

INSPECTION REPORT

ALL SAINTS C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wigston

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120206

Headteacher: Miss C A Pharoah

Reporting inspector: Jan Sullivan
3205

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 December 2000

Inspection number: 224646

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary School

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 4 - 10

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Long Street
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Leics.

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A D Barnett

Date of previous inspection: 02/12/1996

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Jan Sullivan 3205	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for Under-Fives	What sort of school is it? Standards
			What should the school do to improve further?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Cathy Stormonth 16472	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Geoff Allport 12956	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Information and communication technology Design & technology	
Elizabeth Lewin 18214	Team inspector	English, art, Equal opportunities	
Christine Power 21059	Team inspector	Mathematics Music	How well are pupils taught?
Paul Rangecroft 15945	Team inspector	Geography, history, Physical education, Special educational needs, English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

All Saints Church of England Primary School is a larger than average primary school providing for pupils aged between four and ten years of age. There are 337 pupils on roll, 162 boys and 175 girls, taught in twelve classes. As a church aided school, pupils attend from a wide area. However, the majority of pupils reside locally, in neighbourhoods where there is significant economic and social disadvantage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twenty percent; this is above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified on the school's register of special education needs is thirty percent, with two percent having statements of special education need; these proportions are above the national average. Six percent of pupils are from minority ethnic groups, four percent of whom speak English as an additional language. This is higher than in most schools. Baseline information for 1999 indicates that pupils' attainment on entry to the school was well below the national average. At the time of the inspection, thirty-eight pupils in the reception class were below statutory school age. During the last school year, the number of pupils entering and leaving the school outside normal transfer times was twenty-nine; this is well above average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Standards for seven-year olds in reading, writing and mathematics are below expectations, but pupils make satisfactory to good progress from a very low baseline on entry. By the end of Year 5, many pupils are well on the way to achieving the standards expected nationally in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is satisfactory overall, although there are significant variations within and between the year groups. Leadership and management are strengths of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching and learning in reception classes and Year 5.
- The leadership and management strategies employed by the headteacher, senior management team and the governing body.
- The quality and range of learning opportunities in reception classes.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Promotes good attitudes in pupils towards school.
- Provides well for pupils' moral and social development.
- Has good procedures in place for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare.
- Promotes very good liaison with other schools and training institutions.

What could be improved

- The use of assessment to inform lesson planning, so that tasks set meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of different abilities working in the same class.
- Equality of learning opportunity is not secure in classes where there are significant differences between class timetables operating within the same year groups.
- Curriculum balance: additional time for English and mathematics is used at the expense of science and other subjects of the curriculum.
- The integration of information and communication technology across the curriculum.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvements since the last inspection have been broadly satisfactory, although there are some issues outstanding that continue to require attention. Since the last inspection, in December 1996, significant improvements to attainments in reading, writing and mathematics for the seven year olds in 1999, were not sustained in 2000 due to the disproportionate number of pupils with special educational needs in this particular year group. Standards of attainment in science are consistently below expectations. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology continue to be school priorities for further development. The successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has

changed the balance of teaching and learning styles and provides a good model for lessons in other subjects. A policy and register for more able pupils has helped to create challenge through extension work in lessons and homework tasks. Differences in attainment between boys and girls are being carefully monitored; for the most part this issue that has been successfully resolved. Teachers of reception classes have recently adapted their planning and assessment formats so that they appropriately reflect the contents of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Overall, this is a school with the capacity and willingness to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	[1998]	[1999]	[2000]	[2000]
Reading	E*	E	E*	E*
Writing	E	E	E*	E*
Mathematics	E*	E	E*	E*

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

NB. E indicates that the school is in the bottom five percent of schools nationally in the subjects indicated.*

Baseline assessment data indicates that attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics for seven-year-olds in 2000 were also well below the national average. Fifty percent of the school's seven-year-olds involved in national tests and tasks in 2000 were on the school's special educational needs register; this makes comparisons with similar schools unreliable. Standards were significantly higher in 1999, reflecting good progress from a very low baseline. With the exception of the 2000 cohort, there has been a steady improvement in standards in reading and writing and an overall improvement in mathematics over the last three years. Teacher assessment indicates a downward trend in science since 1998. A lack of teacher confidence in their science assessments often results in an under-assessment of pupils' abilities in this subject. Results in national tests for eleven year olds, supplied by high schools to which pupils transfer at the age of ten, suggest that pupils from this school attain standards that are broadly in line with national averages in English and science. Results in mathematics remain below the national average.

In class lessons, the majority of pupils, including those for whom English is an additional language, are able to demonstrate standards that match national expectations. In test situations, when pupils are required to work without teacher support, the younger and less able pupils are not always able to achieve these standards. In all classes there is a substantial number of pupils with special needs whose attainment is below expectations for their age, but who make good progress promoted by the good use of support staff. School staff set ambitious targets to raise standards within each year group and work hard to achieve these.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy lessons, are enthusiastic learners and try hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Behaviour is mostly good in classrooms and in the playgrounds it is at least satisfactory. In most situations pupils are friendly, confident and courteous. Pupils know the rules for behaviour and generally comply with them.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Most pupils are developing self-discipline and good social skills. Pupils take responsibility by helping in many daily routines and older pupils are becoming more independent learners. Relationships between staff and pupils are good throughout the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are slightly below average. There is no unauthorised absence. A significant amount of authorised absence is attributable to the taking of term time holidays.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-10 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

The quality of teaching for pupils under five years old is good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in reception classes; eighty-eight percent of the teaching was good or better. Teachers, who know pupils well, provide stimulating and carefully structured learning experiences. This good teaching promotes the pupils' good progress across the curriculum; it helps them to make learning gains from a very low baseline on entry.

Teaching is mostly satisfactory for the five to ten year olds. There are pockets of both good and unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching in Year 5 is very good. Ninety four percent of all lessons were satisfactory or better and eighteen percent of lessons were very good or better. There was much good teaching in all year groups. Pupils' behaviour is managed well throughout the school; positive relationships successfully promote pupils' learning and reward their efforts. There is a strong work ethic in the school, promoted by enthusiastic teaching. Teachers do not make enough use of their on-going assessments to provide different tasks for pupils of different abilities. The good use of support staff helps to engage pupils with learning difficulties when they are involved in normal class lessons. The quality of teaching in English is satisfactory, with some good teaching for the seven to ten year olds. The skills of literacy are taught and applied well across the curriculum. Mostly, teachers are confident and skilful in their teaching of the National Literacy Strategy. The teaching of mathematics, including numeracy, is satisfactory with some good teaching for the five to seven year olds. Teachers make good reference to National Numeracy Strategy guidance in their lessons. Individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are detailed and are used effectively by class teachers and support staff. Most pupils make satisfactory progress in all subjects throughout the school. There are pockets of good progress in English, in some aspects of music and in science for the older pupils. Progress is unsatisfactory in information and communication technology for the younger pupils in classes where they lack ready access to computers. Pupils usually show high levels of interest in what they are learning during lessons and make positive efforts to improve their performance.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curriculum provision is improving as the school adopts new schemes of learning. National strategies for literacy and numeracy are helping to provide well focused lessons. Most learning opportunities are satisfactory, but there is a significant imbalance in the timings allocated to subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The large numbers of pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and are supported well by teaching and support staff. Monitoring and assessment arrangements are communicated and managed efficiently. These are strengths of the school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is sound. It is enhanced by good teaching and good use of support staff.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Sound overall. Provision for social and moral development is good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory; there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultures and those of the wider world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides a secure learning environment where regular attendance, good behaviour and good working habits are encouraged.

The school has established satisfactory links with parents, including the introduction of a Family Learning programme for the parents of reception pupils. The good level of care provided for all pupils is a strength of the school. The provision for instrumental music is also a particular strength of the curriculum for those pupils who choose to be involved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management of the school are good. There are systematic approaches to curriculum and whole school improvement. Effective monitoring and evaluation of pupils' achievements have helped to guide this process. The special needs co-ordinator ensures good provision for pupils' with learning difficulties.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body carries out all its duties with enthusiasm and is committed to school improvement. Governors are actively involved in the school at all levels. Several work as voluntary helpers in classrooms.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school effectively collates and analyses pupil performance data. The school development plan makes clear the links between this information and school improvement targets, and staff and curriculum development initiatives.
The strategic use of resources	Most resources are efficiently used, with the exception of the school library and the use of outdoor play for reception pupils. All learning resources are stored and cared for well. Good use is made of learning support staff to complement the classroom curriculum, especially for pupils with learning difficulties.

Resources are adequate to teach the full range of the National Curriculum, including the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Throughout the school, teaching and support staff show a commitment to personal development and school improvement. This helps to support whole school

development and to sustain new initiatives.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Their children make good progress.• Behaviour in the school is good.• Teaching is good.• Parents feel comfortable approaching the school.• The school expects their children to work hard.• The school works closely with parents.• The school is led and managed well.• School is helping their children to become mature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of work their child is given• More information about how their child is getting on• A more interesting range of activities

Inspectors agree with the positive comments made by parents. The inspection team found pupils were provided with an appropriate amount of interesting work in class, complemented by a sufficient range of extra-curricular activities and frequent homework tasks. Some homework tasks are repetitive and uninteresting. The amount of homework pupils receive is in line with the home-school agreement. There is a wide range of information available for parents about their children's learning, but the pupils' annual reports do not consistently report progress effectively and do not indicate sufficiently areas for improvement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Children in reception classes undertake baseline assessments on entry to school. Results for this year's cohort of children indicate attainment in the key areas of literacy, numeracy and personal and social development are below national expectations. Baseline assessment results from previous years are consistently below expectations, with all baseline results in the recent past being well below national averages. Children make good progress in the reception year, especially in the development of key skills. By the time the children leave their reception classes there has been significant improvement in their attainment in all Areas of Learning. From a very low baseline, children make particularly good gains in language and literacy; knowledge and understanding of the world; and personal, social and emotional development. Good gains are also made in mathematics; physical development and creative development. The very low attainment on entry means that most children are still working towards the Early Learning Goals as they transfer to Year 1 classes, with attainment levels just below national expectations. The good progress made by all pupils ensures that some of the more able pupils are beginning to work within the National Curriculum at Level 1 by the time they enter Year 1 classes, but these are a minority. There is also a significant number of pupils identified as having special educational needs who are still some way from achieving national expectations by five years of age, despite the good learning opportunities offered in reception classes.
- 2 The National Curriculum tests and tasks in 2000 indicate that attainment at the age of seven is well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Attainment in science, as measured by teacher assessment, is also well below average. Fifty percent of the pupils in this year group were on the school's register of special educational need. The school also experienced a significant amount of pupil mobility, with a higher than average number of pupils entering and leaving the school during this year. Even in these circumstances, these results indicate satisfactory progress when analysed alongside the very low levels of attainment children demonstrate on entry to school.
- 3 With the exception of the national test and task results in 2000, there has been an overall improvement in reading, writing and mathematics attainments for seven-year-olds since the previous inspection in 1996. By 1999, reading results had risen sharply, approaching the national average from a very low baseline. There has also been a steady increase in standards of writing over recent years, although results in 1999 remained below the national average. Improvements in mathematics standards are more variable; by 1999 there had been an overall improvement in standards with school results approaching the national average. Science results too show significant variation over recent years. There has been a downward trend in science attainment since 1998 that is not reflected in the work seen by inspectors during class lessons. A lack of confidence by teachers in their assessments of science often results in an under-assessment of pupils' abilities in this subject.
- 4 Standards towards the end of Year 5 are broadly in line with national expectations in all subjects except information and communication technology (ICT). Results of Year 6 national tests, supplied by high schools to which pupils transfer, suggest that by eleven years of age most pupils attain standards broadly in line with national averages

in English and science. Year 6 test results in mathematics remain below the national average. However, evidence in the mathematics books of pupils at the end of Year 5 indicate that most pupils achieve to the standards expected nationally for their age in normal class lessons, where they are well supported by teachers and education support staff.

