

INSPECTION REPORT

Brigstock Latham's CE Primary School

Kettering

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122011

Headteacher: Mr Russell Findlay

Reporting inspector: Mr G Bassett
21500

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 224993

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Church of England Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Latham Street Brigstock Kettering Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN14 3HD
Telephone number:	01536 373282
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms M Brady
Date of previous inspection:	10 th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G Bassett	Registered inspector	Mathematics, Science, Information technology, Religious education, Music Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are the pupils taught? How well is the school managed?
Mr A B Anderson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, How well does the school care for its pupils, How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
Mr J Collins	Team inspector	English, History, Geography, Art, Design and technology, Physical education, Education of pupils under the age of five, Equal opportunities.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Brigstock Latham's Church of England school is a small primary school situated to the north of Thrapston, Northamptonshire. The school is housed in two buildings; one based on the old 1800s village school and containing four classrooms. The second built in the 1950s houses another classroom, the school hall and the administration offices. The head teacher has been in post for six years since 1994. There are 110 pupils on roll with an equal number of boys and girls. Many pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 to join a local middle school in preparation for secondary education in Oundle at the age of 13 years.

The school population is totally white. It serves Brigstock and other surrounding villages. The pupils come from rented and privately owned houses, and the proportion eligible for free school meals is low when compared to the national average. The proportion on the register of special educational needs is broadly average and two pupils have statements. The pupils start school at the beginning of the school year in which they are 5 years old. During the inspection these 14 children attended school part time in the mornings only. They are taught in a mixed aged class with nine Year 1 pupils. The school's assessments show that the attainment of pupils on entry reflects the full ability range, but is clustered around the average for their age.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Brigstock Latham's primary school is a very good school. By the time they are eleven years old, the pupils achieve standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The improvements in English and mathematics made by successive cohorts of pupils over the past four years have been faster than seen in the national performance. In science, the school's performance has matched the rate of the nationally achieved progress, but still remains above average. This reflects the significant improvements in the whole school planning and in the quality of teaching; they have improved from being good at the time of the last inspection to being very good. The quality of leadership is very good and the head teacher is most effective in giving very good, clear direction to the work of the school. The school has established a conscientious and hard working team that has a common goal...to raise standards. The role of subject co-ordinators has brought about a rigorous monitoring of the quality of the teaching in each class, the teachers' plans and the pupils' work. This ensures that the whole school makes progress towards the targets set and priorities agreed. The above average standards reached by pupils at the end of both key stages and the improvements since the last inspection are all evidence that this is a very good and very effective school. The cost per pupil is high but considering the significant improvements made since the last inspection and the above average standards achieved by the time the pupils reach the age of eleven, the school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The head teacher provides very good and clear direction to the work of the school.
- In all classes the quality of the teaching is very good. The teachers have an enthusiasm for teaching and for the work they do in the school.
- The pupils have a very good attitude to their work. They enjoy coming to school and they are keen to learn.
- The pupils make good progress and the standards of their work in English, mathematics and science are above average
- The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good, and they make good progress.
- The pupils' social, spiritual, moral and cultural development is very good.
- The parents' comments show that they consider the school to be excellent

What could be improved

- The quality of the pupils' work in information technology needs to be improved.
- The governors need to ensure that the documents for the parents include all the necessary details required.
- Due to the nature of the school site, there is insufficient external lunchtime supervision.
- Some matters of health and safety need to be addressed

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection took place in June 1996 and since then the head teacher, governors and staff have made very good improvements to the quality of education throughout the school. The quality of the leadership is very good. The head teacher gives a very good clear direction to the work of the school. Overall the pupils' standards have been improved in English, mathematics and science and are above the national average at the end of both key stages. The schemes of work and the monitoring of the pupils' progress in each subject have been successfully established by the subject co-ordinators, and there have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching throughout the school. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was judged to be good whereas now it is very good overall. The pupils' behaviour is also very good and the school has

agreed a good policy. The pupils' attitudes towards their teachers and other adults are very good. All the issues identified in the previous report have been acted upon successfully. The school is well placed to continue these very good improvements in the future.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests in 1999.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English				
mathematics				
science				

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table above is blank because there was less than 10 pupils in the cohort for the years listed and consequently the comparisons with all schools and with similar school is too unreliable to make comparisons. In 1999 there were only three pupils in the year group. However, it is evident from the results of the national tests and from the inspection evidence that the quality of learning and the standards achieved by the pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved since 1997 when they were well below average. In the national assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, all pupils reached the required level 4 in English, mathematics and science but none reached the higher level 5. The trend seen in the results for the school over the past four years shows that standards have remained above the national average. The targets set by the school for 1999 and 2000 were reached successfully with the school's performance outstripping significantly the targets that it had set in English and mathematics.

The inspection evidence shows that by the time the pupils leave the school their standards are above average and that they make good progress.

The quality of work in religious education is above the expected levels identified in the locally agreed syllabus. The quality of work in information technology is below the expected levels for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. These standards are not high enough and do not match the above average standards reached by successive cohorts of pupils in the other core subjects of English, mathematics science and religious education. By the time the pupils leave the school at the age of eleven the quality of their work in history and physical education is above the expected standards and in music, art, design technology and geography it is broadly as expected.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have an enthusiasm for learning and their attitudes are very good.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils' behaviour in and around the school is very good.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils' personal development and the relationships throughout the school are good.
Attendance	The attendance is very good and better than the national average. The pupils arrive at school on time

The very good attitudes of the pupils towards their work and to the school are strong features of the school. They are enthusiastic about learning, sustain concentration and nearly always work with excitement and enjoyment. The pupils' personal development and relationships are good. Their behaviour is very good and they work and play together as a family. Their attendance is also very good. All these aspects of the pupils' attitudes and values have improved significantly since the last inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
34 lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very 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.

During the inspection the quality of the teaching was very good overall. Half of the 34 lessons were very good or better and almost half (47%) were of a good quality. The remaining lessons were satisfactory and there was no unsatisfactory teaching. The quality of teaching has substantially improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be good overall but no lesson was judged to be very good or excellent. This very high quality of teaching has a beneficial impact not only upon the pupils' achievements but also upon their very good attitudes to school. The teachers show their enthusiasm for teaching throughout the school, and this is reflected in the enjoyment that the pupils have for learning. The teachers have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum they teach and their comprehensive plans ensure that all pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy lessons is very good and the teaching of skills is firmly established.

When the teaching is very strong, the teachers prepare very detailed plans and employ very good strategies for questioning. This deepens the pupils' thinking effectively and extends the explanations that they give. The teachers interact very effectively with the pupils and this helps the pupils to maintain concentration and to strengthen their understanding and knowledge. Even though the teaching of information technology is satisfactory it is weaker than the quality seen in all the other subjects. This has a detrimental effect upon the pupils' progress in this subject

The learning objectives for the lessons form a focus for ongoing assessments, which all the teachers carry out very well. These assessments are used effectively to plan what each pupil needs to be taught next. The support given to all pupils and especially to those with special educational needs is very good and helps them to make good progress against the targets set in their individual education plans.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provided by the school is good. It has been improved significantly since the last inspection.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for the pupils with special educational needs is very good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' spiritual, social moral and cultural development is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The educational and personal support given to the pupils is excellent. The monitoring of the pupils' academic and personal development is very good.

The curriculum provided throughout the school meets the statutory requirements for the National curriculum. The teaching of religious education complies with the locally agreed syllabus. The school covers sex education in Years 5 and 6. In health education, the safe use and misuse of medicines and drugs are taught effectively within science lessons. The provision of a planned curriculum for the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very good. The curriculum for information technology is planned well but the time available for

each pupil to have “hands-on” experience is restricted because of the inadequate number of reliable computers in the school.

The range of extra curricular activities is very good, particularly for the oldest pupils. They have opportunities to enjoy educational trips and residential visits as well as more unusual activities in badminton, country dancing and gardening clubs.

The school effectively supports its pupils and the staff strive hard to promote their welfare. The head teacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides very good leadership in this aspect. The teaching staff are very approachable and totally supportive. The non-teaching staff are dedicated, committed and provide excellent support for both the teachers and the pupils.

