

INSPECTION REPORT

SCOTTER PRIMARY SCHOOL

High Street, Scotter

Gainsborough, Lincolnshire

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120473

Headteacher: Christine Tarpey

Reporting inspector: Phil Cole
2616

Dates of inspection: 9 October – 13 October 2000

Inspection number: 224788

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: High Street
Scotter
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr A M S Smith

Date of previous inspection: June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P H Cole (02616)	Registered inspector	Information and communications technology, music, religious education and equal opportunities	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs M Jacobs (13808)	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well the school cares for its pupils? How well the school works in partnership with parents?
Mr N Hardy (29261)	Team inspector	Under-fives, English and art	
Mr S Reynolds ((04304)	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, geography and English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr A McGregor (03533)	Team inspector	Mathematics, history and physical education Special educational needs	

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The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Scotter Primary School is of average size and mainly serves the needs of a commuter village to the south of Scunthorpe. There are 251 pupils on its roll and virtually all of these are from white heritage backgrounds. All pupils speak English well. Very few pupils are entitled to free school meals and many children come from backgrounds that are more advantaged than usual. This is reflected in their attainment on entry to the school, which is a little above that expected for pupils starting their reception year. Although the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average, more pupils have statements than usual. The range of special educational needs in the school is wide and includes pupils who have physical disabilities as well as those with a variety of learning and other difficulties.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Consistently good teaching and a mostly well organised curriculum enable pupils to achieve standards that are usually much better than those found nationally and often better than those in similar schools. It is well led and managed and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieved well in English and very well in mathematics in the national tests.
- Pupils' current work in mathematics reaches a high standard. It is above average in English and in most aspects of science.
- Pupils achieve well in history, swimming and the Year 6 pupils make very good progress learning French.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about learning, behave very well and their very good attendance reflects their enjoyment of school.
- Teaching across the school is good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and this enables them to make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- The school benefits from very good links with parents.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and management and is supported well by senior staff and teachers in their roles as coordinators.

What could be improved

- Results in science, although in line with national averages, have not been high enough for this school. Brighter pupils could achieve better in investigational work.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their learning in design and technology, art and for the youngest pupils in some of the areas of learning that are identified for them.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since the last inspection in June 1996. Results have continued to improve in English and mathematics. The emphasis on developing literacy and numeracy has reduced opportunities for art and design and technology: consequently skills and standards in these subjects have been adversely affected. Pupils do not achieve as well as they should in information and communications technology (ICT) and religious education (RE). The school is effectively addressing these weaknesses and pupils are now making

good progress. The significant weaknesses in teaching identified in the last inspection have been dealt with very successfully. Considerable improvements have been made in ensuring that programmes of work for all subjects provide clear progression for pupils' learning and these are helping to raise standards. Weaknesses in pupils' cultural development have been tackled and this area is now promoted well. The good provision that was made for pupils with special educational needs is now very good. The significant problems related to leadership and management in the school have been addressed very effectively and the considerable strengths in this area are the major reason for Scotter being a good school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	A	A	C
mathematics	C	B	A	A
Science	C	C	C	D

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

Year 6 results in 2000 compared very favourably in mathematics and appropriately in English with those in similar schools (based on free school meals entitlement). Results in science were not high enough because too few pupils achieved the higher levels. Results in both English and mathematics have shown considerable improvement over the last few years but this has not been the case with science. The current Year 6 pupils' work shows achievement above national expectations in English and science and consistently above in mathematics. In both English and science pupils are achieving appropriately high standards and in mathematics they do even better. Although good teaching is leading to better progress now in science, greater challenge in investigative work would enable more pupils to achieve the higher levels. The school achieves, and sometimes exceeds, suitably challenging targets set for the end of Year 6. The Year 2 results in 2000 were better than those in similar schools in reading and mathematics and in line with them in writing, although the number of pupils achieving the higher levels in writing was disappointing. Pupils' current work shows a high proportion of pupils already achieving the levels expected by the end of the year in writing and above the expected levels in reading and mathematics. These standards are appropriate in writing and are good in reading and mathematics.

Pupils' current work is not high enough in art, design and technology, ICT and RE. Limited time for teaching reduces opportunities to develop skills in both art and design and technology. The revised curriculum and more focused teaching are now enabling pupils to make good progress in both ICT and RE and weaknesses are being effectively addressed. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress, overall. They achieve well in language and mathematical activities. The other areas of development for these children are satisfactory with some weaknesses in their ability to learn through investigating and exploring materials. Year 6 pupils have a French lesson every week and they are making very good progress in developing conversational skills.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils are enthusiastic, work hard and enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils are sensible, aware of others and play constructively.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils get on very well with each other. Their personal development is satisfactory.
Attendance	Very good.

Pupils are very enthusiastic and positive. Their very good behaviour provides an excellent foundation on which their learning can be built. Pupils get on very well with each other, with girls and boys often playing football or skipping together. There is scope to improve their personal development by providing more opportunities for them to take initiative and accept greater responsibility.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching across the school is consistently good and no areas have any significant weaknesses. All teachers taught more good or better lessons than satisfactory ones and only two lessons (3%) were judged to have weaknesses that made them unsatisfactory. Overall, 70% of lessons were well taught or were even better and in 20% of lessons teaching was either very good or excellent. This is a significant improvement on the last inspection where there were too many unsatisfactory lessons in lower junior classes.

A major strength is the skill with which all teachers meet the different needs of pupils in their classes. Lessons are very carefully planned and prepared and take full account of different abilities and ages. This ensures that teachers work with confidence, explain clearly and use questioning skilfully to check on understanding and challenge pupils to think more deeply. Classroom support staff and volunteer helpers are well briefed and used very effectively to support pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Both literacy and numeracy are taught with considerable skill and this is reflected in the standards that pupils are achieving. There were, however, weaknesses that led to pupils not making sufficient progress in two lessons in junior classes. In an RE and art lesson, the teacher was unsure of techniques in art and did not explain clearly enough to pupils what was expected of them and in a physical education lesson, the teacher did not provide sufficient physical activity and challenge.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and provides good progression as pupils move through the school. There are some imbalances between the times available for subjects.
Provision for pupils with	This is very good and ensures that these pupils make good

special educational needs	progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good in all areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is strength of the school.

The balance of the curriculum is distorted to a certain extent by the emphasis given to literacy. This reduces the time available for pupils to develop skills in science, art and design and technology. French for Year 6 pupils and the good range of out of class activities enrich the curriculum. All pupils have good access to learning opportunities, for example, a pupil with physical special educational needs successfully joins in games lessons. The school encourages literacy and numeracy skills well across the curriculum. The programme for pupils' personal, health and social education, including citizenship, currently lacks coherence but there are plans to address this. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs is very well planned and is firmly based on careful assessments of what they need. All pupils are very well cared for. Teachers use assessment well to get to know what individuals need and to plan what to do. There are high levels of care, as exemplified by the very sensitive and successful handling of delicate issues.

The school enjoys very strong links with parents. They are very well informed about their children's progress and events in school. They are actively encouraged to become involved with their children's learning and many respond positively to these opportunities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The very effective headteacher is well supported by both the deputy headteacher and other staff in their roles as subject managers.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors positively support the school and fulfil their roles satisfactorily.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures for judging how well it is performing and uses them effectively to make improvements.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of its budget.

The headteacher has high expectations of the pupils and the school. She uses very effective strategies to bring about change and has successfully created a shared commitment to improvement and good teamwork. Governors are becoming increasingly involved in finding out about the school and contributing to developments. Until recently, they have not been sufficiently aware of relative strengths and weaknesses in the standards being achieved. With the increasingly effective support of coordinators, the headteacher and the deputy headteacher are successfully monitoring and evaluating standards, teaching and curriculum plans in order to make improvements. The budget is managed carefully and particularly good use is made of funds to support pupils with special educational needs. Aspects of the best value principles are used to guide school management but they need to be formalised in the routines of the school.

The organisation of the curriculum stretches the resources for several subjects and more will need to be done to support recent changes in the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage curriculum for the youngest pupils. The school buildings and grounds provide a good environment for learning although wheel chair access is inadequate and the playground is uneven and hazardous in places. There are sufficient teachers and good levels of skilled staff to help in classes. The secretary and caretaking staff ensure that the school runs smoothly and is a clean and pleasant place to be.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high standards their children achieve. • Successful encouragement of pupils' positive attitudes, values and self-confidence. • Behaviour is good. • Their children are well taught. • They are well informed about their children's learning and about what is happening in school. • They are encouraged to become involved in their children's learning. • The school deals sensitively with issues and problems. • The school is well led. Expectations are high. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents would like the school to change its policy for allocating children to mixed age classes. • A small number of parents would like more guidance on helping their children with homework.

