

INSPECTION REPORT

Abbotsmede Primary School

Peterborough

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110779

Headteacher: Mrs B. Wright

Reporting inspector: Mrs A. Soper
18148

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th July 2002

Inspection number: 230556

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Junior and Infant

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 – 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kingsley Road
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs M. Todd

Date of previous inspection: 5th April 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
18148	Alice Soper	Registered inspector	Geography Foundation stage Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
19335	Susan Dixon	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21858	John Pryor	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education Equal opportunities	
20692	Richard Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and technology Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
17456	Angela Smithers	Team inspector	English Art and design History English as an additional language	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Abbotsmede Community Primary School is situated in the East Ward of Peterborough, which is in the top 12 per cent of the most deprived wards in the country. In this catchment area there is a considerable amount of family movement and between one third and one half of the main school population can change in a year. The school, which includes a nursery for children from the age of three, is housed in a large building and there are 197 pupils on roll. There are 73 children who attend the nursery part-time. Children who attend the nursery come from further afield and do not all transfer to the school's reception classes. A high number of pupils, in comparison to national averages, have special educational needs and Statements of Special Educational Need. Most of these pupils have literacy, numeracy and behavioural difficulties. There is a much higher than average number of pupils whose first language is not English. These include pupils from Pakistani, Portuguese, Albanian and Czechoslovakian backgrounds, some of whom are from refugee families. There are also children from traveller families. Around one third of the pupils require additional support in speaking English as an additional language. A much higher than average number of pupils is eligible for free school meals. Attainment on entry to the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The overall effectiveness of the school is good. The school very successfully includes all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, travellers' children and refugees. It has a good racial equality policy, which is evident in its learning climate. Standards in the core subjects are improving. The quality of teaching is good. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher in the school's management. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- ◆ Standards are good across the school in information and communication technology.
- ◆ There is very good leadership and management by the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- ◆ The quality of teaching is good and there are very good relationships.
- ◆ Pupils have very good attitudes to learning.
- ◆ There is good provision for pupils' personal development and their welfare.
- ◆ There is a good partnership with parents.
- ◆ The provision for pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, refugees and travellers' children is good.

What could be improved

- ◆ Standards by the end of Year 6 in most subjects.
- ◆ The quality of the provision in the Foundation Stage.
- ◆ Attendance and punctuality.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 2000, when Her Majesty's Inspectors removed it from special measures. Since then, there has been a good improvement. After a period when the school had several changes of leadership a new headteacher was appointed in September 2001. The school now has clear aims, with all statutory requirements being met. Teaching has improved and there has been an improved rate of progress in pupils' performance. There are excellent systems in place for monitoring pupils' progress in English and mathematics and for providing the required support. Senior staff and co-ordinators are beginning to take a stronger role in management. The nursery provision is being successfully improved, though there is still work to be accomplished. There has been a rapid rate of improvement overall and there is good capacity for this to continue.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	E*	E*	E*	E*	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E very low E*
Mathematics	E	E*	E*	E*	
Science	E*	E*	E*	E*	

The table shows that pupils' performance by the end of Year 6 in the 2001 national assessments was very low, in the lowest five per cent nationally and when compared to schools in similar contexts, in English, mathematics and science. A similar pattern is seen over the last three years. The overall performance is affected by the well above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the higher than average numbers of pupils for whom English is not their first language. There is also considerable movement to and from the school and poor attendance, all of which affect performance. The school's information shows that in Year 6 in 2001, all of those with average ability attained standards that were in line with the national averages. Evidence from the inspection shows that standards in all three subjects are improving by the end of Year 6. They are no longer very low but below the national average and pupils are achieving in line with their capability. The improvement has been achieved by improved teaching, planning and assessment procedures and by the setting of good targets.

At the end of Year 2 in the 2001 national assessments pupils' performance was well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. It was above average in reading, below average in writing and satisfactory in mathematics when compared to schools in similar contexts. Inspection evidence shows that attainment is below the national averages in all three areas, but is improving similarly as for Year 6. Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their capabilities.

Standards are good in information and communication technology by the end of Years 2 and 6, due to the good provision and teaching. Standards are satisfactory by the end of Years 2 and

6 in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. In science standards are satisfactory by the end of Year 2, but unsatisfactory by the end of Year 6. Standards in history and geography are unsatisfactory and below national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils meet the expectations of the religious education programme by the end of Year 2 but not by the end of Year 6 where the planning lacks continuity.

By the end of the reception year, children meet the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, their creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They have yet to meet these goals in communication, language and literacy, early mathematics and physical development.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and like school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in lessons. They move around the school sensibly and play well together at break times.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils show respect for one another and appreciate others' contributions. They share and take turns willingly.
Attendance	Poor. There is too much absence, despite the school's encouragement to attend regularly. Too many pupils are late.

Attitudes, values and personal development are strengths. Attendance is a significant problem. Too many pupils miss out on their learning when absent and when arriving late for the start of the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery & Reception	Year 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall. A very small amount was unsatisfactory. The quality of teaching is good in English and often good in mathematics. In mathematics, expectations are not always appropriate for pupils in the mixed age classes. Literacy and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily, though there is not always enough focus on developing pupils' speaking skills across the curriculum. Particular strengths in the teaching include the very good management of pupils and the very good use of time, support staff and resources. These enable all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, refugees and travellers' children to achieve well. The school meets the needs of all of these pupils well. The weaknesses in teaching relate to the planning for progression across year groups in the foundation subjects and that for some reception children, whose needs are not always sufficiently met.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is not yet fully satisfactory in ensuring pupils develop skills progressively in several subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are supported well in lessons and their needs are met. Individual education plans, though satisfactory overall, vary in the quality of detail provided.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. There is effective support from bilingual assistants and pupils are fully included in school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. There is good provision for pupils' moral and social development and satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. Pupils show respect for others' values and beliefs. They understand right and wrong and care for each other.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There is good care. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour.

There is a good partnership with parents. The curriculum is enhanced by the very good extra-curricular activities provided. There is very good provision for English, mathematics and information and communication technology and good provision for science. There are excellent assessment procedures in English. There are weaknesses in the programmes and assessment procedures for art and design, design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. There is good personal support and guidance for pupils. There are good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher. Most other key staff are still continuing to develop their management roles.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Statutory duties are fulfilled well. Governors are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are taking an active role in the school's development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has successfully addressed most issues from the last inspection and has identified good priorities based on detailed audits of its performance.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Funds are used very efficiently and effectively, specific grants are used very well and very good use is made of all available resources.

There is a very good number of staff, including support staff. The accommodation is very good and there are good resources overall. The leadership is very good. The management by the

headteacher and deputy headteacher is very good. They have a very good understanding of the school's needs and are successfully effecting improvement. The management contributions of most other staff are still being developed after a period in which these roles lapsed. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Their children like school. ◆ The teaching is good. ◆ The school is approachable. ◆ Their children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Links with parents. ◆ The quality of information about their children's progress.

Inspectors fully agree with parents' positive views. They disagree with their views on the links with parents, which have been strengthened and are now good. Most information is good, though inspectors agree that the quality of pupils' reports varies and requires review.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The school's performance at the end of Year 6 in the 2001 national assessments was well below the national average and in comparison with schools in similar contexts, in English, mathematics and science. It was in the lowest five per cent nationally. In the same year, performance was unsatisfactory and well below the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. The Year 2 performance was above average in reading and satisfactory in mathematics when compared to similar schools. It was below average in writing, compared to schools in similar contexts.
2. The school has undergone a period in which there have been considerable changes, which have contributed to the results and pupils' achievements. There have been six headteachers since the school went into special measures in February 1998. Improvements in English, mathematics and science were reported by Her Majesty's Inspectors of schools, who removed the school from special measures in April 2000. The present headteacher was appointed in September 2001 and has made very good progress in raising standards, the quality of teaching and the overall learning climate. Parents have noted the greatly improved behaviour of the pupils and the school's effectiveness in helping their children to progress.
3. There is a well above average number of pupils with special educational needs and Statements of Special Educational Need. There are higher than average numbers of pupils for whom English is not their first language, including refugees, who did not benefit from bilingual support when undertaking the tests in 2001. There are also travellers' children, who frequently move school and significant numbers of pupils whose attendance is poor. The school's information shows that in 2001 all of those with average ability attained standards that were in line with the national averages. Around one half of the pupils moved into the school during Years 2 to 6 and made at least one level of progress within a year.
4. Standards are continuing to improve in the core subjects, due to the concerted efforts made by the school to improve the quality of teaching, planning and assessment procedures. Standards are still below the national average by the end of Years 2 and 6 in English and mathematics, but most pupils are attaining within their capabilities. Speaking skills are generally weak across the school and are not always given sufficient profile in lessons. In some instances in mathematics, expectations of what pupils might achieve are too low. Pupils with English as an additional language now receive very good support to understand what is expected of them. Standards in science are now satisfactory by the end of Year 2. They are still below the national average by the end of Year 6, but are improving, as a result of the good provision, with around two thirds of pupils attaining standards expected for their age.
5. Standards are good in information and communication technology by the end of Years 2 and 6, which is a very good improvement since 2000. They are satisfactory by the end of both years in art and design, design and technology, music and physical education. Standards are satisfactory by the end of Year 2 in religious education but not by the end of Year 6, where the quantity of work undertaken and the range and depth of the subjects studied is inadequate. Standards are unsatisfactory by the end of Years 2 and 6 in geography and history, largely due to the lack of continuity and progression of the programmes provided.

6. Overall, pupils achieve well in terms of their intellectual and creative effort. They work hard and show interest in their learning. They develop a secure understanding of their own learning, supported well by the systems in place, such as target groupings and feedback about their work from teachers. The good procedures in place to support pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, refugees and travellers' children enable these pupils to experience success and to achieve well.

7. Children enter the nursery with well below average prior experience and achievement. Those who move on to the reception stage have made sound progress, but their attainment on entry to the school is still below average, particularly in their communication, language and literacy skills, early mathematical development and in their physical development. They meet the early learning goals in their personal, social and emotional development, creative development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. There are some aspects of the provision that are not fully satisfactory in ensuring continuity, but the school is continuing to develop the provision and organisation in the Foundation Stage and has good plans for enriching children's overall experiences.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work. They are enthusiastic, conscientious and show interest in their work. Pupils settle to tasks quickly and work well alone or as members of groups as required. In particular, pupils help and encourage each other to solve problems and improve their work. For example, in a Year 4 and 5 lesson pupils worked successfully in pairs and small groups to research the history of Ancient Greece. As pupils move through the school they develop good independent learning skills. They use reference books confidently and access information from computers and the Internet. For some younger children there are not always sufficient opportunities for them to make choices and to develop independence. Pupils are proud of their work and their school and, in turn, their efforts are celebrated in lessons and assemblies. Attractive displays of pupils' work throughout the school convey to pupils the high value that is placed upon what they do.

