teachers make good use of apparatus to reinforce the children's learning. Activities include opportunities to build towers from different sizes of bricks to a specified height and to record the answer. Children are taught how to form numbers correctly and mistakes such as reversing numbers are corrected in a way which does not undermine the children's confidence. The teachers make good use of assessments on admission to school to plan lessons which encompass the needs of all pupils. A strong emphasis is given to regular practice of counting, sorting and matching, and the children have learned several counting rhymes which they sing with gusto.

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

- 49 By the time they leave the reception classes, the children have achieved the early learning goals and show good levels of competence in each aspect of this area of learning. The children greatly enjoy using computers and quickly master skills such as using a mouse, writing their own names and drawing pictures, using the computer's tools effectively. They know about the world around them and describe their journey to school and significant places on the way. They know that they live in a town and that there are many different shops and services. The children are keen to find out about the world around them and enjoy growing flowers in the school's garden. They know that they have changed since they were babies and also understand that in many of their

families some of the people are older or younger than themselves. They are able to retell events in their lives putting them in the right order. The school's good resource room for sand and water play is a place of real excitement for the children where they explore and experiment. Visits to places of interest such as the zoo help them to gain an appreciation of living things.

- 50 The teachers provide a stimulating and interesting curriculum to extend the children's knowledge of the wider world, and teaching is good. Practical opportunities to work together in making models and tracks for trains are used well to extend the children's vocabulary and improve co-operative skills. Further practical work in modelling using clay is given in the experiential room where children are permitted to make choices and to learn how to use simple tools, such as scissors. The nursery nurse records significant developments or weaknesses in skills and shares the information with the teachers who then plan the next step in learning.

### **Physical development**

- 51 During the inspection there were very limited opportunities for outdoor play due to poor weather. However, the children took part in physical education lessons in the hall and showed good skills in balance, movement and agility. Standards are above those normally seen in reception children due in part to the excellent apparatus available in the hall and good teaching. There are opportunities for the children to take part in outdoor play and as they mature they have opportunities to share the main playground with the infants. The children have a good awareness of space and when moving around the hall avoid collisions. They engage in the activities with enthusiasm and expend much energy in jumping, bouncing, climbing and running. They are aware that exercise affects their bodies and know that they breathe harder after running around. The teachers stress the use of care in physical activities and the children know how important it is to change and warm up for exercise. During lessons, teachers emphasise vocabulary and develop the children's understanding of shape and space effectively. The children are familiar with words such as stretch and curl, and respond by making appropriate shapes.

### **Creative development**

- 52 The children make satisfactory progress in this aspect of their work and attain the expected standard by the time they leave reception. The teaching is satisfactory. The children benefit from opportunities to experiment with paint in the experiential room. They are developing an appropriate knowledge of how mix paint and some know that colours will blend to make another colour. Their pictures show suitable brush control and the children steadily improve their skills in painting portraits and representation of familiar objects. They enjoy singing and have a good repertoire of rhymes and songs which they sing enthusiastically. In music lessons they know that different instruments make a variety of sounds and exercise good control in using them, following the teachers' directions. In their role-play they use imaginative vocabulary. For example, one group of boys pretended to be policemen apprehending a bank robber. They talked excitedly about the money they had recovered. However, the resources for this aspect of the children's learning are rather limited. Adults join in with the children and help to promote language effectively. In story times the adults encourage the children to join in well-known phrases.