Parents are very supportive of the school and believe it is doing a good job. The inspectors agree with the strengths that parents have identified. The school has a clear policy for placing pupils in mixed age classes, based on their age. A few parents are unhappy about this policy. The inspection found that the school works hard to provide for the needs of all pupils and ensures that pupils in mixed age classes are well taught. Parents are given much useful information on what children will be learning and have opportunities to comment on reading in the record book that goes home. There is scope for this approach to be extended to include other homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 In both English and mathematics results in the 2000 national tests for pupils in Year 6 were well above those in primary schools across the country and in English they were also above and in mathematics well above those in similar schools. The results in both these subjects have shown considerable improvements over the last few years. The results in science have not been as good and in 2000 they were in line with those in all schools and below the average for similar schools. The main reason for the weaker performance in science was that too few pupils achieved the higher level 5. These results were not good enough. Pupils currently in Year 6 are already working comfortably at the levels expected by the end of the year in most aspects of English and science and consistently so in mathematics. In all the core subjects almost all pupils are achieving appropriately high standards. In English pupils have very good skills in reading, write well and have accomplished speaking and listening skills. All aspects of mathematics are well established. In science standards are improving in response to good quality teaching that mostly challenges all pupils appropriately. There remain relative weaknesses in investigational work where opportunities to challenge the brightest pupils are not being taken. If they were encouraged to design their own experiments by choosing what equipment to use, how to record and present their findings and evaluate the effectiveness of what they had done, they would be able to access more appropriate levels.

2 Year 2 pupils did well in the national tests in 2000. Their results in reading were very high compared to all schools and well above those in similar schools. Results in mathematics were also much better than those in similar schools. Results in writing were not as good, although they were in line with those in similar schools and well above the national average. This was because too few of the brighter pupils achieved the higher levels in the writing test. In science, as in English and mathematics, standards have shown steady improvement and teachers' assessments indicate that last year pupils were achieving appropriately with more of them achieving the harder level 3. In all of the core subjects the work of the current Year 2 pupils is appropriately high although writing is not quite as well developed as reading and speaking and listening in English.

3 In the core subjects, pupils are achieving appropriately across the full range of attainment, with isolated exceptions, such as those mentioned in science. The school achieves and sometimes exceeds suitably challenging targets set for the end of Year 6. Pupils with special needs make good progress and are achieving well in relation to their individual targets. This is true across the curriculum and in all of the key stages.

4 Standards in the foundation subjects are more variable. They are too low in ICT, RE, art and design and technology by the time pupils are in Year 6. They are at least satisfactory in the other subjects. In IT improvements have been made to the curriculum and together with effective teaching, pupils are now making good progress in this subject and deficits in their learning are being quickly addressed. Progress in RE is also good and the planned programme of learning should eradicate the weaknesses in pupils' knowledge of major world religions. While the school has concentrated on the very successful implementation of literacy and numeracy, too little time has been given to both art and design technology. Pupils have not therefore been able to spend enough time practising and refining their skills and consequently these are not high enough and completed work could be of higher quality.

5 A high proportion of the children in the reception are likely to achieve above expectations by the time they move into Key Stage 1. Particular strengths lie in progress they make in the areas of “communication, language and literacy” and “mathematical development” where they are stretched in lessons and respond well. In the other areas of “knowledge and understanding of the world”, “physical development” and “creative development”, progress is steady but there are weaknesses related to their abilities to learn for themselves by exploring, experimenting and engaging in role playing situations.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and personal development

6 The very positive picture from the last inspection has been maintained in the way pupils approach their work and every aspect of school life, their very good behaviour and the high levels of attendance.

7 Pupils are really enthusiastic about school and their lessons. They concentrate well and work hard. Lessons start very promptly and pupils are comfortable and familiar with school routines. Year 6 pupils talk about how much they enjoy school and learning. During infant hymn practice all pupils, including the youngest children, listen hard and try to join in singing and have a go at the actions to songs. Parents of reception children say their children have settled in very quickly and are eager to go to school each day.

8 Pupils’ behaviour is very good, both in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and friendly. They are relaxed and confident with all members of staff and will easily approach whoever is on duty in the playground. At break and lunchtimes, pupils are happy and lively. Boys skip and girls play football. There are well placed seats for those who prefer to be less active. The grounds are exceptionally well landscaped, providing a really attractive area for pupils to play and relax. Pupils also behave very well during wet playtimes. They occupy themselves with games, colouring and reading and need little overt supervision. Infant pupils thoroughly enjoy watching a video. Relationships amongst pupils of all ages and between pupils and all adults are very strong. Year 6 pupils say that one of the things they most like about school is that children are kind, unselfish and everyone thinks of others. There are no exclusions.

9 Older pupils are given some responsibility within school, for example, operating overhead projectors, showing people around school and sometimes looking after younger children. They also ask the headteacher when they want to do special fundraising. Pupils have been consulted on some aspects of the school development plan and their designs used for playground games. However, they are capable of being given much more responsibility and of being involved directly in decision-making. Opportunities to show initiative in their own work are limited. For example, in science there are not enough occasions when pupils can design their own investigations and choose their equipment. Pupils are being given some responsibility for their own work by making them aware of the targets teachers are setting for them.

10 Attendance at the school is consistently very good and very high in comparison with the national average for primary schools. Pupils come willingly and happily to school and are always prompt. However, the school does not currently fulfil the statutory requirements for reporting authorised and unauthorised absence in the school prospectus and the governors’ annual report to parents.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

11 Teaching across the school is good. Only two lessons, amounting to 3% of all observations, were judged unsatisfactory. All teachers, including those who taught the unsatisfactory lessons, taught more good or even better lessons than satisfactory ones. This is a measure of the consistent quality of teaching in all classes. 72% of lessons were well taught or better with one in five being very well taught or excellent. In each of the key stages no fewer than two thirds of lessons were taught well and in infant classes over 85% of teaching was good or better. The unsatisfactory teaching that was evident in lower younger junior classes during the last inspection has been addressed.

12 Both literacy and numeracy are well taught. Almost all numeracy lessons were of good quality and nearly three quarters of those in literacy were either well or very well taught. All other subjects were also effectively taught. The two unsatisfactory lessons were combined RE and art lesson and a PE lesson, both were in Key Stage 2. In the RE and art lesson the teacher did not make sufficiently clear what she expected of pupils doing a task in RE and there were weaknesses in subject knowledge in art, specifically related to the properties of clay. As a result those pupils doing RE activities were unable to achieve what the teacher had planned and those doing art handled clay inappropriately, which reduced the effectiveness of their work. In the gymnastics lesson the teacher spent too long talking and pupils did not have sufficient opportunity to work on their skills. The same teacher taught a games lesson well the following day. Both these lessons were untypical of the teachers concerned. Their other lessons showed the same qualities that made teaching so effective across the school. A relative weakness in a minority of satisfactory lessons was teachers showing a lack of confidence in teaching music, religious education, design and technology and aspects of the Foundation curriculum.

13 All lessons are planned in detail. The needs of different age groups and pupils with different abilities in subjects are identified and appropriate activities provided to meet their different requirements. As a result, in almost all lessons pupils in mixed age classes, as well as single age classes, make at least satisfactory and often good progress; including brighter pupils and those with special educational needs. The pupils who enjoy additional support from classroom assistants and voluntary helpers, often those pupils with special educational needs, consistently make good progress. This is because those who provide the additional support are well briefed by the teacher on what they need to do and on many occasions classroom assistants help to plan activities.

14 Teachers have high expectations of pupils concerning the way they behave, their attitudes to work and what they can achieve. This ensures that lessons have a purposeful working atmosphere, that pupils spend their time involved with challenging learning and there is very little, if any time wasted. In the very best lessons, such as an excellent numeracy lesson in an infant class, the teacher maintains a very challenging pace that stimulates pupils, explains very clearly and questions closely across the range of abilities in the class. Similar qualities were evident in many other lessons across the school. In an excellent science lesson with the oldest infant pupils the teacher very skilfully used praise to reinforce real quality in pupils work and made particularly good use of time which ensured that all pupils completed their particular tasks while providing additional challenge for the brightest pupils that extended them further. A relative weakness in the teaching of science to older junior pupils is in not encouraging them to plan, undertake and evaluate investigations. If there were more opportunities provided for them to do this then brighter pupils in particular would be challenged to achieve higher levels. All teachers encourage and maintain positive relationships in their classes and this underpins their very effective management of pupils, which ensures that pupils spend their time working. Many lessons follow the same effective structure. New learning is introduced to the class, checking earlier understanding and explaining clearly what has been planned. Pupil activities, well matched to the different needs in the class, are supported well by teachers who carefully check understanding and provide

focused support when needed. Lessons often finish with a useful review that consolidates what has been learned. All these qualities support effective learning and enable pupils to make good progress on most occasions.

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

15 The school has made very good headway in improving the curriculum since the previous inspection. Weaknesses identified in planning for progression have been very effectively addressed through the adoption of the national literacy and numeracy strategies and the recent introduction of schemes of work in other subjects. In English and mathematics the well-organised strategies have contributed to the improvement in standards and to the effective teaching of literacy and numeracy skills both in dedicated lessons and through other subjects. For example, pupils were getting valuable practice in using speech marks during a lesson in the computer suite where they were learning new skills in using a word processing program.

16 Whilst the school schemes take appropriate account of the recently published Foundation Curriculum for pupils in the reception year, there is some imbalance in areas of learning, such as the provision made for physical and creative development. Statutory requirements are met and provision for religious education is in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

17 The school works very effectively to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of all pupils. The provision for special educational needs is very good. Targets are clear on each pupil's individual education plan. Teachers and support assistants make very good use of these in planning, with a carefully considered blend of in-class and withdrawal support. Pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive very good support and the required provision is made. Two pupils for whom English is an additional language are fully integrated into all lessons. The school's curriculum is, therefore, socially inclusive, although the monitoring of equality of access – for example where payment is required for instrumental tuition – is informal and consequently of limited help in identifying areas of concern.

