

INSPECTION REPORT

SPRATTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121991

Headteacher: Mrs B Gascoin

Reporting inspector: John Messer
15477

Dates of inspection: 20-23 November 2000

Inspection number: 225035
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4-11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Spratton Northampton
Postcode:	NN6 8HY
Telephone number:	01604 846530
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Revd. Brian Lee
Date of previous inspection:	January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Messer (Ofsted No 15477)	Registered inspector	English Information and Communication Technology Art and Design Design and Technology Geography French Physical Education Special Educational Needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) the school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? How well is the school led and managed?
John Baker (Ofsted No 9770)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Vincent Leary (Ofsted No 23319)	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics Science History Music Religious Education Equal Opportunities	How good are curricular and other opportunities?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This village primary school has 109 pupils on roll and is smaller than most primary schools. The pupils are aged between four and eleven years old and are taught in five classes in the mornings and four in the afternoon sessions. All are from white, English speaking backgrounds and most come from relatively advantaged homes. Around fifteen per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs which is broadly in line with the national average. Five per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals which is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry to the school is above average, though the full range of ability is represented. The school is significantly larger than at the time of the last inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school where the sound teaching promotes satisfactory progress in most subjects. Good foundations are laid in the class for the youngest children where the basics are taught well. By the age of seven most pupils attain standards in reading and writing that exceed national expectations and standards in mathematics and science that are in line with national expectations. By the time they leave the school at the age of eleven pupils attain high standards in English, and this is a particular strength of the school. Standards in mathematics are in line with national expectations of eleven-year-olds but are not as high as they could be. In science nearly all pupils attain average standards but too few attain standards that are above average. The headteacher provides clear educational direction for the work of the school and governors give sound support. The school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching of English is a strength of the school and as a result by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain standards that exceed national expectations of seven and eleven-year-olds.
- Good foundations for future learning are laid in the class for the youngest children where basic skills are taught well.
- Most pupils are articulate and self-assured and this helps them to adopt a confident approach to their learning.
- Relationships throughout the school are good and this contributes to effective learning.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and their behaviour is mostly good.
- Learning support assistants make a major contribution to the quality of education provided, especially the good provision made for pupils with special educational needs.

What could be improved

- Across the school standards in mathematics and science are not high enough mainly because the more able pupils are not stretched.
- Teaching is not evaluated systematically against clear criteria and this contributes to inconsistencies in quality.
- Computers are not used enough to support teaching and learning across the curriculum.
- Skills, knowledge and understanding in art are not taught systematically.
- Expectations of pupils' performance are not always high enough which leads to a degree of under-achievement.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the school was last inspected in January 1997 improvements have been made though several of the key issues raised at that time have not been fully resolved. In most classes higher-attaining pupils are provided with work which is sufficiently hard for them but this is not always the case, especially in mathematics and science. Across the school standards in English, especially writing, have improved, though the standards eleven-year-old pupils attain in science have declined. Standards in art are not as good as reported at the time of the last inspection. The resources for supporting teaching and learning in information and communication technology have improved significantly and standards meet national

expectations. At the time of the last inspection standards were described as above average but since 1997 expectations of pupils' attainment in this subject have increased. Teachers' planning has improved and includes appropriate objectives for each lesson. Inconsistencies in the quality of teaching remain, however, and teachers do not always insist on high standards of work from pupils. The long-term curricular plans for most subjects are good and promote progression in learning though this is not the case in art. Procedures for marking work and recording pupils' progress have improved and are now satisfactory in most subjects. The school development plan now focuses more closely on raising standards. The quality of teaching has improved; there is now less unsatisfactory teaching and more very good teaching. Inspection findings show that overall the level of improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

This table shows that, when compared with all schools, the performance of eleven-year-olds in National Curriculum tests in 2000 was well above average in English, above average in mathematics and below average in science. When compared with similar schools, the school's performance was still well above average in English, though average in mathematics and well below average in science. The school's National Curriculum test and assessment results for seven-year-olds in 2000 were very high in reading writing, mathematics and science when compared with all schools. This is an exceptional year group and attainment by these pupils was among the highest five per cent nationally. The standards as measured by National Curriculum tests vary according to the characteristics of each year group that takes the tests. In a small school a slight fluctuation in the proportions of higher or lower-attaining pupils in a year group causes significant swings in the school's results. The current Year 3 group, for example, has an exceptionally large proportion of very able pupils though a more normal spread of distribution occurs in other year groups. Until 1999 the upward trend in the school's results was in line with the improving trend nationally but the relatively poor results in science in 2000 has resulted in the school's rate of improvement falling below the national rate. The school exceeded the modest targets of 77 per cent of pupils expected to attain the national target of Level 4 in English and mathematics in the tests for eleven-year-olds. Standards exceed national expectations in English and meet expectations in mathematics and science. There is, however, scope for further improvement in the standards attained by the more able pupils in mathematics and science. Satisfactory standards are attained in information and communication technology. Standards in religious education meet the expectations defined in the locally agreed syllabus. Particularly good work was seen in writing across the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to learning which enhances their attainment and progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is generally good in and around the school and this supports effective learning
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and pupils work well together in groups. Their personal development is fostered well.
Attendance	Very good; pupils enjoy coming to school and lessons start punctually.

The school is relatively small and teachers know pupils well. This contributes to good relationships, a strong sense of teamwork and to the family atmosphere that pervades.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is at least satisfactory in 91 per cent of lessons; it is good in 41 per cent and very good in 14 per cent. Teaching is unsatisfactory in 9 per cent of lessons. Teaching is especially good where teachers have good knowledge of the subject, as in English which is taught well. Teaching is less successful where teachers lack subject knowledge, as in science. Teaching is effective where high expectations of pupils' performance are maintained and again this contributes to the good teaching in English. In mathematics and science expectations of pupils, particularly the higher attainers, are often too low. Art is not taught systematically and skills are not developed progressively. Literacy is taught well and pupils use their well developed reading and writing skills effectively in other areas of the curriculum such as history. Numeracy is taught satisfactorily but the skills learned are not used systematically in other areas, such as science or design and technology where opportunities to record data or measure accurately are missed. Pupils who need extra help in learning are supported well and they make good progress. The most able pupils are identified by the school but their particular needs are not always met successfully. Pupils learn effectively when they are provided with appropriate challenges. Learning is less effective when tasks do not stretch pupils' capabilities.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is mostly broad and balanced though art is given insufficient attention.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good provision is made. Pupils who need extra help are identified early and are given appropriate support. The learning support assistant makes a major contribution to the good progress which these pupils make.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good provision is made. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and for their spiritual and cultural development it is mostly satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A caring ethos has been established. Assessment of pupils' development is satisfactory.

The requirements of the National Curriculum are met in all subjects except art where the statutory programmes of study are not taught in sufficient depth. The curriculum for physical education is restricted by the small size of the hall which makes teaching and learning difficult, especially for the oldest pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Sound leadership is provided by the headteacher and her deputy who work in close association.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are closely involved with the school and give sound support.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school analyses its performance satisfactorily, especially in the core subjects of the National Curriculum.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are generally used well but computers in classrooms are not used enough to support teaching and learning.

Adequate levels of staffing are maintained and the imaginative deployment of staff makes good use of the personnel available. Accommodation and learning resources are adequate though the hall is too small when classes are forced to have games indoors because the field is unusable due to wet weather and it is too wet to walk to the village recreation ground. All spending decisions are taken after due consideration and the school applies the principles of best value in using its allocations.

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 school expects children to work hard and to do their best. Children like coming to school. Children make good progress. The teaching is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of homework. Information about children's progress. The school's working partnership with parents. The range of activities outside lessons.

Inspectors largely agree with parents' positive comments. Inspection findings show that an adequate range of after-school activities are provided and that parents are given satisfactory amount of information about their children's progress. A suitable amount of homework is set and this has a marked impact on reinforcing and extending pupils' learning. The school fosters a close working partnership with parents which supports pupils' learning effectively.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

THE SCHOOL'S RESULTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. Most children enter the class for the youngest children with achievements that are generally above expectations for their age. They make good progress and all are on course to attain the nationally defined early learning goals in the nationally recommended areas of learning before they reach the age of five. The youngest children make rapid gains in confidence and by the time they are five they have well developed language skills. They speak fluently and talk about their work sensibly. They have a clear understanding of how letters make words and how words can be built to make sentences. They write their names clearly. Many recognise short words and read simple books well. They enjoy singing and acting out number songs and they count accurately to at least twenty. They manipulate tools, such as brushes and pencils, with increasing precision and they run fast in the playground without knocking into others. Their physical development is satisfactory and they have good opportunities to manoeuvre wheeled vehicles around the open air play area. The under fives have an acute awareness of the world around them and their learning is effective because they are eager to find out about things and because they are provided with a purposeful learning environment.
2. Inspection findings show that by the age of seven, pupils' attainment exceeds national expectations in reading and writing. Pupils reach standards which are in line with national expectations in all other subjects except art where standards are not as high as they should be, and music where there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards. Standards in religious education meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Nearly all pupils read fluently and most are developing good research skills both when using reference books and when using computers. They are beginning to learn their multiplication tables and are gaining confidence in arithmetic. They can see patterns in sequences of numbers and are developing a good grounding in mathematics. They know about the major organs of the body and understand which food is healthy and which should be eaten in moderation. They have little knowledge of a range of artists and skills in art are under developed. They understand how to exercise safely but gymnastics skills have not been taught to a sufficiently high standard. They sing well in unison.
3. The latest National Curriculum tests and assessments for seven-year-olds are not entirely consistent with inspection findings. The school's results in 2000 were exceptionally high. Pupils' performance in reading, writing, mathematics and science, when compared with all schools, were all very high and represented attainment that only five per cent of schools nationally attain. When compared with schools who have pupils from similar backgrounds, the school's performance was still very high in writing and science and was well above the national average in reading and mathematics. The standards of work currently produced by seven-year-olds is closer to the average standards that the seven-year-olds in 1999 attained in the national tests. Over the past five years the school has maintained standards in reading and writing that have exceeded national averages. In mathematics they exceeded national averages in every year since 1996 except 1998 when the school's performance dropped to a standard that was below average. Since 1998 the trend in the performance of seven-year-olds has been upward in reading, writing and mathematics. An analysis of results over the past three years shows that girls perform better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is aware of this though no particular reason is apparent. There was no discernible difference in the performance of boys and girls in the lessons seen.
4. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000, the school's performance was well above average in English both when compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools. In mathematics it was above average when compared with all schools though average when compared with similar schools. In science the school's performance was below average when compared with all schools and well below average when compared with similar schools. An analysis of results shows that the results in science, and to a lesser extent in mathematics,

were lower than they should be because too few pupils exceed the national target of Level 4 and attained the higher Level 5 standard. In English the proportion of pupils who attain Level 5 was more than twice the proportion who attained this level nationally in 2000. Inspection findings are largely consistent with the test results. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 6, pupils attain standards which are well above national expectations in English. In mathematics, science and all other subjects, except art and music, standards meet national expectations. Given pupils' prior levels of attainment standards should be higher in science and mathematics. Standards in art are not as high as they should be and in music there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about standards. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Until 1999 the upward trend in the school's results was in line with the improving trend nationally but the relatively poor results in science in 2000 has resulted in the school's rate of improvement falling below the national rate. The school exceeded the modest targets of 77 per cent of pupils expected to attain the national target of Level 4 in English and mathematics in the tests for eleven-year-olds. Pupils with special educational needs make mostly good progress and attain satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. The most able pupils are not always sufficiently stretched and this leads to a degree of under-achievement.