- 5 Evidence from the scrutiny of work and the lessons seen during the inspection indicate that standards across the school in speaking, listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science are broadly in line with national expectations for all pupils, except those with special educational needs. Thirty percent of the school population is on the special needs register. There is also a policy and class register to identify higher attaining pupils. Occasionally these pupils receive extension activities to create extra challenge during normal class lessons or as homework tasks. However, teachers do not make sufficient use of their on-going assessments to provide different sorts of activities for pupils of different abilities, including the higher attainers. There is too little evidence in workbooks and class lessons of more able pupils achieving above national expectations; this is reflected in the low number of pupils that achieve the higher levels of attainment in national tests. In carefully structured and well resourced lessons, the majority of pupils are able to demonstrate achievement in line with national expectations in most subjects of the curriculum. In the absence of these support structures the younger and less able pupils do not always perform to the best of their abilities in test situations.
- 6 Evidence collected during the inspection from lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with pupils indicates that standards throughout the school are broadly in line with national expectations in history, geography, art, music and physical education. Standards in design and technology are also in line with national expectations for the seven to ten year olds. There was insufficient evidence of attainment in design and technology for the five to seven year olds to judge standards. There is some evidence of unsatisfactory attainment in information and communication technology for all pupils throughout the school. In all year groups, there is evidence of some good attainment in aspects of music, especially instrumental music.
- 7 Pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects across the school, with the exception of information and communication technology for the five to seven year olds. There was insufficient evidence of attainment in teachers' records to judge progress for pupils between five and seven years of age in design and technology. Provision for information and communication technology is weak throughout the school; it is unsatisfactory in lessons for the five to seven year olds and this impacts upon their progress. There are pockets of good progress in music throughout the school, promoted by the good use of a music specialist teacher. Good progress is also evident in science, and all aspects of English, for the seven to ten year olds.
- 8 The large number of pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school; their needs are well provided for by support staff in withdrawal group situations and in normal class lessons. Good progress in lessons is promoted by much good teaching. Teachers mostly teach enthusiastically to clear learning objectives. They reinforce language and vocabulary regularly and this helps to promote the pupils' progress, especially for the younger and less able pupils and for pupils with English as an additional language.
- 9 All teachers make good use of practical resources to support the pupils' learning, sustain positive relationships and manage the pupils' behaviours well. This, together

with the good quality support provided in most lessons by a large number of education support staff, helps to ensure that all pupils achieve to their capabilities, including both boys and girls and pupils from different ethnic backgrounds.

- 10 The school sets ambitious learning targets for year groups of pupils and all teaching and support staff work hard to achieve these. However, individual targets that take account of each pupil's specific needs are not well used by teachers to inform lesson plans for pupils in all year groups, other than those with individual education plans.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Good attitudes and behaviour remain a strength of the school; when the teaching is good, pupils are enthusiastic learners. Right from the time children start in Reception classes, they are instilled with good social skills and a good work ethic that stays with them all the way through school. Reception class children play well together, sharing ideas and resources and they show enjoyment in the success of others. They also show respect and consideration for their teachers and peers.
- 12 Attitudes and behaviour in all key stage one classes were at least satisfactory and often good. In the Reception classes, behaviour and attitudes were always good and often very good. At Key Stage 2 there were some unsatisfactory elements; however, the attitudes and behaviour of the oldest pupils were usually good. Pupils respond well to challenge; they are keen to learn, listen well and answer questions enthusiastically. They follow instructions and conform to lesson routines with a good degree of self-discipline. They work hard, with care and attention to detail. Pupils enjoy practical activities; they are motivated by involvement and the opportunity to respond individually. A notable feature of pupils' good attitudes to work is their willingness to observe more able pupils in order to improve their own performance. There is general admiration and support for the good efforts of others. This was seen in a Year 1 physical education lesson when pupils were interpreting Christmas music in the form of dance; they spontaneously applauded the creativity and agile movements of peers.
- 13 When behaviour and attitudes were unsatisfactory it could be linked clearly to weaknesses in teaching. In lessons where the teaching did not stimulate interest and where the pace was slow, time was wasted, behaviour management was weak and pupils lost concentration as a result. They became bored, fidgety and behaviour deteriorated. This unchecked disruption hindered learning.
- 14 Behaviour outside the classroom is generally good. Behaviour in the two dining halls is good and lunchtimes are pleasant, sociable occasions. Behaviour in the Reception and Year 1 playground is very good. Behaviour in the older playgrounds is good, with some occasional boisterous moments when boys play football and tear around play fighting but there was no evidence of any aggression. There is evidence of some bullying; when this is reported, it is dealt with well. There has been one exclusion this term for dangerous behaviour. Relationships, on the whole, between adults and pupils are good.
- 15 Pupils' personal development is good and pupils are courteous, friendly and helpful, allowing adults to go first. The school helps pupils to become more responsible and develop greater maturity and growing confidence as pupils move up through the school. Personal development has some strengths in pupils' active involvement in daily routines, where every class has a jobs rota and pupils carry out their duties conscientiously. Younger pupils were encouraged in their assembly to "stay happy",

and were given some helpful advice and strategies on taking responsibility for their own happiness that was very impressive. Pupils from the Wigston Menphys Centre visit each week and integrate with All Saints pupils and are looked after and supported really well. Older pupils also do community service and next week plan to lay tables and help to serve the local senior citizens' Christmas dinner, and the choir provides the entertainment. Older pupils do shared reading with younger pupils and also help to keep the library and the outside courtyard tidy. Residential trips give pupils a range of new and exciting learning experiences away from home, which pupils value and are a real boost to personal development. There is some evidence in Year 5 of pupils being encouraged to become more independent learners when, for instance, in a history lesson pupils were given access to the library to carry out some research about life in the 1950s. There are, however, too few opportunities across the school for pupils to develop greater independence or take more initiative in their learning. A significant number of less able pupils are very teacher dependent, and lack the confidence to apply and develop their skills and understanding in the absence of adult encouragement and support in unstructured situations.

- 16 Attendance is satisfactory. Authorised absence levels are above the national average and a significant amount of this absence is attributable to taking of holidays in term time. Effective monitoring and following up absences has commendably eliminated any unauthorised absence. Punctuality on arrival at school is generally good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 17 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In ninety four per cent of lessons the teaching is at least satisfactory and in forty five per cent of all lessons teaching is good or better. Teaching in almost one in five lessons is very good. In six per cent of lessons teaching is unsatisfactory. This unsatisfactory teaching is located in a specific area of the school and significantly influences the quality of teaching offered to some pupils. There is no poor or very poor teaching. Teaching for children under five is almost consistently good and for pupils in Year 5 it is very good.
- 18 The quality of learning across the school is at least satisfactory by the end of Year 2 and Year 5 and is good for children under five. Children under five are enthusiastic and show a keen readiness to learn. They are motivated through a wide range of practical, lively experiences. They make very good gains in their creative, physical and intellectual learning. In lessons observed, and by the end of Year 2 and Year 5, pupils make steady gains in the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in most classes. A majority of pupils can concentrate and sustain effort when the learning is relevant and interesting. Many can work individually or collaboratively, and want to succeed.
- 19 The teaching of children under five is good. Teachers build positive relationships with all children through conversation and interactive teaching. They respond well to children's needs and interests. Teachers ask questions to promote understanding in children. They explain ideas clearly and reinforce a broad vocabulary so that children continually build on what they already know and can do. Effective lessons are led by appropriate, well-defined learning intentions which ensure that the children appreciate exactly what they are expected to learn.
- 20 In Years 1 and 2, the teaching of English is sound and the teaching of mathematics is good. In Years 3, 4 and 5 the quality of teaching in English is good and in

mathematics it is satisfactory. Teaching is good when it is based upon clear learning objectives which are closely aligned to individual pupil targets. Learning is good when all pupils are appropriately challenged and activities provide opportunity to develop and secure understanding of the learning intentions.

- 21 Good or better teaching was observed in science, literacy and music. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs in Year 5 is very good, and is good in all areas of learning for children under five.
- 22 In the school as a whole, the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. There is a sound understanding of the teaching of phonics and the basics of reading, spelling, writing and an understanding of number. Pupils are given the opportunity to talk about their work and are encouraged to use subject-related language. They are taught systematically how to develop elements of writing such as structure, direct speech and extended sentences. Then pupils are shown how to bring these together when writing within a variety of contexts. Teachers provide regular opportunity for pupils to rehearse known facts, and explore the relationships between numbers. Pupils are encouraged to use different techniques and strategies to calculate in their heads.
- 23 In effective lessons throughout the school, teachers display good subject knowledge. Teachers of children under five have a thorough knowledge of what constitutes a good curriculum and are successful in implementing it. Teachers in all year groups explain new ideas in ways that make sense to the pupils. They use words carefully and precisely and make links between related ideas. They ask the sort of questions that make pupils think more deeply and challenge them to reason out their response.
- 24 Teachers' short term planning identifies what it is that pupils are to learn and the learning objectives are discussed with the pupils at the beginning of the lesson. In a few lessons, there are too many objectives or planning has described what it is that pupils are to do, not what they are to learn. This results in lessons that are less sharply focused. In the teaching of mathematics, teachers raise key questions which, when asked, will help to secure pupil understanding. This is a strength in the school's planning process and enables pupils to successfully access the learning.
- 25 Teachers usually have appropriate expectations. In classes for under fives, teachers consistently set suitably challenging tasks for the children. However, in some lessons in other year groups, insufficient account is taken of the differing needs of pupils. This results in expectations of what the more able pupils can achieve being set too low. Teachers do not always make sufficient use of their assessments to ensure that work builds upon pupil's previous learning. In too many lessons all pupils are given tasks which are of similar difficulty. For example, more able pupils often only benefit from challenging activity when the initial directed task is completed and they are provided with extension work.
- 26 Across the school, teachers use a range of methods in order to meet the purpose of the lesson. Teachers demonstrate specific skills and model thinking strategies and ways of recording for pupils, enabling them to gain understanding. In the very best lessons, teachers intervene at precisely the right moment to make points and to reinforce key concepts. At times tasks are too closed and directed by the teacher. Pupils are given too few opportunities to raise their own questions and steer their own learning. Insufficient activity is provided for pupils to investigate ideas for themselves and solve problems. Too often there is over-dependence on the use of worksheets, which leads to pupils' uncertainty about the nature of learning. They only know what

they must do. Pupils are beginning to be involved in analysing their success against learning targets, which will increase their knowledge of their own learning.