18 Teachers work extremely hard to plan a range of activities that match the needs of different pupil groups. This is a major strength of the school that goes a long way to ensure that both age groups in mixed-age classes receive an appropriate curriculum. It is only achieved because of the hard work of staff individually and in their key stage teams.

19 The curriculum is generally broad and balanced, but with some weaknesses. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. The very good provision of French for all Year 6 pupils goes beyond statutory requirements and is a good example of a flexible approach where a complete year group benefits from working as a unit for a short period each week. Some teachers include circle times where pupils can talk about aspects of personal and social learning, but this is not universal or supported by an agreed policy. Health matters, including sex and drugs education, are included within the science curriculum, but are not currently given a sufficiently high profile. The head teacher has sensibly delayed consideration of a whole-school approach to personal and social education, including the new guidelines on citizenship, until the new statutory curriculum has settled down.

20 The balance of time in the curriculum emphasises the importance of English and mathematics. In English, the daily literacy hour is supplemented by regular lessons such as handwriting, silent reading and spelling tests. Additionally, the great majority of homework tasks relate to English and mathematics. Whilst this leaves sufficient time for most other

subjects, the curriculum allocation for science, design and technology and art particularly is limited, affecting the school's ability to fully cover the programmes of study and raise standards.

21 Good provision is made for extra-curricular activities. A broad range of sporting clubs, mainly in Key Stage 2, and musical activities is available to any interested girls and boys. Some provision is also made for instrumental and games coaching on a paid basis and the school claims that ability to pay would not prevent the inclusion of any child with interest or talent. The school participates in festivals and competitions – often with great success – offering opportunity for Scotter pupils to meet with others. Good links have been established with the local playgroup and the main secondary schools to which pupils transfer at the age of 11. These include visits by some curriculum staff and the use of bridging units in some subjects. Curriculum links with other local primary schools are more limited and opportunities missed for staff or pupils to work together.

22 The curriculum is enriched by a regular programme of visits and visitors, including a successful residential weekend for older pupils.

23 Good provision is made for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the issues identified in the previous inspection. Unusually, many subject policies include a valuable section highlighting opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development within the subject.

24 Daily acts of worship meet statutory requirements and provide good opportunities for reflection. Religious education lessons often very successfully draw out issues of belief and the special part that religion plays in many people's lives. Good emphasis is placed on learning about different faith cultures, for example, through thoughtful displays and through the sensitive monitoring by the religious education coordinator, raising awareness of the need to respect different beliefs in school and in the wider society. Good examples were seen in lessons where teachers promoted a sense of wonder – such as the gradual appearance of an image on a photographic plate or the use of different tools in a computer programme. Provision for spiritual development is good and has improved since the previous inspection.

25 Moral development is supported well and the school adds good value to the strong sense of right and wrong that pupils develop at home. Rules are few and teachers rarely need to use rewards or sanctions to underpin the very good behaviour of pupils. However, when occasional incidents occur, staff - including midday supervisors - are alert to opportunities to explain why certain actions are inappropriate. Pupils themselves are very clear about what is acceptable behaviour. Again, good opportunities are taken in religious education lessons and circle times to draw out moral questions, for example, examining the causes and effects of world tragedies.

26 Provision for social development is good. Frequent opportunities are made in lessons for pupils to work together, which they do well. A high profile is given to charitable and environmental concerns, for example, through collection of cans, plastic and copper coins in the hall. The school does not have a structured system for involving pupils in decision-making, although they are consulted from time to time, for instance in developing the environmental area. Older pupils enjoy a range of additional responsibilities, but this is not widespread and could be developed further.

27 Provision for cultural development has improved since the previous inspection and is now good with interesting plans for further development. Staff use incidental opportunities well to promote awareness and interest in aspects of cultural life. For example attention is drawn to the origins of music heard in assembly or singing and interest in theatre is promoted

in discussion and displays. Visits are regularly arranged, for example to Lincoln, and proposals exist to broaden these, for instance to give pupils experience of different places of worship. Opportunities are missed in art to develop cultural awareness and the school needs to continue the active promotion of understanding of the multicultural nature of society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28 The last inspection found that pupils were well cared for and the day to day health and well-being of pupils continues to be a high priority for all staff.

29 Pupils are very well cared for. Staff know pupils and their backgrounds and use this knowledge sensitively and carefully to guide and help them individually. They have supported pupils and parents through tragedy with compassion. Pupils are confident to go to any member of staff with problems or worries. Year 6 pupils know they can always ask their teachers to explain again anything they might not have understood. First aid is administered with sensitivity and care. Very good records are kept and all teachers, midday supervisors and support staff have a concerned awareness of the needs of pupils with specific medical and educational conditions. These pupils are particularly well looked after. Lunchtime is very well organised, midday supervisors are very caring and the senior supervisor makes sure that all pupils have enough to eat. The building and grounds are maintained often to a very high standard of health and safety. However, because there are few ramps in school, support staff sometimes have to lift wheel chairs up steps. Also, parts of the playground and other areas of tarmac are uneven and sometimes unsafe for their intended purpose.

30 There is a strong emphasis in getting to know children before they start in reception. Children visit regularly from the playgroup and other children are also invited to visit. Parents are also helped to make their children ready for school through advice given at meetings and well written booklets. Year 6 pupils and their parents are given well thought out advice and support when choosing which high school they will transfer to. The schools work closely together to ensure pupils are confident and comfortable when they move on.

31 Pupils are very well behaved naturally. However, they enjoy and appreciate rewards for effort, hard work and for being caring and thoughtful. Teachers and the head teacher award stickers and there are weekly and monthly cups to be earned. A cup is also awarded to the best behaved table in the dining room by lunchtime supervisors.

32 Attendance is consistently high and most absence is accounted for by holidays. Very good records are kept. Registers are marked and collated by class teachers and the secretary does a weekly check. However, the school has been authorising holidays over 10 days and therefore not accurately reporting levels of unauthorised absence.

33 Pupils find the way their books are marked very helpful. Year 6 pupils are given an extra day for their homework so they can ask the teacher to explain anything they might not have been able to complete over the weekend. Pupils are being encouraged to take more responsibility for their own work by being made aware of targets teachers are setting for them.

34 The school has recently put in place a number of improvements in assessing and recording pupils' academic performance. Provision is now good and procedures for assessing the progress of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very good. Systematic assessments are made in all subjects, usually based on what the pupils are expected to learn over a sequence of lessons. The format in most subjects includes a valuable reminder of what might be expected of pupils who exceed the main objectives. The

system is comprehensive but manageable. Marking of work by teachers is usually detailed and the well-written annual reports to parents contribute to pupils' welfare and support.

35 A good start has been made to academic target setting. In addition to the "target" section in the report form, targets in English and mathematics are agreed with individual pupils, written down and referred to regularly both by pupils and their teachers. Assessment information is used well to help in setting work for different groups of pupils. One indication is that in most classes groupings of pupils change for different subjects. Coordinators and senior staff are beginning to use assessment information to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' learning. More time needs to be allocated to critically analysing pupils' responses to National Curriculum tests in order to pinpoint areas for further development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36 Links with parents were very strong at the last inspection and continue to be so. Parents are immensely supportive of the school and all its work with their children.

37 Parents are kept very well informed. Parents of new children are given a helpful range of information and activities to prepare for starting school. Newsletters keep all parents updated as to what is going on in school. They are told about what their children will be learning each term. The summer open evening includes a subject focus, such as numeracy, when parents share activities with their children. Parents of infant children can take their children into the classroom each morning and share an activity with them, often including younger siblings. They also take the opportunity for brief conversations with teachers. Reports are of a particularly high standard. They very precisely tell parents what their children know, understand and can do and set good targets. Teachers have a very clear perception of the capabilities of each child and indicate where pupils can help themselves within the individual subject paragraphs as well as setting specific targets. Parents are consulted, for example, on the home/school agreement and homework policy. Reading records are well used for teachers and parents to share pupils' progress in reading.

38 Parents freely give their time to help the school and support their children's education. They help in classrooms and accompany trips and visits. The school association is a very active group, which puts on social and fundraising events and raises significant amounts of money for additional resources such as computers, a television and video recorder.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39 This is a well led and managed school. The very effective headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher, provides a clear sense of purpose and direction that is focused on improving the quality of education and the standards the pupils achieve. All staff are committed to making the school better and this is reflected in the very good teamwork and supportive working relationships found across the school. Teachers in their roles as subject coordinators lead and manage their areas effectively. They plan work across the school and analyse pupils' work to judge the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The information gained helps them to produce action plans for their subjects and to contribute to school developments. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher monitor the quality of lessons and work with teachers to address weaknesses. This is working well, as seen in the consistently good quality of teaching across the school. Test results are looked at to identify areas of weakness that could be addressed but more detailed formal analysis would provide specific information that could be used to target areas for improvement more precisely.