5. Across the school pupils are eager to learn and rise to challenges set. They learn rapidly in the class for the youngest pupils where expectations are appropriate. Learning continues to be effective and pupils make sound progress through Key Stage 1 though the pace of lessons is not always in tune with pupils' ability to learn rapidly. The quality of learning is mostly good in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds and they make good progress, especially in the classes for the older pupils.
6. By the time they leave school at the age of eleven pupils have developed a wide range of skills associated with literacy. They write at some length both imaginative and factual accounts using a legible joined script and mostly accurate spelling. They use the skills developed in literacy well across different areas of the curriculum, such as writing imaginative accounts of times past in history and recording results of investigations in science. They use their ability well to measure accurately when cooking and when recording data from traffic surveys in geography. There are, however, instances where the teaching of skills is unrelated to real life situations and the reasons for learning skills and their possible applications are not made explicit. In such situations opportunities are missed to give greater purpose to learning. Pupils are very well prepared to continue their education in the secondary phase.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. Nearly all like school, are eager to attend and take part enthusiastically in all aspects of school life. Their attitudes to learning are good overall which enhances their attainment and progress. The vast majority is attentive, responds well to questions, undertakes tasks enthusiastically and enjoys lessons. For example, in a Year 5/6 science lesson, pupils thoroughly enjoyed practical work involving weighing objects in air and water in order to note the differences and to explain them.
8. Behaviour is good overall throughout the school and sometimes very good in lessons. Pupils are aware of the high standards expected and respond well to discipline which creates an orderly environment conducive to learning. All play harmoniously together in the playground. They are very lively and active with older pupils playing football and younger ones playing chasing games. There were no signs of aggressive behaviour or any forms of oppressive behaviour anywhere in the school and there have been no exclusions in the past year. Pupils are very friendly, courteous and polite to adults and show respect for other people's property and the school. They talked to a visitor who joined them for lunch, for example, and, although very keen to express their views, they waited politely for their turn to speak.
9. Pupils' personal development is good; they mature as they progress through the school and willingly take on increasing responsibility. For example, younger pupils tidy up after themselves and older pupils undertake whole school responsibilities such as preparing the hall for

assembly, preparing drinks for the infants and tending the garden. Pupils use their initiative well in organising activities to raise money to stock the school garden and for charity. For example they approached local shops for prizes for a colouring competition they were organising for 'Children in Need'.

10. Relationships between pupils are good. They work well together in the classroom when in pairs or groups and play together harmoniously. Relationships between pupils and staff are also good and pupils are secure and confident in their relationships with other adults. Pupils care for others and have a good awareness of others' needs and raise considerable funds for charity.
11. Pupils have a very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others. For example, in an assembly on the theme of 'Promises', pupils clearly understood the importance of keeping promises and its impact on friendships. They also listened attentively to the words of the song, 'Bridge Over Troubled Waters' which further developed their understanding of friendship and helping others.
12. Levels of attendance are very good, with no unauthorised absences and virtually all pupils arrive punctually. These factors contribute positively to standards achieved. Registration is carried out in accordance with statutory requirements. Since the last inspection good attitudes to school, good behaviour, good personal development and very good attendance have all been maintained.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. Throughout the school most of the teaching is good. Well over an eighth of teaching is very good, two fifths is good and just over a third is satisfactory. Teaching is, however, unsatisfactory in nearly a tenth of lessons. Teaching for the youngest pupils is good. Teaching in the classes for five to seven-year-olds is mostly satisfactory and in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds it is mostly good and often very good.
14. Teaching in the early years is good. Teachers have a very secure knowledge of how young children learn and develop, resulting in carefully planned learning activities that build on what the children already know and then challenge and extend their learning. Children's progress is monitored by regular assessment, which is used to help teachers in planning future lessons. Activities are well organised to promote communication, language, literacy and mathematical development. There is generally a good balance of activities led by the teacher and those initiated by the pupils. Staff provide effective support for all activities, interacting with individuals and groups to check and extend children's understanding. Praise and encouragement are highly effective in promoting positive behaviour. Teamwork is of a high quality and staff work very well together. They are enthusiastic, committed and have high expectations of the children. Parents are actively involved in their children's learning through supporting the very well organised homework tasks. The school has not fully implemented the new curriculum planning framework for the foundation stage which is needed to underpin the current good practice and provide valuable guidance for the teachers of children in the early years.
15. In the classes for five-to-seven year-olds teaching is sound in all subjects except art, where it is unsatisfactory, and English where it is good. In the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds teaching is very good in English, it is good in design and technology, physical education and French and sound in all other subjects except art. Across the school teaching is unsatisfactory in art, and in music there was insufficient evidence on which to make judgements.
16. Throughout the school relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Pupils feel at ease and feel free to ask questions, discuss ideas or share views. In all classes a serious approach to work is generated. This encourages pupils to strive hard to do their best. Pupils are happy and are eager to please the teachers. The generally good behaviour makes a strong contribution to the quality of pupils' learning. Pupils receive a great deal of praise and encouragement. In all classes teachers are very sensitive to pupils' needs, especially the need to feel successful and be valued. The pace of learning is not always sufficiently brisk in the class for six and seven-

year-olds. In the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds most lessons progress at a brisk pace and opportunities are grasped to reinforce learning by asking challenging questions. Classroom assistants have a positive impact upon the quality of teaching. The support provided in the early years classroom is effective. The learning support assistant responsible for assisting with pupils who have special educational needs and information and communication technology works tirelessly in support of pupils. Her influence has a major impact on the quality of education that the school is able to offer. In a small minority of lessons in both key stages tasks are not well matched to pupils' learning requirements. This is partly because assessment of pupils' prior attainment is imprecise and is not always recorded in a form which enables teachers to see clearly what the next steps in learning should be. It is also partly because expectations of pupils' performance, especially the higher-attaining pupils, are too low. There are also inconsistencies in teachers' daily lesson plans. There are good examples of lesson planning which include the skills, knowledge and understanding to be taught in a lesson, how tasks will be matched to pupils' varying stages of development, how information technology will be used and how learning will be assessed. Teachers do not plan consistently and the quality of planning varies both between and within classes. Some lessons are planned well and others are not. Teaching tends to be more effective when lessons have been planned thoroughly.

17. Homework is used exceptionally well to reinforce and extend learning. Reading books are taken home regularly, pupils learn spellings and number facts at home and are required to complete a set amount of work at home that varies in quantity according to age. Pupils are also challenged to find out information. Homework has a considerable impact upon the standards that pupils attain. Teachers have particularly good subject knowledge in English, and this makes a significant contribution to the high standards attained. Several teachers are less secure in their knowledge of mathematics, science, information technology and music. Time and resources are generally used well but opportunities to use computers to support teaching and learning are often missed. The teaching force is deployed imaginatively so that five relatively small classes can be formed for the morning sessions though four larger groups are formed each afternoon. Several parents had reservations about this system because pupils are taught by more than one class teacher but inspection findings show that it works well and pupils adjust rapidly to the different teachers.
18. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have both been introduced successfully and are now firmly established. Early reading and writing skills are taught well and pupils make rapid progress. Mathematics is taught satisfactorily and pupils are confident in handling numbers. There are some opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in real situations, such as measuring quantities carefully when following the recipe to cook biscuits in Years 5 and 6, but there is scope for extending such opportunities. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and in the classes for seven to eleven year-olds for higher attaining pupils in English who are generally challenged appropriately. There is, however, a lack of sufficient challenge in these classes for the most able pupils in mathematics and science. In a minority of lessons, mainly in the classes for five to seven-year-olds, the pace of learning is too slow for pupils with very high levels of prior attainment. This leads to an element of under achievement. Clearly the mostly good and very good teaching leads to effective learning and enables pupils to make good progress. There is, however, no whole school teaching and learning policy to guide teachers and promote greater consistency in teaching. The quality of teaching is better than at the time of the last inspection when the proportion of very good teaching was not as high and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was higher than it is now.

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

19. The curricular opportunities offered to the pupils are mostly satisfactory. Provision includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, health, sex education and drugs awareness education. The curriculum does not fully meet statutory requirements because part of the programme of study for art is not being taught. Whilst increasing the emphasis on English and mathematics in response to national priorities, the school has maintained broad provision in all other subjects. Time adjustments have been made to the provision in subjects

other than English, mathematics and science, to ensure realistic time allocation for all subjects on the timetable.

20. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory. It is based on the six areas of learning recommended in national guidance for children of this age and is planned to provide a broad and balanced programme. The foundation stage is not, however, clearly identified in planning as a distinct stage of learning for the youngest pupils. At the age of five, children transfer smoothly from the early years curriculum to the programmes of study in the National Curriculum. This is an improvement since the last inspection when planning for some of the under-fives was not always appropriate.
21. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 was broadly satisfactory but weaknesses were apparent in English, science, religious education, information technology, geography, art and design and technology. Policies and schemes of work were not in place for all subjects and planning strategies were poor. These weaknesses have been addressed effectively with the exception of art. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being implemented successfully. The school is now in the process of adopting nationally promoted schemes of work for all National Curriculum subjects except for physical education where they are using the local education authority's guidelines. Teachers' planning is now more consistently and securely based on these strategies and guidelines. Medium and short-term planning is generally good in all subjects and teachers use the same planning format. This promotes a greater consistency of approach, which was lacking at the time of the last inspection, and it is proving effective in enhancing greater continuity in learning. In literacy this is evident across the school in pupils' growing competence in handling a broad range of written texts. In religious education, work is based on the locally agreed syllabus. The daily acts of worship meets statutory requirements and provide sound support for pupils' social, cultural and spiritual development. The school meets together as a family in assemblies where they reflect on important issues. As they enter and leave the hall, they listen to a range of music from different periods and from different cultures which the teachers leading the assemblies explain and interpret. The school has suitable policies for all subjects and there is a programme in place for updating each policy systematically according to a carefully devised cycle.
22. Provision for personal development and health education is satisfactory. There is a sound policy. A special time when the class gets together to consider personal and social issues, called 'Circle Time', often reinforces themes addressed in assemblies and makes a significant contribution to sustaining good behaviour, good relationships and growing personal development.
23. The school is committed to providing equal opportunities for all its pupils and it is successful in its efforts to provide equal access to all curriculum areas. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils who need extra help are identified early and given appropriate support. Good individual education plans are produced for pupils with special educational needs that include clear, precise learning targets. The school has a new revised policy for special educational needs that is implemented well by teachers and learning support staff.
24. Provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and includes recorder groups and country dancing as well as sporting activities such as football, netball and cricket. The school organises a range of visits and visitors to extend and enrich the curriculum. The vicar makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school. Other visitors to the school include the school nurse, the area policeman and fire fighters. Visits are made to such places as the British Museum and the Roman museum at St Alban's. Pupils also explore the local environment to carry out history and geography surveys. Pupils in Year 6 take part in a week of outdoor pursuits and information technology activities at Kingswood Field Study Centre in Norfolk that extends their learning opportunities well.
25. The school has refined and improved its homework practice. Throughout both key stages homework is provided on a regular basis. Parents are also receiving useful information on what their child is currently studying in class. Pupils gain significant benefits from this good practice. Very good links are made with the main receiving high schools. Pupils in Year 6 make visits to

the high schools and appropriate records are passed on. Students from local schools and colleges gain work experience at the school and provide useful assistance.

26. The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The act of collective worship allows pupils to reflect and pray in their own manner, following a biblical, religious or moral theme. For example, throughout the week of inspection, the theme was about promises. Pupils were given the opportunity to reflect on the issue of keeping promises and the affects on family and other pupils when promises are broken. The atmosphere created and hymns chosen allowed the pupils to sing with feeling and sincerity. In lessons, however, spiritual development is less well developed though there are examples of good practice. At the end of the school day, in a Year 5 / 6 class, the teacher took time to ask pupils to reflect on that day, and a pupil led the class with a prayer that the class had written.
27. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school rules are displayed in classrooms and some classes also have their own rules. The pupils are clearly taught right from wrong and show self-discipline in their conduct. They modify their behaviour readily when spoken to by an adult. Staff throughout the school provide pupils with a good example in the way they interact with them and with each other. In assemblies pupils are provided with opportunities to learn and think about positive personal qualities such as acts of kindness and keeping promises.
28. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Good relationships are a strong feature of the school. Achievements in work and behaviour are celebrated weekly in the 'highlight' assemblies. Good opportunities are provided for pupils in both key stages to take on responsibilities that contribute to the smooth running of the school. In all classes there are nominated special helpers who carry out task such as taking the register to the office and delivering messages. Older pupils prepare the hall for assemblies, look after the younger pupils at lunch times and help to organise playtime equipment. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Charity work, such as fundraising for cancer sufferers and the Northampton Night Shelter are a regular feature of school life. The local community are invited to school concerts and the celebration of religious festivals and this helps pupils to gain a sense of community.
29. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils are provided with a curriculum at both key stages which promotes an understanding of their own country and gives the opportunity to discover and understand other cultures. Assemblies and music lessons incorporate a variety of songs and hymns. The curriculum for religious education makes a valuable contribution to this with studies of world faiths, but there are few contributions for cultural development in art or music. There is little evidence of non-European cultures being celebrated. Insufficient progress has been made to improve this aspect of the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. This is a caring school which provides good support for pupils' personal development and satisfactory provision overall to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. This provision includes good procedures for promoting good behaviour and eliminating bullying and satisfactory procedures for promoting healthy and safe living together with satisfactory child protection and health and safety procedures. Procedures for child protection follow the Local Authority's policy and staff know who to contact should the need arise. The school has still not, however, produced its own child protection policy.
31. Pupils receive good personal support and guidance which makes a significant contribution to their personal development. Looking after pupils' personal and emotional needs is the responsibility of class teachers who, together with support staff, know their pupils well, are sensitive to these needs and provide good personal support and guidance. The good relationships between pupils and staff encourage pupils to raise any concerns they may have and there are opportunities in personal, health and social education sessions to discuss problems.

32. Procedures for promoting positive behaviour and eliminating bullying are good and include discussing the school rules in the classes for five to seven-year-olds and involve pupils in Years 5 and 6 in discussing and agreeing class rules with their teacher at the beginning of the year. Appropriate rewards are given for good behaviour. These include initiatives within the classroom such as weekly rewards for the 'Best Table' and also the award of merits, which contribute towards certificates, awarded in assembly. Behavioural issues are discussed in personal, social and health education lessons which results in any problems being resolved as they arise.
33. Procedures for monitoring and promoting regular attendance are good. Attendance and punctuality are carefully monitored and absence, for which the school has not been given a reason, is followed up appropriately. A good example of how well the school cares for its pupils is that if a pupil does not arrive at school and the parents have not notified the school of this fact, then the school contacts the parents to establish the pupil's whereabouts and safety. Ensuring regular attendance and punctuality are part of the Home/School agreement and parents are reminded about these aspects as necessary.
34. Procedures for ensuring a safe working environment are satisfactory with issues being resolved with appropriate urgency. The governing body plays an active role in health and safety issues; members of the health and safety committee have attended training courses and have drawn up a risk assessment document. There is no dedicated medical room but first aid arrangements are satisfactory and provision for looking after children who are unwell is also satisfactory.
35. Pupils' personal safety, personal hygiene and general well being are taught satisfactorily in personal, health and social education lessons. In addition learning is reinforced by contributions from outside speakers such as the police on 'stranger danger' and drugs awareness, together with the fire service on the dangers of fire. Since the last inspection good personal support and guidance for pupils has been maintained. Procedures for promoting regular attendance have improved and all other areas of pupils' care are at least satisfactory.
36. The school has satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and recording progress. The use of assessment information to guide curriculum planning is also satisfactory but it is not sufficiently refined to set challenging targets for future learning, especially in mathematics and science. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection, when the use of assessment was a key issue for improvement, but procedures are still not fully developed to inform target setting. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is tracked carefully and good records are kept. The governor who has oversight of provision visits regularly and assesses the progress that these pupils are making.
37. Accurate early assessments of children's attainment are carried out in the reception class. The results of these and later assessments are mostly used well to help teachers' broad planning and to promote a generally appropriate work for most pupils. Good progress results but the most able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged, especially in mathematics and science, to make the progress of which they are capable. There is a policy to support the most able pupils and higher-attaining pupils are identified but the system for identification is not systematic as there are no set criteria to identify such pupils. There are systems too group pupils by ability in lessons but there are no specific plans to cater for the particular learning needs of the most able pupils.
38. In both key stages there is considerable monitoring of the pupils' performance. Assessment and recording systems have been introduced and are derived from nationally developed curriculum planning documents for English, mathematics and science. From analysis of the data produced from these assessments, issues for improvement are identified. For example, such analysis showed that pupils should learn why numerical and mathematical skills are useful and helpful to understanding in real life contexts. A significant development in the assessment process is the involvement of all staff. They now assess their pupils' progress over a year by completing a class record sheet which shows each pupil's level of attainment. Effective action is now taken to ensure the accuracy of the teachers' assessments. Sessions are held to agree a common understanding of the criteria to describe the different levels pupils' attain in English,

mathematics and science. The scrutiny of work samples to identify areas for improvement is in an early stage of development, but indications are that school systems have the potential to provide the information needed to enable targets to be set for individual pupils.

39. Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of the data that it collects on pupils' attainment and progress but there are inconsistencies. The assessment records kept by some teachers do not always identify particular strengths and weaknesses in the development of skills or understanding in relation to individual targets and National Curriculum levels. This inconsistency in the use of assessment data, for instance in mathematics and science, results in inappropriate expectations and ill-matched learning activities, especially for the higher-attaining pupils. A significant element in the unsatisfactory teaching was the inconsistencies in the relationship between assessment and teaching plans. In the best lessons assessment of pupils' performance clearly influences the planning for the next steps in learning. The school has not completed the development of systems to set individual targets for pupils. They are mentioned in the pupil's annual school reports but are not always identified clearly in the classroom. The use of day-to-day assessment is generally effective, with teachers making good use of question and feedback to develop pupils' learning. However pupils' own views of their learning is seldom discussed or recorded.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. There is a good partnership with parents, which is a strength in supporting pupils' successful learning. Parents are satisfied with most aspects of the school, but many parents feel that the amount of homework provided for pupils is not satisfactory. A minority of parents feel that the information that they receive on children's progress is insufficient and a small minority believe that improvements could be made to the school's working partnership with parents. A significant number of parents think that improvements could be made to the range of extra curricular activities provided for pupils. They are particularly satisfied with the fact that their children like school, the progress their children are making, the quality of teaching and the expectation that their children should work hard to achieve their best. The inspection findings support these positive views. However the inspection findings do not support the views of a significant number of parents who are not happy with certain aspects of the school. The team considers that the provision of homework is very good, that information that parents receive on pupils' progress is good, that the school does work closely with parents and that provision of extra curricular activities is adequate.
41. Parents are well informed about the school through the prospectus, the governors' annual report, very good newsletters and other correspondence. However, information about the curriculum is unsatisfactory. General curriculum information is given in the prospectus but none elsewhere. However the school is planning to re-introduce, into newsletters, the work to be covered each term to give parents a better opportunity to support their children's work.
42. Parents are well informed about their children's progress through very good annual reports, a formal consultation evening, an optional consultation following the distribution of annual reports and an open evening in the autumn term. In Key Stage 2 reports on pupils are particularly good and give comprehensive details of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics as well as indicating what they need to do to improve in these subjects. Parents are also welcome to discuss any concerns about their children's progress at any time. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed of their children's progress and attend meetings in school, when appropriate, to review learning. They take part in discussions about individual education plans designed to address pupils' specific needs. Most parents are happy with the school's provision for pupils with special educational needs.
43. Parents make a good contribution to children's learning at school and at home which makes a significant contribution to the standards achieved. There is a good level of parental help in classrooms and parents also provide good support on excursions and visits and they are particularly helpful in assisting with swimming. The Friends of Spratton School Association raise significant funds for the school which make a good contribution to the level of resources to

support teaching and learning. Parents are very well informed about homework expectations which are appropriately geared to the different age groups in the school. A good homework timetable has been devised so that parents and pupils know when work has to be done. This helps parents to support their children's learning effectively at home.