- 27 Pupils' behaviour is usually well managed. This is a particularly strong feature of the teaching for under fives. Throughout the school, teachers use a variety of strategies to encourage co-operation and ensure that all pupils are engaged in learning. They offer regular praise and a mixture of rewards. Clear expectations in behaviour are laid down and pupils understand the consequences if they are not met. Teachers are consistent in their approach to the management of pupil behaviour and adhere to whole school procedures. Positive relationships between adults and pupils successfully contribute to the learning process.
- 28 Resources are used well to aid pupil understanding and to promote individual response to enquiry. Pupils enjoy practical activity and benefit from the high level of involvement this offers. Information communications technology is not sufficiently well used to develop some aspects of other subjects in the curriculum. When lessons start promptly, and move forward at an appropriate pace, learning proceeds briskly and pupils have sufficient time to engage in the set tasks. In those lessons in which teaching is unsatisfactory, the pace of teaching is slow and laborious and pupils' learning is restricted by repetitive, mundane tasks. Support assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of pupils' learning during independent group activity. Where they are suitably deployed, well briefed and aware of the learning needs of pupils, they intervene sensitively in their work with individuals and groups. This mostly good quality support helps to promote progress for pupils with English as an additional language engaged in normal class lessons. During whole class sessions, not all teachers fully involve assistants or ensure that their role in targeting some pupils is clear.
- 29 Teachers and support assistants work effectively together and achieve considerable success with pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans for these pupils contain clear targets and identify sufficiently small learning gains. The additional literacy support for targeted Year 3 pupils is working well, enhancing the overall quality of teaching in English. Pupils in Year 5 are targeted for additional lessons in mathematics to revisit key areas of learning that they meet in their daily mathematics lessons. Pupils with special educational need make good progress in learning throughout the school. However, an overall lack of differentiated learning intentions impedes learning for the more able pupils whose progress is uneven. They are not always sufficiently challenged by tasks set for them.
- 30 All teachers set homework in accordance with the school policy. The amount of homework is appropriate to the age and maturity of pupils. Overall it is used effectively to reinforce what is learned in lessons. It makes a valuable contribution to learning.

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

- 31 When the school was last inspected, the following strengths were noted in relation to curricular and other opportunities:
- Curriculum planning provided good continuity and progression in learning.
 - The curriculum included all the relevant subjects of the National Curriculum and Religious Education.

- There was good provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs.
 - Provision for spiritual, moral and social development was judged to be good, and for cultural development it was judged to be very good.
- 32 The curriculum continues to provide all the statutory subjects. There is good continuity and progression in planning due to the recent adoption of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Schemes of Work. Provision for pupils with Special Educational Needs remains good. The provision for pupils moral and social development remains good.
- 33 In the last inspection there were weaknesses in the curriculum provided for pupils under 5; this is now a strength.
- 34 At this inspection, the curricular and other opportunities are judged to be sound overall. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are helping well-focused planning, for English and mathematics, and the school has just started to implement the guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to support planning for the new National Curriculum. The curriculum is in a transitional stage, and this partly explains the weaknesses that have been noted during the inspection.
- 35 These weaknesses are as follows:
- The imbalance of time allocated to subjects, which leads to too much time being given to English, and mathematics, and too little to other subjects, especially the core subject science.
 - Imbalance in time allocated on time tables to different subjects within the same year groups, so that pupils in parallel classes are not guaranteed equal amounts of time to learn the subjects.
- 36 Other improvements are needed in:
- the attention given to pupils' increasing appreciation of their own and wider world cultures.
- 37 The school curriculum provides access to all relevant National Curriculum subjects and to Religious Education. There is an adequate range of extra-curricular clubs which gives pupils opportunities to extend their learning in music and some sports. In addition, the school provides a homework club, and Springboard 5 to help pupils learn out of school hours. The school also supports a family literacy project. The school runs a lunchtime club to help children who don't manage well at lunchtimes. The school makes good use of the resources available in the community, for example the local church, and environmental venues, and welcomes a range of visitors from the school nurse to the fire brigade. The school also makes very good use of visits to enrich the curriculum, including residential trips to Hothorpe hall for the Year 2 pupils and to Portsmouth for the Year 5 pupils. This is a continuing strength and makes a significant contribution to learning and to social development. The other major strength of the school is in its liaison with local schools, from the pre-school group to the high schools, and with the other members of the family of schools which feed to the two high schools. There are good links also with Leicester University's teacher training department. All of these help to contribute to the continuity and quality of pupils' learning.
- 38 Pupils with Special Educational Needs are helped to make the best of their learning opportunities through well-focused support from their targeted helpers, both teachers and teaching assistants. This good support is noted as being particularly effective in

literacy and numeracy lessons, and in small group work.

- 39 Personal, Social and Health Education is satisfactorily covered. There is a planned block of lessons where visitors, such as health professionals, give useful inputs on health education, and how to resist pressure when others try to persuade you to do something that might not be right for you. Other issues, which promote ideas of healthy living and citizenship, arise naturally from the science curriculum, and from religious education. There are good policies for drugs education and the management of any drug-related incidents, and for sex education. The school meets statutory requirements in providing the subjects of the curriculum, religious education and collective worship, and in having a policy for sex education. The time allocated to teaching is above the minimum recommended for 5-7 year olds, but is slightly below the recommendation for the older pupils.
- 40 The curriculum is used effectively to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils' moral development is promoted well through assemblies. The school's assertive discipline policy provides a coherent framework for behaviour which establishes rules that avoid conflict. Pupils throughout the school are aware of right and wrong. In the reception class careful planning provides a safe and calm environment where pupils can work well together. This promotes their personal, social and emotional development.
- 41 Provision for pupils' social development is good. Many of the activities in which pupils take part promote both social and moral development well. Pupils have good opportunities to consider the needs of others, and raise money for a variety of charities where people across the world are in need. Thus, they have raised funds to support a child who lives in Tanzania, to help relief efforts in Kosovo, for War Child, Rainbows Hospice, Cystic Fibrosis and the Albania appeal.
- 42 This charity work is recognised by a high profile display in the main corridor, so that all passers-by are reminded of these efforts. The school also promotes pupils' moral and social development in the neighbourhood of the school. The community centre, onsite, supports gatherings of older people, and the "stroke" club. Year 5 pupils contribute to these gatherings by helping to serve tea. The school also provides musical entertainment with the orchestra and choirs to local gatherings of people, whether in the community centre, old peoples' homes or in the church. The school also welcomes children from the Wigston Menphys centre to spend some time with other children in this school. Pupils were seen to integrate well with these visitors. This social development is also promoted in lessons, where pupils work well together in collaborative efforts, especially noted in Information and Communications Technology, science and design and technology, and numeracy in the upper part of the school. Teachers provide good role models and encourage an ethos of mutual consideration and respect.
- 43 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. In some aspects of the curriculum, children are engrossed and touched with awe, for example when considering the immensity of space and the amazing interrelationships of the Earth, Sun and Moon. There are also moments when pupils are able to appreciate the deeper feelings and emotions conjured up by the high quality of music which is played to them or in the quality of their own singing in assemblies.
- 44 Provision for pupils' cultural development is unsatisfactory. There are too few planned opportunities to consider the contributions to the pupils' culture made by artists, poets, authors, designers and scientists. There is insufficient attention given

to raising pupils' awareness of the multicultural society in which they live and the parallels and differences in other peoples' lives nearby in Leicestershire or across the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 45 The care and support the school provides for pupils continues to be a strength and helps to improve the effectiveness of the curriculum. Staff know pupils very well and are able to support them both academically and personally. The school gives high priority to a good range of procedures and practices to safeguard pupils' welfare, and provides a secure learning environment where good attendance, good behaviour and good work habits are encouraged.
- 46 Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make good progress because they are particularly well supported by good use of experienced support staff. Individual Education plans are well considered, target pupils' weaknesses accurately, and are reviewed regularly to improve learning. The monitoring and assessment arrangements for SEN are efficiently communicated and managed and are a really strong and successful feature of the school. The school also commendably provides a Springboard Club as a booster class for older pupils who have difficulty with mathematics, and a Homework club for pupils who need more help and support with aspects of their homework.
- 47 The school conducts a yearly pupil attitude survey to find out if pupils are satisfied with many aspects of the school. Results indicate a very positive picture of pupils feeling happy with the quality of school life. All pupils have a range of targets for improvement. In the best teaching practice, target sheets were out on desks and pupils were frequently reminded to try their hardest to achieve their targets. Marking was inconsistent. Those staff who adhere to the school policy on marking described the learning intentions, achievement and effort well and this helps pupils have a better understanding of their own performance. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good. Much of the monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal, promoted by teachers who know pupils well and sustain positive relationships with them. Monitoring strategies to track the pupils' academic performance are well established, but are not always applied consistently across the school. There is insufficient use of pupils' assessments to inform differentiated lesson plans that meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of different abilities working in the same class. Teacher assessment of science is unreliable and is a particular issue that needs urgent review. Pupils' annual school reports are not stored on site and are not always easily accessible.
- 48 The school has very good procedures to promote attendance. Registers are consistently maintained. Efficient office staff check them daily, looking for any emerging absence patterns and follow up all absences, thereby eliminating any unauthorised absence. The procedures for managing behaviour are also very good. Pupils are very familiar with the assertive discipline regime and associated rewards and sanctions and staff rigorously and consistently enforce this to good effect. Many staff have their own class rewards systems as special incentives for extra effort and success and these work very well. The school works closely with parents to manage more difficult behaviour, and takes all reasonable steps to eliminate any form of harassment and is highly successful in this regard. The Lunchtime Club is a good initiative for pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour. They are given extra support and guidance as part of their behaviour modification programmes and a

chance to engage in useful and calming activities.