## **ENGLISH**

- 53 The majority of pupils enter the school with average levels of ability in all areas of language and literacy. They make good progress in reading and achieve above average standards by the time they are seven. This is reflected in the 2000 curriculum tests, where reading was above average when compared with the national average and also when compared with that in similar schools. Standards in writing are above the national average by the time pupils are seven. In the 2000 national tests, pupils achieved above average scores in comparison with similar schools. Standards in English have been maintained since the last inspection.
- 54 Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening and by the time they are seven their skills are above average. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their speaking and listening skills. Teachers use good, open-ended questions to promote oral skills and provide regular opportunities for pupils to engage in class discussions about their work. Pupils are good listeners, with many pupils responding to teachers' questions clearly and sensibly. Good discipline in lessons ensures that pupils listen politely to what their teachers are saying and are keen to respond to their questions. Pupils listen to and respect the opinions of others. They show they have understood the teachers' questions by responding well to instructions.
- 55 Reading is taught well in Years 1 and 2 and the pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Teachers spend a high proportion of time on developing basic skills such as learning new words and using the sounds that letters make to build unfamiliar words. Those pupils with identified reading problems receive good support from teachers and make good progress. Time set aside for guided reading during the literacy hour is used effectively by teachers, with the majority of pupils developing their technical reading skills and good levels of understanding. By the time pupils are seven, 90 per cent have a reading age in line with their chronological age and often above it. The quality of reading is also much influenced by the very good support given by parents through the effective home-school reading scheme. Pupils learn basic library skills and many are able to discuss the characters and events in the books they read with confidence. Teachers use guided reading activities in an effective way and provide many opportunities for silent reading.
- 56 Standards in writing by the time pupils are seven are good in the range and amount of work covered. Teachers provide pupils with the opportunity to write about events in their daily lives, to re-tell the stories read to them in class and to write more structured stories, with good direction. The good reading activities provided by teachers are often used as a stimulus for pupils' writing. Pupils produce a good range of imaginative and creative written work. Basic English language skills, however, including punctuation, grammar, sentence structure, handwriting and spelling, are insufficiently emphasised. Teachers work very hard to stimulate pupils' imaginations and enable them to write freely and with confidence, but do not always insist sufficiently on correct presentation and spelling. The pupils are eager to please their teachers, with the result that content and quantity of written work produced is good, but handwriting and presentation are often untidy and difficult to read. Pupils' word processing skills using computers are developing well. Pupils' written work indicates that there are some inconsistencies in teachers' marking, which rarely tells pupils how they might improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all areas of English and gifted and talented pupils are helped to reach their full potential.
- 57 Teaching is good overall. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 ranges from satisfactory to very good. Teachers have responded well to the demands of the National Literacy Strategy, and utilise the literacy hour effectively. Lessons are well planned and organised. There is a good balance between shared reading and writing

activities and group activities. The shared session at the end of the lesson is used to good effect to reinforce and assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, to share and celebrate their achievement and to raise their self-esteem. Teachers promote writing well across the curriculum in subjects such as history and religious education, but do not always correct mistakes or concentrate on the basic skills of writing. Where teaching is good and better teachers show personal enthusiasm for the work in hand, have high expectations of pupils and provide pupils with a range of challenging group or individual activities. This produces an active and rigorous working environment where pupils work willingly and hard to meet the demands made upon them by the teacher. Because teachers set high standards and make their expectations clear, pupils respond with hard work and good levels of concentration. Routines are established, no time is wasted and management of classes is nearly always good. Homework for reading and spelling is used well.

- 58 The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator regularly monitors year group plans. The new scheme of work is good and the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented to good effect throughout the school. The raising of standards in writing has been identified as a priority through careful analysis of test results. Good systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils have recently been put in place. Support staff make a good contribution in literacy lessons. Clear assessment procedures have been introduced and are used to target areas for development. Resources are good in quality and quantity. The library is attractive and welcoming, encouraging pupils to promote regular habits of reading for pleasure. There are now good quality new computers, on which pupils consolidate their literacy skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 59 Standards in mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 2 show that pupils attain standards which are above the national average. When compared to schools' with similar intakes the standards are average. The pupils achieve good success in number work and using their knowledge to solve problems. They are confident in shape, space and measures and have average skills in using graphs to present data. Standards are rising at a rate which is in line with the national improving trend. There are no marked differences between the performance of boys and girls. In both year groups all pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress due to effective and well focused teaching. The school has focused well on raising the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 and has met with consistent success. The pupils who took the tests in 2000 had below average attainment on admission to the school. Their overall achievement marks a good success for the school's approaches to teaching mathematics. The school has effectively introduced the National Numeracy Strategy and a new scheme of work which provide very good guidance to the teachers.
- 60 Although standards are not as high as reported at the time of the previous inspection, the pupils achieve well. A higher percentage of pupils attain average standards in the national tests than in 1996 and the proportion of those attaining level 3 has also risen. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average and at least as high as they should be. The school has improved its scheme of work for the subject and there are more challenging opportunities for more able pupils.
- 61 By the age of seven, pupils have good knowledge of numbers and add and subtract with accuracy and speed. They have good recall of number facts such as the 2, 5 and 10 times tables and the more able use strategies such as doubling and halving to calculate quickly. In a Year 2 lesson they tried several ways of multiplying and recording

their work, explaining the processes clearly. Another strength is the effective way that teachers emphasise mathematical vocabulary and symbols. As a result, pupils identify the type of sum they are doing and use correct terms competently. This knowledge also assists them in solving problems involving money, time and measurement correctly. The pupils recognise and name two and three-dimensional shapes describing their properties accurately. Pupils are able to extract some information from charts but lack competence in using graphs to present information.