40 Governors fulfil their responsibilities effectively and are appropriately involved in determining the direction of the school by helping to identify priorities for development and discussing refinements to the development plan. Literacy and numeracy governors have observed lessons and the special educational needs link governor has a good understanding of the school's provision and the progress made by pupils on the register. Governors have in the past not looked closely enough at how well the school has performed compared to schools in similar situations and this has reduced their effectiveness in being "critical friends" to the school.

41 The school's development plan is an effective management tool focused appropriately on improving quality and to a slightly less extent raising standards. It informs the use of the budget well and spending is carefully planned to benefit the children currently in school. The funds available to support children with special educational needs are used particularly well. The school uses aspects of the best value principles, such as asking for pupils' views on school life, but these need to be extended and formalised into the routines and procedures that underpin school management.

42 The school has sufficient teachers and their professional development is well planned to achieve the school's priorities. The support provided for newly qualified teachers is very good and ensures they get off to a good start in their teaching careers. The school benefits from the good quality of classroom support assistants, the school secretary and the caretaking staff. The school also has good quality accommodation, overall, including specialist rooms for ICT and libraries. The attractive grounds provide a pleasant and interesting environment for the children. However, the building presents difficulties for pupils with wheel chairs. Also parts of the playground and some other areas of tarmac require attention. Most subjects have adequate resources but the organisation of the curriculum stretches what is available for several of the foundation subjects including science, history and geography. The range and quality of books in the libraries is also limited. There is insufficient large outdoor play apparatus for children in the Foundation Stage and this limits what these children can learn.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43 In order to improve even more the standards and the quality of education provided, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Ensure that results in science are as good as those in English and mathematics by:
 - a. analysing in detail pupils' test papers to identify the strengths and weaknesses in their learning across the year groups;
 - b. modifying the curriculum to address any identified weaknesses from the analysis undertaken;
 - c. identifying pupils likely to achieve the higher levels, given their achievements in English and mathematics;
 - d. targeting these pupils with more challenging work, particularly when they are engaged in scientific enquiry tasks;
 - e. identify additional opportunities to teach science.

(Please refer to paragraphs 1,14,29,35,39,72,75)

- (2) Provide more opportunities for pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 to develop their skills in art and design and technology and for the youngest pupils to learn through exploring and experimenting with materials and equipment by:
 - a. reviewing and adjusting the time allocated to all subjects at Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly English, to ensure that there is enough time for pupils to practise and refine their skills in art, design and technology in order to produce work of high quality;
 - b. providing more time for the youngest pupils to choose from activities that are designed to enable them:
 - i. to experiment with, find out about and develop skills in using creative materials and equipment, such as paint and different brushes;
 - ii. to explore:- objects such as magnets, historical, religious and other artefacts in order to form ideas about what they are and how they work; different materials, to find out their properties, such as whether they sink or float;
 - iii. to enter into well planned and supported role play that will deepen their understanding about ways of life and enhance their social development.

(Please refer to paragraphs 4,20,52,53 and paragraphs for the foundation stage, art and design and technology))

In addition the school should:

- a. develop further, the independent learning skills of older and more able pupils by encouraging them to: initiate aspects of their learning, such as devising their own investigations in science; accept greater responsibility, for example, through involvement in a school council, which could also usefully involve pupils from across the school (*paragraphs 9, 20*);
- b. develop a more coherent approach to providing for pupils' personal, social and health education, including citizenship (*paragraph 19*);
- c. formally integrate the best value principles into the routines and systems of management in the school (*paragraph 19*);
- d. tackle the relative weaknesses in the subject knowledge that some teachers have in art, design and technology, music and the Foundation Stage (*paragraph 12*);
- e. encourage the governors to develop further their roles as "critical friends" to the school (*paragraph 40*).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	59
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	16	53	24	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	251
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	18	13	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	15	17
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	30	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (88)	90 (86)	97 (88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	17	17
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	28	30	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (83)	97 (90)	97 (90)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	17	38

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	19	20
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	31	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (86)	89 (78)	92 (81)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	19
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	32	34	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (81)	89 (78)	89 (81)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	249
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	28

Education support staff: Y[] – Y[]

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	181

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.

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	372,400
Total expenditure	404,020
Expenditure per pupil	1,655
Balance brought forward from previous year	30,380
Balance carried forward to next year	20,470

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	251
Number of questionnaires returned	148

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	41	5	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	42	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	49	10	6	4
The teaching is good.	56	41	1	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	45	8	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	31	3	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	4	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	43	41	10	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	59	34	3	1	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	44	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	42	6	3	6

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

44 At the time of the inspection 38 children are aged five and under and are taught in the reception class and in a mixed age group class with younger year 1 pupils; there is no nursery although almost all children have had some pre-school education experience. The range of attainment is broad, but taken overall children demonstrate skills and abilities that are above those normally seen for this age group when they start school. By the time they move into Key Stage 1 most children should exceed the levels expected for their age.

Personal social and educational development

45 Most children settle quickly into the routines and expectations of school life and their attitudes towards the work provided are very good. Most come happily to school, work confidently with different adults and other children, behave very well and are beginning to develop the skills required to look after themselves and their belongings. Development in this area is fostered well through the good role models of staff who show sensitivity towards children's needs. Most children are confident and happily join with others to work together in their classroom or as part of a larger group as in school assemblies. This was well illustrated when children described their paintings to others in a full school assembly. Relationships between adults and children are very good. Children quickly learn right from wrong, co-operate well when given the opportunity and learn to negotiate rather than argue. Most children make satisfactory progress in this area and exceed the standards expected for children of this age. Greater opportunities to learn through selecting activities, equipment and materials for themselves and to be able to show initiative would further enhance their learning. In lessons, children are sufficiently confident to contribute their ideas and express their feelings. They concentrate very well and most persevere when completing tasks, for example, when completing a piece of writing or a drawing. They respond confidently towards adults and are well behaved, courteous and polite. Children happily share equipment and wait patiently to take their turn. They are already familiar with the routines of the class and school and move enthusiastically to each new activity.

Communication, language and literacy

46 By the end of the foundation stage, most children are likely to attain higher standards than those normally expected for their age group. Many pupils enter the school with well-developed language and literacy skill and the school builds effectively on these. Good gains are made in their listening and talking skills. Teachers make suitable use of opportunities to improve and extend the range and quality of their talking through well directed, open-ended questioning. Most children listen carefully to both adults and each other. They follow instructions carefully and show a clear understanding of what they are to do. Teaching staff provide suitable opportunities for children to show others their work and to explain what they have done. Children's vocabulary is already well developed and the staff extend this well through the introduction of technical vocabulary, for example, the exact meaning of the word 'mortar' when applied to a building activity. Role play activities designed to further develop children's social skills, imagination and confidence form part of the learning programme but could be used to provide further opportunities for the consolidation of these important skills through the greater provision and wider use of imaginative situations.

47 Children are familiar with rhymes and poems. They enjoy singing and many recognise rhyming words. Many have a good knowledge of letter sounds of the alphabet.

Some are already fluent readers and have a sight vocabulary in excess of thirty words. An increasing number can work out new words for themselves. In literacy sessions they follow simple text and some pupils are beginning to use expression in their reading, for example, in the story of "The Three Bears". Children understand where to start reading and can recognise the title and the author.

48 Although progress in writing lags a little behind that in reading, children show that they can write their names with many being able to write simple sentences independently with most words spelled correctly and with an understanding of simple punctuation. Suitable emphasis is given to learning high frequency words. Children's writing is shown to be valued through displays of work and the quality of presentation and care demonstrate that children understand that their efforts are appreciated.

Mathematical department

49 Children's skills and understanding of mathematics have developed well in the short time they have been in school. Most join in with number rhyming songs such as 'five currant buns' and demonstrate their counting skills through well-designed role-play situations. Children show their counting skills well and can count to 50 accurately and backwards from 10 using fingers when necessary. They also understand zero. Progress is also good in their knowledge and recognition of shape with children knowing circle, square, rectangle and triangle. They also know about angles and corners. Many children recognise the value of coins and opportunities for children to work in pairs and small groups in role-play situations are provided to consolidate their learning. The use of a puppet that constantly makes mistakes helps make the learning of mathematics fun and ensures that the children concentrate very well and consolidate key skills such as counting carefully. Counting skills are further reinforced well through practical activities and work carefully designed to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Vocabulary and understanding are well developed; some pupils could confidently predict 'more than' or 'less than' and other children could accurately count on to one take from five in practical situations. Children are beginning to record their findings competently and can form numbers correctly. The children enjoy mathematics, respond to it well and make good progress although this could be further accelerated if more opportunities for pupils to solve problems and increase understanding through practical activities were provided.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

50 Children make satisfactory progress in this aspect of their learning. In a good lesson in which children had the opportunity to investigate a variety of different materials, they were able to classify them and in a good extension of their vocabulary, describe similarities and differences between them. Magnifying glasses were used to help children explore the structure of the differing materials, an activity that provoked much interest and discussion. The quality of this learning activity was good in that it allowed children to explore, question and consolidate skills. Evidence indicates that where such learning takes place, as in a visit to the local colleges, children are highly motivated to learn. Where more practical investigative opportunities are restricted, the rate of learning slows. Children are also increasing their skills in information technology where they sometimes have the opportunity to use the computer. Good mouse control is being developed and children can turn pages and select pictures to put in the correct order. Teachers' planning indicates that opportunities to improve this range of skills in a class 'office' or at the 'dentist' are provided, thus enabling children to practise skills previously learned. Children have a satisfactory understanding of methods of transport and the teacher used this information appropriately in a lesson on a class educational visit. Attitudes in these lessons are very good. Children listen carefully,

remain focused on the tasks given and where practical activities are provided, they are involved and remain interested for long periods of time.