The school’s links with the parents are very good. The parents are encouraged to take an active part in the work of the school, and they do so most successfully.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. The head teacher gives very good clear direction to the work of the school. The subject co-ordinators are also providing a very good direction to the development of the subjects for which they are responsible.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are fully active in achieving the priorities for development within the school.
The school’s evaluation of its performance	The leadership has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It evaluates all aspects of the educational provision with rigour. The priorities of the school development plan are appropriate and are implemented effectively.
The strategic use of resources	The resources in the school, especially the learning support assistants, are very effectively used. However, it is difficult to use the inadequate resources for information technology.

The leadership provided by the head teacher is very good. He gives a very clear and positive direction to the work of the school. He has a clear vision for the future development of the school, and has built a cohesive team to achieve the agreed targets. The role of the subject co-ordinators is now more fully defined; their development of the schemes of work and their monitoring of the quality of teaching have been the focus for raising the pupils’ standards of work in each subject. The governing body is also very actively supporting developments throughout the school and is aware of the various strengths and weaknesses.

The school has an appropriate number of experienced and suitably qualified teachers and learning assistants. The deployment of the learning assistants is very effective. The accommodation is inconvenient and the maintenance of one of the buildings is very poor. The resources, apart from those for information technology, are satisfactory.

The school has established good procedures to ensure that the principles of ‘best value’ for money are used when purchasing equipment and employing staff.

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 children like coming to school. They are taught well and make good progress. • The parents acknowledge that they are well informed about the progress their children are making. • The school expects the children to work hard and to achieve their best. • The school is helping their children to become more mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very small number of parents expressed a concern that they were not well informed about their child’s progress and they did not think that the school was well led and managed.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The children get the right amount of homework and the range of the activities outside lessons is interesting.• The school is well led and managed and the parents feel comfortable about approaching the staff with problems and suggestions. | |
|--|--|

The vast majority of the parents consider the school to be excellent. Only an extremely small proportion (4 parents) listed areas where they would like to see improvements. The inspection team agrees with the very positive views of the vast majority of the parents. It does not agree with the minority view that the school is not managed and led well and that the parents do not have sufficient information about how well their child is getting on in school. Most parents are fully involved with their child's work and give their full support to the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

At the time of the last inspection the standards were judged to be in line with the national average. Since then, the pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 have improved significantly. The inspection evidence and the tests results, for 1999 and 2000, show that the standards are now above the national average.

The results of the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 for 1999 show that the proportion of the pupils that reached the expected level 4 or above was above the national average in English, mathematics and science. None of them reached the higher level 5. However, too much emphasis should not be placed upon this figure, as there were only three pupils in the cohort. Seven pupils took these tests in 2000. The unconfirmed results for this year show that five of the seven pupils reached the expected levels, and a proportion that is broadly in line with the national average reached the higher level 5 in English and mathematics.

Comparisons made with schools of a similar type show that the school's performance is below average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. The comparisons with schools of a similar type, (that is schools with less than 8% free school meals), are also very unreliable, as this school does not provide school meals. Consequently, the published figures for the school do not represent a true picture of the entitlement to free school meals as parents do not claim.

An analysis of the trend seen in the results over the past four years shows that the eleven-year-olds reach standards that are above the national average in English, mathematics and science. The rate of improvement in English and mathematics exceeds that found nationally. Over the same period of time, the pupils' progress in science has kept pace with the national rate of improvement whilst maintaining standards that are above the national average. The targets for English and mathematics set by the school for 1999 were sufficiently challenging and were met successfully.

There is no significant difference between the achievements of the boys and girls.

The results of the national assessment tests for Key Stage 1 in 1999 show that the proportion of the pupils that reached level 2 or above was well above the national average in reading and writing and close to the national average in mathematics. When comparisons are made with schools of a similar type, the results show that in 1999 the pupils' performance was below average in writing and mathematics and broadly average in reading. The trend over the past four years shows that the school's performance has remained above the national average in all three areas. Over this period of time there has been no differences between the achievements of the boys and girls.

Throughout the school, the pupils make good progress in developing their literacy skills and understanding. By the end of the Key Stage 1, they demonstrate confidence in their responses and are able to explain their ideas well. Most pupils also show good reading skills. When reading they show an awareness of letter sounds and initial consonant blends which they use to find the meanings of unfamiliar words. Their attainment in writing often matches that of their reading. By the end of the key stage, the majority of pupils can write in a clearly formed, joined script. The work of lower attaining pupils lacks this accuracy of formation, but all pupils show a pride in their work and are willing to talk about what they are doing. The higher attaining groups have confidence in the correct use of basic punctuation.

The pupils' standards of work at the end of Key Stage 2 are above average. They demonstrate increasingly good skills in the development of their speaking and listening skills. They offer ideas and opinions and show a willingness to listen to what others have to say. By the age of eleven, the pupils' reading is above average for their age. The higher attaining pupils enjoy a wide range of texts and read fluently, expressively and with understanding. The majority of pupils are able to discuss the plot and storyline of a book and have a range of favourite authors. However, more could be done to extend the use of non-fiction books for research skills. In their writing, the pupils show an awareness of their readership, and begin to adapt their writing style accordingly. Most pupils also show a good understanding of the use of basic punctuation. They become more adept at the use of dictionaries to improve their spelling, and their handwriting is accurately formed and consistent in size. At the end of both key stages, they now reach higher standards in literacy than were observed at the last inspection. .

They also make good progress in numeracy throughout the school. By the time the pupils are seven, most have a sound understanding and knowledge of numbers up to 20. They can mentally calculate addition and subtraction up to and beyond 20 and most are beginning to develop an understanding of place value of numbers up to 1000. They can use correct mathematical names for two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties in terms of the number of sides, corners and edges. All pupils are making good progress and now reach higher standards than were observed at the time of the last inspection.

Their good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2. By the time they leave the school, most pupils have a secure understanding of the operations of numbers in thousands, can calculate in decimals and fractions and solve mental mathematical problems effectively. The application of mathematics is being increasingly well developed throughout Key Stage 2. The mental calculation sessions help significantly with this, and pupils were observed explaining their methods of working out a problem. This is a significant development since the last inspection.

The quality of the pupils' work in religious education is above the expected levels identified in the locally agreed syllabus. By the time they leave the school, the pupils have a wide knowledge and understanding of the world faiths of other people. However, in information technology the quality of their work is below average and does not match the good standards reached in the other core subjects. To improve the standards reached in this subject the pupils need more frequent opportunities to use computers and to learn and to practise new skills. This will enable them to use information technology to support other subjects.

The quality of work in history and physical education is above the expected standards by the time the pupils leave the school at the age of eleven and in music, art, design technology and geography it is broadly as expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

The pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour and the relationships within the school are very good. Their personal development is good. The teaching and non-teaching staff, parents and the pupils themselves have very high expectations of the standards of behaviour that are acceptable in the school. The vast majority of parents believe the school consistently maintains these high standards of behaviour.

The pupils' attitudes to the school in general are very good. The vast majority of the pupils consistently demonstrate a very positive approach to their work. They are interested and fully involved in all activities, including the wide range of extra curricular activities that are offered. The pupils are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and eager to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers, willingly ask and answer questions, and freely offer their own ideas and suggestions. They settle down quickly and diligently in class, are capable of sustained periods of concentration and stay on task.

The standards of behaviour are consistently very good. The pupils behave very well and act in a remarkably mature and responsible manner. Their behaviour in the classrooms and in assemblies is consistently very good and there is no disruption to learning. The pupils work in an environment that is completely free from oppressive behaviour, bullying, sexism and racism. The combination of high standards in the pupils' personal discipline and the consistently very good class management by the teachers has a positive impact the levels of attainment. The pupils move around the school in a very quiet and orderly manner. Their behaviour at breaks and lunchtime is good. There were no exclusions either in the academic year prior to the inspection or in the current year to date.

Relationships in the school are very good. The pupils relate very well to their teachers, to other adults whom they come into contact with, and also to one another. Children, of all ages, work and play extremely well together. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. They collaborate well, share resources, take turns and listen to each other. All pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, each other and the environment. During assemblies the pupils are respectful of the occasion, willingly joining in singing and bowing their heads during prayers. The attention and consideration given to a blind visitor during a whole school assembly was outstanding. There is no deliberate damage to either resources or school property and a remarkable absence of litter around the school site.

The pupils' personal development is good. They are learning a good range of social skills that is helping them to become well-rounded individuals. They support local and national charities and encounter an appropriate range of visitors from the community. The pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for taking responsibility for their own work in the classrooms. In some lessons, when not subject to direct teaching, the pupils were

observed working independently and staying on task. When they have opportunities for taking on formal responsibilities around the school, for example setting out the hall for assemblies, the pupils respond in a mature and sensible manner. The pupils are also directly involved in producing their own informative school magazine.