- 49 The arrangements for child protection are good and meet all the statutory requirements. Staff are aware of the child protection systems and their responsibilities. Retraining for the designated person, the headteacher, is due shortly. When pupils are sick or injured they receive a good level of care and attention. The school goes out of its way to ensure that those pupils who have a range of medical conditions are well known and catered for. Staff recently had some Epi-pen training when a peanut allergy was discovered. Risk assessments are thorough and are regularly conducted by governors and senior staff, and any health and safety issues are prioritised and subject to swift remedial action.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 50 The school tries hard to work closely with parents, and does everything it reasonably can to ensure that parents are made to feel welcome and that they are kept closely informed about the day-to-day life of the school. The majority of parents are pleased with the arrangements, but these efforts are not always fully rewarded by parental contributions.
- 51 The response to the parent's questionnaire was low, but the analysis reveals that most parents have confidence in the school and believe that their children are encouraged to learn and achieve. In particular, parents are very pleased with the standard of teaching, the good behaviour, the good work ethic and good management. The inspection team found that parents' views are justified. Some concerns were expressed with the level of homework, being informed about pupil progress and the poor range of extra-curricular activities. Overall, the school sets the type and amount of homework indicated in the policy attached to the home/school agreement that parents have signed. Regular homework helps to encourage parental involvement in the pupils' learning activities, especially in reading and spelling. Some homework tasks, however, are repetitive and uninteresting. The inspection found that the range of activities outside lessons sufficient for a primary school with such a short lunch break. The quality of information parents receive about their children's progress has strengths and weaknesses. Arrangements for consultation are good and parents have three formal opportunities per year to talk to staff, agree pupil targets and discuss progress. Staff make themselves available everyday as part of the open door policy to talk to parents about their children. Annual school reports, however, are inconsistent and some do not provide enough information to report progress adequately or identify weaknesses for improvement. Non-core subjects are, on the whole, poorly reported.
- 52 The effectiveness of the links with parents is good. The school has good links with the Kiddiwinks playgroup and the pre-school group and is able to make some very good arrangements to get to know parents well before pupils start in the Reception class. These parents are also invited to use the toy library held twice each week. Despite the school's best efforts, there is very little contact between parents and Reception and Year 1 teachers at the beginning and end of each day when parents come to school to collect their children. Parents shy away from staff and do not come into the classroom.
- 53 The impact of parental involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory, with strengths and weaknesses. The school keeps trying to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's learning and school life. Parents are regularly asked

to volunteer to help in school, but the response is modest. Parents are invited to meetings about the curriculum, but the attendance is poor. There is no support for a Parent Teacher Association. Parents prefer to support fund raising activities, like the successful sponsored mental arithmetic event that generated £1,500, and came in large numbers to the book fair. The recent 'fun days' organised each half term by the Reception unit have been successful. Last week the group made Christmas decorations and large numbers of parents took part. A Family Literacy programme is running with Reception pupils and their parents in the Reception unit. This is helping parents to support their children's reading and enjoyment of books and is a good initiative. When invited, parents come into school to support their children, especially when they are performing in class assemblies on Fridays, in concerts when pupils are singing in the choir or playing musical instruments or for sporting events. On many such occasions there is a creche provided.

- 54 Good quality information is available for parents in the school foyer and in classroom windows and doors, which are easily accessible for parents. Personal performance targets have been shared with parents for the first time this year, providing parents with the opportunity to make an even better contribution to learning at home. Regular newsletters and letters keep parents well informed. The school has also sent out information booklets about shared reading, the foundation curriculum and a Parent's Guide to Learning book for each family. Overall, the level of information is good; the school prospectus and the governors' annual report contain all the required information.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 55 The headteacher, senior management team and governing body, provide good leadership for the school, with a clear sense of direction that reflects well the school's aims and is supported by all staff. The school's aims are made explicit in the school prospectus for parents and help to create the ethos of the school. They accommodate a holistic approach to learning, and respond well to the needs of the local community by recognising and valuing high achievement within a caring environment that promotes personal and social development. This good leadership is well supported by some good management strategies. All school documentation is detailed, well presented and easily accessible; it appropriately reflects the school's commitment to high standards. There is a systematic approach to school development that encompasses well the plan, implement, monitor, review and evaluate cycle. This is well established in all school development plans and other appropriate documentation. Data about the pupils' learning and their attainment is routinely collected and is used well to inform school development plans. The school identifies appropriate priorities and targets for improvement in their development planning, takes the necessary action and reviews progress. Success criteria in action plans are not always specific enough to be easily measured. Members of the governing body are involved at all levels of school review, and assist in the monitoring and evaluation of change through regular visits to classrooms, as well as through access to good quality information provided by the headteacher and senior management team. The school also has a governors' action plan. This helps to promote the governors' involvement in school development initiatives, offers governor training, and encourages regular visits to the school and classrooms. The governing body works hard and is committed to school improvement. They fulfil their statutory

duties well. Several governors regularly work voluntarily in classrooms throughout the school.

- 56 The school has recently achieved Investment in People status and this celebrates the way the school gives emphasis to staff development and collaborative teamwork. There is a well defined staff appraisal process that is closely linked to a well structured staff development action plan and targets for school development. School documentation reflects a collaborative management style, with review strategies accommodating wide consultation of parents and pupils, alongside staff and governors. A well-established timetable of meetings helps to ensure effective staff communication and collaborative curriculum planning. The senior management team work hard to support and develop the curriculum in their subject responsibilities with good results. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have ensured the effective introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and the needs of pupils with special educational needs are well managed by the special needs co-ordinator. However, each member of the senior management team has several curriculum responsibilities and this makes for a heavy responsibility and workload. Occasionally, subjects do not receive sufficient attention by senior managers in the school, because these managers have limited time available and are having to prioritise other issues. Some of these curriculum responsibilities are beginning to be shared with other interested staff in the school, but this does not happen often enough.
- 57 Pupil literacy and numeracy achievement targets are set and reviewed each half term for whole class, groups and individuals. This process is well established, but targets are not always realistic and therefore pupils often fall short of achieving the targets set for them within the time-scale available.
- 58 The school is favourably staffed with experienced and qualified teaching staff, well supported by a large number of education and special needs support staff. These staff work effectively together, sharing information and expertise. This is especially the case in the reception classes where the teachers are very well supported by an experienced nursery-nurse assistant, who shares all responsibilities and contributes to the good teaching. Whilst a large percentage of the school budget is committed to staff costs, the good quality provision delivered by all staff in the school helps to ensure cost effectiveness. Positive relationships between staff help to ensure that newly appointed teachers, and those on placement in the school from local training institutions, are given appropriate personal and professional support.
- 59 Accommodation is good. All areas of the school are clean, tidy and well maintained. There are many shared areas that are well used to extend curriculum provision, although the outdoor play area is not sufficiently used to extend the classroom curriculum for reception pupils. Curriculum resources are at least satisfactory and sometimes good. There is a good range and quantity of resources for mathematics, music and physical education. Resources to support the English curriculum are mostly satisfactory, with the exception of the use of the school library. There is a large number of books in the school library, but the pupils have too little access to these and several books are out-of-date. Older pupils, in particular, are not provided with opportunities to routinely use the library for research purposes. The newly developed computer suite is also under-used. There are a good number of computers available in the school and they are of a high standard. However, many pupils, especially the younger pupils, currently have too little access to this resource, and in the meantime are denied access to sufficient numbers of computers in the classrooms to compensate. Effective use is made of new technology to support school administration, but effective use of new technology in the curriculum is insufficiently developed.

- 60 The school makes clear links between targets for school development and financial implications. Financial management is secure. Effective monitoring and evaluation procedures help to track and secure the cost effectiveness of school development initiatives. School managers understand and apply the principles of best value. Given the pupils' low attainment on entry, the higher than average school expenditure and the overall school effectiveness, this is a school that provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 61 In order to raise standards of achievement and to improve further the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
1. Enable pupils of all abilities to make better progress by more effectively using on-going assessment data to inform lesson planning, so that pupils with significantly different needs receive sufficiently different learning tasks.
 2. Secure equality of learning opportunity for pupils working in the same classes and in the same year groups by:
 - promoting consistency between class timetables designed for pupils working in the same year group, where these classes plan provision together.
 3. Provide a well balanced curriculum in all classes by reviewing the amount of timetabled time committed to English and mathematics lessons, to secure sufficient time on class timetables for science and other curriculum subjects.
 4. Better integrate information and communication technology across the curriculum.

The governors, headteacher and staff may also wish to consider the following minor issues:

- storage of pupils' curriculum reports on school site;
- better provision within the curriculum for the pupils to develop an awareness and understanding of other cultural traditions and beliefs;
- improved organisation and use of the school library, so that it is used more often by pupils of all ages, but especially older pupils who require access to library facilities for independent study and research;
- the development of further opportunities for outdoor play in reception classes;
- a re-interpretation of curriculum co-ordinator roles, to better draw upon the interests and expertise of other staff in the school;
- more opportunities for reception staff to engage in pupils' free-play to extend their learning;
- improved storage of science resources, so that they are more easily accessible.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	85
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1%	16%	36%	40%	6%	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 – Y5
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	337
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	67

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y5
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	102

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.0
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	28	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	16	24
	Girls	26	19	24
	Total	47	35	48
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	64 (81)	58 (77)	76 (89)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	21	20
	Girls	19	19	13
	Total	37	40	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	60 (71)	68 (89)	53 (74)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	13
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	275
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 – Y5]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3
Average class size	28.1

Education support staff: YR – Y5

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	306

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0

Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0

Number of pupils per FTE adult	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	679115
Total expenditure	726053
Expenditure per pupil	2099
Balance brought forward from previous year	114786
Balance carried forward to next year	67848

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	337
Number of questionnaires returned	58

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	34	5	0	2
My child is making good progress in school.	52	43	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	48	7	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	43	45	9	2	2
The teaching is good.	57	40	0	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	43	14	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	57	38	3	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	40	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	59	7	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	45	43	7	2	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	43	9	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	36	19	10	14

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

- 62 In line with Local Authority policy and practice, the school admits children at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection thirty-eight children were under five years of age. Assessment information is collected about children's attainment on entry to the school using the "Sign Posts" baseline assessment scheme. Results of these assessments undertaken this year indicate attainment levels at the beginning of the reception year that are below average. Over recent years the pattern has been similar, with baseline assessments indicating attainment levels on entry consistently well below average in language and literacy, mathematics and personal, social and emotional development.
- 63 There are two reception classes in the school. They work well together as a unit, with much team-teaching between the two teachers and with good quality support by a nursery nurse who shares the teaching responsibilities. Currently, one member of the full-time teaching team is on long-term sick leave and has been temporarily replaced by part-time support. This has generated the need to review and restructure some normal routines. Staff enjoy the company of these young children and provide enthusiastic teaching. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in lessons for reception children. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, and this helps to promote the children's learning and interest.
- 64 Curriculum provision is most often good, although too little attention is paid to the development of outside play as a natural extension to the indoor curriculum. There are very good links between teacher-directed tasks and good quality free play opportunities. Provision for literacy and numeracy is good and is promoted well through the successful introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teaching is well matched to the needs and interests of these young children. There is a good balance between directed work and independent learning opportunities. Teaching staff manage children's behaviours well and establish very good relationships that motivate and reward the children's efforts. Teaching staff provide well for learning through play, but adults too infrequently create opportunities to engage themselves fully in the children's free play activities to promote their learning. Strategies for curriculum planning and the assessment of children's achievements are good. Assessment information is well used to inform provision and to monitor the children's progress. Reports to parents are detailed and informative. Curriculum plans ensure children receive a curriculum appropriate to their needs and interests and are well linked to the Foundation Stage Curriculum Guidance. Records of the children's achievements are also well linked to the Early Learning Goals.
- 65 Almost without exception, children try hard to achieve the learning targets set for them and are eager to please. As a result, children are making good progress in all of the Areas of Learning, especially in communication, language and literacy and in their personal, social and emotional development. They learn to communicate their own needs and interests in group situations and to listen carefully to the perspectives of others. Teachers explain new ideas and tasks clearly and regularly reinforce language structures and new vocabulary. This helps to promote the learning of children with special educational needs and those with English is an additional language. Carefully structured tasks, presented in small group situations, help to ensure that children with special educational needs are appropriately supported. Good use of questions by teachers and well resourced open-ended tasks help to extend children's thinking and to ensure that all children are appropriately challenged,

including the higher attainers.