Physical development

51 Some elements of pupil's physical development are very well developed, for example, their skills in cutting and pasting using scissors and glue. Children take considerable care with this activity and their ability is well above that normally expected. In physical education lessons seen in the school hall, skills are much more appropriate to their age. Children can skip, hop and jump with control and balance. They climb safely, they can throw and some catch consistently well. Opportunities for them to explore different ways of travelling across and dismounting from apparatus seen during the inspection were much more limited. Outdoor activities are also limited. Although a well defined grassed area is available, children's opportunities to develop their gross motor and social skills is limited because of insufficient outdoor equipment. Opportunities to see children creating models using construction kits to extend their range of dexterity and recycled materials to develop imaginative construction were not available. Children listen carefully to instruction, work safely and co-operate well in joint use of materials, for example, in clearing away equipment in the hall following a lesson. Progress in children's physical development is satisfactory, overall, but with some particular gaps in opportunity and facilities.

Creative development

52 Children's creative development is of a satisfactory standard based on the limited evidence available at this time of the school year. Evidence taken in part from teachers' planning indicates that children experience music through the clapping rhythms and the use of musical instruments. They experiment with long and short sounds and are able to repeat musical patterns. In design and technology they examine playground furniture and discuss and make their own designs and models. Most children know their colours and whilst some of their paintings show good brush control, skills in this area are only satisfactory. Children use a suitable variety of materials for painting and making collages. They extend their vocabulary and describe materials that are rough, smooth or spongy. Although experiments with the use of colour are carried out and many pupils understand how different colours can be created from combining others there are few opportunities for them to choose to paint and to practise and refine their skills and understanding by exploring its properties and the use of different brushes in their own time.

Teaching

53 The quality of teaching in the foundation stage is good overall with particular strengths in communications, language, and literacy and in mathematics. This ensures that all children attain the goals set for them by the time they are five. Many of the more able children are extended effectively so that they would confidently be expected to be working at level 1 of the National Curriculum in several areas by the time they reach Year 1. The reception class and the class containing a mix of reception and Year 1 pupils are well organised and managed. The teaching of basic skills is good but the school has yet to fully implement the approaches and strategies necessary to deliver the whole of the foundations stage. Some areas of the curriculum, notably 'Knowledge and Understanding of the World' and 'Creative Development' provide too little opportunity for pupils to investigate, experiment and try out new ideas on their own and not be afraid of failure.

54 Teachers expectations are high, both of work and behaviour and result in children making a satisfactory start to their education. A real strength of the learning is the quality of questioning to make children think and extend their learning. Staff use pupils' answers well in

their assessment of their learning and understanding. Attainment and progress are carefully monitored and recorded and used purposefully to inform future planning.

ENGLISH

55 The school results in the national tests for eleven years olds in 2000 were well above the national average with a large proportion of pupils achieving the higher levels. These results are in line with standards achieved by pupils in similar schools. Results in English have varied considerably since 1996. The years 1996 to 1998 saw a sharp decline from results well above average to below the national figure. Noticeable improvements occurred in 1999 so that the results, when compared with all schools, were once again well above the national average. This improvement was maintained in 2000. There are differences in the performances of boys and girls but these largely reflect the national trend in which girls usually out perform boys. The school has set challenging targets for improvement for this year and the school has consistently met its targets in the past. The inspection finds that standards are noticeably above the national expectations in reading, writing and particularly so in speaking and listening. Pupils achieve well in English. This is an improvement on the findings of the last inspection where standards were in line with national expectations.

56 The results for seven year olds in 1999 indicates that the number of pupils reaching the appropriate level 2 in writing was close to the national average as was the number reaching the more difficult level 3. Teacher assessments of pupils' ability were largely accurate for reading but the schools' expectations in writing were not reflected in the results. Although results fluctuated because of differing cohorts of pupils they have remained above the national average over the previous four years. Test results for 2000 again show that improvement is maintained with more pupils achieving expected levels. The number of pupils achieving higher levels in writing were disappointing for the school and raising performance in this area has become a priority. The trend of results again shows girls are achieving more highly than boys. The inspection finds that standards, for Year 2 pupils, in speaking and listening and reading are above expectations but are in line with expectations in writing. This judgement represents a marked improvement in speaking and listening, with good standards maintained in reading but writing could be higher. Most pupils have good speaking and listening skills. From the time pupils enter the school, they listen carefully to the teachers and each other and show by their responses that they are listening and thinking in lessons. Pupils are keen to contribute their ideas to class discussions. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils answer questions in well-formed sentences. They discuss fluently and maturely what they have been reading and talk knowledgeably about what they have learned in previous lessons.

57 In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to develop confidence and fluency as speakers. By the time they reach the end of the key stage pupils are willing talkers and engage adults in conversation, talk about lessons, hobbies and interests confidently and fluently and often with a very good range of vocabulary. Specific tasks are designed by teachers to improve pupils' confidence in speaking in groups both large and small and these are successful in raising standards. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and carry them out accurately. They articulate their ideas carefully, expressing themselves in well-constructed sentences.

58 Most pupils are confident readers with the vast majority attaining levels at least in line with and for many well exceeding levels expected nationally by the end of each key stage. The youngest children handle books confidently, know that print conveys meaning and recognize sounds and words recently covered. By the time they reach Year 2 the higher attaining pupils are fluent, accomplished readers with abilities well beyond average levels. They read accurately and with understanding, confidently tackling unfamiliar words. They

competently discuss their likes and dislikes in the stories they read and can use information from their reading to describe characters and plots. Many of these pupils read expressively. Lower attaining pupils have been taught strategies to enable them to read unfamiliar words and they use these skills well. Reading skills are well taught and this results in most pupils attaining the national expectations in reading.

59 In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to build on their reading skills. By the end of the key stage a large majority of pupils read accurately, confidently and expressively using a full range of strategies and skill to establish and explain the meaning of the text. A good example of this occurred in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils were studying Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' and were able to use contextual skills to clarify the meaning of words and phrases previously unknown to them. Pupils enjoy discussing the texts they read, express views about favourite authors and are able to talk about their likes and dislikes giving reasons why they like poems they have read. Skills such as skimming and scanning are used well to enable pupils to access information accurately and rapidly. Lower attaining pupils are able to read accurately, if sometimes mechanically, but are also acquiring the broad range of skills that make them effective readers. Skills in locating reference books are also well developed and pupils have a clear knowledge of the use of index and content pages to find the information they require.

60 Standards of writing, while being at least satisfactory and already in line with the national averages at Key Stage 1, lag a little behind those in reading especially. Pupils are able to write extended descriptive narratives, revising and improving their work when required. They record sequences of events and are able to set down science observations in a logical and legible fashion. Their writing style is clear and most pupils are developing a secure understanding of full stops and capitals. Spellings are mostly correct and pupils have experience of writing lists, poems and stories as well as work based on personal experiences.

61 In Key Stage 2, pupils' writing displays increasing maturity and standards are good. By the end of the key stage they write successfully in a variety of different styles, for a good range of purposes and audiences. They plan, revise and present their work well. More able pupils in Year 3, for example, are beginning to use speech in their writing using correct punctuation while others in the age group are able to use an appropriate format to write a play. By Year 4 pupils are attempting to write character stories for example "Harry Potter" using their reading skills and interests to produce good quality narrative. Skills are further developed in Year 5 where pupils produce mature pieces of work using argument and are able to express feelings clearly in an extended piece of writing using a historical theme. In Year 6 pupils have developed the use of interesting vocabulary, which they use well to enliven their stories. These they develop logically and are able to retain the reader's interest to the end. Mature phrasing such as "crystal clear" when describing ponds enlivens their writing. Pupils write thoughtful poems and have studied the style of Roger McGough and also retell stories using plots from novels they have read, for example 'Moon Path'. Pupils with special educational needs are given additional help with both reading and writing. Teachers target their needs carefully and they make good progress when measured against their own targets. Literacy skills of pupils are good. Expectations of teachers are high especially in Key Stage 1 and this ensures that work is well presented, usually correctly spelled and punctuated. The contribution of other subjects to pupils' literacy is satisfactory overall. A suitable subject specific vocabulary is a feature of many lessons and particularly so in science and history.

62 Pupils' progress is satisfactory in both key stages. Most pupils have laid firm foundations for reading and writing and have begun to show appropriate understanding of grammatical conventions by Year 2. In the juniors most pupils are successfully extending the

range of their reading. Following an analysis of previous results, the school has targeted spelling and this is already showing clear signs of improvement. Sentence structure becomes more complex and many pupils use an ever-widening range of vocabulary skilfully. They manage dialogue confidently and many can use paragraphs to organise ideas. Opening paragraphs of written work are becoming more interesting and designed to raise the reader's interest. This was well done in a very good lesson in Year 5/6 where pupils used their extensive vocabulary to grip the reader's interest.