44. Induction arrangements for children entering school are good and ensure that pupils make a happy start to their school life. The headteacher visits the local playgroup and children make frequent visits to the school before they start, including attending school functions. Parents have a positive impact on the development of the school. Many of the governors are parents and provide a good extra avenue of communication between parents and the school. The parent-governors attend, for example, the meeting for new parents. The school seeks parents' views through questionnaires and acts on these when planning development of the school. Since the last inspection a good partnership with parents has been maintained.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The leadership and management of the school are sound. The headteacher and key staff work well together to promote an ethos which is rooted in a commitment to maintain standards. The school has been largely successful in ensuring that standards are maintained and in several areas there has been a steady improvement. The headteacher has a clear vision for moving the school forward and the committed teaching force are keen to implement initiatives designed to improve the quality of education provided by the school. Curricular responsibilities have been delegated appropriately to teaching staff and a good sense of teamwork has been promoted. The roles of curriculum co-ordinators are developing though in some areas, such as science and art, co-ordinators have little understanding of their accountability for standards in their areas of responsibility.
46. The school reviews its development regularly and sets appropriate priorities for the following year. These are described in the school's annual development plan. This document plots the course for further improvements. Initiatives are carefully costed and there are clear links with budgetary planning. The development plan incorporates clear targets, success criteria and details of how initiatives will be evaluated. Time constraints are set for the successful implementation of initiatives and the personnel responsible for action, as well as for the monitoring of such action. This plan is a useful management tool and is a working document which helps the school to maintain its course through the year.
47. The governing body is closely associated with the school and is well informed about the issues that affect it. Governors keep a close watching brief and monitor the school's results closely. The school bursar ensures that accounts are managed meticulously and that office procedures run smoothly. She provides excellent support for the leadership and management of the school and is instrumental in ensuring that governors are well informed about the financial implications of proposed initiatives. Great care is taken to ensure that the money allocated to the school is spent as wisely as possible. Specific grants, such as extra money to cater for pupils' special educational needs, are spent on the areas for which they were intended. Governors are prudent and have established a substantial reserve fund. This reserve is to provide the extra teaching time required to meet the learning needs of the unusually large group of pupils currently in Year 3 as they pass through the school. The governing body gives considerable thought to spending decisions and helps to monitor the effect of new initiatives. The governors with responsibility for overseeing literacy and numeracy take a keen interest in the progress of these new developments and visit the school to observe lessons. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs also maintains close contact with the school and enquires about the progress of individual pupils. The headteacher's termly report to governors highlights main events and any pending educational issues. In this way the governing body is kept well-informed of developments and governors question closely the reasons for new initiatives, as well as long established practices; in so doing they fulfil their role of 'critical friends' to the school successfully. The governing body is also successful in ensuring that the school complies with most statutory requirements, the exception being compliance with the National Curriculum requirements for art, and in helping the school to make sure that its aims are reflected in its

work. Governors are currently engaged in training to prepare themselves for the introduction of the new national performance management procedures. The headteacher, staff and governors work well together to ensure that the community they serve receives effective educational provision. This is confirmed by the satisfaction with the school expressed by parents.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48. In order to improve standards further, the headteacher, staff and governing body should:

- (1) Improve standards in mathematics and science by developing assessment and target setting systems which ensure that all pupils, particularly the more able, are appropriately stretched. (paragraphs 4,16,36,37,39,69,80)
*
- (2) Develop an agreed teaching and learning policy that sets clear criteria against which to evaluate the quality of teaching and use the criteria when monitoring teaching in order to promote more consistently high quality teaching. (paragraph 6,18,94)
- (3) Develop plans to promote the effective use of computers to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. (paragraph 17,78,88,92,102,104,105)
- (4) Apply the scheme of work for art rigorously to ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding in art are taught systematically and progressively. (paragraph 15, 19,87)
- (5) Raise teachers' expectations of pupils' performance and ensure that plans address pupils differing needs so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable. (paragraph 4,5,15,18,84)

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

- Identify the more able pupils in the school systematically through set criteria against which their potential is assessed. (paragraph 37)
- Develop the book corners in classrooms to stimulate a greater interest in reading. (paragraph 60,66)
- Produce a child protection policy for the school. (paragraph 30)

* Improvements in standards in mathematics and science already feature in the school's development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	44
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	14	41	36	9	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	YR– Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	109
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	5
Special educational needs	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	16
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	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	17	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (85)	100 (100)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	17	17	17
	Total	23	23	23
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	100 (100)	100 ([100)
	National	84 (81)]	88 (85)	88 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	200	7	7	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	6	5	7
	Total	12	11	13
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	85 (71)	79 (64)	93 (93)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	5
	Girls	5	6	5
	Total	10	13	10
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	71 (86)	93 (86)	71 (100)
	National	70 (68)	72 ((69)	85 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	96
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)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	22am/27pm

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	37.5

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	202 788
Total expenditure	198 050
Expenditure per pupil	1817
Balance brought forward from previous year	29 600
Balance carried forward to next year	34 338

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	89
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.	62	29	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	49	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	60	4	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	40	27	4	0
The teaching is good.	47	44	7	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	22	49	18	9	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	36	13	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	42	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	33	40	13	7	7
The school is well led and managed.	40	40	13	0	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	47	11	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	16	36	24	11	13

Other issues raised by parents

At the pre-inspection meeting for parents general regret was expressed that pupils have additional pressures placed upon them, such as increased levels of homework, as a result of the pressures resulting from government initiatives.

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

49. Education for children in the foundation stage is provided alongside provision for pupils in Year 1. The curriculum for youngest children is based on the six areas of learning specified in national guidance and it gives the children a broad and balanced range of experiences. There is a wide variety of challenging and well-focussed activities to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. The school provides the children with a good start to their education.
50. The overall attainment levels of most of the children entering the school are above those expected nationally. Teaching in reception is of a high standard and this has a positive effect on children's learning. As a result most children achieve well and are in line to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning by the end of the reception class, with the majority reaching them well before they move into Year 1.
51. The personal, social and emotional development of the children is good. Standards exceed national expectations of five year olds. There are good procedures for introducing children to school life, which help the children to settle in with ease. Care is taken to meet with parents and carers in order to be able to plan carefully to meet the individual needs of children. Children enjoy coming to school, they respond well to the rules and routines of the class. Most are confident in trying out new activities and speak confidently to other children and to adults. Relationships are very good. The children are polite and respectful to their teachers and other helpers in the classrooms. Classroom resources are used carefully; for example, magnets are used appropriately when investigating objects and materials. They sit quietly in assembly to hear a story and respond with respect during a shared prayer. Even at this early stage of the school year the children concentrate on their activities for extended periods, either when listening carefully to a book during the Literacy Hour, or when persevering when weaving on their cardboard looms. Children select their own activities during free choice periods and most are able to play sensibly alongside other children and some are able to share the activity with others. They demonstrate growing independence in their dressing skills and in personal hygiene, for example, changing for physical education lessons and washing hands following a painting activity. However, there are limited opportunities for the children to develop an awareness of other people of different cultures and ways of life. Teaching is good as every opportunity is taken to develop the children's skills. Adults provide the children with good example in personal and social skills.
52. In communication, language and literacy, standards exceed national expectations of five year olds. Children make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. This area of learning is particularly well taught. Listening and speaking skills are extended effectively through a wide range of appropriately planned activities. When children are playing, staff engage them in discussion question them effectively and challenge them to think. All staff keep records of the progress the children make. Assessment is used effectively to plan for future learning. Elements of the National Literacy Strategy are used well to develop and extend children's language and literacy skills. A strong emphasis is placed on listening carefully to the teachers and following instructions. This is effective and most children are attentive listeners. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and join in familiar ones with enthusiasm. They follow instructions carefully. In a numeracy lesson, for example, children lined up sensibly when demonstrating positions in a queue and responded correctly to instructions in a physical education lesson. In a discussion on looking through an imaginary window children offered many interesting suggestions and opinions on the scenes created. They express their ideas well. For example, one child expressed very clearly why he disliked a busy street scene. 'I would not like to live near a busy street as the noise would be unbearable.' Vocabulary skills are developing as children talk about 'S' words; for example, snake, spider and spout.

Structured play situations, puppets, group activities and circle time provide opportunities for children to use and extend their vocabulary. Clearly labelled displays, nursery rhyme pictures, calendars, weather charts and individual name cards help children develop early reading and writing skills. Many hold their pencils correctly and form their letters accurately. A significant number can write simple sentences with ease and enjoyment. Supplies of paper and pencils are available and the children readily use them. The children handle books with care. In shared reading tasks children recognise initial sounds and use these to read unfamiliar words. A small number are able to read simple stories fluently. Children choose books as an activity and all children take books home on a regular basis to share with family members. This has a very positive effect on children's progress in learning to read. However the quality of books in the reading area is poor. Many books are shabby and dated. The children do have access to a limited number of good quality books but they are small in number. Teaching in this area of learning is good. All staff are competent in teaching basic skills in literacy and use every opportunity to promote the development of children's communication, language and literacy skills.

53. Children make good progress in developing their **mathematical understanding** and standards exceed national expectations of five year olds. Work is well planned using the National Numeracy Strategy. Through play, practical activities, number songs, rhymes and counting games most recognise numbers up to ten but many can count to twenty and beyond with ease. Most reception children are able to join in with the teacher and count down from twenty to zero. Children have good opportunities to compare, match, sort, order and sequence. Teachers place great emphasis on developing appropriate mathematical language and children are encouraged to consider size, shape and position when playing with toys. For example, in a lesson on developing children's understanding of placing number in order the teacher involved the children in 'queuing' activities. This method maintained the children's interest and enabled them to make good progress in their understanding of position and in the development of their mathematical vocabulary, involving the use of words such as first, second and last. This activity was further extended when some children spotted that if the queue reversed their position changed. Calculating skills of more or less, greater or smaller are also developed through practical activities of threading beads and cutting various lengths of paper. Most children can recognise two-dimensional shapes and copy and repeat symmetrical patterns. Teaching in this area is good. The teacher uses examples from the daily experiences of the children to develop and reinforce mathematical learning. The children enjoy the mathematical activities because the teaching is stimulating. The teacher and support staff are an effective partnership. They are competent in teaching the basic skills of numeracy.
54. Children's **knowledge and understanding of the world** is developed well and they attain levels that exceed national expectations of five year olds. The natural curiosity of young children is enhanced as staff continually encourage them to talk about their discoveries and experiences, to ask questions and to explore made and natural materials. From looking at seeds they are aware of how they develop into plants that bear fruits or become flowers. They learn about the passage of time through topics. They are currently investigating old and new toys. They know that, for example that old toys are often worn and of a basic design whereas modern toys have many features. The celebrating of birthdays and festivals is also used to develop further children's understanding of the past and present. They talk about the days of the week, changing seasons and the weather. Through religious education lessons children learn about the early Christian culture. Their knowledge of Old and New Testament stories is very good. They know that the Harvest festival is a Christian celebration where some Christians thank God for the harvest. With support from the teacher they make up group prayers. But knowledge and understanding of other cultures and different ways of life is underdeveloped. Staff carefully observe and assess children's skills providing them with support and encouragement in improving their skills of cutting, folding and sticking. They develop their observational skills as they experiment with magnets, identifying materials that are 'pulled ' towards the magnet. The computer is a popular choice and many children are confident and competent in using the 'mouse'. However, spontaneous access to the computer is limited. Construction toys are used well to encourage pupils to design and make their own models and to discover how things work. Teaching is good. Through appropriate topics the children gain knowledge and skills which

provide a good foundation for future work in science, design and technology, history and geography.