- 66 There is a broadly adequate range of learning resources available in all Areas of Learning. However, resources to support the outdoor curriculum are mostly limited to large, physical activities that do not develop fully other Areas of Learning through sensory experiences. For example, there is too little opportunity for children to be using the outdoors to develop their observation skills (magnifying glasses and binoculars); listening (wind chimes, musical instruments or wind tunnels); and touching (developing a touch garden).

Personal, social and emotional development

- 67 From a low baseline, children are making good progress in their acquisition of personal and social skills. By the end of the reception year, most children are well on their way to achieving the Early Learning Goals. They are keen to learn, are developing confidence and some independence in their own learning, and concentrate well. Many are able to identify, show and communicate their feelings in small and large group discussions, supported by adults who respect their feelings and respond with an interest in and understanding of their needs. Very good relationships between adults and children, and amongst children themselves, help to provide a purposeful learning environment in which everyone is valued. Children mostly work well together; there is a sound understanding of right and wrong. Through stories and discussions, children are developing an insight into their own and other cultural traditions and beliefs. Children behave very well and are eager to please the adults with whom they work. They take responsibility for themselves and the classroom and will readily tidy away their resources at the end of an activity. Most can dress and undress themselves with some independence for physical education lessons. In free play activities, children work with a sense of commitment, persevere at their tasks and usually complete the tasks they begin. Reception classes attractively present a good range of stimulating activities and resources each day; this encourages the children to develop a sense of awe and wonder that is shared with those around them and promotes a love of learning.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- 68 There is a significantly high number of children with special educational needs. On entry to school, these children frequently demonstrate an immaturity in their language and literacy skills. This generates low attainment on entry that is only partly resolved by the good progress children make during their reception year. This Area of Learning is given priority throughout the reception curriculum and teaching staff create a rich language learning environment for all the children. As a consequence, by the end of the reception year, there is a wide range of attainment, with some children well on their way to achieving the Early Learning Goals. The children listen attentively to stories, information and instructions. Through regular small and large group discussions with adults, children learn to communicate their needs and interests with confidence. More able pupils are able to explain enthusiastically, and in detail, their activities to those who show an interest. They talk readily about their experiences in small and large group situations, supported by teaching staff who demonstrate good listening skills. Through activities well matched to the National Literacy Strategy, children are given routine opportunities to listen to stories and to develop word and text awareness. This helps to promote good progress. An attractive imaginative play area is available for the children, and there are good links between the dramatic play undertaken here and the adult directed tasks that form part of the daily literacy

sessions. Even the less able children can follow a story line and talk about what is happening in the pictures. They are all aware that print carries meaning and engage in emergent writing activities with confidence. Many children demonstrate word awareness and some can identify a number of different letter sounds. Most children recognise their own names and the more able children can write their own names unaided, holding a pencil effectively and making at least some easily recognisable letters. All children demonstrate a respect for books and enjoy sharing books with familiar adults. Some of the most able children can sight-read a number of familiar words and can build small words using familiar phonic sounds such as 'it' and 'in'. Good use is made of the computer to promote developing literacy skills. For example, children were observed copying their names and a short message from a card onto the computer, using the keyboard, ready to be printed onto their Christmas cards. Software programmes also help to reinforce letter recognition and phonic sounds. From a low baseline on entry, children are making good progress in their speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, as this Area of Learning is given high priority throughout the curriculum for all children.

Mathematical development

69 Attainment in mathematics varies considerably. The low baseline on entry means that only a minority of children are able to achieve the Early Learning Goals in full by the end of the reception year, even though most children make good progress. Mathematics is given a high profile within the reception curriculum, and there are numerous opportunities for children to use, apply and develop their number skills through free choice and free play activities. Teachers reinforce number and quantity awareness regularly through a wide range of interesting practical activities. Good quality play opportunities and resources also encourage the children to reason, predict and problem solve. Children are encouraged to match, sort and sequence using a number line, and some of the more able children can sequence numbers to ten unaided. Through making tasks, such as mixing porridge, children are encouraged to use vocabulary to describe quantity and size such as more, less, bigger and smaller. Good quality learning support resources, that are carefully structured by the teaching staff, help to encourage children to engage in mathematical explorations as part of their play. In the imaginative play area the children are encouraged to think about counting, quantity and size as they act out the story of The Three Bears. At the threading table the children are encouraged to copy and create their own patterns using beads and laces. The children learn a wide range of counting games, number rhymes and songs and they repeat these with confidence. Most the children can count to five, a few can count to ten and beyond. Some of the more able pupils are beginning to demonstrate an awareness of addition and subtraction and respond appropriately to questions about one more than and one less than. Through structured activities children are developing an understanding of time and are learning the appropriate time sequences during the day, linked to time vocabulary such as before, after and 'o' clock times. Through construction and art work they are learning about shapes and space. Good use of computer software programmes helps to reinforce mathematical concepts to do with matching, sorting, sequencing, shape and quantity, explored through the use of practical play resources.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70 Many children arrive at school with a limited experience of the world around them. By the end of the reception year, children have made good progress, but overall attainment remains below expectations. More able children talk about their families and past and present events in their lives. However, many children find talking in detail about contexts other than the here and now more difficult. All children readily explore features of natural and made objects and show a natural curiosity. This is

promoted well by reception staff through the provision of stimulating resources with which to experiment and explore; for example pink jelly foam in the water-trough.

- 71 Through a wide range of interesting practical activities, supported by teaching staff, the children are encouraged to look closely at similarities, differences, patterns and change. More able children are encouraged to consider why things change and how things work. Whilst making porridge, the children were encouraged to observe how the properties of the porridge changed when hot water was added and how different sorts of oatmeal produced different textures and tastes. Sensory awareness is high profile and there are regularly tasks about the room to encourage the children to differentiate what they taste, smell, touch and hear. Many children are still heavily reliant upon the adults with whom they work for guidance and information. Positive teacher-child relationships encourage children to experiment, explore, to tolerate change and the unexpected. Most children are learning how to use tools appropriately to cut, stir, shape, pour and build. They use a range of construction apparatus successfully, and most use familiar tools such as pencils, glue sticks and scissors with some accuracy. They use the computer mouse with precision and are operating familiar software programmes independently. More able children are also using the computer keyboard with confidence and can write their own names without assistance.

Creative development

- 72 The reception classes provide a wealth of imaginative and creative opportunities for children, both adult structured and independent. However, many children lack the detailed language and communication skills necessary to effectively communicate their thoughts in an imaginative context. Pictures can contain good details, but many children rely on other children or adults for guidance as to the content of their pictures. Adult-directed art activities are sometimes too heavily focused upon end products to allow children opportunities to express themselves more freely. Attainment in this area of learning is variable, but overall progress is good and sometimes very good. By the end of the reception year there are still a significant number of pupils who find self-expression difficult, and who lack the confidence to create truly original artwork. Good provision throughout the reception curriculum encourages the children to explore sound, colour, texture, shape, space and form in two and three dimensions. Children are encouraged to respond in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and feel. In these circumstances the more able pupils are able to create their own stories, generate their own ideas and to develop a variety of different techniques to express their thoughts and feelings, using a wide range of materials, tools and musical instruments.

Physical development

- 73 The children make good progress in their physical development, especially development of small motor skills such as pencil control, scissors control and computer mouse control. Most children can colour and cut with some accuracy, and can manage buttons and zips unaided. They are developing good hand-eye co-ordination. By the end of the reception year, many children are achieving the Early Learning Goals in these respects. Their large motor skills are less well developed, although their progress is at least satisfactory and in some respects it is good.

Through well planned and structured physical education (PE) lessons the children are learning to move with increasing control, co-ordination and an awareness of space and others. However, many pupils lack the confidence to move imaginatively and independently and rely heavily on adults for encouragement and support. Good quality teaching encourages the children to use balancing and climbing equipment with increasing skill, and through routine opportunities for outdoor play the children are learning to peddle, steer and co-ordinate their limbs on bikes and wheeled toys. For those children who lack access to these resources at home, current time-tabled access to the outdoors is insufficient, and there are too few opportunities for children to choose to go outdoors to use the large play equipment during normal daily timetables.

- 74 Reception staff welcome parents into the nursery to work alongside and with their children, but the response is minimal. 'Fun' days encourage parents to come into the nursery to take part in activities, such as the making of Christmas decorations. These events are better attended. Parents are encouraged to be more actively engaged in their children's learning through a recently introduced Family Learning Programme that is running successfully for the first time this term. All children regularly take home homework tasks to share with their parents, and the children's school successes can be easily celebrated with their parents through the use of rewards such as stickers, badges and certificates.

ENGLISH

- 75 By the age of seven, standards in English are well below average. Although standards have steadily improved between 1997 and 1999 they have fallen again in 2000. This can be attributed to a large proportion of these pupils having special educational needs. Half of the Year 2 pupils in 2000 were on the Special Educational Needs Register, five percent of whom had a statement of special educational need. The school also experienced a significant amount of pupil mobility, with a higher than average number of pupils entering and leaving the school during this year. In the circumstances, these results indicate satisfactory progress when compared with the very low levels of attainment on entry. With the exception of the 2000 results, there has been a year on year improvement in speaking and listening, reading and writing. There has been an overall improvement in spelling, most noticeably between 1998 and 1999. In 2000, results from the National Curriculum tasks and tests indicate that attainment of seven year olds is well below the national average in reading and very low in comparison with the national average in writing. Performance in reading and writing is very low in comparison with similar schools. Teacher assessment shows that standards in speaking and listening are well below the national average.
- 76 Standards of attainment towards the end of Year 5 are broadly in line with national expectations in all aspects of English. Test results of pupils in Year 6 in high schools to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 5 indicate that standards in English are improving; in 2000 they were above average in comparison with similar schools. Evidence gathered during the inspection from lesson observations, samples of work and through discussions with pupils, indicates that standards across the school in speaking and listening, reading and writing are broadly in line with national expectations for all pupils except those with special educational needs. Almost a third of the pupils in the school are on the special education needs register.
- 77 There is also a policy and school register to identify and monitor the needs of higher attaining pupils, although this does not yet significantly influence provision in this subject.