- 62 The pupils are keen learners and enjoy mathematics because their teachers provide stimulating and interesting tasks which are matched to their needs. In introductory sessions the pupils respond enthusiastically to challenging questions by the teachers. They like to be the first to answer and this spurs them on to learn number facts through regular practice. Homework is given regularly and this good way of extending learning meets with the approval of parents and the enthusiastic response of the pupils. The teachers keep the pace of lessons moving briskly and control the pupils well through quick-fire questions and the positive use of praise to keep the pupils on track. Behaviour in lessons is good. The pupils work together well and show their initiative in using resources and in organising groups.
- 63 The subject is led well by an effective co-ordinator who provides good guidance to her colleagues. There is regular monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and governors, and the information is used to pinpoint areas for development through training. The school carefully analyses the results of national tests and uses the results to improve standards. The staff have good subject knowledge and have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy. They apply its principles well when planning well-structured and effective lessons.
- 64 The quality of teaching is good, and, in Year 2 it is sometimes very good. Lessons begin with snappy and challenging questions designed to engage the pupils. These introductions are often linked well to the main theme of lessons. In a very good lesson, in Year 2, the pupils practised number patterns and then the teacher introduced different terms for and methods of multiplication. The pupils made rapid gains in their learning and by the end of the lesson had a firm grasp of several ways of calculating. Teachers give very clear instructions and the pupils are left in doubt about what is expected of them. At suitable times during the lessons, and particularly at the end, the teachers review what has been learned and use the information to plan the next step in learning. A strength in the teaching is the emphasis given to developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary. Thorough planning takes good account of the needs of pupils' of differing ability. Those pupils with special educational needs receive helpful guidance and support from the teachers and voluntary helpers. Gifted and talented pupils are set challenging tasks. Teachers focus well on particular groups making relevant points and offering good guidance. Because they are well organised and prepared they also keep a good eye on the rest of the class and give support when it is needed. The positive and encouraging manner of the staff and their willingness and patience in explaining methods of working inspires confidence and builds the pupils' self esteem, promoting successful learning.

## SCIENCE

- 65 Standards in science have been maintained effectively since the last inspection. Results of teachers' assessments at age seven in 1999 showed standards below

those for English and mathematics. Similar assessments in 2000 show good improvement and above average results, with a good number of pupils attaining the higher level 3. Inspection evidence shows attainment at age seven to be above average in all aspects of the science curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

- 66 Attainment and progress are good in experimental and investigative science. Pupils have good opportunities to carry out investigations using small equipment and interesting materials. They predict the outcomes of their tests and can explain their predictions demonstrating knowledge of scientific language that is above that expected for their age. Year 1 develop mathematical skills to create graphs and analyse data, using the information to identify the eye colours of pupils in the class. However, the use of information technology to present data is underdeveloped.
- 67 Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things. Year 1 pupils understand that parents reproduce in their likeness and successfully match animal families. They know the visible parts that make up a human eye and make good progress in identifying and labelling a diagram. Pupils at Year 2 recognise the properties of green plants and their reproduction through seeds. They recognise and name some external body parts and understand the importance of diet in healthy living.
- 68 By the end of the infants, pupils are confident in categorising materials by their properties. They understand that some materials are man-made, compare and contrast them and consider their suitability for a variety of purposes. They relate their knowledge to an understanding of the function of materials in every-day life. Year 2 pupils discover when they are investigating the use of forces on materials, that different forces can alter the shape of some materials.
- 69 By the age of seven, pupils have an above average understanding of physical processes. They have a good understanding of the effect of forces on motion and describe the forces involved in the motion of familiar toys. Pupils' good understanding of the use of forces is reinforced well in investigation and through practical homework tasks. They experiment with batteries and have an appropriate understanding of different sources of power. Year 1 pupils make good progress in identifying sources of light, and more able pupils use books for research. Progress in the acquisition of technical language is very good.
- 70 Progress and learning are good. The school analyses the results of assessment tests and successfully identifies areas for development. As early as Year 1 pupils use reference books and carry out homework tasks that relate scientific principles to every day living further knowledge and understanding. Teachers use pupils' previous experience and knowledge as a guide to planning and have high expectations of pupils' learning. As a result pupils are highly motivated, have good attitudes to science and behave very well. Both year groups make very good progress in relating science to every day situations and through this they begin to develop an awareness of moral and social responsibility.
- 71 The very good and sometimes excellent teaching of science has helped to raise standards. Teachers manage their classes very effectively. They have a good knowledge of pupils' prior attainment and learning needs and plan well for groups and individuals. Due to their detailed and effective subject knowledge, they ask clear, interesting questions that excite and motivate pupils to learn. They have an enthusiasm that inspires pupils and leads to effective learning. Lessons have clear objectives that are shared with the pupils. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. In planning tasks that are matched to ability effectively. The pupils enjoy success and have a good foundation for the next stage of learning. Teachers