The levels of attendance are high and well above the national average. There is almost no unauthorised absence. The pupils enjoy coming to school and there is a very low level of recorded lateness.

The high standards maintained in behaviour, attendance and punctuality are a strength of the school and have a very positive impact on standards achieved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

At the last inspection the quality of teaching was found to be good. It has improved substantially since then and is now very good at all stages throughout the school. No lesson at the time of the last report was judged to be very good or excellent, but this has changed dramatically. In this most recent inspection half of the 34 lessons observed were of either very good (44%) or excellent (6%) quality. Of the remaining lessons, one was satisfactory and the remaining were of a good quality (47%). There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

This very good teaching has an extremely positive impact upon the pupils' attitudes to their work and the quality of learning. It has been most influential in raising the pupils' standards in all subjects and particularly in literacy and numeracy. The rate of the pupils' progress has also been significantly improved. It is now faster in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 and in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 than the average performances seen nationally. This is an improvement upon the last report.

The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is also a strong feature of the school. The children enter with broadly average attainment and settle to make a very good start to their school life. They quickly achieve standards of work that are above average for children of their age and reach the early learning goals.

Throughout the school, the major strengths of the teaching are evident in literacy, numeracy and science where nearly all of the lessons observed were of a good and often very good quality. All teachers have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They have a thorough knowledge of the schemes of work that are now firmly established. The effectiveness of the teachers' planning has improved substantially and the plans are now very good. All teachers plan their lessons objectives much better than at the time of the last inspection. In literacy and numeracy they follow the national strategies for teaching and plan imaginative and stimulating activities for all pupils. Some write the learning objectives for each lesson on the board so that the pupils are aware of the targets set for the lesson. This is an appropriate strategy and it has a positive effect upon the pupils' attitudes and the pace of their work. The teachers and learning support assistants have very high expectations and these are understood fully by all pupils.

The most effective teaching is evident when the pupils are challenged with prompts and questions which require them to explain what they have achieved, how they did it, and how they could have improved it or worked it out by a different method. For example, in Year 2 the pupils were asked to classify objects into smooth or hard and the teacher quickly introduced a third category of cold. The pupils were prompted and questioned so that they explained that this third group "*overlapped*" the other two sets because things can be "*smooth and cold as well as hard and cold*".

In most instances in the lessons seen, the teachers used very good questioning techniques and gave the pupils time for explanations. However, there were a few occasions when the pupils should have been questioned more fully to ensure that they had a full understanding. For example, the class of pupils seen adding and subtracting 9 or 11, could have been challenged more thoroughly by asking them to show and explain to the other pupils how they had made their calculations with the use of the class 100 square.

The teaching of information technology (IT) is very difficult because of the inadequacy of the computers. The plans for IT are comprehensive and the pupils follow all the elements of the national guidelines appropriately. However, the restrictions imposed by the lack of computers means that the pupils do not get sufficient time to learn and to practise new skills despite the good efforts made by the teachers and the support assistants.

The quality of teaching in all subjects is very good throughout the school. Comprehensive planning and the very good support of the learning assistants have a substantial impact upon raising the quality of the pupils' work. They increase the rate of progress being made by all pupils and have a very positive influence upon the

pupils' attitudes. Interesting tasks are well matched to the pupils' previous learning and the children with special educational needs are given very good support. The individual educational programmes generate all the learning objectives for the pupils with special educational needs. Assessment records, especially for the pupils with statements, are completed daily and provide the key to what needs to be taught next.

The resources are used well and the teachers and learning support assistants work very well as a cohesive team for the benefit of all pupils.

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

The curriculum for children under five incorporates all the required Early Learning Goals of the Foundation Stage, which provides a secure basis for the National Curriculum. High priority is given to the development of the children's speaking and listening skills, their personal and social development. A good basis is also laid down in their work in language, literacy and mathematics.

The school provides a curriculum, which is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements for the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It provides not only for the academic needs of pupils, but also develops their physical and creative abilities. There is an appropriate emphasis given to the teaching and learning of literacy and numeracy. Sex education, drugs awareness and healthy living are taught as part of the school's science curriculum and through the school's personal, social and health education programme. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Notably the school has maintained good teaching and learning in all the foundation subjects despite the limitations of time. The allocation of time to all subjects enables the pupils to build effectively on their previous learning and maintain their developing knowledge and understanding. However, the current equipment for the teaching and learning of information technology skills is inadequate and hampers the pupils' progress. The school is aware of this weakness and has already taken remedial steps.

The curriculum is taught both in subject-based lessons and through topics. All areas of the curriculum now have schemes of work, which are supported by nationally approved guidelines. They provide support for teaching and learning across the school and a secure basis for the teachers' planning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The numeracy and literacy strategies are now securely embedded in the school curriculum to the benefit of all pupils, and have contributed to the overall rise in standards across the school. Overall, the planning for the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is a strong feature of the schools' work. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and ensures equal access and opportunity for all groups of pupils.

Given the restrictions of the site, the school enhances the curriculum for a significant number of its pupils through a very good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities. In these, staff are very well supported by parents and helpers, which enables the activities to reach a good number of pupils. For example, the after school art club and football clubs were well attended during the inspection. Similarly, the lunchtime gardening club was observed planting spring bulbs to improve the school environment. There are musical activities such as choir, recorders, violins and brass and sports such as netball, gymnastics and short tennis. The latter has proved to a particular success for the school. It has attracted funding from the Lawn Tennis Association and considerable personal success for some pupils. Other clubs such as chess, country dancing and verse speaking, also give evidence of how well the school provides an extended curriculum for a majority of its pupils.

The school is justly proud of its links with the local village community, which have a positive impact on the pupils' developing social awareness. The reception class children develop their sense of the outside world through a village walk-about, and the school has very strong links with the local playgroup. The pupils are heavily involved in the May Queen Carnival and Festival and show their care for their local environment by supporting the annual village 'Spring Clean'. This is a two-way process, and the local people themselves have visited the school as part of history topic work. There are regular visits by the local nurse, a dentist and a policeman. The school takes part in services at the local church and the vicar and other visitors support the school's spiritual provision.

These links with the outside world are further developed with the provision of a well-planned programme of visits to support other aspects of the curriculum. This was a cause for concern at the time of the last inspection, but the school has addressed it very successfully. Residential visits with another local primary school are arranged for older pupils to places such as Hartington in Derbyshire, York and the Isle of Wight to give experiences of other contrasting localities in geography. Work in history is supported through visits to Kirby Hall and Sulgrave Manor. Younger pupils visit Kettering Library and have a day visit to a local Country Park to support their science topics. There are a number of visitors to school who also contribute to the school's

provision. For example, Year 3 and 4 pupils had a visit from a 'Viking' complete with sword and shield, which proved a great stimulus to their history topic. Artists have also visited the school to help Year 6 pupils experiment with techniques such as 'paper tearing', from which they produced some very striking work. These activities, and many others, enhance the quality of the curriculum for all pupils in the school.

The experiences of all pupils are enhanced by the very good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This also represents a marked improvement since the last inspection. The high quality of this provision is a particular strength of the school and is a good reflection of its overall ethos. There is very good provision for the pupils' spiritual development, which is carefully and sensitively encouraged not only through the school's policy for religious education, but also in many other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for reflection in assemblies and lessons are used effectively to help pupils of all ages to think about points of views that differ from their own, and to build up a value system that fosters a caring and Christian outlook. The older pupils help to prepare assemblies and all pupils take part in the reading of prayers chosen from a book of their own making. A particularly striking example was seen in an assembly when a blind lady came to talk to the pupils about living without sight. All pupils, including children from the reception class attending their very first assembly, listened intently to her and afterwards asked very mature and sensible questions. Another feature of all the assemblies observed was the pupils' real sense of enjoyment when singing hymns. They sing willingly and with a sense of respect for the occasion.

The children's moral education is very good, due to the consistent approach of all adults involved in the work of the school. All pupils are helped to develop a view of what is right and wrong and its effectiveness is noticeable on the occasions when the pupils can be heard reminding one another of how they should behave. During story time in a Year 1 class, for example, there were discussions about selfishness and compassion. All classes have displays of work that the pupils are proud of and the teachers are very skilful in the ways in which they raise the self-esteem of pupils of all ages. A noticeable feature of a number of lessons was the way in which the pupils were quick to celebrate the achievements of others. The pupils are expected to undertake duties and responsibilities, which helps to develop their sense of reliability.