- 78 The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. All pupils spend at least an hour a day on the development of literacy their skills. When pupils enter the school they lack confidence in speaking and their listening skills are poor. Reading skills are poorly developed and very few pupils are able to write. These limitations are immediately addressed. Through effective teaching pupils soon become confident in speaking and listening and contribute well to discussions in large and small groups, as well as individually with adults. Plenary sessions are common across all classes and subjects, enabling pupils to focus on their learning and build upon their speaking and listening skills. Their vocabulary and use of words is developing through the language associated with the literacy hour and the emphasis placed on the use of correct terminology in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils have ample opportunities to practise and develop their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. For instance, during the inspection, Year 2 pupils successfully explained different ways of dividing an array of, say, six by four dots into equal halves, and exploring the different ways of describing and recording their findings. Year 4 pupils collaborated well on designing and making burglar alarms. They were able to use correct terminology learned during the lesson, evaluate the outcomes and consider improvements to their designs. At the beginning of a science lesson, Year 5 pupils provided clear explanations, demonstrating their current understanding of Earth and space. This emphasis upon spoken language helps to promote good progress for those pupils with English as an additional language.
- 79 Pupils read and write with increasing confidence, fluency and understanding. They read together successfully during whole class sessions, in a group with the teacher and independently. They have a good grasp of letter sounds; this helps them to tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. Younger pupils make good use of pictures to help with their understanding, and many are able to self-correct as a result of reading on and making sense of the text. More able pupils read fluently and with expression. They are keen to talk about what they have read and show an interest in books of all types. They are able to state preferences and know why they like particular books. Pupils are familiar with terms such as fiction, non-fiction, author and illustrator. They know how to find information within books, using contents and index pages as well as making good use of skimming and scanning skills. This was particularly evident with Year 3 pupils who were making effective use of a range of books to find out about everyday life during Roman times. Although pupils make effective use of books in the classroom, little use is made of the school library. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the sound and spelling system, which they use to read and spell with increasing accuracy.
- 80 Standards of presentation vary from class to class. Although handwriting is generally neat and legible, and pupils learn to join letters during handwriting practice sessions, these skills are not consistently applied in other written work. Writing covers the full range of fiction and non-fiction texts and pupils are able to write for different purposes. Year 3 pupils were successfully organising and writing their own non-fiction texts about different aspects of life during Roman times. This involved the different stages of planning, making notes, drafting and developing ideas, revising and improving the writing before presenting a final copy. Year 4 pupils were working particularly well, in pairs, to edit and improve their writing, embellishing it through the use of language. They were able to link paragraphs together effectively, with appropriate connectives used to demonstrate the passage of time and link ideas. Towards the end of the lesson, pupils were able to share good ideas when reading their writing confidently to the whole class. Pupils in Year 2 were able to evaluate critically how successful they had been, when writing invitations to a puppet show, in terms of clarity, information

provided and presentation. Meanwhile, pupils in Year 1 were considering the use of computers in designing posters containing pictures and relevant information to advertise the puppet show.

- 81 The teaching of English is at least satisfactory. In three fifths of lessons it is good or better. Lessons throughout the school are planned well. Learning objectives are clearly identified and shared with the pupils. In a Year 4 lesson, pupils' clear understanding of the learning enabled them to work effectively in pairs, assessing each other's work, providing feedback about good points and advice about how the work might be improved. Where teaching is good, activities contribute well to pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. For example, in Year 5, good use was made of "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens to engage the pupils in making sense of the evolving character of Scrooge, as well as focusing on the language of the past, present and future tenses. Good use is made of recapitulation in whole class, introductory sessions to reinforce and consolidate learning from previous lessons. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher effectively used 'Croaker', a hand puppet, to capture the interest and involvement of pupils. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the spelling rules learned as they applied them during this class activity. All contributions were valued, and mistakes were used positively to reinforce learning. Whilst the skilful use of questioning engages pupils' interest, it is also used to check understanding and extend pupils' thinking. Pupils are generally managed well, relationships are positive and behaviour good. In lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory it is characterised by slow pace throughout and the poor management of pupils. Although pace in lessons is generally good, particularly at the beginning and end of lessons, it is sometimes slow during group work activities when pupils apply themselves less readily to their work, without direct support of the teacher. Good use is often made of plenary sessions to facilitate the sharing and extending of ideas, to recap on learning and to check understanding further.
- 82 Teachers know the pupils well; they monitor their progress effectively. Feedback to pupils during lessons is both positive and constructive. In some classes, pupils are involved in self-assessment, and work effectively in pairs, providing each other with helpful feedback about what has been done well, with some indication for improvement. Some teachers record comments about individual pupils on weekly planning sheets to inform subsequent planning. Work is marked frequently in all classes, in line with the school marking policy. Marking is particularly effective in some classes when pupils are provided with constructive feedback about how well they have achieved the learning objective, and targets for improvement are set, as appropriate. Some teachers also make useful notes on pupils' work to indicate the context in which the work is done and the level of support received.
- 83 Pupils with special educational needs have detailed individual education action plans, which are followed carefully. They make good progress towards the targets set for them and are well supported by both teachers and special educational needs support staff. Good use is made of computers for word processing to facilitate and edit writing.
- 84 The English curriculum is taught mainly through the literacy hour, with good provision made for the teaching and learning of speaking and listening skills. The school has benefited from intensive support from the Local Education Authority. The management of English is good. The co-ordinator is currently updating the policy for English, in line with the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. At present, it is in draft form. Most classes allocate at least an hour a day to the teaching of literacy and sometimes more. This extra time is often at the expense of other areas of the

curriculum. The policy currently states that a third of teaching time is to be allocated to the provision of the wider English curriculum, including drama, extended writing, personal reading and library time. Although the wider English curriculum needs to be catered for, this should not be at the expense of other subjects. Standards are closely monitored through observation of the literacy hour being taught in classes across the school, and through analysis of teacher assessment and test outcomes. Monitoring has resulted in carefully identified school targets for development, the focus being on spelling. There is a detailed implementation and monitoring timetable in place. Classes throughout the school have targets relevant to the age group. Individual pupil's needs are met through the setting of individual, personal targets. Each child has a target card which can be referred to whilst working. This is particularly successful where teachers focus pupils' attention on their targets at the beginning of lessons and carefully monitor their progress towards achieving them.

- 85 Resources for learning are adequate. Pupils have access to a wide range of literature, which makes a positive contribution to the standards attained in reading. The person with responsibility for the library, who is also a member of the senior management team, is overloaded with responsibilities and, consequently, has not been able to manage the development of the school library effectively. Many of the books are dated; some are inappropriate. Books are organised by topic and are colour coded. There is no classification system so that pupils find books more by luck than by design. Pupils make little use of the library. It is used mainly by pupils in Years 4 and 5 and by teachers to supplement class topic collections. It provides a pleasant working environment and is used for withdrawal groups, class story sessions and to watch television. The school has recently been equipped with a computer suite. This has yet to be developed to support the teaching and learning of literacy skills. Little use was made of computers in classrooms during the inspection other than in Year 5, to support the writing of pupils with special educational needs and for pupils to check the spellings of irregular verbs in the past tense.
- 86 Since the time of the last inspection, with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy, a better range and balance of teaching and learning styles has been developed across the school. There is more teacher intervention into group and individual activities, which promotes the development of knowledge and understanding. Higher attaining pupils occasionally receive extension activities which provide added challenge during normal class lessons and as homework tasks. However, teachers do not always make sufficient use of on-going assessment information to provide a suitable range of activities to meet the needs of pupils of differing abilities, including the gifted and higher attainers. There is too little evidence in workbooks and lessons of the more able pupils achieving above national expectations. This is reflected in the low number of pupils that achieve the higher levels in the National Curriculum tasks and tests. In well structured and well resourced lessons, the majority of pupils are able to demonstrate achievement in line with national expectations. However, in the absence of these support structures, the younger and less able pupils struggle when working independently, and do not always perform to the best of their abilities in test situations.

MATHEMATICS

- 87 In national tests at the end of Year 2 a sufficient number of pupils do not reach the standards expected for their age in numeracy and all areas of mathematics, especially at the higher levels. The 2000 national test results show that seven-year-olds reached standards that are well below all other schools and those schools that

are considered to be similar. Standards have steadily improved since 1997, but fell sharply in 2000. This was due to a large proportion of pupils who have special educational needs. But standards are still not as high as they should be. Very few pupils, if any, reach standards above those normally expected. Year 6 national test results provided by feeder high schools suggest that standards remain below national expectations. However, end of Year 5 work in the pupils' exercise books indicates that most pupils are working within the standards expected nationally for their age in normal class lessons, where pupils with learning difficulties are well supported by education support staff. In the lessons observed, most pupils are working near their capacity and make sound or better progress, particularly in Years 1 and 2. When achievement is measured against attainment on entry to the school, progress is satisfactory.

- 88 By the end of Year 2, pupils are developing a clear understanding of the concept of a half. They recognise that the two halves are the same size and recombine to make a whole. Several models were shared with the pupils to secure their knowledge, such as half an apple and half a group of six children. Most pupils appreciate the difference between the two ideas. Placing mathematics in a real life context motivated pupils and captivated their attention. Many pupils have a sense of place value to 100 and use their knowledge of the number system to add or subtract 10. All pupil are beginning to know a range of number facts from those numbers which add up to make 5 or 20 to simple multiplication facts. They can name some solid shapes such as sphere and cylinder and can read time at quarter of an hour intervals.
- 89 By the end of Year 5, pupils are able to interpret information represented in a bar graph, reading axes where 1 square is worth 5 or 10 children. They are using specific mental strategies for adding 2 numbers which are close together. Most pupils are able to find factors and multiples of numbers, have a sense of place value to tenths and sometimes hundredths, and can calculate the sum of two 2-digit numbers in their heads. A few pupils are less secure in checking their answers and making sensible estimations. During one lesson in Year 5, more able pupils could reflect a four-sided shape, from one quadrant to another, and label all the co-ordinates of the corners of the shape. They respond with enthusiasm to this challenge, and enjoy the opportunity to work in a more open ended, imaginative way.
- 90 The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics throughout the school is satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2 it is good. Pupils are beginning to consider the different ways quantities can be halved, and record their findings in different ways, whilst recognising that the various number sentences actually mean the same thing. They are learning some of the abstractions of mathematics. However, the pace of learning in some lessons is too slow for the more able pupils who are asked to complete the same task as the rest of the class. Insufficient account is taken of what they already know. In some lessons in Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils are being taught set routines and procedures in order to find solutions to questions that are repetitive. They are not taught to understand an idea and then apply their thinking to new situations. This restricts the progress pupils can make over a group of lessons. In the more effective lessons, pupils are challenged to apply reasoning to a range of possible solutions in order to achieve a result. For example, when teachers raise questions such as "What number is a multiple of nine and has digits that add up to nine?" Progress in learning is accelerated when problems are posed in this way.
- 91 All teachers have established the three-part lesson structure. There is continuity of learning through the lesson. Identifying what is to be learned in a lesson is clearly defined in the planning and shared with the pupils, but it is not sufficiently well used to

inform questions at the end of a lesson to assess what pupils have understood. What pupils are to learn through the year is not always directly linked to the needs of individuals in the school, learning objectives are too often derived from what is expected of any average child. The teachers are very secure in their implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. It has influenced a broadening of the range of teaching styles. There is now an emphasis on interactive teaching. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