9. Pupils' behaviour is good overall and many examples of very good behaviour were seen during the inspection. No unacceptable behaviour of any kind was observed. The school has been very successful in improving behaviour. There is an effective system of rewards and sanctions which pupils feel acknowledges their good work, effort and behaviour. Bullying is rare. Although there have been some racist incidents in the past, there is clear evidence that these have been handled very well and are now a very rare occurrence. The school has a high number of exclusions, which has been partly a result of higher expectations with regard to acceptable behaviour. Exclusions have in the main proved to be very effective and inspection evidence shows that their numbers have dropped considerably over the present academic year.

10. Pupils' personal development and the relationships in this school community are very good. Pupils play and work alongside each other amicably. They take care of each other well and, in particular, older pupils adopt a responsible approach to younger ones. Pupils are friendly and helpful to all and show respect for their classmates and for adults. They are offered a variety of opportunities to take responsibility and undertake their duties very well. For example, at lunch times pupils serve drinks, taking great care to ensure that no one is missed out. Personal and social education lessons support this area well and the school has good plans to develop aspects of citizenship further with the introduction of a school council.

11. Attendance rates are well below the national average and are poor. The school has worked hard to encourage good attendance and has been successful in reducing the amount of unauthorised absence. Whilst many pupils have good attendance records, far too many do not. An expected number of absences are due to normal childhood illness. A significant number are due to holiday taking in term time and many are amongst pupils whose attendance rates give great cause for concern. For those pupils involved this has a serious and detrimental effect upon their learning. Most pupils come to school on time eager to start the day, but again a significant number are late and in some cases regularly miss the start of early morning lessons. Registration periods themselves are none the less efficient and provide a calm and happy start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12. The quality of teaching is good. It was good or better in 6 out of 10 lessons observed, with most other teaching being satisfactory. This shows a good improvement since 2000 when the report produced by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools found teaching to be mostly satisfactory and good in one third of lessons. There has also been a good improvement in the quality of teaching in the nursery, which is now at least satisfactory. The teaching is consistently good or better in information and communication technology. It is good in English and good overall in mathematics and science. Examples of very good and good teaching were seen in geography, history and religious education, whilst examples of good teaching were also seen in lessons in most other subjects. A small amount of unsatisfactory teaching was seen.

13. Particular strengths in the teaching include the very good management of pupils and very good use of time, support staff and resources in Years 1 to 6. The school is an orderly community and presents a calm and purposeful learning environment. The good quality of the teaching effectively motivates pupils to work hard and to have very positive attitudes to learning. Support staff are used very well in lessons to help pupils of all abilities. Pupils with special educational needs, those with English as an additional language, travellers' children and refugees are closely supported and make good progress. There is very good use of resources, including books, equipment and other apparatus and the inner quadrangle area has been rejuvenated to provide many learning experiences, such as science activities and gardening. The increased extra-curricular provision is also used well to enhance pupils' experiences.

14. In the Foundation Stage, there is similar, effective support for children, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language and refugees. Children with speech difficulties are supported well in the nursery. Overall, children in the nursery and in the reception and Year 1 class are managed well, but there are some limitations in the management of children, particularly in the reception class, due to the weaknesses in the organisation of activities.

15. Overall, teachers have good knowledge and understanding and they teach basic skills well. Most support staff also have secure knowledge and understanding of ways in which to help pupils. The school benefits greatly from the expertise of bilingual staff, who not only help pupils and children to acquire the English language, but also assist with wider matters such as developing links with parents who do not speak English.

16. There are good expectations of achievement and behaviour, which enable pupils to make good progress in lessons. As a result, pupils work hard and try their best. In the very good and good lessons seen, teachers ensured pupils knew and understood the objectives, discussed tasks fully and held effective conclusions to review what had been achieved. Teaching methods often included a range of effective strategies to maintain pupils' interest. Teachers included all pupils well in discussions and subsequent tasks, which enabled the lowest attaining pupils to achieve similar success as their classmates. This was particularly noticeable, for example, in a Year 4 and 5 geography lesson, where pupils with special educational needs were independently successful in locating information about Rutland Water. Similarly, those from other ethnic backgrounds proudly contributed their information about water in their families' countries. Opportunities are sometimes missed to involve pupils in discussion and to develop their speaking skills.

17. Teachers' planning is broadly satisfactory. Long term planning follows the schemes of work provided. The school has worked very hard to establish common planning formats, which include clear lesson objectives and outcomes. There is effective planning in the core subjects of English and mathematics, where work is clearly identified to meet the needs of pupils with differing prior attainment and where support is indicated for groups of pupils, such as those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The excellent assessment procedures in English support planning and provision for additional literacy support. Planning is satisfactory overall in science. The school has not yet had the time to develop planning and assessment procedures for the foundation subjects to such an effective standard, which results in a lack of adapted work being provided for pupils with differing attainment. This means that pupils are often provided with the same tasks and as a result average attaining and more able pupils do not always make the progress they should. The school has yet to ensure that more able pupils are consistently challenged across curriculum subjects. Planning for religious education insufficiently follows the agreed syllabus in Key Stage 2.

18. The Foundation Stage planning is satisfactory overall. Nursery planning is very detailed, including information about support staff's duties and routines. Activities are well written in the planning. As with the reception classes' planning, the activities do not clearly refer to the stepping stones that progress towards the early goals. Planning for children in the reception and Year 1 class inappropriately follows Key Stage 1 National Curriculum programmes of study. In the nursery, sound ongoing assessment procedures are being developed, with all staff taking part in monitoring children's progress. In the reception class, there are detailed records of children's achievements, though activities observed did not take good account of children's prior attainment.

19. The weaknesses in the teaching and learning observed centred on the lack of effective planning and development of some lessons. In one, the mathematical tasks were not well matched to children's attainment and they made insufficient progress during the lesson. There was insufficient explanation about the activity and several lacked interest and concentration. Children were not ready to undertake such a sustained activity. In another, the lesson lacked a clear introduction and effective conclusion and the pace was too slow. Time was not used effectively and efficiently. Children followed instructions but did not benefit from encouragement or demonstrations to help them to refine and improve their performance in games.

20. The individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory. Teachers plan appropriately to support pupils' particular needs and, in practice,

enable them to make good progress in lessons. Whilst some plans are good, with precise targets for improvement, others are too general and do not show clear, measurable steps towards meeting the targets. This has been identified by the senior management as an area requiring improvement and is to be addressed in the near future.

21. Pupils have a good understanding of their own learning. Targets for improvement in English and mathematics are shared with them and the targeted teaching time each morning helps pupils to be involved in evaluating their progress. Marking is satisfactory overall and usually provides constructive guidance for pupils on how to improve their work. Homework is used satisfactorily to support pupils' learning.

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

22. The school offers a broad curriculum, in keeping with national requirements. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. Religious education follows the Cambridgeshire locally agreed syllabus in Years 1 and 2 but does not fully follow this in Years 3 to 6. The curriculum is satisfactorily balanced in that the time allocated on the timetable to each subject is appropriate. This was also the finding of the previous inspection report. The report noted the school's emphasis on the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in order to raise pupils' standards of attainment in English and mathematics. This emphasis has continued and standards have risen.

23. There are policies and schemes of work for each subject. Most of the policies are now out of date. Teachers base their long-term planning on national guidelines ensuring that they satisfactorily cover the components of each subject. In the medium and shorter term, planning for subjects other than English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology is unsatisfactory, particularly in Years 3 to 6. Teachers do not adequately plan for the progressive development of the skills essential to each subject. The lack of assessment procedures in these subjects also contributes to this. Planning does not always sufficiently take into account mixed age groups in the same class, or plan for work appropriate to the different levels of pupils' attainment. The result of this is that pupils of average and above average attainment are sometimes not challenged to achieve their full potential.

24. The school is aware that in the drive to improve standards in literacy and numeracy some subjects have not received their full requirement in terms of planning, assessment and skill development in the past two years. It is also aware that pupils are entitled to be taught a balanced and relevant curriculum. The school now plans to introduce a curriculum "map" based on a two-year cycle of subject topics to attempt to remedy the deficiencies. Skill development will be addressed through practically based work and the aim of the curriculum will be to "widen pupils' horizons". Visits to places of historical, environmental and cultural interest will be an important factor in this, as will be special weeks focusing particularly on science, the arts, sports and so on.

25. The school is a fully inclusive community. All pupils have an equal opportunity to learn and make progress, as well as participating in all curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils with special educational needs account for more than half of the school population. They receive good support in lessons from a large team of learning support assistants. The school follows the revised Code of Practice in its assessment of pupils with special educational

needs. The individual education plans drawn up for these pupils are satisfactory overall, but vary in quality, sometimes providing targets that are too general. Teachers regularly set homework to extend and reinforce pupils' learning. The school has produced a good homework policy.

26. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. There is a clear policy that aims to prepare pupils for adult life. The school also aims to create a calm, friendly and stimulating environment where pupils feel happy, valued and secure. The scheme of work is clear and includes citizenship, personal safety, hygiene and relationships. It is delivered through aspects of the curriculum such as science, religious education and "circle time", which is timetabled for every class. The personal, social and health education programme is linked to expectations of right behaviour in and out of school and recognises the need to raise the self-esteem of many pupils. The school is involved in the "Healthy Schools" project and the "Eco-Schools" project, which deals with caring for the local environment.

27. The governors have agreed a sex education policy whose teaching is supported by the school nurse. There is a structured scheme for Key Stage 2, with particular emphasis on Year 6 pupils. Drugs education is included in the personal, social and health education programme and is supported by local authority trainers and specialists. A named governor supports the personal, social and health education programme, visits the school and reports back to the governing body.

28. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities that includes hockey, football, country dance, art, cookery, play club, recorder playing and drama. The school participates in hockey matches with other schools and plans to extend sporting contacts. All pupils experience a wide variety of visits to museums, galleries, churches, environmental sites and local places of interest. Many visitors to the school also enhance the curriculum. These include the local vicar, a theatre group, students from other schools and musicians. Pupils have listened to talks about Victorian toys and have learned about the fire engine.

29. There is good involvement with the community. A business enterprise project has involved a community police officer working with pupils from Years 3 and 4 on the theme of making the right decisions and co-operating with each other. A police superintendent will visit the school to present certificates to the pupils. The project follows on from last year when Year 6 pupils worked with the manager of a commercial firm on international trade. The local education authority has provided substantial funding for a Toy Library, from which families can borrow. The school's information and communication technology room is used by the community one morning each week. The many visitors to the school include parents and grandparents who talk to pupils about past times in the local community and also about their own cultures.

30. There are good links with other schools. Year 5 gifted pupils in mathematics have been to the local secondary school to further their progress. The "Excellence in Cities" project is to fund a learning mentor for gifted and talented pupils in conjunction with three other primary schools and also a specialist teacher for science. The New Opportunities fund has provided the training for information and communication technology in collaboration with another primary school.