The provision for the pupils' social development is also very good. There are many opportunities to learn how to work together both in the classroom and outside. In mixed age classes, it was noticeable how many times the older pupils in the class helped and supported younger classmates. The parents themselves have commented on the strong friendships that exist between pupils of all age ranges. Older pupils take greater responsibilities, such as the group of Year 6 pupils who produce the 'Brigstock Bundle', their own school newspaper. School productions and team games also help to foster teamwork and reliance. All pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of citizenship through the school's involvement with the local community and on a wider scale through raising funds for a variety of charities.

The cultural development of pupils is very good. It is promoted well in subjects such as history, art, music and geography. During literacy lessons, the pupils learn about the richness of their own language and culture. A wide range of visits to such events as the Oundle Music and Drama Festival helps them to appreciate their own culture. Visitors, such as Chinese and Indian members of the community, bring diversity to their experience that would not always be evident in a village community. The school is at the present trying to establish links with a school in Newham, London to further enhance this aspect of its provision. The teaching of French to older pupils also helps to extend their awareness of different cultures. In religious education, the teaching of world faiths, including Christianity, helps the pupils to appreciate their own cultural heritage and respect others whose views are different.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

B

The school effectively supports its pupils and the staff strive hard to promote their welfare. The head teacher places a high priority on pastoral care and provides very good leadership in this aspect. The teaching staff are very approachable and totally supportive. The non-teaching staff are dedicated, committed and provide excellent support for both teachers and pupils. All staff, teaching and non-teaching, have a very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them conscientiously and consistently. Appropriate provision is made for medical and first aid requirements, and the arrangements for dealing with routine matters such as minor accidents are very good. Conscientious teachers and learning support assistants, who are alert and vigilant, supervise the pupils well at breaks. Experienced and efficient supervisors undertake lunchtime supervision, and their standard of care is high. However, there is an insufficient number of midday supervisors to adequately supervise all pupils when they are outside in the playground and around the school. **(This is an area for improvement that the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan).**

C

The school makes very good use of its learning support staff. Along with parent helpers, they are deployed very effectively and used extremely well to support both pupils and teachers. The support for the pupils with special educational needs is very good. This has a positive effect on their attainment and the progress they are making. Child protection procedures are securely in place and there is a good awareness of them throughout the school. There are also sound procedures for health and safety. These are well known and understood by all staff who consistently demonstrate safe working practice in lessons. The governing body and the head teacher take their health and safety responsibilities seriously and all the required safety inspections and checks, including risk assessment, are regularly carried out and properly recorded. However, the fire routes from the classrooms have not been designated and signed, and not all external fire doors are equipped with appropriate fire exit locks. These points and a number of other health and safety concerns were brought to the attention of the head teacher during the inspection. **(This is an area for improvement that the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan).**

The school has effective procedures in place to promote and monitor discipline and good behaviour. All staff have high expectations of behaviour and discipline is administered consistently and well. This has a positive impact on the high standards of behaviour maintained in the school. The pupils' attendance is monitored well. Their absence is correctly recorded, followed up and appropriate action taken when necessary.

The head teacher, class teachers and the support staff know the pupils extremely well and have a very good understanding of their individual personal needs. The class teachers maintain detailed pupil profiles and monitor their pupils' personal development very well. There are very good procedures in place for marking, assessing and monitoring the pupils' academic attainment and progress. The assessment information is used consistently throughout the school to guide curriculum planning. The day-to-day assessment in the classrooms is good and this helps the teachers to plan specific work for individual pupils. This has a particularly positive impact on the progress made by pupils with special educational needs.

Brigstock Latham Primary School is a caring school that provides effective support and guidance for its pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

The relationships between the school and the parents are excellent. The school enjoys the active support of the vast majority of parents, who consistently express a very high level of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. There are a high number of committed parents who regularly help in the classrooms and with extra curricular activities. These parents are well deployed and their contributions have a positive effect on the standards achieved by the pupils. The parental involvement in their children's work in school and at home is very good and there is very strong support for home reading and homework. The parent governors are fully involved in the governing body and with the school. There is an active parents and friends association (PFA) that organises social events and raises funds for the school. The vast majority of parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or complaints and agree that the school works closely with them. The head teacher and the school staff are very approachable and parents were regularly observed talking to the class teachers at the start and close of the school day.

D

The day-to-day communication between the school and home is very good. The school sends out regular newsletters and communications to parents about specific events and activities. Home/school books are used to record the pupils' reading at home and provide the parents with a very good means of communication with their child's class teacher. These are very well used, particularly by the parents of children in the infant classes. The school publishes an informative prospectus, but the current edition omits some items of statutorily required information. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish an annual report. However, the latest report is unsatisfactory and fails to include much of the required information, for example, information about professional development undertaken by the teaching staff and the arrangements for disabled pupils. **(This is an area for improvement that the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan).** The parents are given a very good annual progress report and offered appropriate opportunities to attend meetings to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers. The reports consistently indicate what the pupils can and cannot do, progress being made, and where pupils are finding difficulties. They also set targets for improvement.

Overall the school's work is considerably enriched by its links with parents and these links have a beneficial effect on pupils' academic achievement and personal development.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

The leadership of the school is very good and the management is very effective. The strength of the leadership throughout the school is evident in the establishment of an environment where there is an emphasis upon the academic and social development and care of all the pupils.

The head teacher provides very strong and effective leadership for the school. He gives very clear direction to the educational developments and work of the school. All staff, pupils, governors and parents are involved fully in the establishment of a very strong and dedicated team. The whole team works conscientiously together to ensure that the school is a friendly and orderly environment in which pupils and staff are valued and can grow in confidence, knowledge and skills.

The head teacher has very high expectations, which are reflected fully in the attitudes that everyone demonstrates towards the school. These positive attitudes have an extremely positive impact upon the very good quality of teaching and upon the very good quality support that is given to all pupils.

Since the last inspection, the quality of leadership has improved substantially. The role of the deputy head teacher has been developed effectively and the deputy gives the head teacher and the staff good advice, support and guidance. The roles of subject co-ordinators have been defined carefully and they subject fulfil their responsibilities with dedication and imagination. They all monitor effectively the quality of the teachers' half termly plans and also the teaching strategies for their subjects. This includes the monitoring of lessons. Each subject co-ordinator gives the teacher concerned a verbal and written feedback when discussing the strengths of each lesson and the areas of teaching and classroom management that require improvements. The schemes of work that were identified as a school weakness in the last inspection have now been successfully completed. They are now based securely upon the national guidelines and form a structure that ensures that each pupil can build upon the previous learning and can make progress towards the next target. The pupils' work is scrutinised carefully on a regular basis by the head teacher and the subject co-ordinators to ensure that each pupil is making sufficient progress. The very good assessment records are now well established, showing clearly what each pupil has achieved. All these improvements in the management of the curriculum have helped to raise the standards of the pupils' work throughout the school.

E

The Governing Body is actively involved in shaping the direction of the school and gives the staff, pupils and parents good support. They have a good insight into the day to day running of the school and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. They observe lessons regularly and report back details of their visits. The chair of governors meets the head teacher and deputy head teacher once a week to discuss educational, finance, personnel and premises matters. The governors are fully involved in the final decisions that are taken in setting the annual budget. The head teacher, with the support of the finance committee, presents the full governing body with alternative spending options for discussion before the budget is finally approved. They monitor the monthly expenditure effectively with the head teacher and the finance committee. Consequently, they are able to make informed decisions about priorities. For example, the governing body is fully involved in the development of the provision of better information technology equipment throughout the school. This development is detailed in the school development plan, which is presented to the governing body for their final approval. They take an active role in the final preparation of this school plan and are fully aware of the priorities and costs involved. However, the annual report to parents and the school brochure compiled and approved by the governing body does not meet statutory requirements. The governors will need to seek guidance from the Local Education Authority before compiling these documents next year. **(This is an area for improvement that the governors should consider for inclusion in their action plan).** Notwithstanding, the performance of the governing body is good and has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was judged to be satisfactory.

Under the guidance of the head teacher and with the help of the Local Education Authority the staff have evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of the school. These areas now form an action plan and have been instrumental in raising the quality of the teaching and the standards that the pupils reach.