55. Children make good progress in their **physical development** and standards exceed national expectations of five year olds. In physical education lessons they walk, run, jump and hop using forwards and sideways directions. They can hold balanced positions on hands and feet. They listen carefully to the teacher's instructions and use space well being aware of how to move to keep themselves and other children safe. Children use the hard outdoor playground area for riding on wheeled toys, climbing on large equipment and playing with balls, hoops and ropes. Emphasis is placed on developing children's skills when handling tools, construction toys and malleable materials. Children are given many opportunities to cut out, glue, paint and crayon to develop their handling skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teaching is good and enables the children to make good progress.
56. Standards in **creative development** exceed national expectations of five year olds. Children enjoy a good range of experiences, art, music, story and imaginative play. Through such experiences children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and to develop their use of language to express ideas. A good range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. Children enjoy taking part in role-play situations in the 'veterinary surgery', acting out the part of the vet, nurse and clients with sick animals. Dance is well used for stimulating and developing their imaginations. There are many activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Staff provide materials with a variety of interesting textures from which children can choose to create their own pictures and models. They work with play-dough, plasticene and junk material to create three-dimensional models. Sand and water are available for the children to explore. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Many varied activities are provided which encourage the development of creativity. There have been significant developments in this area since the last inspection.

ENGLISH

57. Across the school pupils attain standards in English that exceed national expectations. The standards that pupils attain represent a particular strength of the school. By the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards in speaking and listening, reading and writing which exceed national expectations. This represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection when standards in writing for seven and eleven-year-olds were judged to be in line with national expectations, though in speaking, listening and reading they exceeded expectations. Inspection findings reflect the school's performance as measured by the National Curriculum tests. In the tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 pupils' attained standards that were very high when compared with all schools in reading and were well above average when compared with similar schools. In writing the results were very high both when compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools. The group that took the tests in 2000 were exceptionally able and results were exceptionally good. Over the past five years, however, the performance of seven-year-olds has been maintained at a level that exceeds national averages in reading and writing. In 2000 all seven year old pupils attained the national target of Level 2 and over a half attained the higher Level 3 standard in reading whilst nearly a half attained Level 3 in writing. The year group that took the tests in 2000 is relatively large and has more than three times as many girls as boys but there was no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.
58. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the school's performance was well above average both when compared with all schools and when compared with similar schools. Nearly all pupils attained the national target of Level 4 and well over a half attained the higher Level 5 standard. There was no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls either in the test or in the work seen during the inspection. The school set targets, based on an analysis of each year group's prior attainment, for the proportion of eleven-year-old pupils expected to attain at least Level 4 in 1999 and 2000. It did not reach its target in 1999 but it exceeded its target for 2000.

59. The baseline assessment scheme for children when they first start school show that children enter the school with skills in speaking and listening that are significantly above county averages. This is especially the case for girls and for the group of pupils who are currently in Year 2 and those in Year 3. Undoubtedly pupils' speaking skills are developed effectively at home but the school consolidates and extends such skills effectively. Speech is encouraged through role-play and in the class for the youngest pupils a well-structured veterinary surgery leads to a great deal of discussion on how best to treat the patients who need help. Pupils use words like, 'thermometer' and 'stethoscope' accurately and enter into a sensible dialogue with others in their imaginative play. Teachers have good questioning strategies that encourage pupils to think and to articulate their thoughts. In a design and technology lesson, for example, pupils were encouraged to select the materials they needed to make an effective baby's rattle. Here they were asked to explain why they had selected certain materials and to describe how they intended to make the rattle. They were then encouraged to evaluate their finished products which they did with enthusiasm and confidence. Good foundations are laid in the first class where pupils have opportunities to talk with adults in small groups. This fosters confidence. Throughout the school pupils listen to stories with rapt attention. In Year 2 pupils enjoy the rhythm of speech and identify words that rhyme as they learn simple poems which they love chanting in unison. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 retell the stories they have heard in their own words and have strong opinions on which are favourites. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 speak confidently and articulately about their work. They explain clearly why they chose to use particular words in their writing and understand how certain words are more powerful in conveying meaning than others. In discussion they pay close attention to what others say and are responsive to the views of others. They have a good understanding of colloquial speech and the need to use standard English in formal situations.
60. Pupils enter the school with early reading skills that are above County averages. A good momentum is developed in the class for the youngest pupils and reading routines are established well. Pupils practise their reading regularly, both at school and at home, and soon develop high levels of competency. They learn the sounds of words and can read an increasingly wide range of words on sight. By the time they are seven most pupils read fluently. They tackle any unknown words by using the context of the sentence to deduce meaning and use their knowledge of letter sounds to 'sound out' the word. Most pupils in Year 3 are avid readers and several spoke of being told off for reading in bed until later than they were supposed to. They read widely, usually fiction but several read poetry and non-fiction books occasionally. Older pupils maintain competency in reading but reading records indicate that several read infrequently on an individual basis or remain on the same book for far too long. Two pupils from a sample of three in Year 6, for example, had been reading slowly through their books for the past nine weeks and one was still less than half way through. All pupils participate in regular, productive group reading sessions with the teacher, however, as part of the literacy hour. In these sessions they are introduced to good quality writing which they read and review together. Nevertheless insufficient emphasis is placed on reading for pleasure and in stimulating a wide knowledge of children's literature.
61. The school has been concentrating on improving pupils' writing skills and its particular emphasis on developing this area of English has been highly successful. Pupils in Year 1 write confidently and place their sentences together in a logical sequence. The youngest pupils in Year 1 wrote effective short passages about an old bear who had been introduced to the class. They used full stops and capital letters appropriately, tried to spell accurately and wrote legibly. By the time they are seven pupils write at greater length and also produce their own simple non-fiction books that often include a preface, contents, and a glossary. One exceptionally good example about 'Grandad' even included a dedication, 'To my Grandad'. Pupils enjoy humour and re-write nursery rhymes such as, 'Mary had a little rat, its fur was pink and black, it curled upon the soft, black mat but the cat pounced and squashed it flat.' They retell classical stories, such as 'Cinderella', make up a diary of a week's events and create good character studies. They use adjectives well as in, 'Once upon a time there were three plump, juicy, little pigs.' They are beginning to use a wider range of punctuation, including speech marks, question marks and exclamation marks where appropriate.

62. Pupils in Year 3 write at great length about a naughty girl who joins the school. This is based on a book that has captured their imagination. They write clear instructions on how you should brush your teeth, for example, which helps them to order their thoughts and write clearly. They have a sensitive feel for words as shown by one pupil who wrote about, 'the orangeness of the crumbled leaves'.
63. By the time they are eleven pupils have a good knowledge of technical vocabulary and use terms accurately, as when one girl said that she much preferred writing in the first person, usually in the past tense, because that helped her to really become involved in her imaginative writing. They understand direct and reported speech and write good dialogues with a good understanding of how to use colloquial speech effectively. One boy wrote, 'Ben slid into Mr Willis's room and stood quivering in his shoes. A loud noise smashed the silence'. They understand how to write in a range of styles and have produced very good biographies. Many have developed writing skills which far exceed expectations of eleven-year-olds.
64. Most pupils have positive attitudes to the subject and enjoy reading and writing. A significant minority, mainly boys, profess not to enjoy reading. Pupils use the small library well to research for information and are beginning to use CD-ROM with increasing expertise. They understand how to use dictionaries and thesauruses as well as encyclopaedia and other reference books. They use their well-developed skills in literacy well in other areas of the curriculum, such as history where they read for information and write at length about the areas they are studying. Pupils in Year 6 for example have produced some good booklets about the Aztecs.
65. Teaching in the classes for the five to seven-year-olds is good and it is often very good in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds, especially for the older pupils. The imaginative themes that pupils in Year 2 are asked to use as the basis for developing their writing are effective in stimulating a keen interest in writing for pleasure. Across the school teachers have high levels of subject expertise. A very good lesson in the Year 5/6 class focused on journalistic writing and here the teacher gave an excellent explanation of how colloquial speech often leads to confusion about correct grammatical structures. Several pupils were confused as to whether 'She should of taken more care' or 'She should have taken more care' was correct. The teacher explained how in speech elision often causes the omission of a syllable and that if pupils considered the contraction 'should've' then they would be able to arrive at the correct form. This resulted in great enlightenment and was a lesson that most pupils would remember. The technical vocabulary used indicated the teacher's high level of subject knowledge and these were shared with the pupils who were extending their already good knowledge of grammatical terms. This good subject knowledge also resulted in confident teaching. The high expectations of pupils' performance and a good knowledge of their prior attainment resulted in exceptionally good progress. Drama is used well to illustrate themes and in a class of pupils in Years 3 and 4 pupils were encouraged to explore language through the dramatisation of scenes associated with 'The Iron Man' by Ted Hughes. Here the pupils were expertly led towards describing the iron man's eyes with suitable similes such as 'His eyes were as sharp as lasers'. This lesson had life and pupils almost believed that, when they touched the back of iron man's hand, which was protruding through the wall of the hall, that they were really pleading with him not to destroy their villages. Here the teacher had established a sense of awe.
66. The subject is well managed and an adequate supply of resources is supplied to support teaching and learning. Teaching is monitored systematically to identify any areas for improvement. Across the school there is insufficient attention paid to developing a deep knowledge of a range of children's literature and book corners are not well used in this respect. Many contain outdated books that lack appeal. There is a book fair held regularly in the school which does encourage pupils to take an interest but regular focused displays on particular authors or illustrators are rare. This subject is a strength of the school and the school has the capacity to maintain high standards.