31. The provision for pupils' personal development overall is good. Provision for their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory, whilst that for their social and moral development is good, with some very good features. The daily assemblies meet the

requirements for collective worship. During the inspection the assemblies focused on the theme of "Friendship". In one assembly pupils listened to a story contrasting a good and bad friend and reflected on "what kind of a friend am I?" The assembly concluded with a prayer of thanks for friends and their gifts. The theme and the receptive atmosphere provided a good enhancement of pupils' spiritual development. Pupils celebrate religious festivals of a number of the world's faiths, including Christmas, Easter, Eid, Diwali and the Chinese New Year. Year 3 and 4 pupils, listening to a Zimbabwean story in English, think how they would feel if they lived in a community without electricity or fresh water. Pupils show good respect for others' values and beliefs, for example for Muslim pupils observing Ramadan.

32. The school strongly and consistently reinforces the difference between right and wrong behaviour and encourages pupils to think through their actions, considering their impact on others. Classroom rules are prominently displayed. Pupils all know that the school has high expectations of their best behaviour. "Behaviour sheets" recording pupils' unacceptable behaviour have dwindled from 145 in the first term to seven this term. Parents co-operate well with the school in supporting the promotion of good behaviour. There is a clear policy to curtail and prevent bullying, with precise rules for class, playtime and lunchtime, based on respect for others and safety. Rewards and affirmation of good behaviour as well as sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are known and appreciated by all pupils. The success of these policies is evident in pupils' good behaviour and very good relationships with each other and adults. Inspectors found pupils to be friendly, courteous and eager to talk about their school. The school describes its pupils as caring and trustworthy. Pupils also consider wider moral issues such as the creation of Rutland Water. The "Eco-School" project encourages them to care for their local environment.

33. The many visits and excursions develop pupils' relationships and interaction with each other and their teachers well. The school plans to introduce a residential experience for older pupils as soon as possible. There are many opportunities in school for pupils to take responsibility. For example, older pupils give out cutlery at lunchtime. During lunch, pupils visit each table serving a drink to adults and pupils alike. Lunch is a pleasant, social occasion taken in a relaxed atmosphere. There is no pressure to finish and leave the hall. Pupils are well integrated and the carefully organised lunchtime makes a significant contribution to pupils' social development. The "play buddies" arrangement enables trained older pupils to play and talk with younger ones.

34. Religious education helps pupils to understand the culture, traditions and values of different religious faiths. There are good links with the local church; next term pupils will visit the local mosque. The school aims to celebrate the cultures of all in its community. Art and design and music offer some opportunities for pupils to experience cultures other than their own. For example, pupils draw in the style of Aboriginal designs. In music they listen to West Indian rhythmic music and in English consider an African story. Geography displays in the school show pupils' links with different countries of the world. Pupils learn short phrases from the languages of their friends.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The procedures for the care, safety and well being of pupils are good. The school offers an attractive, calm and caring environment. Pupils from all the ethnic groups represented in this school, including those from the traveller community and those new to this country, are equally valued and cared for. There is a good health and safety policy that is reflected in

Careful daily practice, efficient systems and the close involvement of the governing body. The procedures for child protection are also good. The staff are appropriately trained and aware and there are good plans to build on this further in the next academic year. Pupils are made aware of the need to care for themselves through personal and social education lessons and in other areas of the curriculum, such as in a Year 1 geography lesson where pupils considered aspects of road safety.

36. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development and progress are satisfactory. Whilst the school has no formal whole school system for monitoring and recording pupils' personal progress, it does have a variety of informal systems, including teachers' notes, incident records and pupils' individual records. These enable the school to identify any problems and to provide pupils with personal targets for improvement when needed. Pupils are provided with good personal and educational guidance, including the provision of clear targets for improvement in mathematics and English. Pupils are well involved in discussions about these and they feel that teachers are always helpful and encouraging.

37. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are excellent in English, good in mathematics and satisfactory in science and information and communication technology. The school has yet to develop suitable assessment procedures in the other subjects of the curriculum. The information gained from a wide variety of tests and assessments is used well in the core subjects to set individual targets and to plan work. This has led to a significant improvement in standards in these subjects. It is used less effectively in other subjects.

38. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school meets with statutory requirements and the administration procedures are efficient. The attendance records of all pupils are closely monitored and unexplained absences investigated swiftly. The school benefits from the support of an education welfare officer and outside specialists should attendance cause concern. Parents are provided with clear messages about the need for good attendance and pupils are encouraged by a variety of awards. Despite the school's efforts to encourage good attendance, too many pupils are away from school too often. This seriously disadvantages their education. Lateness is also a concern for the school and is strongly discouraged.

39. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and for eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. There are clear, good quality policies to support these areas and they are consistently and effectively applied across the school. There is a well understood and popular system of rewards and sanctions that provides both pupils and teachers with very good support. Issues surrounding bullying and racism are also well supported by good quality policies and by the provision of suitable work in personal and social education lessons, assemblies and by the generally high expectations of the school. The success of this is evident in the considerable reduction in racist incidents and the significant improvements in behaviour and relationships across the whole school community.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. Parents' views of the school are good. Parents support the school well and are appreciative of the many recent improvements that have been made. They feel that the school is approachable, has high expectations and offers good teaching. They feel that their children make good progress and become mature and responsible people. The inspection findings

support all of these views. Some parents are unhappy with the information they receive about how their child is getting on and with some aspects of the school's work with parents. The overall quality of information is good, though inspectors agree that the quality of written progress reports for parents varies. The partnership with parents has improved greatly and is now a strength of the school.

41. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is good. The school is keen to involve parents more in the life of the school and in supporting their children's education. Parents are invited to various events that allow them to gain insight into their children's work. For example, class assemblies allow pupils to show their work to their parents and celebration assemblies do much to build confidence and share success. There is good support where needed for families that have English as an additional language. The school recently conducted a survey of parents' views and has responded very well to a request for more extra-curricular clubs, where the provision is now very good.

42. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good. Parents are supportive of the school and want their children to do well. Some are able to help in school and this opportunity has led some to develop their skills further as classroom assistants. Attendance at school events is good and parents support new initiatives and improvements well. There is a good relationship between the parents and their school.

43. The quality of information provided for parents is good. The governing body's annual report, school brochure and newsletters are all clearly laid out and contain useful information. Until recently, little information was provided about the curriculum and coming work. The school identified this and responded quickly with improved information and there are good plans to extend this information further in the autumn term. Reporting on pupils' progress is made at consultation evenings and with a written report in the summer term. Written reports are satisfactory but do not always identify pupils' difficulties or provide guidance for improvement. The school has also identified report writing as an area for improvement.

44. The contribution of parents to children's learning at home and at school is good. Parents want their children to do well and homework is supported well. Parents are provided with clear information about the requirements of homework and they make good use of record books to indicate their support and involvement in their children's education. Whilst many parents are clearly committed to their children's education, a number are not, as can be seen by the poor attendance records of a significant number of pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. Leadership and management of the school are good overall. The quality of leadership is very good and is a strength of the school. The headteacher, very ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has made significant improvements to the ethos of the school within the last year. This is recognised by the pupils and the adults within the school community. There is an improvement in both the behaviour and in the standards attained in the national tests. After a number of years of considerable change, there is a shared commitment to continued improvement, which has the potential to be very successful. The management roles of key staff are being developed well. Most management responsibilities have been delegated, with some reorganisation of these planned for the next academic year to make the most effective and efficient use of staff's expertise. The roles are not yet fully contributing towards effective evaluation and development as they have only recently been revived since the appointment of the new headteacher.

46. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities very effectively and is well informed about the outcomes of its decisions. It has made a valuable contribution to monitoring the requirements of previous inspection reports over the last four years and through these is very aware of the areas of strength and those that need development. Members of the governing body are honest and forthright in their dealings with school and ask challenging questions.

47. The school is a calm, secure and academically challenging environment for all its pupils. There are good management strategies in place to support the care and learning of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, refugees and travellers' children. This is a fully inclusive school. Information gained from the excellent English, good mathematics and sound science assessment procedures is assisting the setting of improved performance targets for all pupils. The school has yet to ensure that there is effective use of assessment to inform planning and teaching in all foundation subjects.

48. All staff have positive attitudes towards further improvement and are beginning to work well together and as a team. They work hard and are fully committed to the pupils within their care. They have clearly defined responsibilities but currently some changes are taking place and some roles are temporary. Whereas most staff have an overview of the teaching and learning within their subject responsibilities, their views do not have an impact on the standards pupils achieve, the balance and relevance of the curriculum, or the improvement of teaching. The monitoring of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory, particularly in the foundation subjects within the curriculum. Good systems are being introduced to support teacher's professional development and to improve their role as designated members of the team. For example, the school is involved in an "Improving the Quality of Education For All" project, which studies the teaching and learning throughout the school. All staff have completed the New Opportunities Fund computer training. Performance management is in place and is used effectively. The school supports other adults working within the school community very well, encouraging them to gain further qualifications and accept additional responsibilities. There is good provision to support the training of new teachers and the induction of those new to the school.

49. The school has worked hard to address the issues set for them by previous inspections and have been successful. The school improvement plan is good, showing clear priorities for development and targets, including the improvement of literacy and numeracy, medium and short term planning, monitoring, the quality of provision in the nursery and the overall quality of teaching. Individual plans for each priority area are detailed. Areas for development are known to the school community and are clearly linked to realistic timescales. There are identified evaluation criteria against which to measure the success of the initiative and an awareness of the need to finance it within a budgetary framework.

50. Educational priorities are very well supported through the school's financial planning and this is due to the excellent administration of the budget by the staff responsible. Although there is currently a significant sum of money carried forward from previous years within the budget, this is due to the changes in leadership within the school and will be significantly reduced within the coming financial year. In particular, considerable money is to be spent on extending and improving the outdoor area for the nursery and structural alterations to allow ease of movement from one area to another. Funds are also delegated for improving resources and storage for art and design and design and technology. Specific grants are used very effectively. For example, the school makes very good use of a grant of £8,000 towards improving attendance by providing pupils with incentives such as buying "book

credits". The school is making very good use of new technology. Effective use is made of local education authority consultants to support improvements. The school has good procedures in place to ensure that the principles of best value are applied.