The school makes very good use of the available resources, both human and material. In particular, the learning support assistants are highly valued and are very effectively deployed to enhance the quality of educational support throughout the school. Although many pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4 to join a local middle school, this has no obvious detrimental effect upon the quality of the educational provision. The grants made available to the school have been very well used to employ additional help and to embark upon information

technology training for the teachers. The expenditure of the forth-coming grant to improve the resources for information technology has been well planned by the head teacher, governors and staff. There are sound reliable procedures in place to ensure that the school gets the best value for money whilst providing very necessary improvements.

The staffing levels throughout the school are very good. The resources, apart from those for information technology, are satisfactory. The accommodation being split between two buildings is most inconvenient for the staff and the pupils. The maintenance of the building containing the hall, one classroom and the administration rooms is poor with peeling paint, and large cracks in the exterior brickwork.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors, head teacher and staff should

- (A) Improve the quality of the pupils' work in information technology. (Paragraph A)

The governors should also consider including the following areas for improvement within their action plan.

- (i) Increase the level of mid day supervision (Paragraph B)
- (ii) Consider the concerns about health and safety that were verbally reported to the head teacher and the governing body. (Paragraph C)
- (iii) Ensure that the school brochure and the annual report to the parents meet the statutory requirements by including all the necessary items. (Paragraphs D and E)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

34

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

13

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6%	44%	47%	3%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	110
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	25

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9?
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5%
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
	1999	6	8	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93	93	86
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86	86	100
	National	82	86	87

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
	1999	2	1	3

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100	100	100
	National	70	69	78

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	67	100	100
	National	68	69	75

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	94
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.9
Average class size	27.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	86

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A

Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	203356
Total expenditure	197353
Expenditure per pupil	1811
Balance brought forward from previous year	12810
Balance carried forward to next year	18813

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	110
Number of questionnaires returned	45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	36	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	60	27	0	0	13
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	29	0	0	9
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	53	29	4	0	13
The teaching is good.	64	27	0	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	36	4	2	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	4	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	29	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	53	36	4	2	4
The school is well led and managed.	51	33	7	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	60	31	0	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	40	33	7	2	18

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The school has very strong links with the village playgroup, which enables the reception class teacher to make visits to gain familiarity with the children before they start school in September. Visits by children and their parents take place in the summer term which enables the children settle quickly in to the routines of the school. This helps them to feel secure and confident. At the time of the inspection there were fourteen children under the age of five in the mixed age class of reception children and nine Year 1 pupils. The assessment of their attainment on entry had just been completed and showed that they were in line with the national average in language and literacy, but slightly below average in mathematics. The curriculum for children under five incorporates the new requirements of the Foundation Stage and is planned alongside the curriculum for the pupils in the class who are Year one. The coordinator has held meetings with parents to explain the new Early Learning Goals and how it will affect the way children learn. She has also led in-service training for her colleagues and produced her own learning skills list to support the planning of the new curriculum. In all this preparation she has worked very closely with the learning support assistants who work with children under five. As a result, all children are already settled in to the learning routines of the school and, even at this early stage of their time in school, most of them are showing above average levels of attainment with most reaching the early learning goals for their age. Their progress in language and literacy, mathematics and personal and social development is good. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

On entry to the school, the children are welcomed into a caring and supportive environment. They are quickly made to feel valued members of the class community. They quickly learn to play and work together and are already showing a degree of independence in the way they respond to the activities they undertake. For example, when changing for outdoor play or physical education, many do so with the minimum of adult help. They listen to their teachers and respond readily to their questions when working in a group. The teachers and the support staff provide very good role models for the children and take all opportunities to reinforce the social skills of cooperation. Many children already show good levels of concentration in their activities. They respond well when given the responsibility for giving out and clearing away equipment during lessons. They follow instructions well and are safe and sensible when moving about the classroom and the school. The high level of development of their personal and social skills was very evident when they attended their very first assembly with the rest of the school. They were all very well behaved and listened intently to the blind lady visitor explaining about how she coped with her disability.

From the start, the children's speaking and listening skills are well developed. It is a strong feature of all the lessons observed. Some children can already recognise their names and those of their friends when they choose their 'book bag'. They enjoy stories and rhymes and a good proportion can identify the correct sequence of a story, for example in 'The Gingerbread Man'. Many knew the order in which the characters appeared and were quick to point out to the class teacher when she said otherwise. All handle books sensibly and know that text is read from left to right, and a few children can already identify the title of a book. Their knowledge and understanding of sounds and letter names is being well developed through very good teaching.

The children can count confidently to ten and most can recognise the numbers involved. Those who are less secure can do so accurately when touching the objects being counted. A few children were seen taking one away from or adding one to a number when playing the game 'What time is it Mr. Fox?' in the schoolyard. This and other similar games are used very well to reinforce and practice the children's learning skills. Registration and other daily routines are also used very effectively to develop children's knowledge of numbers and counting skills. Good, clear questioning ensures that all children are well motivated to take part in mathematical activities.

The majority of children are already confident in moving about the school and its grounds and opportunities are taken to reinforce their sense of direction. Scrutiny of previous work shows that they learn about good things to eat as part of a sensible diet, and they know a range of objects in the house that use electricity. This very good quality of teaching helps them to develop their knowledge and understanding of how the world works. On a visit to a local Country Park the teacher planned an effective study of pond life and from this the children are able to correctly sequence a series of pictures showing the life cycle of a frog. In the classroom, construction kits are used well by the teacher to encourage the children to find out how things can be put together and taken apart. A

photo-gallery of themselves from birth helps to develop their sense of chronology into times past and times present.

The lack of a secure outside area for play with climbing equipment identified in the last report has not yet been fully addressed. However, the school playground although not adjacent to the classroom is used by the children under good supervision to explore the uses of the new, large wheeled play equipment that is now used regularly to extend this aspect of the school's provision. The children under five enjoy physical education lessons through well-planned and well-resourced lessons. They are able to use space sensibly and safely when moving around the hall. They listen to their teacher's instructions and try hard to copy her actions. A similar lesson taken by a learning support assistant was also successful in allowing the children to use their imagination in miming actions of the characters of "The Gingerbread Man". Both lessons were characterised by the enjoyment and confidence of all children in moving and jumping. In a lesson devoted to making a mask, the children were able to practice the use of scissors for cutting, which they did most successfully due to the very careful instruction of the adults involved. The use of construction kits also helps to develop these fine manipulative skills.

The children under five join in and sing along with a number of songs and rhymes. They express themselves confidently in paint and most of them have used other media such as crayon in their artwork. There are bright, colourful examples of their work to be seen in the class and around the school. The home corner is adapted to a variety of play scenarios, which help to provide opportunities for imaginative and creative role-play.

The overall quality of teaching of the children under five is very good, and the class teacher and support assistants demonstrate a very secure knowledge and understanding of how they learn. They provide a wide range of well-resourced learning experiences which interest and enthuse the children and effectively develop their learning. The teacher's planning of the curriculum is very good. The learning objectives identified in the half term plans are precise and the activities devised are imaginative and well thought out. The teacher gives clear instructions and intervenes effectively to enhance the children's learning and to ensure that they develop a depth of concentration. This is already having a beneficial influence upon their attitudes to work and play. The day-to-day assessment of each child's successes and difficulties are used effectively to plan what needs to be taught next. In physical education the teacher encourages the children to copy and to practice a range of movements and to follow instructions. In the creative activities, the resources are prepared well in advance so that there is a brisk start to the learning. Very good emphasis is placed upon the teaching of phonic and this has a very beneficial effect upon the children's skills. The management of the children is very good with encouragement given to work in small groups in co-operation with each other. The teacher and the learning support assistant work well together and both give the children time to think and to explain their thinking.

ENGLISH

Overall standards have been rising since the last inspection. The results of national tests for eleven year olds in 1999 were very high when compared to the national average. The points score for pupils achieving level 4 or level 5 over the previous four years confirms a trend of good results. Even though there has been some fluctuation between the preceding years the overall trend is upwards. The performance of boys and girls improved substantially over the same period. When compared to similar schools, results were close to the national average.

The figures for this year indicate that the school has improved significantly the proportion of pupils achieving the higher than expected levels of attainment, but pupil's performance in English is below average when compared with that of similar schools.