63 Pupils' attitudes to English are good. Pupils in both key stages settle well, listen attentively and are industrious and diligent. Most are eager to make contributions to discussion. They remain involved over a long period, concentrating on their individual tasks until finished. When work is completed pupils use their own initiative to find other activities to occupy themselves. Relationships are cordial and productive. Pupils' behaviour is usually very good and makes a positive contribution to the progress made.

64 The quality of teaching in English is good, overall, with many examples of very good teaching. The quality of teaching makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved by the pupils in both key stages. At least satisfactory in all the lessons observed, it was good or better in seventy per cent and in forty per cent it was very good. This is a clear improvement on the findings of the last inspection.

65 Teachers subject knowledge is good. Their expectations regarding the quality of work and behaviour are consistently high. The quality of planning is similarly high and is thorough, detailed, well focused and relevant with a good range of tasks carefully linked with previous work to meet pupils' individual needs. This enables pupils to experience success and make good progress. Good explanations and clear instructions ensure pupils know what they have to do. Good summing up consolidates their learning and enables the teacher to gauge progress made during the lesson. Well targeted open questioning appropriately challenges pupils of differing abilities and develops understanding. It encourages speaking and listening, and obliges pupils to think carefully and focus answers. Consistent use of praise motivates pupils well.

66 Very good management of pupils creates a productive atmosphere which supports good learning. The use of resources is sound and support staff are well briefed and used effectively. Lessons move forwards purposefully. Time is well used. Assessment is very good and enables teachers to have clear understanding of individual pupil's strengths and weaknesses. Marking is very good. At its best it provides clear targets for improvement and offers encouragement and advice. Teachers set satisfactory levels of homework which support the work initiated in lessons.

67 The subject is well led. The curriculum is well planned to provide a broad experience of English. Documentation is comprehensive, detailed and thorough and based on the National Literacy Strategy. The literacy programme is well managed and very good. Resource levels are satisfactory. Library stocks supplemented by books from the county library service, are satisfactory but older unattractive books need to be removed.

MATHEMATICS

68 Standards of attainment are comfortably above national expectations at the end of both key stages. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests showed a marked improvement on the previous year and since the last inspection; against national figures for all schools and similar schools, results were well above average in both key stages for pupils attaining both satisfactory and higher levels. The National Curriculum results for 1999 had

shown some improvement on the previous year in Key Stage 2 and dipped in Key Stage 1. In each key stage, the results for 1999 were below average against similar schools. In line with national trends, girls tend to achieve better than boys. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve appropriate levels of attainment. Standards of numeracy in both key stages are good and mathematics is well used across the curriculum. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy into the curriculum and is making effective use of the range of strategies and approaches. Attention has been focused strongly and to good effect on raising standards of oral and mental work, together with other aspects such as using and applying mathematics. It is recognised by the school that further refinements can still be made and it is working hard towards this end.

69 The majority of pupils, by the age of seven, are able to use a good recall of basic number facts to ten and many can work effectively with larger numbers and have a good range of mathematical language and vocabulary. Most pupils recognise different sequences of numbers, including odd and even numbers, can count forwards and backwards using small numbers and are able to complete missing numbers in a simple sequence. They know the names and properties of many two and three-dimensional shapes, as seen very effectively in a Year 1&2 lesson. Most pupils can estimate and measure using a range of standard units, such as those relating to length, and can communicate effectively using simple bar graphs and charts. By the age of eleven, the majority of pupils are able to use mental recall effectively, older pupils often used well a range of different strategies in their mental and oral work, including rounding and doubling, to rapidly estimate answers. Many pupils have a good understanding of place value in relation to their age and have an effective grasp of appropriate fractions and decimals. Most pupils can use relevant diagrams, arrays of data and graphs. Many pupils use mathematical language and vocabulary well and are able to use and apply mathematics increasingly effectively in different contexts.

70 Most pupils have very good attitudes to the subject; they often really enjoy the activities, work consistently hard and take pride in their achievements. They listen attentively, often with rapt attention, behave very well, and frequently see a number of activities as fun, especially mental and oral work, number games and some investigations. Most relish the varied and challenging mental work and practical tasks which are often provided and take care with the layout and presentation of their work. Teaching and learning in both key stages are good. Pupils' progress throughout the school is improving rapidly and is assisted greatly by the effective use of national numeracy approaches and strategies, together with astute targeting of areas of underachievement, individual and groups of pupils, including those aspiring to higher levels. The progress made by higher attaining pupils has markedly improved in both key stages recently, assisted by the school's emphasis on mental and oral work, challenging use of mathematical language and more opportunities to extend investigations and problem solving to enhance pupils' skills, understanding and precision. On a few occasions, particularly able pupils still could be stretched even further. Strategies employed have improved the performance of all pupils, including the boys, notably through the good quality of direct teaching and learning, improvements in continuity and the commitment of all the staff. This picture represents a substantial improvement in the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection in both key stages. Teachers' planning is consistently good with clear learning objectives for lessons, which are closely related to national strategies and are effectively communicated and discussed with the pupils. Lessons are well structured with strong emphasis placed on stimulating and challenging oral and mental work, good quality direct teaching and carefully targeted group work. The match of work for different age groups, such as those within the same class, and abilities of pupils is often good and being refined all the time as a result of the valuable use of information from assessments and monitoring. In most lessons, the pace is brisk, good and some very good use is made of questioning to consolidate and extend learning, and teachers often show good knowledge of the subject. Teachers often have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and

progress. They frequently make rigorous demands on the pupils and much is achieved in a single lesson. Joint planning arrangements are often highly effective, not least, those between teachers and support staff. The latter make a major contribution to the quality of learning and pupils' achievement in mathematics lessons, especially pupils with special educational needs.

71 Arrangements for assessment are good with effective use of continuous assessment to guide teachers' planning. Results from a variety of sources are analysed and often used well to target areas of underachievement and differing needs of groups of pupils. The co-ordinators are providing a very strong lead in developments astutely supported by the headteacher and backed fully by all the staff. Arrangements for staff development are effective and strategies for monitoring and evaluation are contributing well to improvements in provision and standards. The school is well resourced for the subject, although it is recognised that further items will be needed from time to time to keep pace with developments which are taking place and to replace worn or outdated equipment. The school is very strongly committed to the development of mathematics and all the staff are working hard to raise levels of attainment and progress and making effective use of national strategies; the quality of teaching and learning has been significantly improved and there has now been a marked improvement in standards throughout the school.

SCIENCE

72 Until this year, results in the tests for 11 year olds had improved very slowly since the previous inspection and did not reflect the national improvement. In 1999 results were not as good as those of similar schools, although slightly better than the national average. The 2000 results show continued improvement with almost all 11 year olds reaching the expected level. However, too few pupils achieved the higher levels compared to similar schools and this led to the overall results being below those in similar schools.

73 By the age of seven, past teachers' assessments indicated that pupils could have achieved better. Again the most recent results have risen promisingly, with more of the brighter pupils achieving the higher level 3 before going into the juniors. The inspection confirms that standards are above average in both key stages and that pupils, including those with special educational needs, are now achieving as well as in most similar schools. The main reason for this is that all teachers are very careful to match the science work to the different abilities in their classes.

74 The progress pupils make in most lessons is good. During their time in the infant department they learn to make increasingly careful observations, for example, when examining different materials. In one particularly successful lesson, a group of brighter Year 2 pupils was able to describe the differences between fabric samples using their own words such as "fluffy" as well as scientific terms like "opaque" and "transparent". This good achievement illustrates the consistent care taken by staff in introducing pupils to new concepts and vocabulary without stifling their natural curiosity and confidence. By the age of seven, almost all pupils can distinguish living and non-living things by identifying some of their characteristics such as the need for water and sunlight. Only a minority yet knows why a plant needs sunlight, although most can begin to explain the difference between sunlight and moonlight.

75 Between the ages of seven and eleven pupils make secure progress in scientific enquiry, building on the good foundations laid in the infants. They learn to predict and to record their findings in a good range of ways – with particularly good emphasis on them using their own words rather than copying a model set by the teacher. Diagrams are sometimes

less sophisticated than the writing. Some pupils show a remarkable facility in raising their own scientific questions, such as the pupil who asked: “There’s something I don’t understand – how can we see round corners?” Whilst most teachers respond well to such ideas, they generally provide too few opportunities for pupils to design their own investigations or to select their own resources. This weakness means that some brighter pupils do not achieve as well as they might.

76 By the age of eleven, most pupils can describe the characteristics of plants and animals – for example, their different needs for oxygen and carbon dioxide. Most pupils are also beginning to understand the functions of the main body organs. They can distinguish solids, liquids and gases, with brighter pupils using correct terminology when describing change from one form to another. Whilst they are beginning to apply their knowledge to the real world, there are some important gaps, for instance, in understanding how filtration might purify water. Pupil achievement, including those with special educational needs, has improved in the juniors since the previous inspection.

77 Pupils show consistently good attitudes in their science. They behave very sensibly, learning to handle equipment safely. All pupils listen very well in whole-class sessions and are keen to contribute to discussions. They work well with others in pairs and small groups, such as in the Year 6 lesson where pupils cooperated very well to make a series of accurate measurements of shadows. Most pupils show great interest, although some opportunities to extend this through well-focused homework, or independent research, are missed.