- 92 Teachers' knowledge of the subject is sound; they use a good range of mathematical vocabulary. The main part of the lesson is most effective when tasks are practical and allow pupils to work independently. When teachers continue to explain, discuss and demonstrate skills and ideas throughout the lesson, pupils consolidate their understanding. When teachers move around the class spending time keeping pupils on task, opportunities for learning are either missed or under-developed. Younger pupils, particularly, are quick to settle to their activities and are co-operative, happy to share equipment, and to take turns when playing games or generating numbers. Year 1 pupils are content to work together to match times shown on the clock face with written times, agreeing between themselves the best way to represent their findings. At times pupils are held back by over-direction and dependence on set procedures and tasks. Too often tasks are based on the completion of a number of worksheets, which limit the level at which some pupils can really engage with the learning. They are often too easy for the more able pupils.
- 93 Across the school, the use of information and communication technology to support mathematical skill, knowledge and understanding is poorly developed. Other resources, such as number lines, personal white boards and number target boards are well used to promote active involvement and secure understanding. Pupils use mathematics to help learning in other subjects. For example, pupils discuss size, proportion and relationships when looking at perspective in the work of famous artists.
- 94 Teachers are beginning to diagnose appropriately pupil misunderstanding in aspects of mathematics through the lesson and when marking finished work. In the best lessons, misconceptions identified during the marking of the pupils' work are dealt with in the following lesson. This is not always as effective as it could be because teachers talk through the same approaches, rather than trying to find alternate strategies. There is some inconsistency in teachers' ongoing assessment of pupil achievement, which results in learning and activity that is too easy or too difficult.
- 95 The mathematics co-ordinator has a high level of interest and expertise in the subject. She has successfully managed the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy throughout the school. She has maximised the opportunity to monitor classroom practice, and has proposed key areas for improvement in the quality of both teaching and learning. She has a thorough understanding of the need to raise pupil performance in mathematics.

SCIENCE

- 96 Teacher assessment shows that standards achieved, by the end of Year 2, are very low when compared with schools nationally and with schools in similar social contexts. For the last three years, no children achieved the higher Level 3. Overall, standards have fallen rapidly since 1998. There is a combination of factors which affects these results. The school takes in many children whose learning is at a low level when they start in school. In some years there is a high number of pupils with special educational needs. In the year 2000 results, half the children were on the

special needs register, and quite a high proportion of these had significant learning difficulties. The curriculum that pupils were following was not of a high enough challenge. Not enough time is given to science in some classes. Results at the end of Year 2 are based on teacher assessments. Teachers have been over cautious in assessing some pupils' higher capabilities. As a result, the figures are not a true reflection of pupils' skills and knowledge. Although pupils do achieve standards below those achieved nationally and by similar schools, they are not as far below as the reported results suggest. In the 2000 results, girls did considerably worse than boys. There is no evidence in current teaching to suggest that boys are given more help to succeed in science than girls.

- 97 From a very low base of skills and knowledge, pupils make sound progress in their learning through Years 1 and 2. This is slower in Year 1, but quicker through Year 2 as pupils gain more experiences. The very recent introduction of the guidelines offered to schools in the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's [QCA] Scheme of Work for science is already having an effect on raising expectations and achievements. While there is still a significant proportion of pupils in these classes with special educational needs, all are making satisfactory progress, and are on course to attain better at the end of Year 2 than they have in recent years.
- 98 Teacher assessment of pupils in Year 5, at age ten, show standards that are also very low. By the time they leave, only two thirds achieve the level expected of ten year olds. Again, these achievements have fallen markedly over the last three years. All the same factors that influence low teacher assessment for the younger pupils also affect the older pupils. The most significant of these have been a poor scheme of work, undermined further by too little time allocated to science, and over-cautious teacher assessments. Evidence from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and scrutiny of their books shows that many of the current Year 5 are well on the way to achieving good standards in the national tests they will take next in the High School.
- 99 Progress in learning from Year 3 to Year 5 is steady at first, but accelerates swiftly in one Year 4 class and in both Year 5 classes. Here, expectations are very high; challenging work helps many pupils to achieve quite high levels of knowledge and understanding. Many pupils can explain the main functions of the heart and lungs, or how water can change its state from solid to liquid to gas. They can explain what properties of materials fit them for certain uses, eg metals for carrying electric currents, or leather for clothing that needs to be tough and durable. They know how to alter current in a circuit to make bulbs shine more brightly, and many can explain how the earth's rotation causes day and night. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory; it would be quicker if their work was better matched to their needs. Pupils make good progress in their investigative skills in Year 3 and this is maintained through Year 4 and Year 5.
- 100 At both key stages pupils enjoy their science lessons. They behave well, work well together and try hard.
- 101 Science teaching is satisfactory overall from ages five to seven, and good at ages seven to ten. The lessons observed at each key stage were good, but evidence in the work sample suggested that overall science teaching for Year 1 and 2 is only satisfactory. This is due to the evidence of weaker marking, some lack of subject knowledge and some lower expectations of the quantity and quality of work over time. This judgement also takes account of the inaccurate assessments which have been made of pupils' achievements. These weaknesses contrast markedly with some of the teaching observed during the inspection in Year 2. Some major strengths in teaching were noted in an electricity lesson, when pupils were asked to make circuits

and to consider how electricity could be used to cause a range of effects from light to sound or movement. The main strengths were in the quality of questioning and the high expectations that pupils would be able to cope with intellectual challenge, backed up by good guidance to help the other teaching assistant work in a concentrated way with pupils. This resulted in many pupils making very good progress.

- 102 At Key Stage 2, teaching is good. In the best teaching, a range of strategies is used to help pupils think about how the Earth's rotation accounts for day and night. In Year 5, the teacher helps pupils to understand by using models to represent the different sizes and distances between the earth, sun and moon; pupils are encouraged to act out, and to experience, the movements to illustrate the way we get day and night, and how the earth orbits around the sun. In Year 4, the challenge in some work in electric circuits is very high when pupils experiment with different conductors and insulators, this is due to the teachers fast pace, very good resourcing and high expectations.
- 103 The curriculum has some weaknesses. Although the school has just started to implement the nationally recommended scheme of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, this is only just beginning to impact on lessons. There is much too little time for science for the older pupils. The time in one class is not always equalled by the time in the other class in the same year group. This means that pupils don't have equal or sufficient access to science.
- 104 The management of science has some weaknesses. There is a need for tighter monitoring of the accuracy of assessments. The organisation, storage and accessibility of resources need to be improved. The amount of time allocated to science needs to be increased significantly in Key Stage 2, and the equal access to science time guaranteed for all pupils of the same ages.

ART

- 105 Only three art lessons were observed during the inspection, one with pupils aged five to seven and two with pupils aged seven to ten. Additional evidence from planning, finished work and discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that standards of work, and progress in skills, knowledge and understanding, are in line with expectations. Pupils have experience of a suitably wide range of drawing materials, media and resources, and they are able to record from experience and imagination. Knowledge and understanding of art is less well developed than designing and making skills.
- 106 The quality of teaching is satisfactory with the older pupils. Pupils are well supported by teachers and classroom assistants. Learning objectives are clearly identified and shared with pupils. Teachers provide good demonstrations, enabling pupils to learn different skills with opportunities to practise and consolidate them. Following a good demonstration by the teacher, Year 5 pupils were successfully learning how to draw faint outlines using charcoal and blend colours using pastels, when drawing mother and child pictures in the style of various artists. Year 4 pupils were making use of a range of materials and techniques to build pictures of silhouettes showing light and dark with perspective. Their pictures were modelled on those of artists such as Van Gogh. Skilful questioning enables pupils to identify problems and employ strategies to solve them. The use of correct terminology and discussions about their work contributes well to pupils' speaking and listening skills. The quality of the teaching seen with the younger pupils was unsatisfactory. Although the objectives were clearly identified, the lack of demonstration of skills inhibited pupils' success.

- 107 Good links with information and communication technology help pupils develop and use their ICT skills in art work. This was seen when Year 5 pupils were using computers to develop these skills to produce a background for a Christmas card.
- 108 The art co-ordinator, a member of the senior management team, is overloaded with responsibilities and has little time to devote to the development of art across the school or the systematic monitoring of standards. Although there is a policy and scheme of work to support the teaching of art, there is little guidance provided in relation to the progression and development in skills and understanding. The school's planning for art does not contain sufficient detail to help teachers plan progressively more challenging tasks for pupils at different stages of development. However, the school intends to adopt the QCA scheme of work in the coming year. Classrooms are well organised for artwork and resources are generally good, although little or no use is made of sketch books, and limited time is available for the teaching of art and design. Displays of pupils' work are used to good effect around the school; they greatly enhance the working environment.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 109 It was only possible to observe one lesson in design and technology; this was in Year 4. As a result, there is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on the standards achieved, nor make an overall judgement on teaching of the subject. The evidence available suggests that design and technology is taught throughout the school and that there is a balance of designing, making and evaluating.
- 110 In the one lesson observed, standards were very high. Pupils showed rapid gains in their designing and making skills, and their learning was enhanced by the careful structuring of experiences and the foundation of skills that the good subject knowledge of their teacher has built up. Their achievements are above what is expected for the age. Pupils brought positive attitudes to their work. They were fully involved and worked well together on their project to create a burglar alarm: a highly motivating and fun activity which combined knowledge of joining methods and materials, and simple mechanisms, together with electrical circuitry.
- 111 Where there is evidence of work on display, as in pupils' musical instruments designed and made in Year 5, it is clear that the pupils respond well to tasks that have been set.
- 112 The teaching observed in Year 4 was very good. The teacher is knowledgeable and guided the lesson sensitively, expecting and receiving a good quality of response to her questions. Learning is carefully structured over time so that pupils have knowledge and skills that they are applying in this lesson. Resources are very good; they help pupils to achieve their planning and making objectives.
- 113 There is a weakness in the design and technology curriculum. The time allocated is not securely timetabled; it can be modified or altered due to timetable pressures caused by some pupils being withdrawn for instrumental music lessons. Other than this, the school's adoption and adaptation of the QCA scheme of work is supporting a good balance of work. The co-ordinator has produced a policy which summarises how the subject should be taught. The subject is adequately resourced, but tools, equipment and materials are not yet centrally stored to facilitate easy access and

use. The school is well equipped to promote the teaching of food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

- 114 The school is beginning to use the nationally recommended QCA scheme of work and has planned blocked units for each year group. Geography was taught in only one year group during the inspection, and only one lesson was observed. Evidence from planning documents, discussion with pupils and scrutiny of work indicate that progress throughout the school is broadly satisfactory, as was described in the last inspection report.
- 115 The over emphasis of time spent on Literacy and Numeracy limits the impact of Geography in the curriculum, and prevents some of the breadth and depth of study necessary to promote the pupils' achievement of higher levels of attainment.
- 116 The five to seven year old pupils have the opportunity to think about the differences between life in Wigston and the rural countryside. This leads to some good fieldwork, walking in the local area and visiting East Carlton Park. Pupils are eager to talk about local amenities such as the church, pedestrian crossings and shops, and can contrast and describe effectively the countryside that they have visited, the different types of animals found on a farm, the woodland and fields. Older pupils could refer in general to work covered in previous academic years, but were unable to explain clearly or precisely what they had learned. The work samples indicated an appropriate breadth of geographical study, but did not adequately reflect the wide range of ability levels within the school. Learning is enriched by field trips and a Rain Forest Roadshow has visited.
- 117 The lesson introducing an Indian village study observed with older pupils was very good. The teacher outlined the objectives of the lesson and her brisk explanation using maps and atlases introduced key words such as tropics, equator, rainfall and climate. Primary and secondary sources of evidence were discussed and the brainstorming activity enabled children of all abilities to offer interesting ideas and opinions. Support staff working in the lesson gave encouragement and assistance to the children they were there to help.
- 118 Resources are adequate, but will need reviewing in line with the revised curriculum guidelines. The knowledgeable and enthusiastic curriculum co-ordinator is working with staff to develop these new schemes, along with her many other curriculum responsibilities. Good links exist with the local High School to ensure a continuity of curriculum into Year 6.