The picture for the achievements of seven-year-old pupils is a similar one. In 1999, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels of attainment was above the national average, whilst that for pupils achieving the higher than expected levels was close to the national average. The pupils' performance in writing fell below the national average when compared to similar schools. The latest figures for 2000 show that the proportion of pupils achieving the expected levels of attainment has been maintained and there has been a substantial improvement in the proportion reaching the higher levels of attainment. The results show that over the past four years the standards of both boys and girls have remained above the national average in both reading and writing.

Throughout the school, the standards of attainment seen during the inspection were above those expected in speaking and listening, and above average for reading and writing. The good progress noted in the last report has been maintained. The inspection evidence and the school's own assessments suggest that the pupils' standards in reading are improving. A wider range of writing across the curriculum is also helping to raise

standards in spelling and handwriting. The range and content of the written work are helping the pupils to improve their ability to express their ideas through prose and poetry. The particular needs of pupils in mixed age classes and those of higher attaining pupils are being met successfully across the school. The progress made by pupils with special educational needs is good. This is being achieved through the very good support they get in lessons. Extra, well-qualified support staff have been appointed to give specific help to these pupils and are working very effectively.

The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and the implementation of the literacy hour have been very successful, and are now firmly embedded in the school's curriculum. The teachers have clear ideas of the most effective ways of teaching the various elements. There is an appropriate balance between guided reading and guided writing which is being used more extensively across other areas of the curriculum. Very good teaching is helping to ensure that the pupils make good progress as their reading and writing skills are further developed.

A particular feature of the school's work is the very good development of speaking and listening skills across all age groups, which enables all pupils to take an effective part in their lessons. The majority of pupils make good progress throughout the school. A range of activities, including school productions and assemblies involving drama and verse speaking, enhances speaking skills. In lessons, the pupils listen well. This was evident, for example, when pupils in Year 1 listened to 'The Crocodile Story', and then responded with very sensible opinions and suggestions about the moral of the tale. By the end of the key stage, Year 2 pupils demonstrate confidence in their responses and are able to explain their ideas well. Many pupils in Key Stage 1 show good reading skills and a good understanding of the stories they read. When reading they use letter sounds and consonant blends to find the meanings of unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils are able to use the context of words in a story to gain understanding while others often use picture clues. In their group reading sessions, they listen well and are eager to offer their ideas and opinions about the text.

The attainment of seven-year olds in writing often matches that of their reading. By the end of the key stage the majority of pupils can write in a clearly formed, joined script. However, the handwriting of lower attaining groups of pupils lacks this accuracy of formation. Nevertheless, all pupils show a pride in their work and are willing to talk about what they are doing. The higher attaining pupils have established a confidence in the correct use of basic punctuation.

As the pupils move through Key Stage 2, they demonstrate an increasing quality in their speaking and listening skills. They are attentive to their teachers and respond well to their questioning. They offer ideas and opinions and show a willingness to listen to what others have to say. This was evident, for instance, in a Year 6 lesson when the pupils were using a range of non-fiction texts to explore report writing. By the age of eleven, the pupils' reading is above average for their age. The higher attaining pupils understand and enjoy a wide range of texts and read fluently and with expression. The majority of pupils are able to discuss the plot and storyline of a book and have a range of favourite authors. However, more could be done to extend the use of non-fiction books for research skills. Through their poetry work particularly, many are able to demonstrate an increasing awareness of the use of 'condensed' language and how to create a 'mood' with words. A good example of this was seen in the book of autumn poems produced by Year 6 pupils. In their writing, the pupils across the key stage are learning to adapt their style to their readership. This was evident in the books written by older pupils for Year 1 and reception class children. The pupils become more adept at the use of dictionaries to improve their spelling. For instance, the pupils in a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class showed a clear understanding of verbs, adjectives and sentence construction. The majority of pupils show a good understanding of the use of basic punctuation, but the work of higher attaining pupils is also characterised by a greater fluency in style and better sentence structure. The writing of most pupils is accurately formed and consistent in size. However, the lower attaining pupils' writing often lacks consistency in positioning on the lines of the paper, which leads to an appearance of untidiness.

The use of information technology is under-developed by the school at the present time due to the age and unreliability of current resources. Good use is made of the range of reading books to match books to the ages and abilities of pupils extend their reading skills. Some use is made of non-fiction resources in the library, but this remains an area of improvement for the school

In the lessons seen the overall quality of teaching of English was very good with half of them being very good or better. All teachers demonstrate a very secure knowledge of the subject, which is used particularly effectively in the questioning of pupils. They are careful to target their questioning to the age and ability of the pupils so that all are able to be a part of the lesson and achieve success. This is significant in the way it raises the self-esteem of the pupils and gives them confidence. The lessons are always well planned and resourced which enables all groups of pupils to know what is expected of them and settle quickly to their tasks. This helps to maintain a good

pace, which is such a noticeable feature of the best lessons seen. Another feature of such lessons is the high expectations that teachers have of pupils' efforts and behaviour. Good class management encourages all pupils to think about what they are doing. Another notable characteristic is the very good use made of support staff to assist the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs. They work very closely with the class teachers and are well briefed about the learning objectives of the lesson, thus enabling their pupils to make good progress. The good level of marking, which is consistent across the school, advances the pupils' progress in their written work. The good guidance the pupils receive as to the next stage of their learning and how they can improve helps to motivate them further.

Overall, the standard of behaviour of all pupils across the school is very good. They are interested in the activities their teachers provide and respond with an enthusiasm for learning. Their pace of working is very good and the levels of concentration and effort are impressive in all age groups. They take great pride in their work and are eager to talk about what they are doing. At the same time, they are quick to celebrate the success of other pupils and work well together when required to do so.

The English coordinator along with the head teacher and all other staff in the school have worked hard to develop English as an area of strength in the school.

MATHEMATICS

The pupils' standards are above the national average at the end of both key stages. This is confirmed by the results of the national assessment tests and also by the inspection evidence.

In the national assessment tests for 1999 the proportion of the pupils that reached the expected level 2 or above was close to the national average and a similar proportion exceeded this standard to reach level 3. In the unconfirmed results for the national assessment tests of 2000, the proportion of the pupils that reached level 2 or above had improved significantly. All pupils reached level 2 and many exceeded this expected level.

By the time the pupils are seven most have a sound understanding and knowledge of numbers up to 20. They can add and subtract mentally up to and beyond 20, and most are beginning to develop an understanding of place value of numbers up to 1000. They can use correct mathematical names for two and three-dimensional shapes and can describe their properties in terms of the number of sides, corners and edges. All pupils are making good progress and now reach higher standards than were observed at the time of the last inspection.

This good progress continues throughout Key Stage 2 where the pace of work and the very good levels of the pupils' concentration ensure that the standards they reach by the end of the key stage are above average. This is an improvement upon the last inspection when the progress was judged to be satisfactory. Although the number of pupils in the cohorts for 1999 and 2000 were extremely small and comparisons with the national average are unreliable, all pupils achieved level 4 in the national assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 2, and 5 out of 7 did so in the tests for 2000.

Comparisons with similar types of schools at the end of both key stages are totally unreliable. This is firstly because of the small cohorts of children and secondly the figures for school meals are not inapplicable because the school does not provide meals.

By the time they leave the school at the age of eleven they have made good progress. They have a secure understanding of the operations of numbers in thousands, can calculate using decimals and fractions and accurately solve mental mathematic problems. The application of mathematics is also being increasingly well developed throughout Key Stage 2. The mental calculation sessions help significantly with this and pupils were observed explaining their methods of working out a problem. This is a significant development since the last inspection when the pupils had 'insufficient opportunity for investigative work using mathematical knowledge and understanding'. Most pupils reach levels of understanding that are above the national average in the use of measures and shape, can draw pie charts using degrees and create accurate line and bar graphs, sometime using the computers.

The teaching of mathematics is very good overall. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when the quality of the teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Consequently, this is having a beneficial effect on the pupils' standards of work and on their attitudes towards mathematics. They were observed talking enthusiastically during and after lessons about their discoveries.

The national numeracy strategy is now firmly established and the co-ordinator has organised demonstration lessons to help all teachers and the learning support assistants to improve their teaching methods.

Consequently, the staff devises innovative and imaginative activities that inspire the pupils. They have an enthusiasm for mathematics and respond very well in all lessons sustaining concentration and maintaining a very good pace to their work.