systematically teach the use and understanding of scientific language, reinforcing it well in lessons. They do not, however, always apply the same standards to the presentation of written work in the subject. The subject leaders have given good support to teaching have implemented effective procedures for development and continue to check that the good progress is maintained.

- 72 The subject is led well and the good scheme of work, linked to national guidelines is used successfully to ensure consistency in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. The subject leader and headteacher monitor teaching and review the progress made by pupils through reviewing their books. Assessment has been used to identify gaps in the pupils' learning and the planning has improved so fill these gaps. As a result, standards are rising and at least as high as they should be. The school has good resources for science and they are used well.

### **ART and DESIGN**

- 73 The attainment for seven-year-olds is at the level expected for their age. Although little teaching of the subject was seen due to the school's timetable arrangements, analysis of work, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of planning shows that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in all aspects of art and design. Standards are at a similar level as reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school has a recently introduced scheme of work which provides teachers with good guidance and is beginning to have an impact on standards, particularly on the pupils' skills in working in the style of famous artists.
- 74 All pupils have sketchbooks in which they practise and improve their drawing and observational skills. In Year 1, they draw recognisable portraits of their friends and then refine their ideas using paint and crayons. In the experiential room all pupils have opportunities to work with clay and other mouldable materials to make basic and satisfactory models. However, these lack refinement and detail and skills learned in reception are not built upon sufficiently. In contrast the pupils' work in the style of famous artists is good. Very effective pictures of poppies using a variety of techniques and materials bring the flowers to life and enhance the displays in the hall. Pupils are able to name several famous painters and comment about their work expressing preference for different styles.
- 75 The teaching and learning of art and design are satisfactory overall although a very good lesson was observed in Year 2. In this lesson, the teacher inspired the pupils' imagination and creativity, linked the task to the pupils' experiences in literacy and history and gave them much confidence. As a result their images of a before and after picture were well formed and took account of careful observation and detail. In both Years 1 and 2, teachers emphasise techniques of colour mixing and the pupils accurately describe the effect of combining colours. They also know how to blend and tint colours using black and white. The subject is taught in alternate half terms and planning shows that coverage of all aspects of the subject are covered. Planning is satisfactory and lessons include a balance between teaching about skills and techniques and providing adequate opportunities for pupils to experiment and create their own pictures. There are satisfactory and sufficient resources. Some good progress has been made in using computers for drawing. Pupils enthusiastically compare methods of drawing portraits using pen and pencil with using the computers' tools. They talk enthusiastically about their work and show obvious pleasure when their work is displayed. Pupils are confident and explain in detail how they have produced their paintings, the time taken and how they improved their work.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 76 Standards in design and technology are about the level expected of seven-year-olds and similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. There have been improvements in planning due to a well-structured scheme of work, guidance from the subject leader and a more balanced curriculum which includes opportunities for the pupils to design, make and evaluate their models. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall. One lesson in design and technology was observed and other evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils, analysis of their work and scrutiny of planning. Food technology is given good emphasis and pupils make good progress in this aspect of the subject. They make satisfactory gains in designing, making and using tools such as scissors although there are too few opportunities for pupils to work with wood and to cut and shape materials.
- 77 The school follows national guidelines for design and technology and sufficient time is allocated to the subject. In Year 1 there is an appropriate emphasis on teaching basic skills and developing the pupils' awareness of technical vocabulary. The subject leader provides helpful guidance to her colleagues and ensures that there are sufficient resources. The school has plans to monitor the teaching and learning of design and technology in order to assess the impact of the recently introduced scheme of work. In Year 1, good links are made with literacy through looking at books with moving pictures. The teachers encourage the pupils to say why particular designs such as sliding pictures and pop-up books work well. They encourage accuracy in measuring strips of card and attaching pictures and the pupils gain a secure understanding of how to work carefully and assemble a simple working model of a card with a sliding picture. Having gained this skill the teacher encourages the pupils to design and make their own suitably decorated Christmas cards. In Year 2, the pupils design coats for the Bible character Joseph. They make good use of decoration and work carefully and neatly. Planning shows that the pupils will transfer their design to making simple puppets with moving parts.
- 78 The pupils enjoy design and technology and are particularly interested in working models. They ask questions about why some things work better than others. They persevere with tasks and concentrate well. They carefully follow instructions and show much pleasure in their achievements. The teachers have an appropriate knowledge of design and technology and teaching is satisfactory overall. Strengths in the teaching include good planning, particularly for food technology where a strong emphasis is given to hygiene. The teachers encourage literacy skills in using recipes and develop pupils' numeracy skills by encouraging them to measure ingredients accurately. During lessons, the teachers encourage pupils through helpful and constructive comments which contribute to the pupils' self esteem. Lessons are well organised and the effective support given by parent helpers ensures that less confident pupils are given sufficient guidance.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 79 No geography lessons were observed during the inspection due to the school's timetable arrangements. Standards in geography are in line with those expected of pupils aged seven. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. This assessment is based on evidence from observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with Year 2