51. The accommodation both indoors and out is very good. Currently there are plans for further improvements, particularly for a large development within the nursery. All areas of the school are clean and well maintained. Staff make very good use of the areas of display to present pupils' work so that it is seen at its best and this encourages pupils to take a pride in their work and the environment. There is an appropriate range of expertise among teaching staff and the quantity and quality of the support staff make a significant, positive contribution to pupils' learning, particularly to those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, refugees and traveller's children. Resources are good overall and very good in some areas of the curriculum, such as information and communication technology, which has had a very positive affect on the standards pupils achieve. There are insufficient resources for painting in art and design.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

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

- ◆ Maintain the good standards in information and communication technology and continue to improve standards in all subjects by the end of Year 6 by:

- *continuing the effective strategies being used to raise standards in the core subjects;*
- *reviewing and further developing the planning and assessment systems for the foundation subjects;*
- *continuing with the existing good development of co-ordinators' roles to improve the rigour of monitoring, evaluating and developing their subject responsibilities;*

(paragraphs 4, 5, 15, 16, 18, 22, 36, 47, 71, 74, 76, 81, 84-86, 88, 98-100, 103-109, 113, 114, 116, 119, 122, 136, 137, 142, 144-148 and 150)

- ◆ Continue to improve the quality of the provision in the Foundation Stage by:

- *continuing with existing plans for developing the nursery;*
- *ensuring that all children in the Foundation Stage follow an appropriate curriculum, which includes a good balance between child and adult-directed activities;*

(paragraphs 7, 8, 13, 17, 55, 56, 58, 59, 60, 64, 65, 66, 69 and 70)

- ◆ Continue to use and develop the good systems in place to improve attendance and punctuality.

(paragraphs 3, 11 and 37)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should also include the following less important issue in its action plan. This is referred to in paragraphs 39, 42 and 43:

- ◆ Improve the quality and consistency of written progress reports to parents.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

65

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

46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	7	32	24	2	0	0
Percentage	0	11	49	37	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	73	197
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	145

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	10
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17	100

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	73

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	57
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	68

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	17	18	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	8	10
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	20	19	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (71)	54 (58)	63 (71)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	8	9	7
	Girls	12	12	11
	Total	20	21	18
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	57 (68)	60 (77)	51 (65)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	7	10	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	29 (39)	29 (39)	41 (56)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	24 (44)	29 (50)	35 (50)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

As the number of boys and girls in Year 6 undertaking the National Curriculum tests were either 10 or less then only the school's overall percentage results are reported.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	28
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	104
Any other minority ethnic group	28

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	2	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	7	1
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	22	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)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.8 : 1
Average class size	24.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	37 : 1
Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	4.6 : 1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	809,064
Total expenditure	776,080
Expenditure per pupil	3,481
Balance brought forward from previous year	49,059
Balance carried forward to next year	82,043

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0

Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	234
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	70	29	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	37	1	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	52	7	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	40	7	0	13
The teaching is good.	67	33	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	57	33	8	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	40	0	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	34	0	0	11
The school works closely with parents.	36	43	13	2	6
The school is well led and managed.	51	36	2	4	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	36	2	2	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	49	7	1	16

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

52. The Foundation Stage children are in the nursery, the reception class and the reception and Year 1 class. Children are admitted to the nursery from the age of three years and most, but not all, move on to the reception classes when they are four years old. Their overall attainment on entry to the nursery is well below average. A high proportion of the children in the nursery are on the special educational needs register, with almost one half of them being on the school's Action Plus stage, requiring individual support. Many of the children have delayed, immature or speech difficulties.

Personal, social and emotional development

53. The inspection of the school in April 2000 by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools found that there was a need to improve the quality of provision in the nursery. The school has acted positively to this issue, re-deploying staff and developing the provision with the support from local education authority advisers. There has been considerable achievement since September 2001, including a review of the organisation, planning and teaching methods. There is a strong focus on children's personal, social and emotional development and their communication skills. This is having a good impact on the rate of progress in children's personal, social and emotional development. At the time of the inspection, near the end of the school year, most children are progressing well along the stepping stones to meeting the early learning goals in this area of learning. Most children are developing skills of choosing and moving independently to experience a range of activities.

54. The teacher and other adults in the nursery provide good guidance and support, encouraging children to take a full part in all activities. They encourage more confident children to take increasing responsibility, such as following more than one instruction for taking messages from one room to another. All children learn to select and place their own name card in its place during registration. Children begin to work together successfully, though some still move quickly from one activity to another and play on their own. Snack times have been designed well to promote children's personal and social skills. This includes children in helping to make the snacks, laying the table and holding conversations with each other and the adults. It also provides a calm, pleasant experience for the children. In all observations, adults took particular care to talk to children, asking open-ended questions and encouraging them to communicate as well as they could.

55. In the reception class, children's personal, social and emotional development is satisfactory in some aspects but the organisation and development of activities has limitations and opportunities for developing this aspect fully are missed. During literacy work with the whole class, the teacher and support staff encourage children to share their enjoyment of stories, which are read expressively by the teacher. The organisation and management of activities has weaknesses. Activities are not well devised and prepared, both indoors and in the outdoor play area. Children do not have the opportunity to move spontaneously from indoors to outdoors and to make their own choices. There is too much direction from adults, limiting children's developing independence and ability to make choices. In activities, such as making model bridges, adults put the necessary "junk" materials and tools on tables for the children, limiting their development in selecting and accessing resources for themselves.

56. In the reception and Year 1 class, children's personal, emotional and social development meets the early learning goals for the Foundation Stage. All children have reached the age of five, though some only very recently. The children have confidence, very positive attitudes and respond well. All children, including those with special educational needs and with English as an additional language make good progress in this area of learning. The teaching is satisfactory overall. It always provides children with good opportunities to talk, question and answer during lessons. They are often included well in many tasks and work is usually adapted to meet their needs. The children in this class lack sufficient opportunity to experience a wide range of early learning activities within the Foundation Stage curriculum. Planning insufficiently distinguishes work in the areas of learning and Key Stage 1 National Curriculum subjects.

Communication, language and literacy

57. Children in the nursery make slow progress in this area of learning, particularly in their speaking skills. They listen to adults who support them but many have yet to develop concentration. Many communicate in simple ways, though a few speak and listen well for their age. Most children show interest in stories. They handle books appropriately, looking at the cover, suggesting a title and turning the pages. A few "read" the story, improvising by using the illustrations well to devise their own versions of the book. A few show interest in mark making, such as "writing" their own notes about the activities alongside an inspector! Most children recognise their own name. Overall, children are still developing along the stepping stones towards the early learning goals in this area of learning.

58. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning in the nursery. The organisation of activities has recently been developed and improved. The teaching of oral communication skills is good. The mark making areas, though appropriately resourced, are not designed in the most appealing ways to attract children to writing. There is a considerable distance between the two nursery rooms and when there are few children present, they lack the stimulus of listening to others talking and developing their ideas. The role-play areas are carefully laid out but are all in one room, which, similarly, means that children cannot move in and out spontaneously to and from different activity areas, including these role-play areas. In a few instances, at the end of the morning story time session, children listened well but there was insufficient opportunity and time for them to offer their ideas and experiences.

59. In the reception class, children's communication, language and literacy development does not yet meet the early learning goals. Children listen to stories attentively and most recall the story. They recognise a good number of letters of the alphabet and begin to write some recognisable letters. A few write their own names independently. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. In the whole class lesson, the teacher maintains children's interest by reading expressively and drawing children's attention to features such as the characters and rhymes. Some tasks are not well devised to meet children's different needs. For example, a few children are expected to trace over letters of the alphabet on a page when they have neither the control nor understanding of these. These include some children with English as an additional language, for whom the work is quite inappropriate.

60. In the reception and Year 1 class, reception children meet the early learning goals. They are confident when speaking and recording their work. They recognise some familiar words from their books, such as the names of characters "Biff" and "Kipper". They recognise that books have a title and know the direction in which pages are turned. They recognise some familiar words on display around the room. During one lesson, the children showed good

understanding of ways in which to change a sentence from a statement to a question, using words such as “what, why” and “when”. This was part of a literacy lesson whose objectives were primarily aimed at a Key Stage 1 programme of study and not at progression along the stepping stones in the Foundation Stage. The quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. There are strengths in the teacher’s sensitive approach to all pupils and children in the class, but the planning is insufficiently adapted to take into account the needs of children in the Foundation Stage. Classroom assistants supported children well by providing additional explanation and encouragement.

Mathematical development

61. Children make sound progress in their early mathematical development in the nursery. They begin to understand capacity and volume when playing with water and sand. They do not yet use words such as “pour” or “more than” and “less than” to describe quantity and their actions with containers. Nevertheless, they fill and transfer varying amounts of water and sand between different containers and begin to learn that these hold different amounts. Children count up to 20 aloud and the more able add on in ones. They recognise some colours, patterns and simple shapes, such as a circle. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory. There is a good range of resources for developing children’s mathematical understanding.

62. Children in the reception class make sound progress in their mathematical development towards meeting the early learning goals. Their work shows appropriate progression in knowledge and understanding. The organisation means that children have insufficient opportunity for independent, investigative activities. In the reception and Year 1 class, children make good progress, meeting the early learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of number. They recognise numbers and add on one more. For example, they do this when making accurate quantities of play dough cakes to match the numbers they are given. During the whole class mental mathematics session, children contributed well by joining in the counting from “zero” to 20. Some reception children counted in twos to 30, exceeding the early learning goals. There was appropriate adaptation of work for children in the Foundation Stage in the mathematics lesson. Overall, in these classes, the quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. When they begin nursery children have limited knowledge and understanding of the world. The carefully devised activities provided for them ensure good progress in this area of learning. Children begin to recognise their immediate surroundings and their features. The outdoor area for play with wheeled toys is marked with routes and cones and children devise their own games involving journeys. They recognise that machines have different parts and tools are used for different functions, such as when they make wooden, wheeled vehicles, using hammers, nails and saws at the technology work bench outdoors. When playing with construction equipment, children devise various games involving speed and direction. They learn about food and its preparation during snack times each day. In role-play, children bath baby dolls and talk about their imaginary “family”. In another activity, children learn that magnets attract certain objects. Few talked about events in the past, though some discussed what they had done the previous day. By the time they leave the nursery, children are making good progress along the stepping stones towards achieving the early learning goals in this area of learning. The quality of teaching is good. Considerable care is taken to widen children’s experiences through first hand practical activities and extensive discussions.

64. In the reception class, children continue to widen their knowledge and understanding of the world satisfactorily in most respects, though mostly by direct teaching and not through a full range of investigative activities. The scrutiny of work indicates that children receive the same tasks regardless of their prior experience. Children in this class do not have the same wide range of activities provided as those in the nursery and the organisation again limits the extent to which children can investigate independently.

65. In the reception and Year 1 class, children learn through the Key Stage 1 programmes of study. For example, they make a fruit salad with their Year 1 classmates as part of design and technology. They listen to and take part in discussions about road safety and traffic as part of geography. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is generally secure and meets the early learning goals by the end of reception. Teaching is broadly satisfactory overall. The teacher adapts her expectations and the tasks to take into account the children's needs, which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Children do not have enough opportunity to make choices as part of the Foundation Stage development.

Physical development

66. Children's physical development is slow and does not meet the early learning goals by the end of reception. In the nursery children often choose to play with wheeled toys for a short time before preferring to move on to other activities. The climbing apparatus indoors is not used frequently by choice. At present, until planned building work begins and the outdoor provision is extended to include a grassed area, there is a relatively small outdoor play area for nursery children. Similarly, the reception class has the use of another small outdoor, hard surfaced area, which is not large enough for outdoor physical activities, whilst children in the reception and Year 1 class have no separate outdoor facilities.