The teachers' planning is detailed and includes assessment routines that are used very effectively to promote the next stage of learning. For example, the pupils in Year 2 were challenged appropriately when a label for an amount of money up to 30 pence was fixed to their backs. They had to ask each other questions such as "*Is it less than --- Is it a 2 digit number, --- Is it a 2 coin amount?*" The enthusiasm for this activity was very evident and most pupils could formulate a relevant question to ask their friends.

When the classes comprise more than one age group, the teachers plan activities very effectively to take into consideration the varying levels of prior learning. Many opportunities are planned to reinforce understanding and to extend learning to a greater depth. In a lesson at Key Stage 2 that involved three age groups, the teaching was very brisk and made good use of pencil and paper activities and a well-organised session of turning and jumping in the hall. By the end of the lesson, all the pupils had a very secure knowledge of 45 and 90 degree turns and could explain $\frac{1}{2}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ turns accurately.

The progress made by the pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Their very positive attitudes are a direct result of the high expectations of the teachers and the learning support assistants. Many opportunities are given throughout the school to include numeracy in the activities of other subjects. For example, time lines are used in history, rotation and turns are used in physical education and measuring is used in science.

The co-ordinator is fulfilling her role effectively. She monitors the teachers' plans and has watched individual lessons and given a feedback to the teachers to discuss strengths and weaknesses of their teaching and classroom management. This is good practice. It has developed openness, throughout the school, which has improved the quality of the teaching, and raised the standards of the pupils' work since the last inspection at both key stages. .

SCIENCE

The pupils' standards in science at the end of both key stages are above the national average. This is confirmed in the inspection evidence for all year groups, the teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 and the national assessment test results at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 and 2000.

At the end of Key Stage 2 for the past 2 years all pupils have reached the expected level 4. This is very high compared with schools of a similar type and with the national average, but no pupil exceeded this level to reach level 5 and in this regard the result is very low. At the end of Key Stage 1 the results of the teachers' assessments show that all pupils reached the expected level 2.

At both key stages the pupils' standards have improved significantly since the last inspection report when they were judged to be broadly average.

By the time the pupils are seven years of age, almost all have secure knowledge and understanding of their senses and of the need for the safe use of medicines. They also appreciate the need for them to eat a balanced diet of healthy food. They know that light may come from different sources and that materials have various properties. They know, for example that they can be transparent and opaque, and that they can be stretched twisted and squashed. They have a sound knowledge of the forces of push and pull. They are developing good skills when carrying out experiments and understand the need for a fair test.

By the time the pupils are eleven, they have covered all aspects of the curriculum for science and have revised themes twice in the key stage to ensure that each one can build upon their previously learned skills, knowledge and understanding. During the inspection, the pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 were observed exploring the theme 'Night and Day' and by the end of the lesson all had a good understanding of the causes and effects of the phases of the moon. They know that the moon is only visible because it reflects the light from the sun to our eyes. They can carry research and follow instructions effectively when investigating and know the requirements of a 'fair test'. They record their findings very neatly and carefully in words, diagrams and tables and sometime use the computer to help with this process.

The quality of teaching is good throughout Key Stage 1 and often very good at Key Stage 2. The teachers' plans are comprehensive and are based effectively upon the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000. The plans

identify the skills, knowledge and understanding the teachers intend to teach. In many instances, these objectives are made known to the pupils and are written on the board. This serves as a continual reminder to the pupils and aids the assessments carried out by the teacher at the end of the lesson. The teachers use very good questioning techniques to encourage the pupils to think more deeply about their experiments, their predictions and conclusions. For example, the Year 1 pupils were asked to consider and to explain what might happen when water is added to corn flour. The Year 6 pupils understand the high expectations of the teacher and respond with sustained concentration. They are developing an excellent attitude towards science and work hard together in group activities. These good attitudes to science are developed well at Key Stage 1 and are continued very effectively throughout Key Stage 2.

Through their science work, the pupils extend their literacy and numeracy skills well. For instance, they are developing an appropriate scientific vocabulary. They learn, understand and use terms such as 'waxing, waning, crescent and gibbous' when studying the phases of the moon. Similar development and application of their numeracy skills is also evident. The pupils in Year 1, for example, were observed measuring accurately 150ml of water to mix with corn flour.

The co-ordinator has established very good procedures for monitoring the quality of the teaching throughout the school and for assessing the progress made by pupils in the subject by inspecting a sample of work each week. These samples are checked against the requirements of the curriculum for science and a feedback is made to the teacher and the pupils. This is a good procedure to follow as it raises awareness of the curriculum requirements and the need to continually raise the quality of the pupils' work. The resources for science are satisfactory with the exception of the availability of information technology to explore modelling and monitoring so that the pupils can experiment, set hypotheses and draw conclusion by changing variables in their investigations.

ART and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Due to timetabling, there were limited opportunities to observe lessons in either of these subjects during the course of the inspection. It was not possible to see any teaching of design and technology but one art lesson in Key Stage 2 was seen. However, from this lesson, a scrutiny of previous work, discussions with staff and pupils and information from the teachers' planning, it is possible to judge that pupils are making good progress in both subjects. This is better than reported at the time of the last inspection.

In design and technology, the pupils in both key stages experience an appropriate range of materials and media, which help to develop their skills in shaping, cutting and construction. This was clearly seen in a lesson in the reception class where children under five received clear instruction in how to cut and shape figures of a Gingerbread Man. In food technology, the pupils have been designing and making their own fruit salads, using construction kits to make buildings and shapes, and older pupils have made models with moving parts. A visit to Peterborough Cathedral was the inspiration for making figureheads in clay.

The work in art and design is planned to give all pupils experience of a range of media and materials, which help to develop their sense of how the world can be represented. Younger pupils have made careful observational drawings of cross-sections of fruits and vegetables using crayon and paint. This is related to their design and technology topic. The pupils in Key Stage 2 make use of sketchbooks to refine their ideas before combining in small groups to produce very effective pictures of grouped figures on the theme of "*Relationships*". In the art lesson observed, the pupils made good use of their own ideas and their previous knowledge of contrasting colours when working collaboratively to produce some very effective pictures of. The older pupils have been studying the techniques of painters such as Matisse and Cezanne and used this well in their own still life pictures. Some pupils worked with partners to produce some very striking pictures using their knowledge of colour shades, tints and tones.

There is insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching but in the one lesson seen, the quality of the teaching was good. A study of the teachers' planning in both subjects, however, suggests that teaching is often good. The current curriculum is planned effectively by the co-ordinator to address all the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000 and to ensure the progressive development of skills in both subjects. For instance, she is preparing lists of skills for art and design to be taught to each year group. All pupils respond well to both subjects and take great pride in their performance. The resources are generally good and used effectively to promote the teaching and learning of the subjects across the school.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

During the inspection no lessons in geography were seen and only two history lessons were observed. However, from talking to staff and pupils, a scrutiny of previous work, current displays, and a study of teachers' planning, it is possible to make the following judgements.

The quality of pupils' work in both subjects is broadly in line with those expected for pupils of a similar age. This is similar to the quality of pupils' work seen during the last inspection. The majority of pupils are making good progress through the two-year cycle of topics that provides adequate coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum in both subjects. A good range of educational visits and visitors to school helps to support the pupils' developing geographical and historical skills.

In history, a sense of chronology is already covered in the reception class where children under five and Year 1 pupils have made a photo collage, 'Our Families', showing their own development since birth. A lesson in a mixed Year 3 and Year 4 class on the Vikings extended the pupils knowledge and understanding of the importance of the longships in the story of their explorations. There was photographic evidence of a visit by a 'Viking' to school, complete with sword and shield, which acted as an impetus to pupils writing. Older pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are studying the role of great explorers and have produced booklets of aspects of life on ships. They have used the Internet for research purposes and information technology has been used to good effect in some report writing. As part of this topic, they are currently linking their work very effectively to physical education through dance and movement to music.

The geographical knowledge of all pupils in the school is considerably enhanced by a series of well-planned visits. Older pupils have a residential visit to places such as the Peak District and the Isle of Wight to study contrasting localities to their own. They visit local villages and a country park. Year 3 pupils have a residential visit to Newton Field Study Centre where they undertake a number of outdoor activities. Their historical knowledge is enhanced through visits to such places as Sulgrave Manor and Kirby Hall. The pupils' appreciation of their own environment is developed through the very good links the school enjoys with the village and many opportunities are taken to involve pupils in village life.