pupils. The geography curriculum gives pupils valuable opportunities to explore the locality in which they live and to consider similarities and differences of life in their own and other countries. Standards in geography at the last inspection were reported as good.

- 80 Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of places beyond their own country. A favourite toy animal accompanies them on their holiday travels and the class book that records the places of interest is used well to teach pupils about landscapes; identifying features such as the seaside, mountains and rivers that do not relate to their locality. Year 1 successfully compare a town and a city, recognising distinguishing features and drawing a plan of an imaginary town to show the main features. Year 2 know about a Scottish island, and they compare transport, employment and buildings on the island with that in Daventry. Local visits, for example, to the library and re-cycling plant, are used well to support geography.
- 81 Map skills are promoted well. Year 1 pupils contribute their own experiences and knowledge of foreign travel to a class book about "Percy's Travels". They identify England and Scotland on a map and know that a variety of forms of transport are sometimes necessary to visit other countries. Year 2 pupils draw an informative map of the Scottish Islands showing the physical and human attributes. They can identify some islands on a map of the United Kingdom, drawing conclusions about environmental factors from their position on the map.
- 82 Teachers plan work to match pupils' ability and this has a good effect on learning. Work is marked regularly but does not include comments that would form a record of progress and show pupils how they might improve their work. Worksheets are used appropriately but there are few opportunities for pupils to write their own work. There is no evidence of the use of information technology to research or record geographical skills. Pupils talked enthusiastically about the subject and showed an appropriate knowledge of geographical language.

## **HISTORY**

- 83 Standards in history are above those expected of seven-year-olds and have been maintained well since the previous inspection. Planning is now good and uses an effective variety of methods and strategies to encourage historical thought and a sense of chronology through direct learning and practical activities. The purpose of learning is made very clear to pupils, the pace of lessons is brisk and planning is beginning to ensure a thorough development of skills as pupils move through the school. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- 84 Pupils from five to seven successfully distinguish between past and present and develop a secure understanding of chronology. They study the lives and works of famous people, as well as important historical events. Pupils absorb facts well and express an enthusiastic response both to the period under study and people associated with it, such as Guy Fawkes. There is evidence of the use of a good range of sources and pupils' good reading skills are used effectively to find information in a variety of texts.
- 85 The provision for history is good. It ensures a wide coverage of topics and learning goals and provides a stimulating variety of activities to support the teaching. Emphasis is firmly laid on helping pupils to think for themselves and on the use of first-hand and secondary source material. Work is planned to ensure that more able pupils can extend their skills and knowledge by undertaking personal research and that pupils with special educational needs are always involved and progress at a good rate.