78 Teaching in both key stages is good, showing an improvement since the previous inspection. The outstanding strength lies in the way that teaching is planned to meet the needs of all pupils. In whole-class discussions, questions are well directed and in practical work, activities are carefully matched to the different groups in class. Notably, the work is almost always differentiated not only to support pupils’ different reading skills, but also to make appropriate demands on their scientific understanding. For example, some brighter pupils in a Year 2 lesson on materials were expected to consider what would make a fair test of the waterproof qualities of different materials and to ensure that an equal amount of water was added to each piece of fabric. This lesson also exemplified the very good use that is made of additional adults in many lessons, particularly in supporting pupils with special educational needs. The close match of work to needs of the different groups in each class is now ensuring that the brighter pupils are mostly working at challenging levels and are more likely to achieve the higher levels in national tests. The exception is in investigational work as described above.

79 In both key stages there is a good balance of practical and theoretical work. Most lessons include appropriate opportunities for pupils to further their understanding of scientific methods. Behaviour management is low key but very effective. On occasions, time is not managed so well, for instance where introductory sessions take too long or the lesson finishes abruptly without tasks being completed or the learning reviewed.

80 Improved standards are mainly the result of introducing a clear scheme of work. The coordinator is very experienced and recent appointments have improved staff expertise. The subject has not been a recent development priority and consequently, early steps taken in monitoring results and teaching are having limited whole-school impact. However, the school is in a good position to move forward in analysing strengths and weaknesses as a basis for further development.

ART

81 Few art lessons were observed during the inspection and evidence of a variety and range of pupils' work was also limited. School policies, teachers' planning and a small collection of work from previous years and the work from the early part of this year were examined. This reveals that pupils experience the full range of artistic experiences covering sculpture work with fabrics, collage, painting and drawing. However, the quality and development of pupils' artistic skills, knowledge and understanding are underdeveloped and by the end of Key Stage 2, standards are below those normally expected.

82 While some examples of pupils' work demonstrate an appropriate level of skill and technique, the work of the majority shows too little development from that seen lower down the school. Work in progress during the inspection was linked to printing and pupils used a variety of objects and materials to produce these. In Key Stage 1, examples of work included string prints, made by indenting polystyrene to make a printing block. These prints showed appropriate care and attention to detail. Work by older pupils showed a lack of understanding of proportions although detailed drawings of hands showed a greater degree of care and attention. Pupils often apply art skills in other subjects. Pupils in a history study had made mosaics based on floors discovered in excavated villas. Some artwork used computer graphics; pupils in Year 4/5 produced repeating patterns of a satisfactory quality using a suitable programme. Clay work does not show enough care and attention, and too little guidance has been given to produce work of high quality. Too little time is devoted to the subject, overall and pupils therefore find it difficult produce well-observed and detailed studies.

83 Pupils seen in lessons enjoy art. They concentrate well, are interested in what they are doing and are able to discuss it. In the previous inspection report, standards at Key Stage 1 were judged to be in line with national expectations and this standard has been maintained. Progress in Key Stage 2 was reported to be more variable with progress being intermittent. This accords with the current position and too little attention has been given towards rectifying the situation.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

84 Due to the timetable during the inspection, only one part-lesson was observed. As a result it is not possible to make overall judgements about standards or the quality of teaching. From discussions with pupils and teachers and an examination of planning and some work samples it is clear that although design and technology is included in the work of all classes, the allocation of time is very tight; insufficient time is given to ensure that pupils consistently experience a balanced programme of designing, making and evaluating activities. As a result pupils could achieve more, particularly in the acquisition of skills such as those associated with cutting and fixing a range of materials, or planning the construction of something in advance.

85 Sometimes design and technology is valuably linked to other subjects – for example, when a junior science topic on light is used as a background to the design of periscopes to “see round corners”.

86 In the infant department, pupils learn about the use of different materials in the design of play equipment. Some show good understanding of their properties such as the slipperiness of the metal used to make a slide. Most pupils are creative in making their own models from construction kits and are eager to talk about the different parts and how they work. They also work with other materials such as paper and card and learn about food such as the making of sandwiches after a supermarket visit.

87 Older pupils develop their ability to design products before making them, although generally they do not reach the expected stage of measuring and drawing step-by-step plans. Skills and knowledge are taught in the context of practical work – for example when younger pupils in Key Stage 2 make pop-up cards and sliding pictures from paper and card. Older pupils learn about cams and axles in order to make a moving toy based on adult examples of toys such as a snapping crocodile. Opportunities are provided for pupils to evaluate their designs, as when they are asked to think about improving their periscopes.

88 In both key stages, however, because of limited time and variability in teachers' confidence about the subject, key skills are not built on systematically enough. The recent adoption of a scheme of work setting out what pupils can be expected to learn in each year group should improve progression and the sharing of ideas amongst teachers who are following the same theme. The coordinator role has developed since the previous inspection to include a central role in drawing up and supporting the termly planning. A start has been made on monitoring the delivery of the subject and the standards pupils are achieving. Simple, but appropriate assessments are now being made of pupils' learning of key objectives. However, since the subject has not recently figured in the school's development plan, the monitoring does not yet have a significant influence on the standards of work.

GEOGRAPHY

89 The school's topic cycle for history and geography and the inspection timetable meant that only two geography lessons were seen. Because the inspection took place early in the school year, there was a limited evidence base and no overall judgments can be made about standards and teaching. However, discussion with pupils, scrutiny of planning and displays and an examination of past work indicate that pupils cover the requirements of the National Curriculum reaching the expected standards in the work seen. This apparent decline since the previous inspection probably reflects the temporary changes to the National Curriculum when non-core subjects became much less prescriptive as the focus was on literacy, numeracy and information technology.

90 Pupils' knowledge of their own locality and of a small number of other places is sound and they develop satisfactory skills in reading and drawing maps. Most 11 year olds can use an atlas well and remember important facts about a studied country such as India. Good provision is made for this work to link with other subjects, such as the religious beliefs of different countries.

91 By the age of seven, most pupils show satisfactory achievement, for example, in describing features of their own village and comparing these with the remote island of Struay. They are beginning to apply geographical skills in using maps, for instance recognising that islands are surrounded by sea, but generally are capable of more in explaining the geographical features of different locations. Recent work following the travels of Barnaby Bear, is raising awareness of different parts of the world in an interesting and involving way.

92 By the age of eleven, most pupils have developed their mapping skills well so that they can use co-ordinates and keys to help read a range of maps. They can make more mature comparisons, for example, between life in an Indian village and their own. Good teaching of this aspect ensures that pupils are careful not to stereotype, but to use the geographical evidence carefully. Most pupils are beginning to understand some of the environmental damage done by human action, but could achieve more in researching ways of reducing or eliminating such harm.

93 The main weakness lies in the development of geographical and fieldwork skills. The school benefits from an interesting environmental and wild area and many topics are supported by appropriate visits. However, the scheme of work has only recently been adopted and previous themes, drawing on these resources, are not yet fully integrated. Consequently, pupils' skills in observing and recording, collecting evidence to answer geographical questions and in enlarging their geographical vocabulary are not yet built on systematically. Teachers are adhering carefully to the scheme, supported by the coordinator who has a clear overview of what is being covered.

94 The school has identified this weakness and has put in place sound arrangements to improve the teaching of the subject. The well-organised scheme of work includes ongoing lessons about topical world issues – for example, the recent Olympic games in Sydney were used with a Year 3 class to explore aspects of Australia. A manageable and effective assessment and recording system has been adopted and some monitoring of pupils' work undertaken. The coordinator has a good understanding of the subject, recognising that pupils could achieve more. Current school priorities give limited opportunity for staff development, although the sharing of expertise when common themes are studied across several classes is good.

HISTORY

95 During the inspection, only a few lessons were seen in history, but a range of evidence was available including pupils' work, teachers' planning, records and discussions with pupils about their work. On the basis of this evidence, appropriate opportunities are being provided to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding in the subject. Pupils often achieve standards which are above national expectations in both key stages and make good progress, especially where the work links closely to the use of artefacts and other valuable sources of evidence or is linked to the use of visits and visitors. This represents a significant improvement since the last inspection, notably in the quality of teaching and learning with good attention to the development of historical skills and understanding.

96 By the age of seven, most pupils can talk about changes in their lives and those of their family and are beginning to show an awareness of how aspects of their lives are different from their parents and grandparents when they were young. Pupils can describe some differences in everyday life and objects from more distant times beyond their own, including famous people, past events and changes such as technology. By the age of eleven, pupils know facts about people and events from the history of Britain, such as life in Celtic times and leading up to and following the Roman invasion of Britain and also life in Victorian times, although this latter period is being altered as a result of current changes which have been made in the curriculum. Pupils are beginning to develop a concept of the distant past and can describe important features of past societies and periods such as their ways of life, beliefs and achievements. They are starting to give reasons for and consequences of different events in history, such as the invasion of Britain by the Romans. Many pupils show an empathy and understanding for people of the past, sometimes communicating effectively in their writing based on historical knowledge, such as letters from Roman soldiers written home and newspaper articles about events in Roman times. Increasingly, throughout the school pupils are using a range of sources of evidence to make deductions, such as, artefacts, articles, photographs, cuttings, extracts from the period, records and eyewitness accounts. Notably, each of the junior classes visited the Archaeological Centre and historical sites linked with Roman times on a visit to Lincoln at the beginning of term, from which much work of good quality has been developed.