67. When using malleable materials, small construction materials and tools such as paintbrushes, children in all Foundation Stage classes show appropriate development in manipulative work. They progressively learn to use tools such as scissors, glue sticks, hammers and nails, writing and painting equipment and make satisfactory progress towards the early learning goals. By the end of the reception year, few children have made sound progress in throwing and catching a ball. Children listen attentively to their teachers and make appropriate use of space in the hall. They learn to move in different ways, including jumping and skipping but have yet to show sound co-ordination skills. In the lessons seen the quality of teaching was good. Teachers provided encouragement and managed the children well, but the children lacked enthusiasm and confidence in improving their performance.

Creative development

68. Children's creative development is satisfactory and most achieve the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. Children learn to observe closely and often produce good quality paintings and drawings by the end of the reception year. In the nursery, they experiment with a wide range of materials and techniques, learning to appreciate colour. Some nursery children make reasonable paintings of people, showing eyes, hands and legs, though others have still to produce recognisable figures. Children learn to use brushes and crayons appropriately and use materials such as fabric and paper to make collages. They make kites, using cut card, string and paper and stick these together with tape. Children in the reception classes sketch and paint, such as when using ready mixed paint to paint a vase of sunflowers and plants. They also use different colours of tissue papers to make collages of these flowers.

69. Children make sound progress in music, learning simple songs by heart and joining in with enthusiasm, particularly in assemblies. Their creative development in activities such as role-play is not always so successful. In the nursery, though role-play areas are provided, their use is not always developed well enough to reinforce children's creative, speaking and listening skills and their social development. In the reception class, where children developed imaginative conversations about the hospital, no adults interacted with them to support and develop their vocabulary.

70. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The teacher has only become responsible for the nursery since November 2001. She and her colleagues are developing the provision well and acknowledge there is still much to do. A good start has been made in reorganising and improving the accommodation and teaching methods to ensure children can choose from a wide range of activities. Planning is very detailed and good assessment procedures are being developed. In the reception classes, although activities are provided, the planning is not fully satisfactory in showing planned opportunities for children's progress along the stepping stones, towards achieving the early learning goals. This also restricts effective assessment of their progress within the Foundation Stage curriculum.

ENGLISH

71. Attainment in English is below average throughout the school. Pupils enter school with poor speaking skills. Many still have a limited vocabulary and find it difficult to articulate their ideas by the time they are 11 years old. Reading skills are improving and many pupils make good progress, but their attainment is below the levels expected for 7 and 11 year olds. The majority of pupils find it difficult to achieve average standards in writing although standards are improving throughout the school. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, travellers' children and refugees make steady progress and achieve as well as would be expected for their capabilities. Although standards remain below average they are improving significantly and there has been an overall good improvement in the provision since the last inspection.

72. Attainment in speaking and listening is below average throughout the school. Pupils listen attentively. They show a good deal of interest and increasing confidence in discussions and willingly answer questions, but their response is frequently in short phrases. Year 1 pupils respond to questions from non-fiction texts and the more able repeat the words used in a statement to make it into a sentence. Year 2 pupils recognise expressive words within poems that demonstrate humour. Older pupils explain their ideas and volunteer information. The language they use is limited to a narrow range of vocabulary and they are unfamiliar with some words such as "skyscraper". Year 4 and 5 pupils understand how the author makes writing persuasive. By Year 6 pupils still reply very briefly and the teaching does not always have high expectations. Insufficient attention is given within the planning of lessons to improve this aspect of learning. Teachers do explain specific vocabulary regularly, but they do not always encourage pupils to use a varied vocabulary. There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to develop this aspect through planned speaking and listening activities.

73. Pupils are assessed very regularly to track their progress in reading. The school has organised reading groups to target specific pupils and many within these groups make good progress. There is a good range of reading books available and pupils benefit from the use of a range of reading tasks, including guided group reading, individual reading and the opportunity to take books home to read with the family. Year 6 pupils are aware of the

difference between fiction and non-fiction text, but do not always remember the terms “fiction” and “non-fiction”. There are two fully resourced libraries, which are well organised and aesthetically pleasing and stimulating, but the development of reading for research is underdeveloped and older pupils do not have the skills of skimming and scanning. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use pictures and letter sounds as strategies to help them read unfamiliar words in information books, poems and stories. Year 3 and 4 pupils begin to understand the main points of a story and identify characters. More able pupils read fluently. Year 5 and 6 pupils continue to extend the range of their reading, with higher attaining pupils making deductions and expressing their reading preferences. Average and less able readers do not always self correct and make deductions. Many average and lower ability pupils lack confidence when reading alone, although they read with expression as part of the whole class. Most have satisfactory comprehension of a story.

74. Higher attaining pupils attain satisfactory standards in writing. They develop their writing using a range of styles and purposes, sometimes using these skills in other subjects such as history, when they write a letter to Henry VIII. The attainment of average and lower ability pupils is below that expected nationally but they make steady progress and many are achieving to their capabilities. The higher attaining pupils construct letters, write instructions, develop narratives and draft their work to a more advanced stage. They enjoy writing poetry and write expressive lines such as “Tropical fish, like red, blue and green. Rarely heard and rarely seen.” Average and lower attaining pupils often struggle with sentence construction, handwriting, spelling and punctuation. Whilst they often undertake interesting tasks, which they enjoy, these are not always successful due to the lack of support material that would assist pupils in completing what they had to do. Pupils do not always copy known words accurately, spell high frequency words correctly and present their work in their best handwriting.

75. Overall, pupils make steady progress through the school. Year 1 pupils pose questions from statements and know that “why, when” and “where” often start these sentences and that such sentences end with a question mark. They find it easier to articulate the question than to write it as they find spelling and letter formation difficult. Year 2 pupils are able to add “ful” as a suffix to words. Year 3 pupils recognise pronouns and are beginning to change simple sentences from third to first person, for example by changing “He” to “I”. Pupils in the Year 3 and Year 4 class know that some letter strings are written in the same way but have different sounds within the context of the word. For example, they know that “ou” is part of “ought” and “though” and has different sounds within each word. Pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class evaluate text for persuasiveness and clarity and recognise the main parts of words and prefixes that change them, such as “irrational” and “irresponsible”. Year 6 higher attaining pupils write complex sentences, punctuate appropriately and are beginning to engage the reader with their stories. Average and lower ability pupils undertake the same task but the vocabulary and punctuation is more limited. The lower attaining pupils need adult support and write in simple sentences.

76. The quality of teaching is good. Planning follows national guidance and includes a variety of structured reading and writing tasks. Planning is effective and maintains a balance between direct teaching and pupils undertaking their own work, although at times pupils do not complete all the work set due to time constraints. The majority of teachers use questioning techniques well to assess pupils’ previous knowledge and understanding and to develop their learning. At times, teachers do not make good use of pupils’ ideas through questioning and so miss opportunities to extend pupils’ knowledge and understanding and their speaking skills. Teachers provide good explanations of grammatical structure and types of text. Adapted work is provided for different ability groups and all adults helping in the classrooms provide good

support for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Tasks are usually successful in achieving objectives but sometimes pupils are not provided with sufficient support to spell words correctly. Homework supports work undertaken in lessons well.

77. Pupils' attitudes to work are very positive. They try hard to respond to questioning and apply themselves well to the tasks they are given. Relationships throughout the school are very good and pupils work well together. Pupils enjoy the resources that are provided. For example, Year 2 pupils enjoy the humorous poems read in the guided reading sessions.

78. The school has implemented the national guidance for teaching literacy and its effectiveness is satisfactory. Teachers use information and communication technology very well to support learning and pupils draft and redraft using word processing programs. They write for a variety of audiences, such as using a publishing program to design certificates. The school is beginning to develop writing across other aspects of the curriculum but this is not yet effective. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The procedures for assessing and tracking pupils' progress are extensive and excellent. Pupils are involved in the setting of individual targets and so have a good understanding of their own learning needs and what they must do to improve. Resources are good and mostly used well, but during the inspection the libraries were not used well for independent research.

MATHEMATICS

79. The performance of pupils by the end of Year 2 in the 2001 national tests was well below the national average, though in line with that of schools in similar contexts. In the same year, by the end of Year 6, standards were well below the national averages and those of similar schools. Similar standards were seen at the time of the previous inspection, which pointed to satisfactory progress being made in both key stages. This has been maintained for the last two years, so that pupils are now in line to achieve and overtake the targets set by the school. A significant number of pupils in Year 2 now attain standards at level 3, which is above the average and a small number of pupils in Year 6 are reaching the above average level 5. All these results indicate steady progress and improvement, though standards overall are still below average. The high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language, refugees and those from traveller backgrounds receive very good support in class and they make good progress.

80. Year 1 pupils make satisfactory progress in counting on and back and adding and taking away numbers to 20. They understand the difference between odd and even numbers and know that shapes have three or more sides and corners. They successfully use number lines and multi-link cubes to help solve number problems. Year 2 pupils build well on the number work of the first year. Their books show understanding of place value in hundreds, tens and units and they solve money problems to 50p. They correctly draw diagrams illustrating halves and quarters and begin simple division and multiplication. Pupils recognise different shapes and their properties although there is less work on solid shapes. They solve word and number problems and record different types of data using tallies and bar charts. The books of average and higher attaining pupils show satisfactory levels of accurate work. Pupils' achievement overall is satisfactory. Teachers and classroom assistants support pupils with learning difficulties well so that their work shows improving standards. Pupils of average prior attainment are not always sufficiently challenged to achieve further.

81. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds continue to make sound progress in Years 3 to 6. The impact of the high number of pupils with special educational needs means that in national

terms the school's overall attainment is very low. Some pupils' limited use and understanding of language makes the solving of spoken and written problems difficult for them. Average and higher attaining pupils' books show satisfactorily progressive coverage of the National Curriculum, but too much work in mixed age classes is identical. This means that some pupils are not being challenged sufficiently.

82. Year 6 pupils work successfully in the four operations of number. They understand the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages and solve problems involving these. They correctly measure angles, know the difference between regular and irregular shapes and work out the perimeter and area of various shapes. Higher attaining pupils correctly use co-ordinates in graphs and geometric shapes and have begun to work on the theory of probability. In one lesson they were challenged well to solve a problem requiring deduction rather than calculation. Only one or two pupils were able to see the logic of the problem and solve it. Year 5 pupils work on problems involving the timing and length of television programmes. Higher attaining pupils accurately convert digital timings to analogue but some pupils have difficulty in understanding the relationship between the two versions. Younger junior pupils draw on their knowledge of the six times table to solve division problems. Some quickly learn the principle but for the majority progress in understanding is slow. An objective of the lesson, to apply the principle to the seven times table, is not reached.