- 86 It was only possible to observe two lessons during the inspection. From an analysis of pupils' written work and discussions with pupils, it is clear that teachers explain the purpose of lessons well and that teaching is good. In the lessons observed, teachers very successfully involved pupils in the topics studied, such as that in a Year 1 lesson on toys in the past. Pupils are helped to reach their full potential and to understand people and period with ease and interest. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of the subject. They plan interesting lessons and develop links with other subjects effectively. However, not enough attention is paid to the technical skills of writing in the subject. The subject is well led and managed. The subject leader monitors and evaluates teaching and has plans to analyse the pupils' work. Pupils' personal development is promoted well through the study of history, as pupils study life in other times and learn to understand how the past has affected the present. Visits to sites of historical interest help to enhance the curriculum. Resources in the form of historical artefacts are few, but are used effectively.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 87 The previous report stated that standards were average. Inspection evidence shows that by the age of seven pupils attain levels that are in line with those expected nationally. There has been much improvement in provision, teaching and learning of information technology. There is a new computer suite that is well equipped and the school has computers in most classrooms. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is due to the very effective scheme of work and good teaching of skills which builds upon the pupils' previous knowledge.
- 88 By the age of seven pupils have appropriate skills in word processing. They are able to write and punctuate their work appropriately, amending it as necessary. They save and print their work. The teachers focus well on building skills consistently and on checking that pupils make appropriate progress. Pupils work at the level of their ability and are sufficiently successful to make good gains in confidence and enjoyment. Year 2 pupils use a drawing program, planning their work, predicting the outcome and amending the design appropriately, using tools such as brush, spray can and fill to change shapes and colours. They discuss their work making good use of technical vocabulary. The pupils have appropriate research skills. In a history lesson, good use was made of an encyclopaedia programme to research the Second World War.
- 89 In the lessons seen the teaching and learning were good. The teachers have benefited from and continue to receive, supportive and helpful in-service training. Teachers' subject knowledge and confidence has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Lessons are planned well and the pupils are left in doubt about what to do. Teachers create activities that are suitably challenging, maintain interest and match the pupils' learning needs. As a result, pupils are well motivated and interested learners. They are enthusiastic, proud of their work and enjoy their regularly time tabled opportunities to use the new computer suite. The subject leader has been helpful in providing guidance about the consistent development of skills and through practical support with preparation for lessons. Direct teaching of skills has benefited pupils' learning and they have a clear understanding of what is expected of them, using their skills to achieve success in set tasks. The pupils' behaviour is good. They work well in pairs, taking care of equipment, sharing and discussing ideas. They willingly share their knowledge with others and are anxious to help each other. Pupils' enthusiasm for information technology is used insufficiently in most classrooms to further writing skills.

- 90 The subject leader is knowledgeable and enthusiastic. There is a good scheme of work that is focused well on basic skills. There are appropriate procedures for checking pupils' progress. The computer suite, representative of the generosity of local industry and the schools' excellent community links, is having a very beneficial effect on pupils' learning.

## **MUSIC**

- 91 At the previous inspection standards were in line with national expectations. The school has improved the standard of music in the school and attainment is above that expected of seven-year-olds. The pupils enjoy music and take part with enthusiasm. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. Pupils acquire good listening skills through games and rhyming songs, where they show a good understanding of rhythm and of loud and quiet sounds. They have a good musical vocabulary and accurately describe sounds that their instruments make. They have a secure understanding of simple notation and know that notes vary in length. The pupils use percussion eagerly and sensibly, enjoying the opportunity for performance.
- 92 Pupils sing with enthusiasm, particularly when they join together in the hall for assembly or in choir practice. They learn to pitch their voices accurately and sing tunefully and with expression. Pupils listen carefully and attentively to music played on entry and exit in assembly; they show an appreciation of different styles of music.
- 93 Teaching in the subject is good overall and with some very good and excellent lessons. Some staff have particular subject expertise and this is used well to support colleagues. Although some teachers say that they lack confidence in the subject, the very good support given and effective use of the scheme of work mean that pupils in each class make good progress. Teachers ensure that pupils are involved in the activities, that they enjoy music-making and that they learn secure skills. The teachers manage lessons very well keeping the pupils engaged and on task. Lesson preparation is thorough and teachers include a good balance of activities and games to keep the pupils' attention. Learning is fun and the enjoyment shown by the pupils contributes to their success. Lessons are planned well and conducted at a brisk pace, which ensures good learning. The school offers pupils a recorder club and a choir. Some older pupils benefit from extra-curricular tuition. The school takes part in community activities such as singing in local venues. Resources for music are good and there are plenty of opportunities to use them.
- 94 The music co-ordinator is committed and enthusiastic and provides effective guidance to her colleagues. The new national guidelines and the scheme of work are providing the foundations for developing all pupils' musical abilities.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 95 At the time of the last inspection standards in physical education were in line with those expected for pupils aged seven. Since the last inspection the school has worked hard to improve equipment and teaching. There has been good improvement in physical education and standards are above expectations for seven-year-olds. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in gymnastic lessons. Due to timetable arrangements no lessons for games or dance were seen. There were no opportunities to observe games; however, teachers' plans show that an appropriate amount of time is allocated to all areas of the curriculum. There is a good, skill-based scheme of work that ensures that pupils have opportunities to learn the importance of rules and to become part of a team.