MATHEMATICS

67. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards which are in line with the national expectations. This finding conflicts with the National Curriculum test results, which show that the performance of seven-year-olds was very high both in comparison with the national average and the average for similar schools. The differences in attainment from year to year are explained in part by differences in the characteristics of the group of pupils who take the tests. In the group of pupils who took the test in 2000, there was an exceptionally high proportion of very able pupils. This resulted in all pupils attaining at least the national target of Level 2 and over half reaching the higher Level 3 standard. This year's group of Year 2 pupils have a more normal spread of ability.
68. By the age of eleven, most pupils attain standards which are in line with national expectations. The National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in 2000 showed that pupils' attainment was above average when compared with all schools though below average when compared with similar schools. The proportion of pupils who exceeded the national target of Level 4 and attained the higher Level 5 standard was in line with the national average. Taken over the last four years, attainment at the age of eleven is broadly in line with the national average. Results vary from year to year according to the characteristics of the groups taking the tests and the small size of these groups means that any statistical analysis of results should be treated with caution. The performance of one pupil can make a large difference in the proportion who attain a certain level. Inspection findings show that the standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
69. There is, however an element of underachievement at both key stages because the higher-attaining pupils are not always presented with tasks that are sufficiently challenging. In addition, the school does not conduct a sufficiently thorough analysis of pupils' prior attainment in order to identify clearly pupils' strengths and weaknesses so that the next steps in learning can be designed to match pupils' learning needs. Hence work is not always well matched to the particular needs of pupils, especially the more able. This hinders pupils' progress as they move through each key stage.
70. By the age of seven, almost all pupils add and subtract accurately and many also understand multiplication and simple division. They recognise odd and even numbers and have a sound knowledge of number facts to 20. They can identify tens and units and can arrange numbers to 100 in order. They have a good understanding that addition can be done in any order but not subtraction. Higher attainers recognise simple number patterns and relationships between numbers and use this understanding when carrying out calculations. For example, a pupil quickly worked out $51 - 25 = 26$ because he knew that $25 + 25 = 50$, showing clear understanding that subtraction reverses addition. They are developing the confidence to predict simple number relationships. In problem solving standards vary. The higher-attainers are beginning to use mental strategies accurately in solving problems, for example, when working out how many tubes of sweets can be bought for a £1 they used the principle of doubling. They are able to read simple problems and use appropriate number operations. The lower attainers are more reliant on concrete aids to support their learning. Most pupils recognise and describe the names of common shapes such as rectangles, circles and triangles. The higher attainers are able to identify the more complex shapes such as cylinders, pyramids and cuboids. The majority has a good knowledge of their tables, counting in multiples of 5, 6, and 10 with real skill, supported by regular, daily mental arithmetic sessions. They use appropriate mathematical vocabulary and symbols.
71. By the age of eleven, most pupils understand the value of numbers to 1,000. They can multiply whole numbers by 10 and multiples of 10. Most pupils add and subtract numbers to one decimal place on paper. Higher attaining pupils use all four number operations to two decimal places and are able to calculate fractions and percentages of numbers and quantities. They understand that multiplication is the inverse of division and use this to check results. Pupils are able to carry out calculations involving multiplying with two digit numbers but only a minority of the higher-attainers showed a real facility in multiplication, ably demonstrating skills in partitioning numbers. For example, in Year 6, pupils multiplied three digit numbers together

correctly by a process of breaking these numbers down into sets for easier calculations. In data handling they are able to interpret accurately 'pie chart' information and record their results in fractions and decimal fractions. They are developing strategies for solving problems, identifying the important parts of the information, using approximation and rounding to estimate the answer. Using and applying mathematics is a developing feature in their work. They use a variety of ways to present mathematical information, for example, using pictograms and frequency tables to represent word counts, and in science, using tables to present data on forces. As they move through the key stage, pupils build on their previous learning and develop a sound understanding of shape and space, learning to recognise reflective symmetry in two-dimensional shapes.

72. The National Numeracy Strategy has generally been effectively implemented throughout the school. Pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary is well developed mainly because it is used to good effect by the teachers in lesson introductions. However, there are still too few opportunities throughout both key stages for pupils' to solve mathematical problems. This aspect is underdeveloped. Also, the majority of pupils rarely take responsibility for their own learning. The presentation of pupils' work is satisfactory overall and is good in those lessons where teachers have high expectations of this aspect of work.
73. The progress made by most pupils in Key Stage 1 is largely satisfactory with good progress in a Year 1 class. The good rate of progress relates directly to the teacher's challenging questioning and her sensitive response to pupils' ideas as well as to the vigorous pace and varied activities which are well matched to pupils' abilities. At Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory overall. In Year 4 the good interaction between teacher and pupils improves progress. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are given demanding tasks and the quality of questioning results in pupils extending their knowledge and understanding of mathematical processes. Throughout both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress against the targets set for them.
74. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, overall. Although there are examples of good teaching in both key stages there is also an element of unsatisfactory teaching. Where the teaching is very good, as in a lesson with Year 5 / 6 pupils, the teacher provided the pupils with thinking time and involved pupils in mathematical dialogue, allowing them to explain their methods of calculation. Informing them of strategies, for example, when calculating large numbers to use known related number facts and adjust accordingly. In a good lesson in Year 4, the teacher evaluated the pupils' work from the previous day on data collecting, identified their mistakes and used them effectively as teaching points to improve their understanding of pictograms and frequency tables. Common features of the better teaching were good subject knowledge and high expectations, giving pupils the confidence and time to think and to talk through their ideas. There is also, effective use of assessment to inform lesson planning. Where teaching has significant weaknesses, the learning objectives are not always appropriate or shared with the pupils. Questioning and discussion are too brief, with pupils moving on too quickly to completing worksheets. These pupils are insufficiently challenged and their progress is limited.
75. Where teaching is good pupils' attitudes to mathematics are also good. They work with commitment and enthusiasm and respond well to questions that engage their thinking. They work independently without the need for adult supervision, working co-operatively in pairs and groups. Relationships are generally good and set a positive atmosphere where pupils can join in class discussions with confidence. Most pupils behave well during lessons. These features contribute to the good progress. The few instances where behaviour was inappropriate, directly related to tasks being poorly matched to the pupils' ability, resulting in general restlessness.
76. Where homework is given it is effectively reinforcing learning. Marking is generally of a good standard.
77. Informative displays of mathematical work have a high profile in the school. They are present in most classes and circulating areas. Pupils develop their skills of numeracy in other subjects

satisfactorily at both key stages. There are examples of work on data handling in science and sequencing in history.

78. The planning of the curriculum for mathematics has improved since the last inspection. The school has introduced nationally recommended guidelines to support planning. Comprehensive long, medium and short-term planning ensures that pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. The recently appointed co-ordinator is knowledgeable and keen to share her vision and enthusiasm for mathematics with colleagues. There is a comprehensive mathematics development plan with a strong focus on raising the attainment of the more-able pupils. There is a satisfactory range of resources, which are well organised and accessible to staff. Resources are, in the main, used well though opportunities to use computers to support teaching and learning are often missed.

SCIENCE

79. By the age of seven, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. At the end of Key Stage 1 in 2000, teachers judged that the proportion of pupils reaching the expected levels was very high in comparison with the national average and when compared with similar schools. Inspection findings are that the very high attainment achieved by last year's pupils has not been maintained. The reason for this is that the current Year 3 group has an exceptional large proportion of very able pupils whereas in the current Year 1 and year 2 groups there is a more normal spread of abilities.
80. By the time pupils are eleven years old, most reach the expected level of attainment in this subject. Standards are lower than at the time of previous inspection. The results of the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 showed that the number of pupils reaching the expected levels was well above the average for schools nationally and below the average for similar schools. In the same tests, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was about the same as that nationally and very low in comparison with the average for similar schools. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, the majority of eleven-year-olds attained standards that were below the expected levels. However over the past three years results do suggest, despite the yearly fluctuations in attainment, that the school is maintaining the expected levels of attainment nationally but it is not challenging sufficiently its more able pupils to reach higher levels. The school is aware of this and in order to raise standards, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils, the school is placing more emphasis on investigative work.
81. At Key Stage 1, pupils have at least satisfactory and often good scientific knowledge and skills. They know the major organs in the human body and that a balanced diet is required to remain healthy. Pupils have a good understanding of forces such as pushes and pulls. They know that forces make things move and satisfactorily investigate the effect of forces in experiments with magnets. Pupils develop sound investigation skills through a wide range of practical activities. They begin to explore the effects of squashing, twisting and stretching materials such as play-dough and sponge form and record their observations on simple record sheets. They are developing their prediction skills. For example, when mixing ingredients to make a gingerbread man and heating it in an oven, they can describe the changes that are likely to take place and are able to record their findings. They develop their language skills by talking about the activities and the changes they observe. However practical mathematical skills such as measuring and recording their findings in different forms are underdeveloped.
82. Most pupils continue to make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 2, though higher-attaining pupils do not always make sufficient progress. By the time they leave school, pupils have a sound grounding in the range of scientific knowledge and understanding required by the National Curriculum. They carry out a range of activities that are effective in helping them to develop their understanding of scientific enquiry, and learn about the world around them. Pupils ask questions, such as how do you make a light brighter in a circuit? They make predictions and carry out investigations to find out the answers. For example, pupils in Year 4 experimenting with electrical circuits realised that the brightness of bulbs is effected by the power of batteries. The majority knows how to represent series circuits by drawings and diagrams. Most pupils in

Year 6 have a sound knowledge of the basic properties of forces, including friction and know that if an object is stationary when all the forces are acting upon it, it must balance. They recognise that forces act in a particular direction and that objects have weight because of the effects of gravity. However, higher-attaining pupils do not make sufficient progress as they are not always sufficiently challenged. Their work in particular shows little evidence of opportunities to pursue their own independent enquiries.

83. The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory at both key stages. The effect of this is to provide pupils with a satisfactory quality of learning. But the teaching of the skills of scientific enquiry is now being given a higher priority and is very effective particularly in Y4, Y5 and Y6. Teachers' planning for series of lessons is detailed and effectively covers the range of knowledge and understanding required at both key stages. Teachers plan lessons that have clear and attainable objectives and most share these objectives with the pupils. Consequently, pupils understand the purpose behind the work and recognise its relevance. Teachers' explanations are clear. This improves the quality of pupils' learning and gives them a clear illustration of the concept. Often teachers make effective use of teaching resources, as in Year 6, when the teacher used a forcemeter to good effect in weighing objects in air and water. Classroom assistants are well briefed and provide good support for all pupils, but especially those with special educational needs, who consequently take a full part in lessons and make satisfactory progress.
84. Although teachers have many strengths, some weaknesses in teaching occur throughout the school. Examination of pupils' work shows that teachers do not always plan sufficiently for the needs of all pupils. The lesson planned does not always provide sufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils. In some lessons the teacher talks too much and gives insufficient time for pupils to work independently. This contributes to boredom, loss of concentration and adversely affects pupils' progress.
85. Pupils are generally interested in their work. In the better lessons they work hard and there is a buzz of excitement and interest in many of the practical sessions. Pupils behave well and work co-operatively with others. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 who were working in 'groups' sensibly shared the tasks of assembling electrical circuits.
86. Since the last inspection, the school has introduced nationally recommended guidelines for teaching. Planning, both long and medium-term is now consistent throughout both key stages. This means that pupils now receive a balanced science curriculum with an appropriate emphasis on investigative work. This is an improvement since the previous report. Teachers have recently undergone in-service training to improve their subject expertise.