83. Pupils' attitudes to their mathematics lessons are good. They are attentive and anxious to learn. Most pupils, including the youngest, maintain their concentration well throughout the hour-long lesson. Teachers contribute to this by moving the lessons along at a good pace and using resources, such as white boards, number sticks, squares and lines, well. Pupils work harmoniously together in groups and continue to concentrate when the teacher is working with another group. The presentation of their work is very variable. Many pupils take a pride in their work, setting it out neatly and writing legibly and carefully. Others are too easily satisfied with work that is untidy.

84. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy. Their knowledge of mathematics is secure and they teach with confidence. Lessons are well organised and the balance between whole class learning and individual and group work is appropriate. There is good coverage of the range of the curriculum in all years. Information and communication technology programs are satisfactorily used to support pupils' learning, particularly in number. The many support staff, including bilingual assistants, are well deployed. They support the learning of pupils substantially, especially those with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English. Teachers do not always set work which challenges other pupils sufficiently. Their expectation of what these pupils can or should achieve is sometimes too low. Teachers regularly set homework to extend and reinforce pupils' learning in class.

85. Teachers' assessment of pupils' work is good. Results of regular tests are recorded and teachers carefully note pupils' attainment and progress at regular intervals, giving grades in accordance with National Curriculum levels. Pupils also assess their own work, using "I can..." and "I have learned..." statements. Teachers build up a good knowledge of individual pupils' achievement. The marking of pupils' work generally provides helpful comments and suggestions. Sometimes marking is unsatisfactory, giving little or no helpful feedback to pupils and failing to criticise poor presentation of work.

86. The subject is ably led. All teachers are familiar with the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. The co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning, especially their evaluation of lessons and scrutinises pupils' workbooks. She has identified areas for

development as being the extension of mathematics across the curriculum and a higher concentration on problem solving throughout the school. Resources for the subject are good, with each classroom being well provided with equipment and materials.

SCIENCE

87. The school has continued to maintain the improvement in science noted at the time of the last inspection so that standards now achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 are broadly in line with what is expected nationally. This is better than the standards achieved in the 2001 teachers' assessments, when they were well below average. Similarly, the current Year 6 pupils have achieved markedly better than those in 2001, when standards were very low. Even though they are still below the national average, more than two thirds of pupils achieved the nationally expected grade. This represents a very good rate of progress and is the result of improvements in the planning and teaching of the subject.

88. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard and successfully on improving the investigative and experimental aspects of science. This has been the result not only of better planning and teaching methods, but improvements in the pupils' behaviour have also played a significant part in enabling these methods to succeed. The school has successfully targeted particular groups of pupils, as well as individuals with special educational needs for additional support, to enable them to achieve more highly. The quality of the support given to identified pupils and groups in class is a good feature of the provision for science. Another strength in the teaching of science is the good quality of the relationships between the teachers and pupils. This makes exploring ideas, experimenting and discussing findings exciting and challenging and improves the quality of the pupils' learning. Developing their ability to express themselves clearly, using the correct vocabulary for science, is a continuing concern of the staff. In many cases throughout the school, the pupils' speaking and listening skills are below average and they are slow to respond at length to questions about what they have found out in an experiment. This is not confined to those pupils for whom English is an additional language. Indeed, these pupils generally make good progress in all aspects of science, along with those with special educational needs, because of the high quality support they receive.

89. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. There is also a higher than average number of pupils who join and leave the school in each year. These factors, coupled with the very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, make the improvements in achievements in science even more creditable. The school has realised that the proportion of pupils doing better than average throughout the school is not as high as it might be and has recently initiated a programme to support them. It is too soon for it to have had a significant impact on achievements. All aspects of science are given appropriate weight, so that the requirements of the national curriculum are satisfactorily met.

90. The teaching of science throughout the school is usually good and never less than satisfactory. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and use effective strategies to catch the pupils' imaginations and enhance their learning. A good example of this was seen during the investigations into the condensation of steam and the melting of ice into water, which were conducted with controlled excitement between Year 4 and 5 pupils.

91. Planning throughout the school is based on national suggestions and individual lesson planning successfully reflects this. This helps to make sure that the pupils' skills in the subject develop progressively. Skills such as observing and recording and ensuring that tests are fair

all improve as the pupils grow older and move through the school. "Sheer discovery" is encouraged among younger pupils, such as the free experiments to establish friction forces in air by running with a plastic bag, releasing feathers from the same height, or dropping a flat, and then a crumpled, piece of tissue paper. This develops into a more structured recording of experiments in making bubbles, using different methods and materials in Year 6. The teachers also make good use of information and communication technology for recording experiments and communicating the pupils' findings. Pupils work conscientiously and teachers manage them very well. Time is used efficiently and effectively, which results in good progress. An example of this was seen in a lesson in which Year 1 and 2 pupils successfully investigated the idea of the forces of pushing and pulling used in handling everyday things, clearly working things out for themselves.

92. Support staff are used very well in science, supporting pupils for whom they are specifically responsible and at the same time helping others to achieve well. This was seen, for example, in a lesson on opacity and transparency in a class where more than half the pupils with special educational needs attained broadly in line with what would be expected of pupils of their age. Homework is set occasionally in science, often with the pupils expected to do some observation and recording of things about the home. The pupils' work is marked satisfactorily and in some cases, helpful suggestions about how they can improve are added. The assessment of pupils' work in science is satisfactory and the performance in tests is analysed to provide targets for improvement.

93. The leadership of the subject is sound and plans for its development are well thought out and achievable. The monitoring of the teaching and learning has been effectively started and plans for its further implementation are in hand. The planning for science is scrutinised to ensure that there is steady progression from class to class and year to year. Particular care is taken with planning for the mixed age classes. The levels of funding for the subject are satisfactory and it is well resourced. The co-ordinator is involved in negotiating the budget share for science and has received training in classroom observation, in preparation for the effective monitoring of the teaching of the subject. She is also involved in providing both individual support and in-service training sessions. The quality of the leadership and management of the subject has helped in the improvements in standards and is well placed to continue the good development.

ART AND DESIGN

94. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are just in line with national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, refugees and traveller's children, make steady progress throughout the school. The standards are enhanced by the very high standard of informative display throughout the school building. The last inspection report by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 2000 did not include a statement on the standards or provision within the subject and therefore it is not possible to report on the improvement since the last inspection.

95. Pupils make steady progress through the school. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 have opportunities to experiment and create pictures in a range of ways. For example, they paint pictures of houses and decorate their painted pictures of sunflowers and spider plants with materials to make a collage. They learn the technique of marbling and use the results to cut out templates of frogs. Pupils make sculptures from chicken wire and pasted bandages. They use their imagination to decorate their shapes with mainly recycled materials to create images, such as those of butterflies, mushrooms and fish.

96. Year 3 pupils experiment with colour blending and learn the technique of printing. They make printing blocks out of cardboard and string and print regular patterns effectively. Pupils in the Year 3 and Year 4 class learn about art from the Aboriginal culture. They learn that this art often represents a journey. They experiment and try to produce similar effects using a sand and paint mixture, charcoal and pastels. Pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class illustrate their dreams and copy pictures of birds, accurately showing their shape and features. Year 6 pupils draw portraits, showing an awareness of the proportions of the face. They blend colours and make satisfactory attempts to draw what they see, shading to give the picture a three-dimensional perspective. They design and make three-dimensional masks.

97. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In the two lessons observed the teaching was satisfactory in one and good in the other. Strengths of the teaching included the good resources provided for pupils to stimulate their ideas. Teachers interact with individuals effectively to encourage them to improve their work. Pupils respond well to this and work with interest and try hard to please. Work in the sketchbooks kept by pupils in Key Stage 2 varies in quality. Although intended as initial designs or rough sketches, the work does not show a clear improvement over time. Planning follows national guidance but insufficiently ensures that knowledge and skills are progressively developed. Discussion with pupils indicates that some feel that they do not spend sufficient time during the year undertaking the subject.

98. The curriculum follows national guidance and there are plans to supplement this with a published scheme. The school correctly acknowledges that currently it does not teach skills and techniques systematically to enable pupils to build up their expertise over time. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, as there is no assessment or tracking of the experiences pupils receive. The leadership and management of art and design is not yet fully satisfactory, as there are no opportunities for monitoring classroom practice and improving teaching and learning.

99. Resources are unsatisfactory. For example, currently pupils do not have sufficient choice in the size of the paint brushes they select to undertake their work. There are not enough resources for pupils to mix and blend their own colours. There are some opportunities to work in the style of other artists or to copy photographs. For example, older pupils paint watercolours of a scene from the River Nene and younger pupils use a viewfinder and paint part of a flower in the style of Georgia O'Keefe. This aspect is underdeveloped, as is the study of art within a wide range of cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

100. Pupils' attainment by the end of Years 2 and Year 6 is satisfactory. During the inspection there was evidence of a good range of learning tasks. In the younger classes, pupils satisfactorily designed and made "Joseph's Coat" from fabric, involving stitching and decorating, as well as cardboard vehicles with wheels and axles. In the older classes, pupils designed and made money containers, book covers, musical instruments, rattles, puppets and fairground rides. They also baked bread. All these projects show good links with other subjects of the curriculum such as mathematical links in measuring and estimating and some original writing.

101. The work indicates that pupils have acquired knowledge of the basic principles of designing and making products. Pupils' design books show an insufficient grasp of how to proceed from a design sketch to a design brief. Pupils sketch their products and label them,

but do not then produce a precise account of the materials they will need and the procedures for making. Year 2 pupils made hand templates and cut out two halves of material for a glove puppet. They discussed with the teacher the type of stitching needed to ensure strength. They worked well at the activity and many made small, neat stitches. Those pupils who finished first went on to design in their books decorative features for their finished puppets. They noted what materials, such as sequins or buttons, would be suitable.

102. Pupils in Year 6 work as members of groups to design a puppet theatre for shadow, finger, glove and string puppets they have made. They consider questions such as, "What materials would be needed, how will the theatre's components be joined" and "what will be the appropriate size and dimensions?" In their answers pupils show that they have good knowledge of materials and jointing techniques. Some pupils discuss how to construct a wooden frame with mitred joints. In a previous project pupils have built wheeled models using construction kits and successfully fitted these with computer linked motors to make programmable moving vehicles. Here, they used their good information and communication technology skills to develop their design and technology work. Pupils' progress in the lessons observed during the inspection was satisfactory. Scrutiny of their books and teachers' planning indicates that there is not yet sufficient concentration on the systematic development of necessary skills involving construction, using different materials, the use of levers, pulleys and gears and how to strengthen joints.

103. Pupils enjoy their work, are anxious to produce well-finished articles and discuss issues seriously. They work quietly and purposefully. Pupils co-operate well in pairs and groups and handle tools and equipment carefully, with a proper regard for safety. They are interested in each other's work and value it. Older pupils produce good design ideas independently. Learning support assistants provide good support for pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English, so that they are able to participate fully in lessons and make good progress.

104. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers' overall planning shows satisfactory coverage of the range of the curriculum. Planning of individual lessons is satisfactory and the activities are interesting and motivate pupils well. In practice, there is too much concentration on the production of artefacts and insufficient on the systematic development of skills. Teachers' knowledge is sound and their management of lessons well controlled. There are no formal assessment procedures to provide teachers with a record of pupils' attainment and progress, or to influence their planning.

105. The co-ordinator's work in the nursery limits her availability to monitor teaching and learning in the subject, as well as opportunities to discuss issues with her colleagues. There is a good range of resources for the subject including a fully equipped room for food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

106. Standards in geography are unsatisfactory and below national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. Whilst most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, learn and make sound progress in their studies of places and environments, they do not make sufficient progress in the skills associated with geographical enquiry by the end of Year 6. The overall planning for the subject is not yet satisfactory.

107. In the reception and Year 1 class and in the Year 1 and 2 class pupils studied ways of changing an environment, focusing on road safety issues around their school. They successfully offered their views about improving safety, such as installing “sleeping

policemen”, a zebra crossing or traffic lights. Their task was to write a letter to the local traffic department at the Town Hall, reinforcing pupils’ literacy skills and providing pupils with a relevant purpose for writing. Opportunities for pupils to contribute their ideas to the introductory discussions varied in the two lessons, with the best opportunities being provided in the reception and Year 1 class. In both lessons, there was insufficient adaptation of objectives and tasks to meet the needs of the pupils of different ages and abilities. This also meant that there was a lack of sufficient challenge for more able pupils, whilst younger pupils and less able pupils were unsure about what was expected of them.

108. Pupils in the Year 3 class learned about the effects of weather on human activity. They successfully used reference books about different countries and the CD-ROM to find information about this. Most pupils learned about the differences in weather, though the links between weather and its effects on human activity were not fully established and understood. Pupils were unsure about the locations of different countries on a map. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language made good progress in their learning as they were guided well by classroom assistants and bilingual support staff.

109. In the Year 3 and 4 class, pupils practised mapping skills, making a map of the route from the school to the church. They categorised the types of land use on the route and showed secure understanding of mapping symbols, such as those used to represent a roundabout and church. More able pupils identified residential areas, roads and bridges on a map. All pupils made good progress in this lesson.

110. Year 4 and 5 pupils studied Rutland Water, using pamphlets as a resource for finding and selecting information to include in an advertising poster. The lesson objective was to make pupils aware of where water comes from and to know that water can be used for a variety of activities. This was a very good lesson because tasks were well adapted to meet the needs of pupils with differing prior attainment. All pupils made good progress and attained standards in line with their capabilities. The lesson conclusion also extended pupils’ knowledge of the value of water, by encouraging pupils from Pakistan and the Ukraine to tell others about the ways in which water is provided or collected in these countries.

111. The Year 6 lesson objective focused on water conservation, with pupils sharing ideas and then making posters and a collage. Groups also took turns to use a computer program about the water cycle. Four support staff helped groups to discuss ways in which water might be saved before pupils began to make their posters. Some discussion was very effective, such as that developed by two assistants who asked good, open-ended questions that encouraged pupils to reason and make good suggestions. Other discussion was less successfully developed and the teacher had a limited role in working within these groups. The overall level of work was below that expected for pupils of this age. More able pupils were insufficiently challenged by the tasks set and most pupils already understood the water cycle from previous learning. Posters were not completed by the end of the lesson. The planning of tasks was insufficiently well suited to the lesson objectives.

112. Overall, the quality of teaching is broadly satisfactory. There are some high quality displays of work undertaken recently, including that produced by pupils between Years 3 and 6 on the development of the school’s environment. The scrutiny of work shows that whilst some

interesting and good quality work is undertaken there are weaknesses in the planning for geography. In most classes, including the mixed age classes, pupils do the same work, with varying success in their recording. There is a lack of progression across the school and an overlap in some classes where pupils repeat similar work. In some classes, little geography work is undertaken over the academic year. There is also little evidence of clear progression in skills such as measurement, mapping and data handling.

113. The school is aware of the planning weaknesses and has good plans to review the provision, scheme of work and assessment procedures in the near future. It will also develop the co-ordination of the subject to provide more effective involvement in monitoring practice across the school. Most attention has been focused on the improvement in the provision and standards in the core subjects and geography has not, accordingly, been an immediate priority. There are good resources for the subject and pupils benefit from the increasing use of visits and fieldwork to enhance their learning outside lessons.

HISTORY

114. By the end of Years 2 and 6 standards are unsatisfactory and below national expectations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, English as an additional language, travellers' children and refugees, make progress in their knowledge and understanding of the topics studied throughout the school. Standards are not as high as they might be as insufficient time is spent learning about the topics and many of the tasks are insufficiently demanding. The report by Her Majesties Inspectors in 2000 does not make specific reference to strengths or areas for development within the subject and therefore it is not possible to make a judgement on the improvement since the last inspection.

115. By the age of 7, pupils are beginning to grasp the concept of the past. They know about some of the conditions in hospitals in the 19th Century and about Florence Nightingale and her devotion to caring for the sick and wounded. Year 6 pupils study the lives of famous men such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela and learn about the changes that occurred through their political beliefs and efforts. They know about life in Victorian times and the importance of the arrival of the railways.

116. Year 1 pupils know that items used around the home were made of different materials in the past. For example, they understand that bottles used to be made from pottery but are now also made from glass, or more recently, plastic. Year 3 pupils know about the lives of the Vikings. They learn about the types of clothes they wore and how they used natural materials to dye them various colours. For example, the pupils know that the skins of onions turn material yellow, whilst red cabbage dyes material a soft shade of blue-mauve. Pupils in the Year 3 and 4 class make good progress as the tasks are challenging and there are high expectations. They learn about the Tudors and realise the importance of a male heir to the king at that time. They also understand the experiences of evacuated children during World War II and the use of rationing when food was in short supply. Pupils in the Year 4 and 5 class know some details about the time of the Ancient Greeks, such as this being the first civilisation to hold the Olympic Games.

117. Only three lessons were observed during the inspection. The quality of teaching observed was good overall. The scrutiny of the work in pupil's books shows that expectations are low in most classes. Pupils are given tasks that lack interest and are too simple. There are some exceptions, such as in the Year 3 and 4 class task of writing a letter to Henry VIII.

The teaching was very good in the Year 3 and 4 class, where all pupils were expected to work very hard. They were encouraged and willingly offered their ideas in response to demanding questioning. They showed empathy with refugees such as Anne Frank having to leave their homeland because of war or persecution for their beliefs. The

challenging task they were given to consolidate their learning was well supported with resources to help the pupils remember the main points and spell key words accurately. Pupils were encouraged to work independently.

118. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their learning and behaviour is very good. They settle quickly to work and co-operate well. They enjoy using the Internet to find information. The standard of the presentation of their work in their books does not always reflect their capability. On occasion, the organisation sometimes caused distraction, such as in the Year 3 lesson when there were too many pupils crowded around a table and they became restless. Overall relationships are good. Pupils feel that teachers value their contributions and in return they work hard.

119. The curriculum follows national guidance. Currently there are mixed age classes and the school has not clearly planned how to manage the work so that all pupils within the same year group receive the appropriate programme within the national guidance. The changes planned for next year are good and identify ways in which this is to be addressed. Recently, teachers have tried to make more use of writing across the curriculum, particularly to support learning in history and to reinforce literacy skills. There is some evidence that this is beginning to be developed, but it is not yet consistent throughout the school.

120. At present, the co-ordination of the subject is in transition and is a temporary arrangement. The current subject leader has improved the quantity and quality of resources available to support the teaching of each of the themes. There is no monitoring, evaluation and development of the teaching and learning by classroom observation. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. There are no formal assessments and pupils' progress is insufficiently monitored. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of interest and pupils benefit greatly from these experiences. For example, they delighted in dressing up in Tudor costume in a visit to a local museum and are proud of the photographs taken of them whilst sitting on furniture of the time and in the "stocks".

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

121. Information and communication technology, which is now a strength of the school, has improved very considerably since the last inspection when pupils' standards were found to be well below national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6. They are now good and above the national expectations for both age groups.

122. Three principal factors have contributed to this very good progress. The plentiful, good quality and well managed resources of the information and communication technology room have been imaginatively used both for teaching the subject and for using it to support the rest of the curriculum. The talented and knowledgeable support assistant who co-ordinates the subject is used full-time in the information and communication technology room. Thirdly, the staff have benefited from the training they have received and continue to receive, and are all now confidently teaching and using the subject well. Consequently, information and

communication technology is clearly understood as a tool for learning in most subjects in the curriculum.

123. The pupils in each year group have a good and developing range of skills enabling them to use the appropriate items of apparatus, from the keyboard and the mouse to the electronic pen on the interactive white board, skilfully and with the minimum of instruction. In each lesson, when they have received the general instructions and shared the learning objectives for the session, the pupils move confidently to the machines, log themselves on, call up the program they are to use and begin work.

124. The pupils achieve well because they are confident, well instructed, have opportunities to practise their skills and also because much is expected of them. The youngest as well as the older pupils approach their tasks with a positive sense of likely success. The activities set for them are imaginative and realistic, such as Year 4 and 5 pupils creating a spreadsheet for financing a school activity, using Internet shopping sites to check the prices. This added to their interest and led to higher achievements. Similarly, the younger pupils given a dictionary program with banks of words and phrases, use a mouse to produce interesting sentences. The results are better and more extensive than they would achieve in the same time using pencils and paper, with the added bonus of a real sense of accomplishment. The pupils in Year 6 develop a broad range of skills with programs that support a number of subject areas. They present what they have discovered from the Internet, or from CD-ROMs, in interesting packages, linking text and visuals and occasionally sound. They successfully use a desktop publishing program to design and print certificates applauding success in school.

125. The pupils are made familiar with control technology, from the simple floor turtle which the younger pupils program to follow a particular path, to more sophisticated applications with the oldest pupils. Information and communication technology also supports creative activities well. Year 2 pupils followed instructions carefully in using a vertical symmetry tool in a paint program to design and colour drawings of insects and imaginary creatures well. Year 3 and 4 pupils use e-mail effectively to make contact with pupils from a school in Wisbech. This breadth of range and an approach to the subject, which is both imaginative and realistic, has supported its successful development.

126. All the teaching throughout the school is at least good and sometimes very good. A very significant feature has been the very good support for all the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. This is provided by the staff, who effectively manage the balance between urging pupils to try to solve their own problems and ensuring that they make progress and thus maintain an interest in the work. All the staff have developed their skills in information and communication technology and this is a continuing feature of the provision. The use by teachers of information and communication technology for their own planning and recording has meant that their knowledge and understanding of the technology enables them to teach it with more assurance and the pupils to learn with confidence. The teachers' good basic skills and good management of the pupils ensure that they work at a good pace and generally complete the work set for them to do.