- 96 Teachers' planning and video recordings of both year groups show that pupils have effective opportunities to make good progress in dance. The pupils express their feelings well and interpret the music effectively as shown by Year 1 "Snowflakes" at the Christmas production. There is good progress in control and co-ordination. By the end of Year 2 pupils perform effectively with good skills in maintaining dance patterns as a group. They have confidence in performance and have a good awareness of the movement of others around them.
- 97 Pupils' attainment in gymnastics is good and they make good progress. By the age of seven they understand the purpose of warm up activities and are aware of body parts and their use in movement and weight bearing. Year 1 pupils explore different actions imaginatively. They remember movements, improving them by linking and extending to start and finish a sequence. Year 2 pupils are agile and well focused in lessons. They move around the hall, showing awareness of safety rules in jumping and landing, link several movements and then transfer their skills effectively on the apparatus. .
- 98 The teachers manage behaviour well and insist on careful listening throughout lessons. They encourage responsibility and insist on high standards of performance. Pupils' behaviour is good. They act responsibly when putting out apparatus and respond well to use of space, giving all pupils opportunity to perform freely. They have good attitudes to exercise and make good physical effort, appreciating the success of others. They have good regard for safety rules and are eager to improve their performance.
- 99 The teaching is good and in Year 2 a very good lesson was seen. Lessons are well planned and prepared. Pupils are encouraged to change quickly and to understand the purpose of warming up and the value of exercise to health. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of pupils and have a good understanding of the pupils' abilities, applying appropriate challenge for individuals to succeed and make progress. They have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject. A particularly challenging lesson in Year 2 included opportunities for the pupils to link movements, watch the performance of others and practise and refine sequences. The teacher's incisive comments inspired the pupils to try harder and to improve their concentration. The recently appointed subject leader is enthusiastic and has a good knowledge of physical education. She is supportive of staff and is continuing to develop and improve schemes of work and teaching of the subject. The good quality and quantity of equipment available to teachers has a good impact on teaching and on the interest and enthusiasm shown by pupils in lessons.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 100 Whilst it was only possible to observe a limited number of religious education lessons, these observations show that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in the subject. Pupils at the age of seven reach standards above those expected in the syllabus used by most schools in Northamptonshire. Standards in the subject have been maintained at a sufficiently high level since the previous inspection.
- 101 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of the concept of special occasions, such as birthdays, and of stories such as those of Moses and Jacob. They look at artefacts from Christianity and Judaism, with interest and respect. In one lesson, very good exposition and sensitive open-ended questions by the teacher enabled the pupils to come to an understanding of the reasons for celebrating Christmas and the significance of presents. Pupils have effective skills in expressing their feelings and are

sensitive to the needs of others. This is achieved partly through thoughtful teaching which provides good opportunities for pupils to discuss and share their ideas. There are good links between religious education and assemblies. A good example of this occurred during the week of the inspection, when Year 2 shared their knowledge of the Shabbat with the rest of the school.

- 102 Lessons observed and examination of teachers' plans and pupils' work indicate that over time pupils are provided with good opportunities to explore and extend their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other world faiths and stories from other cultures. Pupils learn about the prophets, religious writing and festivals. There is, however, little opportunity to strengthen pupils' understanding of other faiths through visits to places of worship or other first-hand experiences, though the school invites in as many visitors as possible, such as a group of Hindu visitors. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and convey it to pupils in a meaningful manner. They create and promote a reflective atmosphere where good learning takes place. Teachers actively use religious education lessons to promote literacy skills, with pupils engaging in good speaking and listening activities and producing interesting written work, although the basic skills of writing are under-emphasised. With its focus on different religions and cultures and countries and the opportunity to regularly discuss and write about a range of spiritual and factual issues, the subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The subject is carefully monitored against the requirements of the syllabus and the teachers evaluate the success of each topic covered.