ART AND DESIGN

87. Partly due to the emphasis on developing literacy and introducing the National Numeracy Strategy this subject has received little attention and standards since the time of the last inspection have fallen. By the time they are seven and by the time they are eleven pupils attain standards that fall below national expectations. Skills, knowledge and understanding are not taught systematically and the requirements of the National Curriculum are not met. There are examples of sound work and pupils illustrate much of their work with vibrant drawings. In the classes for five to seven-year-olds, pupils paint bold self-portraits and use pastel crayons effectively, understanding how to blend the colours by rubbing them together. In the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds, pupils again paint portraits of their partners and the quality of painting is of the standard expected for their age. They experience the use of papier-mâché and skills such as quilling. They create imaginative flowers from coloured paper and the oldest pupils maintain interesting sketchbooks. They are inspired by the ephemeral art of Andy Goldsworthy and create good designs on the playground from leaves, twigs, conkers and other natural materials. Across the school, however, pupils have very little knowledge of the work of artists, craftspeople and designers in different times and cultures and it is this aspect of the curriculum that is particularly under developed. This was also the case at the time of the last inspection.

Pupils enjoy art and are mostly proud of their achievements but a standard has not been set and much of the work produced does not do justice to pupils' talents.

88. Little teaching was seen but skills are not taught systematically and the standard of work produced is not as good as it should be. Hence teaching is judged to be unsatisfactory overall. In the lessons that were observed the teachers' expectations of pupils' performance were too low. The teaching for the Year 3 and 4 class was unsatisfactory because time was not used well and many pupils were engaged in time filling exercises rather than working productively. The school has adopted a nationally promoted scheme of work but this is not used systematically to plan lessons. The co-ordinator is unaware of the school's strengths or areas for improvement but the school acknowledges that the subject has been neglected in recent years. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning though there is little evidence of materials to create three-dimensional artefacts. Computers are used to support teaching and learning in several classes but information and communication technology is not used systematically to support learning throughout the school. The school has welcomed an 'artist in residence' for three weeks in the summer term to work alongside pupils. This helped to broaden their learning opportunities.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89. This subject is well established in the school's curriculum and by the end of both key stages pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection. In Year 1 pupils develop a good understanding of the need to create a design before making models. Much of the design process is oral and pupils discuss the need to make baby's rattles, for example, so that they will fulfil the function that they are meant to fulfil. The rattle has to make an interesting noise and must be robust and safe. They consider carefully which materials to select for making the rattles and whether it would be best to use dried beans or pasta to fill the containers so that an effective sound is created. They find the joining of the component parts challenging but know how to use adhesive tape effectively to make secure joins. In Year 2 pupils make effective finger puppets from felt and larger glove puppets that are designed carefully. Pupils follow their designs as they cut out the felt. They tack the parts of the glove together neatly but find the sewing of the two halves very challenging. They persevere and produce effective puppets that fulfil the purpose for which they were designed. They also create good puppets from card, sticks and string so that the legs and arms move. In the classes for five to seven-year-olds construction apparatus is used well to develop skills in joining wheels to axles and making mechanisms that move. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this subject and work with great concentration on practical activities. Their well developed communication skills help them to evaluate the success of their designing and making clearly and effectively.
90. Pupils in the classes for seven to eleven-year olds have a good understanding of the processes involved in designing, making, evaluating and improving products. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have followed a course of lessons in food technology where the objective is to make good quality Christmas biscuits. They discuss the shape and texture of the biscuits and decide on the degree of 'crumbliness' they are trying to achieve. Several of the designs are far too detailed but pupils persevere though understand that their designs are often too ambitious. They follow recipes and experiment by incorporating various 'added ingredients' in different proportions to the basic recipe. They learn from their mistakes as, for example, one experimental biscuit turned out black and charred as a result of adding too much syrup. They discuss the design specification sensibly and consider ways in which they can make the biscuits appealing so that they will become best sellers. They evaluate their products carefully by tasting and adjusting the recipe to improve the flavour.
91. The quality of teaching is sound in the classes for five to seven-year-olds and good in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds. This indicates an improvement since the last inspection in the quality of teaching for the older pupils. Teachers plan and prepare lessons thoroughly and lesson planning includes clear learning objectives. High levels of discipline are maintained and pupils are encouraged to persevere and work hard to finish their products successfully.

Expectations of the quality of the finished products are sound and this helps to maintain sound standards. Opportunities are missed, however, to link the products with other areas of the curriculum. The puppets are made, for example, with no particular purpose in mind. They are not intended to be used for developing speaking skills or to represent characters in a story. This lack of a specific purpose diminishes the impact that the production of the puppets might otherwise have. Whilst teaching for the older pupils is good, too much time is spent on very detailed designs rather than getting on with the making process. Teachers take excellent photographs of the processes as they unfold. The teacher of the youngest pupils took photographs of the pupils weaving ropes around their bodies as they stood in a line on the playground. This helped them to remember, when weaving on card looms in the classroom, how the sequence of weaving over and under had to be followed. The teacher of the oldest pupils took excellent photographs of the experimental biscuits which were used well to focus discussion on the evaluation and improvement of the product.

92. The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator has good subject knowledge. The school follows a nationally promoted scheme of work and this helps to promote progression in learning. Assessment procedures to track pupils' attainment and progress and to guide the next steps in learning have not been developed. Resources are adequate to support teaching and learning. Little use is made of computers to support teaching and learning.

GEOGRAPHY

93. By the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations. This indicates that, since the time of the last inspection, standards are not as high as they were in the classes for the five to seven-year-olds but that standards have been maintained for the pupils in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds. Examples of sound work were seen in Year 2 where pupils draw maps map their route to school and draw a map of the village showing prominent features such as the school, the church, the recreation ground and where they live. They study different types of housing and understand, for example, the different features of terraced and detached houses. Good links are made with literature as, for example, the use of the story about two grandmothers who live on the Isle Of Struay. Pupils study a drawing of prominent features of the island before drawing a map to show a bird's eye view. The map includes appropriate symbols to show rivers, bridges and roads and is annotated with a colour coded key. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 study detailed maps of the village and compare them with maps of the area drawn in varying scales. They look at globes, atlases and road maps and investigate the varying scales. Many pupils had a problem with understanding the term 'larger scale' and could not reconcile the term with large maps of the village being of a larger scale than large maps of the world.
94. Though no lessons were seen in the classes for five-to-seven year olds, there was sufficient evidence in the work that pupils produce to indicate that it is at least satisfactory. Overall teaching in the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is good and is based on the guidance described in the nationally promoted scheme of work. There are shortcomings in the teaching for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Here lesson planning is not always sufficiently structured to enable pupils to gain a clear understanding of certain ideas. Pupils found the notion of scale, for example, very challenging and the lesson was not sufficiently structured to lead pupils, step-by-step towards a clear understanding.
95. The subject is soundly managed and resources are adequate. The pupils are beginning to use computers well for research purposes. They know how to use a world atlas on CD-ROM for example and enjoy discovering features of countries, such as Australia, for example. As part of their study of the local environment they conduct traffic surveys and use a computer program to illustrate the data in colourful pie charts.

HISTORY

96. By the end of both key stages pupils attain standards which are in line with national expectations. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in both key stages. Standards have been sustained since the last inspection.
97. By the age of seven, pupils begin to develop a good sense of the passage of time and know how things change over a period. For example, pupils in Year 1 talked about the types of toys from the past and the materials they were made from and how present day toys are new and shiny whereas old toys are often shabby, damaged or torn. Pupils are developing sound knowledge of people and events beyond their memory. For example, pupils in Year 2 know something about the changes in schools in the last 50 years. They know that tables have replaced desks, and in present times gymnastic lessons take place in halls with a range of apparatus. Whereas in the past physical education was often limited to playground activities. Some pupils noted the differences in the style of clothes worn by pupils and the absence of a uniform.
98. By the age of eleven, pupils have a good knowledge of events and aspects of life during the Tudor period. Pupils have acquired sound knowledge of why the Romans invaded and settled in Britain. Good work has been done on the Aztecs and Ancient Egypt. Pupils have good knowledge and understanding of many aspects of Aztec culture. They have produced good quality files which outline details on community life, law and order, family life and beliefs and gods. They are able to discuss with sensitivity the role of the Spanish in dominating and eventually destroying the Aztec civilization. They are developing a good understanding of the different ways of gathering evidence and distinguishing between fact and opinion. Most are able to distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence. For example pupils in Year 4, know that archaeological discoveries are an important source for finding out about life in the past. They know about life in ancient Egypt and that remains, drawings and artefacts provide clues about aspects of the past. They used some of these sources effectively in developing their understanding of Ancient Egyptian agricultural practices.
99. Pupils' attitudes to history are generally good. They are keen to discuss what they know and share their opinions. They listen carefully to their teachers and give a variety of sensible answers to questions. They show great interest in all topics studied and there is evidence that pupils have a deepening understanding of how people, places and attitudes change over time. The presentation of work in exercise and topic books is generally good. Most pupils behave well.
100. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils is also taken into account in judging the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the standards they attain. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory overall. Good quality lessons were seen in both key stages. In Year 1, teaching is good, the teacher sharing with the pupils the toys of her childhood. They handled and inspected a teddy bear and noted the worn fur and missing parts. They commented on the how toy babies of the past differed from today's baby dolls. This hands- on approach was very effective in developing the pupils' interest and understanding of history.
101. In the classes for seven to eleven-year-olds, a particular strength of the lessons is the quality of questioning which encourages pupils to explore their ideas and develops their use of historical language. For example, pupils when discussing evidence were pressed by the teacher to use appropriate language such as artefacts, remains, sources, opinion and facts. The good teaching promoted significant challenge where the teacher and pupils discussed difficult concepts. for example the difference between primary and secondary sources. In the planning there are clear details of each week's aims but they do not always identify clear assessment opportunities. Links to mathematics are satisfactory. Timelines are used in some lessons to reinforce counting skills, other links to mathematics were evident where pupils were asked to classify toys into old and new sets and sequence a range of vehicles.
102. Leadership of the subject is under-developed. There is no development plan. Resources are satisfactory and are well used in lessons although, with the exception of videos, there is insufficient attention given to the range of information technology available for use in this subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. By the end of Year 2 and by the end of Year 6 pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations of seven and eleven-year-olds. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to exceed national expectations but the school can demonstrate that, over the past three years, standards have improved. Expectations have increased over time, however, and the standards that were considered good in 1997 are usually now described as satisfactory. The school has, however, made a significant investment in purchasing and upgrading computers and is poised to make further improvements. In the class for the youngest pupils a painting program is used well to create colourful pictures and patterns. Pupils learn dexterity as they carefully move articles of clothing around the screen to dress a bear, remembering to put on the pants before the trousers. Pupils in Year 2 use a similar program in a slightly advanced form to create a person by placing legs, arms and head on a torso before labelling the parts of the body. Several found it challenging to place the word 'ankle' in the right place.
104. Across the school teaching is generally sound but there are shortcomings. Teachers teach a class how to use a program without establishing whether pupils have already mastered the skills involved. The lack of well-developed assessment procedures means that teachers' planning takes little account of pupils' prior learning. In several classes teachers have noted that nearly all pupils have computers at home but there are no systematic procedures to record the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils have acquired. Hence the work provided is too easy for some though more challenging for others. Teachers do not always maintain sufficiently high expectations of pupils' performance and set standards for achievement that are too low. Although resources have been improved there are still too few computers to enable teaching to be thoroughly effective. In several lessons up to fourteen pupils were crowded around one machine as they took it in turns to practise the skill that was being taught. Time was wasted as pupils awaited their turn or, having had a go, they became restless and lost interest. Teaching is enhanced by the good contribution which the learning support assistant makes. She works well with large groups, smaller groups and with individuals to explore new software and to experiment with machines. She is developing a good range of skills and is developing a good knowledge of the potential of computers to support learning. She works well with pupils and makes a good contribution to their progress. Examples of very good teaching were seen where pupils were introduced to the creation of databases, for instance. Here clear explanations of terms like, 'data', and 'order' were illustrated by reference to a 'Yellow pages' telephone directory before introducing and explaining the term 'field'. Each stage of learning about a database program was tackled step-by-step. The teacher had high expectations of pupils' ability to assimilate a great deal of data in a short space of time. The lesson was designed to give pupils the skills and understanding they needed for independent work on creating databases later in the week.
105. The subject is managed satisfactorily but the lack of resources restricts progress. The computers in many areas of the school are not used sufficiently and spend a long time dormant. Computers are not used enough to support teaching and learning across the curriculum. Pupils have access to the Internet and have received e mails from various parts of the world. This is, however, a new feature of provision and is greatly under-developed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