HISTORY

- 119 Standards are similar overall to those during the previous inspection. By the end of both key stages the pupils reach levels that are in line for their age groups.
- 120 By the age of seven, pupils are able to identify events that happened in the past by applying their chronological knowledge. Pupils know for example, the events leading up to the Gunpowder Plot. They could explain, in some detail, about Guy Fawkes and that he was involved in a conflict between "the Catholics and the Protestants". Pupils showed a sound knowledge of Motte and Bailey castles and the materials used in their construction. Pupils could explain that Remembrance Day was a time when we

remembered people who “had died in the wars”. Some pupils could identify differences between shops past and present; this was best demonstrated when the teacher passed around artefacts such as glass bottles and tin boxes used in the first half of the last century. Between the ages of seven and eleven children could explain, with enthusiasm, some of the monarchs and events within the Tudor period, including the names and fates of Henry VIII’s wives. However, pupils by the age of ten demonstrated some confusion in chronology, in particular in confusing Viking invaders with Tudor voyages of discovery. Often, recording activities are too simple, for example colouring in the “right” colour of straw used for roofs used by the Celts for their houses. Cutting out, sticking in and colouring events related to the voyages of Francis Drake do little to further knowledge and understanding already gained from stories and appropriate reference materials. There is an over-reliance on the use of simple work sheets.

- 121 Pupils have made satisfactory progress by the time they reach the age of ten. They are able to retrieve information from books and can use index, contents and picture cues. Older children made good progress researching what life was like in the 1950’s; this included discussions with grandparents. Good links are made between History and non-fiction writing, as evidenced by children preparing from their individual note taking to write about life in Roman times.
- 122 Staff are secure in their subject knowledge of history and teaching is, on balance, satisfactory. Teachers share objectives with children and, in the better lessons observed, revisit these at the end of the lesson to review learning.
- 123 Pupils respond well in lessons. When opportunities allow, they co-operate and collaborate effectively. Pupils enjoy opportunities to visit places of historical interest, such as the Framework Knitters museum, Warwick Castle, and the annual residential visit to Portsmouth to study ships and life in Victorian times.
- 124 Support staff work within the class helping children with special needs. This often takes the form of assisting with tasks set for the whole class.
- 125 The subject is well resourced, although some of the books used are inappropriate in content and condition. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has a keen enthusiasm for the subject but, as a result of other curriculum leadership responsibilities, her influence on the monitoring of teaching and learning is limited. The school has started to use the nationally recommended QCA scheme and has effectively planned blocks of time throughout the year for the study of history. However, the over emphasis of time spent on Literacy and Numeracy limits the impact of history in the curriculum. Good links exist with the local High School, which provides for continuity of curriculum into Year Six.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 126 Pupils achieve standards below those expected nationally at seven when they leave Year 2, and at ten when they leave the school. The school now achieves lower standards than it was judged to have achieved at the last inspection. In many classes, the only evidence of information and communication technology is in word-processed writing, and the occasional use of desk-top publishing or graphics programmes. During the inspection, few classes were observed to be using the computers that are available in class bases to support learning in other subjects. The new suite, which has only been in use since October half term, provides a good

resource and is beginning to support higher standards, but is often not sufficiently used by pupils during the day. The majority of computers in classrooms around the school are very old, and with limited capabilities. Not all teachers guarantee the weekly taught session that is needed to help pupils develop their skills across the range of applications. For all these reasons, standards are low, and progress is limited.

- 127 When pupils do have access to the computers they usually work sensibly together, are interested and concentrate on the tasks. This was noted in Year 2 in one class where pupils worked sensibly to make a diagram of the circuits they had made in science, in Year 3 where a small group took turns, and used each other's knowledge to explore a Roman town in a historical programme, and in Year 5 where pupils worked sensibly together to design, amend and save their Christmas card backgrounds.
- 128 Teaching of information and communication technology is satisfactory in almost all the lessons observed. Tasks are well set, are appropriate for the age and prior experience of pupils, and the pupils are well organised. One good lesson was observed in Year 5, when the good subject knowledge of the teacher, combined with very good pupil management, enabled the pupils to learn quickly the features of a new application. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, in one lesson, this is due to a task that is too readily completed by some pupils, who are then bored and start to be silly.
- 129 The main weaknesses in Information and Communication Technology are due to the recent reorganisation of equipment and the newness of the suite, and the lack of access provided in some class timetables. Teachers have yet to access National Grid for Learning training and internet access is not yet available in the new suite. The subject is well-led, the school knows that there are improvements needed, and these are detailed on the school's development plan. The school has sensibly adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Scheme of Work that is redressing the imbalance in the subject. The most urgent need, however, is to guarantee that all classes have a weekly lesson on Information and Communication Technology, and further opportunities to use computers to support the rest of their work.

MUSIC

- 130 Throughout the school pupils attain the standards expected for their age. The additional individual and focus group tuition, provided by the specialist teacher on the school staff, is a strength of the school. A range of string, brass and wind ensembles and junior and senior choirs further enhance the provision for some pupils. This enables the more able to achieve well. Pupils from Year 2 onwards, who choose to play musical instruments, attain particularly good standards in their ability to read and play music. In whole class music lessons the standards achieved by these talented pupils are not sufficiently high enough. They are capable of more challenging and creative work.
- 131 Older pupils regularly perform music with confidence during acts of collective worship, when classes arrive and leave the school hall. They perform equally well alongside other musical groups within the community and for parents and the elderly at special times of the year. They enjoy musical activity and show a lively interest in the performance of others. In an act of collective worship, a trio of boys in Year 5 volunteered to sing the first verse of a carol and sang very well in front of an audience.

- 132 Younger pupils know many songs and hymns from memory, and most sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. They respond with delight to favourite well-known songs. Older pupils show some control of pitch and rhythm, but their singing shows little progress in tonal quality and limited control of dynamics. They are able to sing a simple song in a round, with an awareness of other performers.
- 133 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn the names of a variety of percussion instruments and handle them immediately on entry to school. They know how to make sounds and create musical effects using a range of techniques. They can follow simple notation and maintain a simple rhythm, building in rests and repeating phrases. Pupils in Years 3 can clap and play percussion instruments, keeping in time with the beat. Older pupils compose and perform a short accompaniment using untuned instruments to create sequence and atmosphere of a journey into space. The finished performance is recorded and an initial appraisal suggests slight improvement.
- 134 The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory overall. It is good or better when the teacher is working with only pupils from the school orchestra or choirs. In these lessons, the teacher uses her obvious expertise to explain and demonstrate the musical elements and always uses specific musical language. She analyses pupils' mistakes in stance, breathing, handling of the instrument and interpretation of the music, and models the correction. Pupils' skill and understanding are challenged and their imagination and creativity are inspired. Learning is often immediate and transparent. Pupils refine their work and achieve high standards.
- 135 In whole class music lessons, the learning objectives are not always precise enough to shape and focus the teaching. Sessions are directed closely by the teacher, individual pupil expression and exploration can be limited. A few pupils with challenging behaviour are excited by the opportunity to play instruments and the teacher does not always use effective strategies to maintain calm and a sense of purpose. Assessment and record keeping is a strong feature of teaching in all lessons. Notes on individual and group achievement are kept systematically. It is evident that pupils make progress year on year through a range of musical skills, and bring these together when composing and performing a piece of improvised music.
- 136 The music co-ordinator takes a very clear lead in the subject. She is currently revising a school scheme of work to incorporate new guidelines in the teaching and learning of music. She supports colleagues by writing supplementary material for them to use to reinforce ongoing areas of learning. Her role in monitoring this extension work is as yet under developed. She manages the music room and its plentiful collection of instruments and uses this room as her teaching base. The co-ordinator has a very good overview of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 137 Standards in physical education are satisfactory for pupils of all ages. The picture was much the same in the last inspection, although the opportunities for children to reflect and evaluate their own performance and those of others, as a means of consolidation and improvement has declined.
- 138 The inclement weather during the inspection limited the aspects of physical education to work in the school's two halls and included dance, gymnastics and ball skills.

- 139 Issues of subject time allocation and time management are unsatisfactory; for example, the brevity of lessons often leads to an ineffective warm down and gymnastic apparatus is left out to be put away later when the school session has finished.
- 140 Teaching of physical education was never less than satisfactory and was most effective when the teacher sets a vigorous pace to the lesson, maintaining pupils' activity and models good quality movement. This was exemplified by a very good dance lesson with younger pupils responding to the taped music of Grieg's "Hall of the Mountain King". Space in the hall was well used and pupils were encouraged to comment on their own poise, balance and body awareness.
- 141 Pupils respond well in lessons and behaviour is satisfactory.
- 142 Teachers clarify the objectives of each lesson and often refer to them as the lesson progresses. This is good practice; it reflects teachers' knowledge and understanding of this subject. Staff dress appropriately for physical education, which set pupils a good example.
- 143 The teaching of swimming, which is blocked for Year 3, 4 and 5, was not observed, but standards indicated by swimming records are satisfactory.
- 144 The subject is adequately resourced, with two halls available for lessons, except during lunchtimes. Equipment is stored neatly and safely, and is readily accessible. Gymnastics apparatus, though heavy, offers very good scope for exploration and activity. Outdoor play space includes a large field and separate, smaller playgrounds.
- 145 The experienced subject co-ordinator is working with staff to implement the nationally recommended QCA scheme of work. Older pupils have the chance to take part in extra-curricular games, including netball and cricket, and to compete against other schools in soccer and athletics. Sports day, which is well supported by parents, includes a mix of competitive and other fun activities.
- 146 Support staff join in enthusiastically during lessons to encourage and assist all pupils, especially those with special needs.
- 147 Good links exist with the local High School for continuity of the subject.