In both lessons seen in history the quality of teaching was good. Both teachers displayed a secure knowledge of the subject. However, there was insufficient evidence to make a secure overall judgement of the quality of the teaching in either history or geography. From a study of the teachers' planning and by talking to the pupils it is apparent that all pupils experience a wide range of opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding in both subjects. The curriculum is planned well by the co-ordinator in both subjects and it fully meets all the requirements of the new Curriculum 2000. She monitors samples of the pupils' work to maintain a thorough understanding of how well the subjects are being taught and how this is influencing the quality of the pupils' work. The resources for both subjects are satisfactory and are being used effectively to support the teaching and learning of all pupils across the school.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

A

The standards reached by the pupils at the end of both key stages are below the expected levels for their ages. **(This is a key issue for action.)** Although most have acquired simple word processing skills by the time they are eleven, other skills in the use of information technology such as modelling, monitoring and handling data have not been developed to the expected level. The standards now reached are not as good as those reported at the last inspection.

The development of the pupils' skills is constrained by the inadequacy and disposition in the school of the current equipment. There are three reliable computers in the staff room but these are not networked together and are not linked to the Internet. The school was not very successful with its first bid to improve the provision for information technology under the National Grid for Learning (NGfL) grant. One computer was obtained and was placed in the main building, but the Internet connection was linked to the other building some one hundred metres away.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory and the teachers plan effectively to cover as much of the curriculum for information technology as they can achieve with the computers available. Despite the shortcomings of the equipment, the computers are in continual use and the pupils work under the guidance of skilful and committed learning support assistants. However, only a small number of pupils can use them at one time. This restricts their development and the pupils have too few opportunities to learn and practice new skills. Consequently, the use of information technology to support other subjects is weak.

During the inspection, the Year 6 pupils were observed recording their science work on six laptop computers which the school had borrowed for a month. They employed various styles and sizes of fonts and made an attempt to include tables in their work. Some of the Year 6 pupils were also observed using the Internet to research a history theme. In both of these activities, it was evident that the skills that the pupils acquire mainly at home are above the expected levels for their age of eleven.

The school has comprehensive plans for the development of information technology and has just received a grant to improve significantly the resources and provision it makes for the subject. The teachers have also embarked upon an information and communications technology, (ICT) training course under the National Opportunities Funding for the use of computers to support other subjects. Consequently, the future developments of information technology in the school appear to be more promising.

MUSIC

The music teacher has a very secure knowledge and is a very skilful musician. Her plans show that wide ranging musical experiences are offered throughout the school. As a result, the pupils enjoy their making music. This is achieved through performing, composing and listening to music of different types and from various cultures.

The standards reached by the end of both key stages are broadly in line with expected levels for pupils of this age. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. However, the strength of the music is the very good quality of the pupils' singing. This was demonstrated very well in assemblies and in the lessons observed. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The pupils can sing perfectly in tune and with clarity when performing two- part songs in assemblies. They listen attentively when taught phrases of new songs so that they quickly perform to a good standard. For example, the teacher sang, "Steal away", very sensitively and the pupils responded very well, paying particular attention to the expression and phrasing of the words. They quickly learned the new song and were able to sing most of it from memory by the end of the assembly.

The very good quality of teaching also inspired Year 3 pupils in their music lesson. They read a simple notation score from the board and were able to play non-tuned percussion instruments in time and with co-operation with each other whilst singing the songs. The quality of the teaching is very good overall. The pace of the lessons is brisk. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and is technically excellent. She ensures that all pupils are involved fully in playing instruments and in singing. Consequently, all the pupils make very good progress in the lessons and assemblies. The pupils leave these lessons with growing confidence, a sense of enjoyment and achievement in their developing musical skills.

The part time co-ordinator gives many hours beyond her contracted time. Her enthusiasm is reflected in the very good behaviour of the pupils and in their enjoyment of singing and making music. The management of the subject is good and the resources are a very good quality.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

During the inspection only one lesson in Key Stage 1 and two lessons in Key Stage 2 were seen. From these observations, a study of the teachers' planning and discussions with staff it is possible to say that pupils are making good progress in all aspects of the subject and the quality of their work is above the expected levels for their ages. This is an improvement upon the reported standards at the time of the last inspection. Although no swimming was observed during the inspection, all pupils leave the school achieving the requirements for this aspect of physical education.

The youngest children in Key Stage 1 are achieving satisfactory standards in movement and enjoy mimicking the movements of their teacher, which they incorporate into their own sequences. The oldest pupils in this key stage were seen demonstrating a good sense of balance and how to transfer their weight in movements. They responded well to the challenges of their teacher and showed a good understanding of the effects of exercise on their bodies. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 have good skills in throwing and catching. An excellent lesson in Year 5/ 6 demonstrated the high levels that the pupils are able to achieve in a movement to music lesson. All lessons were characterised by the full, eager involvement of the pupils and their willingness to improve their performance.

In all the lessons seen, the quality of teaching was very good overall. The teachers show a clear understanding of the requirements of the subject and provide challenging and inspiring activities for their pupils. The lessons are well planned and well resourced so that all pupils are able to participate fully. They build on the very good relationships between teachers and pupils, which motivates and encourages all pupils to give of their best. The

pupils are encouraged to assess their performance and think about how it might be improved. All this helps to generate good pace and progress in the pupils' learning.

The accommodation for the teaching and learning of physical education varies in its suitability. The hall provides a good facility for indoor physical education and good use is made of this space for gymnastics and movement. In some cases, the outside playground areas are small for the numbers of pupils involved and the grass field for games is a distance away from the school itself. The resources are generally good and the school makes good use of schemes such as 'Top Sport' to enhance its provision.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At the end of both key stages the pupils' quality of work is above the expected standards of the locally agreed syllabus. This is similar to the standards reported in the last inspection.

At Key Stage 1, the pupils can name the parts of a church and relate these to the different festivals and ceremonies. For example, they know that the font is used by the vicar for baptisms. They also have a sound knowledge of stories from the old and the new testaments. They recently visited Peterborough cathedral and can make comparisons with their local church of St Andrew. They understand that these are special places for Christians. They linked their learning about the church and the cathedral to their work on senses in science and literacy. For example, "*the smell of the candles, --- the sight of the stained glass windows*", were featured in their prayers and poems. During the week of the inspection some Year 2 pupils read these clearly and with expression in an assembly. The pupils also have some simple knowledge of festivals and celebrations of other world religions, such as the festival of Diwali and are acquainted with the 'Torah'.

The pupils' exploration of other world faiths is extended very effectively throughout Key Stage 2 with research into Sikhism, Judaism, Hinduism and, Christianity. The Year 3 pupils were observed analysing the accounts in the four Gospels of Jesus rising from the dead. Through probing questions the teacher enabled the pupils to draw out the differences between the four accounts. The pupils made note of who was present at the tomb and what they said. As a result, they can retell the stories and talk about the differences in the four versions of the event. The Year 6 pupils have an extensive knowledge of Sikhism. They know about the Holy Book, the 'Guru Granth Sahib', and can explain how it was written. They can also relate the life histories of the Ten Gurus. Their knowledge of the Bible is also well developed and during the lesson observed they were able to make comparisons between stories in Judaism and Christianity with authority. The pupils are given many opportunities to discuss their knowledge and understanding of different religions. The older pupils are actively involved in research about religious artefacts, and the stories and lives of other people who have different beliefs.

The quality of teaching is very good. The progress made by all the pupils is good overall, but it is most rapid progress at the end of Key Stage 2. All the teachers have very secure knowledge and understanding of the various faiths. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. It considerably benefits the pupils' learning and engenders very positive attitudes towards religious education. They have a strong realisation that all world religions require their respect. They all enjoy religious education, sustain concentration during lessons and the pace of their work is good. The teachers' are basing their planning appropriately on the locally agreed syllabus and are succeeding in developing imaginative approaches to make the subject interesting. They handle the pupils' questions skilfully and give straightforward and clear answers.

Religious education contributes effectively towards the pupils' development of speaking and listening skills and also to their spiritual awareness. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and works effectively with the Key Stage 2 teacher to plan and prepare the topics and themes. She monitors the pupils' work with a focus upon what the pupils know of The Bible and other people's faiths. Assessment records are in the early stages of development but the co-ordinator recognises that these records will be difficult to devise, as the skills acquired by the pupils are not easy to test. Nevertheless she is making steady progress in devising suitable assessment strategies for each topic.