106. French is only taught to the pupils in Years 5 and 6. Pupils attain standards that exceed the levels normally expected of eleven-year-olds. Standards are better than at the time of the last inspection when they were satisfactory. Most make good progress, including those with special educational needs. There is no significant difference in the progress of boys and girls. Pupils have gained a good understanding of basic vocabulary and show confidence in asking and answering everyday questions about their birthdays, homes, families, the classroom, food, the weather, shopping and pastimes. Pupils listen carefully and take a keen interest in developing appropriate accents. They develop a good accent. They show enthusiasm for learning and behave sensibly in lessons, showing little self-consciousness as they attempt to repeat new words and phrases in French. They are confident in asking questions and for phrases to be repeated for clarification. Pupils show understanding of a range of familiar statements and questions, including everyday classroom language and instructions for setting tasks. It is appropriate that most of the work is oral but there is also an element of written work.
107. Teaching is good and pupils learn effectively. Pupils have adopted French names and the register is taken in French at the beginning of the lesson. A good pace of questioning and answering in the opening session is a well-established routine and all pupils answer questions posed in French readily, and again, in French. Lessons include a good variety of activities, such as asking a child to accompany the singing of the days of the week and months of the year on a recorder and mini dialogues where pupils converse one with another. A purposeful, business-like working ethos is established. The pace of lessons is brisk and the teacher has high expectations of behaviour and the pupils' performance. Relationships between the pupils and the teacher are good.
108. The introductory course has been well thought out. Pupils receive a good grounding that prepares them well to continue their studies in the secondary phase.

MUSIC

109. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 1 and there is insufficient evidence of pupils' attainment on which to base judgements.
110. Pupils in Key Stage 2 listen to and respond to music from different times and places. They are introduced to Western classical composers, for example, Mozart, Bach and Tchaikovsky, Afro-Caribbean and other forms of ethnic music. They are developing satisfactory listening skills being able to identify some of the instruments being played in an orchestral arrangement. No composition work was seen during the inspection and there is no recording of previous compositions. This element of music provision is generally neglected. However, in singing, progress is satisfactory. By Year 6, pupils sing with good expression, clear diction and improved voice control.
111. A minority of boys and girls, from Years 2 to 6, learn recorders and string instruments. Their attainment is good. They can sight read formal notation and confidently play their chosen instrument with a degree of competence. This is a strength in the school's music provision.
112. The pupils are well behaved and generally attentive. Their attitude to music, across the key stages, is satisfactory. They persevere to improve both their individual and group performances. The pupils are confident when performing in front of an audience knowing that their contribution is valued. They generally select and handle instruments with care.
113. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of learning and teaching. In the one lesson observed during the inspection the pupils' listening skills were challenged. The teaching engaged the pupils in focussing on the 'message' underpinning

contemporary popular songs. The lesson was well organised and the pupils made good progress in the development of their listening skills.

114. The previous inspection identified significant weaknesses in the organisation of the curriculum resulting in a lack of continuity and progression in the subject. It also highlighted the teachers' general lack of competence in developing the creative aspects of the subject. The school has adopted the government's recommended guidelines for the subject and planning shows that these are central to the teaching of music throughout the school. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115. During the inspection week, it was possible to observe examples of most aspects of the curriculum for physical education. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations at both key stages. Standards in gymnastic activities reach national expectations and pupils are given good opportunities to practise and refine a sequence of gymnastic activities using apparatus. Older pupils dance well to popular music, such as the theme from 'Grease', moving creatively and developing good sequences of movement. By the age of eleven pupils attain standards which meet national expectations in the games element of the subject. They attack and defend well and have a good understanding of teamwork. All pupils learn to swim and all attain the end of Key Stage 2 target of being able to swim competently for at least 25 metres. Findings are similar to those described in the previous inspection report.
116. Most of the teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in Key Stage 1. Teachers have sound subject knowledge, and set a good example to pupils by dressing appropriately and leading by example. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and manage the pupils well throughout lessons. Lessons are well planned and include the essential elements of warming up and cooling down. However, pupils were not seen to be given enough opportunities to observe, discuss and refine their work with each other, and with the class teacher, in order to develop their skills in gymnastics.
117. The progress of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is satisfactory. They are enthusiastic about their learning. They work purposefully to produce improvement, and make good use of practice and repetition in order to refine performance. They respond well to activities, and show enjoyment in lessons. They work well individually, in pairs and in groups. For example, in a dance lesson, pupils concentrated hard on improving their skills of moving in time with the music and worked well together in small groups when developing a dance sequence. Concentration was good when working individually and when working with a partner and groups.
118. Since the previous inspection, a policy and scheme of work developed by the local education authority have been adopted to promote continuity and progression in learning. The co-ordinator has good knowledge of the strengths and areas for development in the subject but has had too few opportunities to monitor in classes or to work alongside colleagues. Staff have attended special training sessions that led to donations of equipment to play a wide range of games. The school uses its field well for outside physical education and sporting activities but it was water logged at the time of the inspection. There is a good range of small apparatus and the playground is used well. A good range of sporting fixtures and after school clubs help to maintain interest and develop skills. The hall is used when it is too wet to play games outside but it is too small for a large class of older pupils to have enough space to develop their skills to best effect.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

119. Standards at the end of both key stages match the expectations of the local agreed syllabus. Scrutiny of work and discussions show that pupils in both key stages have an effective working knowledge of the themes of the syllabus. By the age of seven, pupils understand that some places are special. They know that a church is a special place for Christians. They have a

good grasp of important Biblical stories, such as the story of Noah and the flood and the life of Moses. They can re-tell the main facts of these stories and also discuss their significance. For example, they are aware that the rainbow is a symbol of God's promise to look after the world that he created. Pupils are given opportunities to study the customs and practices of other religions besides Christianity. They know that religious festivals are special occasions for remembering particular events in religion, for example Christmas and Easter.

120. Satisfactory progress is maintained at Key Stage 2. Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. All have a good knowledge of the Bible and recall that psalms are songs. All have an awareness of the importance of the Ten Commandments. As part of their studies of the parables Jesus told, a good number make suitable comparisons to modern day life. The major Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter and Harvest are celebrated and visits to the local church have been made. Remembrance Day and its implications have been considered by older pupils. Pupils have learned about human commitment to the care and support of others through studying the lives of such people as Florence Nightingale. Knowledge of other faiths is also developed. Pupils show a sound knowledge and understanding of the Sikh religion. They know that Sikhs worship in a Gurdwara which is any room that contains a copy of their Holy Book. Through their studies of Christianity and Sikhism the majority understand the belief that every human being is equal and use their speaking and listening skills to good effect when discussing issues such as racism.
121. Pupils enjoy their lessons generally and show interest in their work. Pupils respond well to their teacher in class and listen carefully to the views and opinions of others. They are developing an admirable level of religious tolerance and awareness of the cultural traditions of major world faiths. Religious Education contributes significantly to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.
122. Four lessons were observed during the inspection. Analysis of pupils' work and discussions with pupils is also taken into account in judging the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and the standards they attain. Teaching in both key stages is always at least satisfactory and good lessons were seen in Key Stage 2. A very effective lesson in Year 5/6 involved pupils reflecting on the importance of community to Sikhs. They discussed the significance of all members of the Sikh religion being equal and shared their ideas and understanding of this important Sikh principle. Pupils responded well to their teacher and listened carefully to the views and opinions of others. A notable feature of the better teaching in both key stages is also its effectiveness in helping pupils' spiritual development. In one class pupils are encouraged to write their own prayers. In these written prayers they show a strong sense of belief in a God and his power to help them in their every day life. Pupils are secure in their beliefs and value the work they do in this subject. All pupils make good progress in their learning because teachers generally use good skills of questioning to enable pupils to reflect on what they have learnt and how this affects the way people live their lives in the wider community.
123. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who ensures that all staff are given clear teaching plans and curriculum guidelines. Resources are satisfactory for the needs of the curriculum.