97 Most pupils have good attitudes towards history, enjoy a lot of the work, behave well, take pride in their achievements, work hard and concentrate well. They very readily talk about the work they have done, frequently with confidence and in an animated way, especially in relation to visits they have made, showing good recall of historical detail. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often characterised by good quality direct teaching using stimulating artefacts, first hand experiences, challenging tasks and the effective use of questions to extend learning; a good example of this was seen in the Year 4&5 class where the class teacher dressed up in modern army uniform and the support assistant in a Centurion's uniform which provided a valuable focal point for the lesson. On such occasions, expectations of behaviour and learning are high, learning intentions are clear and pupils are strongly challenged by what they are doing. In contrast to the last inspection, where work sheets are now occasionally in use, they are well matched to the ages and abilities of pupils and compliment teaching and learning effectively; this was seen in the Year 6 class where, for example, one group used two contrasting texts from sources close to the period to examine issues related to the invasion of Britain by the Romans.

98 A clear lead is being provided in the subject by the co-ordinators, well supported by the headteacher. Documentation has been developed which is helpful to teachers in their planning and good use is being made of recently produced national guidelines. Improvements are being made in monitoring which along with assessment information is being increasingly well used to guide planning. Resources for current topics such as the Romans are good, but more resources are needed to provide for future topics, such as Britain since the 1930's.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

99 The school is making dramatic improvements in children's learning in ICT. A well planned curriculum and regular and consistently well taught lessons are enabling pupils to make rapid progress in their learning. These improvements to the teaching of ICT are recent and have not yet had time to bring pupils up to the expected levels of achievement across all the aspects of the subject by the time they are in Year 6. The current Year 6 pupils are achieving appropriately in using computers to communicate ideas in words and pictures but have not yet reached expected levels in handling data, monitoring and control. The pupils in Year 2 are achieving standards which are broadly in line with expectations. Pupils have sound independence in their use of computers. The infant pupils can launch programs and close them down. They use the mouse to make selections from menus and are able to use a range of editing and formatting tools when writing and producing pictures with computers. Older juniors confidently save and retrieve their work and use features, such as cut and paste and drawing tools within a word processing program to make detailed and accurate plans and interesting pictures. They can rotate, resize and move objects and use tools such as fills and sprays to create effects.

100 Classes are able to use the specialist ICT room twice a week. Teachers plan lessons with very clear objectives based on a detailed and helpful scheme of work. They explain and use demonstrations well to introduce new aspects of learning and provide sufficient time for pupils to practise their skills. A particular feature of many ICT lessons is the good linking of ICT work with learning in other subjects. Older infant pupils were writing lists and instructions, which was the theme for literacy during the week. Similarly, younger infants created pictures using shape tools when two-dimensional shapes were a focus for their numeracy lessons. While pupils are working together on carefully matched tasks, often on different aspects of ICT in mixed age classes, teachers, classroom support assistants and volunteers effectively address problems individuals may encounter. The pupils respond very positively to these opportunities, working hard and cooperating sensibly when sharing resources. In all the lessons seen pupils made clear gains in their learning.

101 The subject is well managed by a coordinator who monitors the quality of pupils' work and provides support for teachers based on their identified needs. She has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to move the subject forward. There are still some deficiencies in resources including easy access to Internet, and control boxes. The ICT room is well organised with good space for learning but computers are not networked and the printing of pupils' work is difficult.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

102 Standards of attainment, overall, are in line with national expectations and in some aspects, such as games, athletics and swimming they are often above, reflecting the importance attached to these areas by the school. The range and quality of extra curricular provision is good for physical education and many of the staff are closely involved in leading the numerous activities on offer throughout the year; these opportunities serve to enhance teaching and learning in key aspects of the subject. Since the last inspection, quality and standards in the subject have been improved considerably. By the age of seven, pupils show appropriate body awareness, agility and good use of space for their age. Skills such as running, throwing and catching, in contrast to the last report, are now developing very well, as seen in a Year 1&2 lesson which focused on the development of fielding skills; where every pupil was able to throw over arm with a reasonable degree of accuracy, many better. By the age of eleven, pupils demonstrate a range of performance skills, some at a good level; as seen in swimming where the vast majority can swim 25 metres and many have achieved much more; and in games skills as seen in ball control skills and use of space in a Year5&6 lesson. Whilst gymnastic skills are satisfactory and occasionally better, pupils' progress does not yet match that achieved in some other aspects, where pupils' learning is consistently good.

103 Pupils generally work hard in lessons and extra-curricular activities to practise a range of ball and other games skills and effectively follow rules in a wide range of team games, including many fixtures in numerous sports against other schools. Strong emphasis is placed on equal opportunities in the subject for all pupils, including imaginative and very appropriate provision for pupils with physical disabilities. On very rare occasions, pupils' progress is impeded where teaching is insufficiently rigorous and the poor attitudes and responses of a very small number of pupils interrupts the flow and pace of physical aspects of the lesson, especially where time is also very limited. Generally, however, pupils' attitudes to the subject are good and sometimes very good. They often look forward to lessons, work hard, co-operate well together and take pride in their achievements. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall; on occasions it is very good. In the best lessons, the teacher has a detailed knowledge of the subject, high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement, and makes real demands on the pupils during the lesson. In such lessons, there are clear and well-matched learning objectives, organisation and planning are good and the teaching builds effectively on previous learning, has rapid pace and much is achieved during the course of a single lesson. Good use is made of national and other guidelines and school documentation to support teachers' planning and arrangements for assessment are being developed, though like monitoring they are at an early stage of development. The subject is positively led and managed. Resources are appropriate with valuable use of an adjacent and well-maintained field that is rented by the school for games, athletic and other activities.

MUSIC

104 It was only possible to observe three lessons in music and none for the older junior children in the school. It has not therefore been possible to judge standards in the subject. The limited evidence available indicates that pupils make satisfactory progress in music and work at appropriate levels. The school's scheme of work provides a good structure for developing the different aspects of the subject through a balanced and developmental approach. Pupils across the school sing tunefully. Younger junior pupils are able to recognise and maintain pulses and rhythms and they can sing in parts. Pupils in the infant classes sing with enthusiasm and successfully perform actions in time to the music. They can also use instruments to reproduce a range of short and longer sounds, recognise high and low notes and maintain simple rhythms. The lessons were well taught by the specialist teacher who maintained pupils' interest well and refined their skills successfully. The pace of a lesson for older infants was a little slow and the range of instruments available made it difficult for the teacher to explore long and short sounds. Many children extend their learning in music by participating in performances both in and out of school and a few pupils benefit from additional instrumental tuition.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

105 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are achieving below expectations. They have weak knowledge of major world religions and have not yet developed a framework they can use to make sense of different religions. They know that Christians worship in a church or a chapel and learn about their religion from reading the Bible and by listening to spiritual leaders such as ministers and vicars. They can name the major Christian festivals and can explain why they are important. However, they have not developed an understanding of concepts such as places of worship, holy books, spiritual leaders, founders, prayer and forms of worship that they could use to compare different religions. Many find it difficult to name the place of worship, holy books and spiritual leaders of Jews, Muslims and Hindus and cannot name or describe important festivals from these religions such as Hanukah, Eid, and Divali. A strength in older pupils' learning is their ability to reflect on and understand the messages in religious stories, such as parables. Pupils in infant classes are achieving broadly in line with expectations. They know important Bible stories, such as "The Prodigal Son" and "The Good Samaritan" and can relate these to how they could live their own lives. Similarly, they have a good understanding of the festivals they have studied, such as their current work on the celebration of the harvest.

106 The coordinator has recently produced a helpful scheme of work in anticipation of the local education authority's new Agreed Syllabus. This provides a good structure for teachers and is followed closely in their planning and delivery of lessons. Lessons are mostly well taught, although some younger junior pupils did not make enough progress in a lesson on symbolism in the Hindu festival of Divali because it was not made sufficiently clear to pupils what they had to do. All lessons were carefully planned and most led to pupils making at least satisfactory progress. In the best lessons, younger pupils and older ones were successfully encouraged to reflect on and respond to issues or events. This was the case in a good lesson in an infant class on Christian views of the harvest and a well taught lesson with older junior pupils that successfully encouraged them to think beyond the obvious when reflecting on the story of "The Good Samaritan". This lesson was also characterized by very effective provision of work at different levels of challenge for the groups in the class. Such provision ensured that the brightest pupils produced work of sophistication while those with some learning difficulties successfully understood the moral behind the story. In this and other lessons class helpers were effective in supporting groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs.

107 The good curriculum provision and effective teaching is enabling pupils across the school to make good progress in the subject and should ensure that the deficiencies in learning, identified above, are addressed. The leadership and management of the subject are good and much more effective than they were during the last inspection, where there were significant weaknesses in the curriculum and few resources to support teaching about major world faiths. The coordinator has successfully tackled the curriculum issue despite the delay in the publication of the new Agreed Syllabus and has made considerable improvements in resources available for the subject. Good plans have also been made to extend learning opportunities by arranging visits to places of worship of religions identified in the scheme of work. This should help considerably in addressing the current weaknesses in pupils' understanding and knowledge.