127. The monitoring of the pupils' progress is satisfactory and the new scheme of work, which is due to start in September, has a simple but effective method of assessment to improve this aspect of the work. The pupils also use programs that improve their self-assessment and this enables them to understand their own development. Since so much of the teaching is undertaken in co-operation with the co-ordinator, the monitoring of teaching and learning is readily accomplished.

128. The leadership given by the co-ordinator is very good. The support is extremely competent, both technically and educationally for teachers, support staff and pupils. The pupils' good behaviour and very positive attitudes to the subject are due in no small part to the enthusiasm demonstrated by the staff. The room is also frequently staffed and available to the pupils at the beginning and end of the school day. The regularity and extent of the practice afforded to the pupils and the readiness of access means that overall there is high level of competence among most of them, rather than the highest attainers being those with most ready access to computers at home. This is a clear sign of the inclusive approach of the school in this subject in which all pupils manage to achieve well, because of the high quality of support they receive.

MUSIC

129. Pupils' attainment in music by the end of Years 2 and 6 is satisfactory. Pupils in Year 2 listen to contrasting pieces of music and describe their feelings. The pieces are about sunshine and rain, linking with work in science about the needs of plants to grow. Some pupils offer very sensitive reactions to a quiet piece of piano music. The second contrasting piece promotes excitement and pleasure. Pupils are asked to make sounds to represent gentle rain, first using their hands and then classroom instruments. Two of these examples are chosen by the pupils for recording and replay, whilst other pupils listen and offer critical appraisal.

130. In a very good lesson, Year 6 pupils used information and communication technology successfully to compose music, manipulating sounds and evaluating their effectiveness. In another lesson, they rehearsed songs for an end of term production. The pupils enthusiastically sang solo parts and in chorus. They entered fully into the dramatic aspects of the performance. Unfortunately, the teacher's vocal training and the pupils' responses were diminished by a piano accompaniment that dominated rather than supported. Pupils' singing in assembly is satisfactory. They sing with clear tone and diction and secure intonation. Pupils from the whole school enjoy a weekly practice when they are taught singing techniques. They quickly learn new songs and boys and girls, as well as those in different year groups, enjoy competing as they sing to each other.

131. Younger pupils have a sound sense of rhythm, clapping and tapping rhythmic patterns accurately and distinguishing between pieces with four and three beat pulses. They work in pairs, using classroom percussion instruments successfully to create patterns in three or four time. They perform their patterns to the class, who have to decide what the rhythm is. Other pupils participate in a project based on a BBC music programme. They learn songs quickly and join in accurately with the programme tape. The teacher punctuates the tape satisfactorily with appropriate vocal and rhythmic exercises drawn from the broadcast. The pupils work in pairs devising "body percussion" rhythmic patterns for their partner to copy. Pupils understand the contrast of high and low sounds as they raise and lower their arms and bodies, making high and low vocal sounds.

132. Pupils enjoy their music lessons and join in activities eagerly. They listen carefully to the teacher, tape recording and each other and follow directions well. They handle instruments carefully and understand when to play and when not to play. Pupils collaborate well in pairs and groups and listen to others' performances with interest. Their attitudes and behaviour are usually very good because they enjoy and are motivated by the activities.

133. Teaching overall is satisfactory. Teachers whose expertise and confidence are less secure use BBC programmes as the basis of their lessons, which offer activities linked to the National Curriculum. Planning is not coherent, with teachers deciding on their own programme. This means that musical skills are insufficiently developed across the school. In the better lessons, teachers offer pupils the opportunity to experiment with the organisation of sounds, for example, using information and communication technology and percussion instruments. There is good follow-up from lessons by a musically well-qualified assistant, who works with groups of pupils withdrawn from other lessons. All pupils are involved on a rotating system. In these sessions, the assistant develops skills of performing and composing well and provides good assessment of individual pupils' work and progress. Teachers' overall assessment of pupils' achievement is limited to these comments and insufficiently informs their planning.

134. The co-ordinator's role is limited to scrutinising teachers' evaluative comments on their lessons. Her involvement with the nursery places constraints on her availability to monitor teaching and learning or to influence the development of pupils' skills in this subject. A visiting teacher offers one hour per week of recorder tuition to 11 pupils. Resources of instruments and equipment are good, but tuned percussion instruments were underused during the inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

135. No reference was made to physical education in the last inspection report so no judgement about its progress since then is possible. The pupils' standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 are broadly satisfactory and in line with national expectations. The school is aware that the subject has areas which need promoting further, such as dance, and is currently awaiting the arrival of the newly appointed member of staff who will co-ordinate the subject to bring about improvements. Meanwhile, the school has made good use of the talents of a part-time sports trainer and teacher to maintain standards.

136. A significant number of pupils start Year 1 with levels of physical development and skills that are still below what are expected for their age. They make good progress so that by the end of Year 2 most are achieving well and attaining levels in line with national expectations in gymnastics and athletics, though throwing and catching, for example, are still not as strong as they might be. The pupils are interested in physical education and understand the need for warming up exercises and for cooling down afterwards. They are careful of each other when running and dodging in the hall and they quickly find a place in which to exercise.

137. Pupils develop skills in throwing balls for a partner to hit with a racquet, doing so with increasing confidence and accuracy. They learn and then practise hopping and skipping and enjoy the movement. At different times in the year, the pupils work on balancing activities, devising sequences of movements and exploring different ways of moving.

138. The pupils in Years 3 to 6 extend the range of their physical activities and swimming is included in the curriculum. It is anticipated that almost all the pupils will be able to swim the nationally expected minimum by the time they are 11 and some of the more talented pupils do very much better than that. The older pupils set themselves targets in athletics and then set out to exceed them in running and jumping. They improve their throwing skills with safe, foam plastic javelins and soft discuses, though their activities are marked more by enthusiasm than by developing skills. They enjoy playing hockey and football and engage in competitions with the cluster of neighbouring schools. This experience deepens their understanding of team

games and competition. There are also after school clubs that support learning. All the physical education activities are open to all of the pupils and the staff take particular care to ensure that pupils with special educational needs benefit from the activities as well as their fellow pupils. The same is true of those pupils with English as an additional language. The staff are also careful to promote sensitive responses to pupils' attempts at new activities and to avoid excessive partisanship in games or competitive activities.

139. Most of the teaching observed in physical education was good. A small proportion was satisfactory and a similar proportion unsatisfactory. Where the teaching was good, the planning was careful and anticipated what the pupils might do and need. The teachers' control was effective, so that the lessons proceeded well. Most of the teachers have a sound understanding of their pupils' physical development and of how that can be developed effectively. They also share the learning objectives for the various activities with their pupils so that they come to understand the purpose of physical activity and its value for healthy living. This aspect of physical education is also being amplified in the developing programme of personal, social and health education. Where the teaching was less good the planning was imprecise and the aims of the work unclear. In some cases, the pupils lacked the opportunity to select resources and to develop individual styles, but worked to an adult determined pattern, restricting independence. For the most part, all pupils engage in the same activities and teachers do not identify different ability groups among the pupils.

140. In most classes, the pupils enjoyed the work set, responded appropriately and behaved well. They generally worked co-operatively and when the opportunities were given, they made sensitive and careful observations about others' performances.

141. The subject has suffered from a lack of clear educational direction and oversight, resulting in the variations in standards between classes. There is a lack of clear development of skills over time and of an effective system of assessing the pupils' performance and capabilities, as well as the monitoring of teaching and learning. These deficiencies are expected to be only temporary until a full-time co-ordinator for the subject is in post.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

142. The last inspection report did not refer to religious education, so no judgement about its progress since then is possible. By the end of Year 2 pupils achieve standards in religious education which are broadly in line with what is expected by the local Cambridgeshire agreed syllabus, on which the school is required to base its work. The standards of the Year 6 pupils do not match those expected mainly because the quantity of work undertaken and the range and depth of the subjects studied is inadequate. The standards achieved by the pupils in those few topics they have studied are generally satisfactory and occasionally imaginative, but not enough is done. Unlike other subjects, the quantity and relative quality of recorded work in religious education reduces as the pupils move from Year 3 to Year 6.

143. The school is careful to ensure that pupils respect the various faiths that are represented in the school. Among the younger pupils, although the centre of focus is on Christianity, some attention is paid to the celebrations of other faiths that occur during the year. For example, in the Key Stage 1 area there is a sensitive display of work on birth and initiation customs, which balances information from Christianity and Islam and also includes aspects of Jewish practice. Good use is also made of visits to the local church and the support of the parish priest. In Year 3 there is a balance between studies in Christianity, such as an imaginative retelling of the Christmas story from the point of view of the shepherds, and studies

of other faiths, such as Hindu stories of Ganesha or the celebrations of Diwali with diva lamps. Pupils look at the Jewish Torah and the Ten Commandments. In Year 4 the focus was on Islam, for example, with studies of the Holy Qur'an, as well as a consideration of what Christians believe about Easter. In Year 5, there is a sensitive study of fasting from the perspective of more than one faith. Overall, though, there is a lack of continuity of purpose or the development of skills and the understanding of religious ideas in the work recorded.

144. The work is planned individually class by class. Years 1 and 2 undertake work based upon the Cambridgeshire agreed syllabus, whilst planning for the older pupils is based on the suggestions of the Qualifications and Curriculum Agency, with only a brief reference to the syllabus to which they all should be working.

145. The teaching of religious education for Years 1 and 2 is good. The pupils achieve satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding because of the good teaching of basic skills and effective classroom management. This means that the pupils' enthusiasm for the work is maintained and their efforts are well directed. One example was when a Year 1 group looked again at the classroom rules they had devised at the beginning of the year, making perceptive comments about how they would change them now. When Year 2 discussed the story of David and Goliath they found difficulty in expressing themselves, though some sensitive comments were made about the reasons why David felt able to tackle his much stronger opponent. Not all of these were picked up and explored, as the teacher felt they were too difficult for the rest of the class, though actually they were within the compass of most pupils of that age. The support given to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language enables them to achieve well, and this is true for the junior classes as well.

146. The lessons observed in Years 3 to 6 were taught well. The teachers' knowledge was sound and their good teaching of basic skills and teaching methods ensure that the pupils learned effectively and enjoyed what they were doing. For example, some expressed their enjoyment of devising questions to ask representatives of different faiths, when visiting their places of worship. Older pupils showed a similar level of enjoyment and engagement when they were painting Icons, copied from examples given to them, as they investigated the relationship between art and religion. The scrutiny of work indicates weaknesses in the progression and development of the subject in Key Stage 2, making teaching unsatisfactory overall.

147. The leadership of the subject is not fully satisfactory and there are insufficiently high expectations. There are no opportunities for the monitoring of teaching and learning in religious education and the overall planning lacks continuity. The assessment and recording of pupils' achievements in the subject is uncoordinated and sparse. The resources are adequate for the current curriculum. Information and communication technology is underused in the subject and links with other subjects, such as history and geography, are not sufficiently promoted. The developing course on personal social and health education tends to duplicate aspects of the religious education curriculum and this overlapping has not yet been clearly resolved. The contribution of religious education to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall.