

INSPECTION REPORT

MIDDLETON PRIMARY SCHOOL

South Bretton, Peterborough

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 131719

Acting headteacher: Mrs K. McDermott

Reporting inspector: Colin Henderson
23742

Dates of inspection: 29th January – 1st February 2001

Inspection number: 230808

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	South Bretton Peterborough
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J. Savage
Date of previous inspection:	Not inspected since amalgamation

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Jenny Mynett 9334	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Vera Grigg 12331	Team inspector	English Music Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
John Griffiths 20097	Team inspector	Science Art	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Middleton Primary is a newly amalgamated school that serves South Bretton, part of a new township to the west of the city of Peterborough. It is larger than average and currently has 384 pupils on roll (174 boys and 210 girls), which is just under capacity. Most pupils live near the school in an area of high density housing, parts of which have a significant level of social and economic deprivation. The pupils are mostly of white, United Kingdom ethnic background. There are 15 pupils (3.9 per cent) for whom English is an additional language. This is above the national average. There are 88 pupils (23 per cent) on the school's register of special educational needs, 18 of whom have statements of need. This is well above the average for the local education authority and includes a wide range of learning, behavioural, hearing, physical and other needs. The school includes a unit for hearing impaired pupils. Twenty-six per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is above the national average. Assessment information shows that attainment on entry is below average, particularly in personal, social and language development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Middleton Primary School is a caring and supportive community. It has undergone a period of significant change in the past two years, in which standards have fallen to well below the national average. Recent building improvements and the positive leadership of the acting headteacher have encouraged a strong team approach, which has successfully focused on improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Teaching is good and the school is now well placed to promote higher standards of attainment. It has efficiently used funds for school amalgamation and the school gives sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is good.
- Pupils have positive and enthusiastic attitudes to school.
- Relationships are very good and promote good standards of behaviour.
- The school ensures equal opportunities for all of its pupils.
- The positive and effective leadership of the acting headteacher encourages a very good team approach.
- Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and make good progress.

What could be improved

- Standards in literacy, numeracy, science, information and communication technology and religious education.
- Procedures to assess pupils' work and the use of assessment information to inform planning and improvement targets.
- Parental involvement in pupils' learning.
- The role of the governing body in working with the school to target improvement.
- Fully meeting statutory requirements in information and communication technology and reporting to parents.

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 amalgamated in September 1998. The new school has not been previously inspected.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	n / a	E	E	E
Mathematics	n / a	D	E	E
Science	n / a	E	E*	E*

Key

well above average A
above average B
average C
below average D
well below average E
very low E
*

(Similar schools are those that have a similar number of pupils entitled to free school meals.) Test results show that standards achieved by 11-year-olds have been well below average since the school amalgamated in 1998. E* shows that the school's standards are in the lowest 5 per cent nationally. The proportion of pupils achieving standards that are higher than the nationally expected Level 4 is low, particularly in mathematics and science. The school has agreed targets for 2001 with the local education authority of 74 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above in English and 69 per cent in mathematics. These are not realistic; inspection evidence and the school's assessment information show that standards by 11 years old are well below the national average. The current Year 6 has a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and pupils who have entered the school in the middle of their primary years. The school is unlikely to achieve its 2001 targets, although it is on course to achieve those for 2002. High levels of changes in staff and the disruption caused by the school amalgamation have not encouraged pupils to retain a positive attitude in Key Stage 2. This has restricted pupils' progress, especially in literacy and numeracy. Pupils' weak literacy skills, particularly in reading, are significantly limiting their standards of attainment in English and in other subjects.

Inspection evidence shows that pupils' attitudes have improved and standards are beginning to improve, especially for pupils who are seven years of age. Pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy have improved from well below to below the national average. Good teaching is promoting an enthusiastic response and the school, under the effective leadership of the acting headteacher, is beginning to use a broader range of strategies to raise attainment. However, teachers' expectations of pupils with average and above average ability are not consistently high enough to improve their standards significantly. Attainment in information and communication technology is well below national expectations at seven and below expectations by 11 years. Pupils do not have enough chance to develop and extend their skills. Very recent improvements in resources and facilities have yet to raise standards. Standards in religious education are below those expected in the national guidance and in the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support and make good progress towards their learning targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes. They are keen to learn and to succeed. They enjoy school and respond enthusiastically to interesting activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. Most pupils work and play together well. The occasional incidents of disruptive behaviour are handled effectively.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils show very good respect for adults and for each other. They willingly take on responsibilities, although the range of opportunities to do so is limited.
Attendance	Attendance is good and above the national average. Most pupils arrive on time and there is a prompt and effective start to the day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is good. There are frequent examples of very good practice at the Foundation Stage and at both key stages. Teaching was good in 38 per cent of lessons and very good in a further 31 per cent. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. English and mathematics are taught well overall, although aspects of the teaching of pupils' literacy skills, for example reading, are not of such a consistently high standard. Teachers manage their classes very effectively to ensure that pupils sustain interest and concentration. They use a good range of teaching methods, particularly questioning skills, to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers' expectations of average and above average pupils are not consistent throughout Key Stage 2 and this restricts standards attained.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for the Foundation Stage is good. It is sound at both key stages and enables all pupils to be fully involved. The curriculum is enhanced effectively by good personal, social and health education, good links with other schools, and a sound range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good. High quality support staff are used very successfully to ensure that all pupils participate fully and make good progress towards their individual learning targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The provision is sound overall. It is good when support staff work closely with pupils who need additional guidance and support in their learning and language development.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for moral development promotes a clear understanding of right and wrong. The provision for spiritual and social development is sound, although teachers do not provide frequent opportunities for collaborative work. Pupils have a sound understanding of their own cultural traditions, although their awareness of multi-cultural traditions is less well developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	The school has a good standard of care for pupils' welfare, safety and personal development. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are sound.
How well does the school work in partnership with parents?	The school has sound links with parents. Staffing and building changes have limited the opportunities for a good home-school partnership to develop. Parents are not consistently involved in their children's learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is soundly managed. The acting headteacher gives a clear positive direction to the work of the school. She has been particularly effective in creating a team approach and improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour. A new acting senior management team has improved communications and is beginning to target standards of attainment.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors were supportive during the difficulties over amalgamation, but they were not effectively involved in shaping the direction of the new school. Recent developments in their monitoring and evaluation role are beginning to involve them more fully in school improvement. Most statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The acting headteacher and staff are analysing an increasing range of assessment information to monitor pupils' performance. They are beginning to identify weaknesses and target additional support. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is developing.
The strategic use of resources	School improvement planning is linked soundly to financial plans to target resources on improvement priorities. Very good use is made of support staff to meet pupils' needs. Improvements in the accommodation have significantly enhanced the learning environment. Resources for learning are adequate. Information and communication technology resources have been very recently improved. Those for reading are limited and restrict standards. Effective financial procedures and the use of the principles of best value enable the school to give sound value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parental responses received from 78 questionnaires (21 per cent) and from the 20 parents who attended the meeting.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The relationships between staff and pupils are of a high quality. • Teaching and support staff work together effectively to support their children. • The inclusion of the hearing impaired unit benefits all pupils. • The school has improved recently after the difficulties over school amalgamation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standards of attainment, especially in mathematics. • Standards of behaviour. • The school working more closely with parents. • How the school is led and managed. • The range of extra-curricular activities. • The consistent use of homework.

Most parental comments were supportive, and many were aware of some of the difficulties faced by the school during the amalgamation. Inspection evidence supports the parents' positive views, especially those relating to the high quality of relationships and the benefits from all pupils, including those with special educational needs, working together well. Inspectors' views confirm that standards of attainment are too low and the school's partnership with parents needs improving. Homework is not being used consistently to support standards, for example in reading. The school is being given good leadership by the acting headteacher and acting senior management team. Standards of behaviour during the inspection were good. The school offers a sound range of extra-curricular activities, for example, in sport, and is planning to extend it further.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards in English are below the national average at the age of 7 and well below at 11 years. The results of the 2000 national tests showed that standards at seven in reading were well below average nationally and well below those for similar schools. Standards in writing were below the national average and in line with the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving higher than the nationally expected Level 2 was well below average in reading and just above average in writing. The results of the 2000 English tests for 11-year-olds showed that standards were well below the national average and below the average of similar schools. The number of pupils achieving above the nationally expected Level 4 was close to the national average. The low test results in 1999 and 2000 were partly caused by staffing changes and disruption from the school amalgamation affecting pupils' attitudes and performance. Boys' achievements were lower than those of girls, particularly at 11 years of age.
2. Inspection evidence shows that the standards achieved by pupils aged seven are beginning to improve, compared with test results. Many pupils read accurately, although their limited speaking skills do not encourage them to talk in detail about what they have read. Handwriting skills are developed soundly, showing a consistent size and an awareness of joining letters. However, pupils frequently spell simple words inaccurately and their writing is limited in its range and imaginative use of words. Standards at 11 years of age remain well below the national average. Many pupils have weak speaking skills and a limited range of vocabulary. These restrict the detail in their writing and when they talk about their work. Pupils' reading skills at the age of 11 are well below nationally expected levels. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to read aloud, especially those who lack confidence in their reading. Their skills in reading for information are poor. Pupils' weak literacy skills are not consistently promoted throughout the school and the low levels of literacy restrict standards in English and in other subjects, for example history. The quality of teaching in English is good overall and is beginning to promote improvements, especially in writing at Key Stage 1. The school has agreed a target with the local education authority of 70 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above in 2001. Assessment information and inspection evidence show that this is unrealistic because the current Year 6 contains a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs.
3. The results of the 2000 national tests in mathematics showed that standards at 7 and 11 years of age were well below average compared nationally and with similar schools. These results showed a small improvement on the 1999 results for pupils aged seven. They were lower than the 1999 results for 11-year-olds, especially in the very small proportion of pupils who achieved above average standards. Inspection evidence confirms these results. Standards at seven are below the national average. They are well below average for 11-year-olds. A significant proportion of boys in the current Year 6 has special educational needs. Boys' performance overall is below that of girls. Standards are too low, especially those achieved by more-able pupils. A high level of staff changes, many pupils who have started at the school in their mid-primary years and the fact that previously teachers' expectations were too low have all affected standards. The school has agreed a numeracy target for 2001 with the local education authority of 69 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above. Although the school is making a determined effort to raise standards, this target is unrealistic and unlikely to be achieved.
4. The 2000 teacher assessments in science for pupils aged seven showed that standards were well below the national average. The number of pupils achieving the expected

Level 2 or above was well below the national average and the average of similar schools. The proportion of pupils achieving above expected standards improved on the 1999 results, and was just above the national average. The 2000 test results for 11-year-olds showed that standards were very low compared with schools nationally and with similar schools. Very few pupils achieved a standard that was above the nationally expected Level 4. The results were lower than in 1999 and boys' and girls' achievements were significantly lower than those expected of their age. Inspection evidence shows that standards at seven are well below average. They are below average for pupils aged 11 years. Standards are beginning to improve, especially in pupils' knowledge and understanding of scientific investigations at Key Stage 2. Pupils' weak speaking skills limit their explanations of their investigations. The school has introduced a more systematic procedure to enable pupils to record their results accurately and this is promoting higher standards.

5. Attainment in information and communication technology is well below national expectations by the age of seven. It is below expected standards by the age of 11 years. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge. The school is not providing a sufficiently broad range of learning opportunities to meet national requirements, for example in modelling and control technology. Very recently, the school has improved resources significantly, although they have yet to contribute to raising standards. Some difficulties with installing the new computers meant that they were only used for the first time during the inspection. Many pupils use computers at home, especially in Key Stage 2, although their skills in such aspects as data handling and word- processing are below nationally expected standards. Pupils have few opportunities to use their information and communication technology skills to support work in other subjects.
6. Attainment in religious education, by the ages of 7 and 11, is below the standards expected in national guidance and in the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus. Standards are restricted by pupils' low level of literacy skills. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have an increasing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths, for example Hinduism. This is promoted effectively by the teachers' good use of high quality artefacts, such as sacred texts. Pupils recall facts accurately about different religious practices, for example Islamic prayer rituals. However, their understanding of the different beliefs supporting these practices is not at the expected standard by the age of 11 years.
7. Attainment in other subjects is in line with national expectations by the ages of 7 and 11 in music and physical education. Games skills are above expectations by 11 years. Attainment meets nationally expected standards in art, design and technology and geography at the age of 7 but it is below expectations by 11 years. Standards in history are below national expectations. Pupils' weak literacy skills are a significant factor in limiting standards of attainment in subjects such as history, science and geography. School improvement planning indicates that the school is targeting the urgent need to improve these skills in order to raise standards.
8. Children in the Foundation Stage¹ make good progress overall because they receive good teaching that makes learning fun. Their attainment on entry to reception is below that expected for children of this age. Inspection evidence shows that children are on

¹ [The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three and finishes at the end of the reception class year. It is a distinct stage in preparing children for later schooling and is based on six areas of learning. These mainly refer to communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and personal, social and emotional development, but also includes knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.](#)

course to achieve the early learning goals² by the end of the reception year for personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development. They are below, but close to reaching the standards expected in the areas of learning for communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world. This is mainly because most children have underdeveloped skills of spoken language. They have a much smaller vocabulary than expected. This affects their progress and ability to talk about what they know, understand and can do across these areas of learning.

9. Pupils make good progress in their learning at Key Stage 1. Good quality teaching, especially in Year 1, is beginning to improve basic language, literacy and numeracy skills. Inspection evidence shows that standards are improving. Pupils have consistently positive attitudes to their work and are keen to succeed. The weak literacy skills, especially in reading, restrict progress from Year 3 through to Year 6. The quality of teaching is good and enables pupils to make sound progress in Key Stage 2. However, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, especially those of average and above average ability, are not high enough to improve standards significantly. The school provides effectively for pupils with special educational needs. Although those pupils have a wide range of differing needs, the school ensures that they are all successfully involved in the full curriculum programme. Teaching and support staff work very effectively together to enable these pupils to receive good support to meet their learning needs, which are clearly identified in their individual education plans. They make good progress and achieve standards in line with their ability. Their progress is particularly strong in developing social and communication skills, enabling them to take a full part in class activities. Pupils for whom English is an additional language receive satisfactory support overall in their language development. They make sound progress in their learning and attain similar standards to those achieved by other pupils of similar ability. They receive good support where pupils have additional sensory or special needs and this enables them to make good progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes to school and to their learning. Pupils enjoy school. They are enthusiastic, eager to contribute, and keen to participate both in lessons and other activities in and around school. Parents are particularly pleased by the way the school promotes pupils' personal development, and helps their children to become mature and responsible. They value the good teaching and commitment of staff. Pupils are particularly well motivated when there is a practical focus to the lesson. However, some pupils have a short attention span and become easily distracted when they do not understand, or if there are over-long sessions when they are sitting on the carpet. Children under five in the reception class show a satisfactory approach both to work and within their relationships with each other. They are beginning to develop good social skills and explore new learning opportunities as they engage in their tasks and activities. The children work and play well together, sharing their resources. A small group was observed happily playing with the clay, taking turns and giving up their place when another child wanted to join in.
11. **The standards of behaviour in and around the school are generally good. A number of parents expressed concern about pupils' behaviour, but this view was not supported by what the inspectors saw during the inspection. The school has worked hard at promoting good behaviour with effective results. Pupils are aware of the school's rules and ways of going on. This good behaviour is particularly**

² [Early learning goals- these are expectations for most children to reach by the end of the Foundation Stage. They refer mainly to achievements children make in the following six areas of learning: communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; personal, social and emotional development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.](#)

apparent when pupils are well focused and engaged in their tasks and activities. However, there is a small number of pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour and can be very disruptive, requiring careful management by staff. Pupils respond positively to the reward system, recognizing and appreciating successes with spontaneous applause during the celebration assembly. Pupils are very friendly, happy to talk about what they are doing and very willing to show their work to visitors. Parents reported a few incidents of bullying. However, pupils felt that the school was a happy and secure place. If there were problems they knew who to go to and were confident it would be dealt with properly. The effective implementation of the school's behaviour policy resulted in an increase in the number of fixed-term exclusions last term. These exclusions were applied for serious incidents relating to six individuals. Only one pupil has had more than one period of exclusion.

12. Relationships in the school are very good, both between staff and pupils, and amongst the pupils themselves. Parents felt that the good relationships between staff and the pupils were one of the strengths of the school and the inspectors agree. The school works hard to promote tolerance and kindness and ensure pupils do not feel excluded. Pupils with special educational needs and those in the hearing impaired unit are particularly well integrated into school activities. Pupils work well together in both pairs and groups. This harmonious atmosphere promotes a good working environment and makes a positive impact on learning. In a geography lesson, pupils were observed working co-operatively to identify traffic calming methods; and groups worked well together in physical education lessons.
13. Teachers use personal, social and health education lessons successfully to provide activities for pupils to talk about important issues, sharing their views and feelings. This promotes a good moral code. The care and encouragement shown by pupils for those with special educational needs and those in the hearing impairment unit are excellent. The clear aims and ethos of the school promote value and respect for each other, and are reinforced by the good role models of the staff.
14. Opportunities to develop pupils' personal development are satisfactory. In the reception classes, pupils are given a choice of activities, which help them to take responsibility for their own learning and develop their initiative. However, in other years, teachers do not promote pupils' independent learning and develop their investigative skills as effectively. Where suitable activities are offered, pupils respond well. Opportunities for pupils to undertake roles of responsibility around the school are also underdeveloped. Pupils are very willing to act as class monitors, and Year 6 pupils help with the chairs and music in assemblies. The school recognises that more can be done to encourage pupils' independence and responsibility, and that a school council would give pupils a chance to air their views.
15. Attendance levels in the school are very good. The attendance figure of 97.3 per cent for the last academic year was well above the national average. However, punctuality is sometimes a problem with a small number of parents regularly bringing their children to school late in the mornings. Attendance and punctuality are well monitored and the school is currently focusing intently on improving levels of punctuality.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching promotes good learning and positive attitudes and behaviour amongst pupils. Teaching is never less than sound. It is good in four out of every ten lessons and very good in a further three lessons. The high-quality teaching is found particularly in Years 1, 4 and 5. Nine out of ten lessons in the reception class are good or very good, and this has a positive impact on the progress of children when they enter the

school. This confirms the pre-inspection questionnaires in which 83 per cent of parents thought that teaching was good.

17. There are several reasons for the good and very good teaching, many of which relate to all years and subjects. A major factor behind the good teaching is the good relationships between pupils and teachers. This promotes the interest and attention of pupils. Pupils know that their opinions are valued, and this contributes to their positive attitudes.
18. Teachers frequently use interesting methods to gain pupils' interest and promote their learning. In an imaginative Year 4 literacy lesson, the teacher used role-play very successfully to galvanise the pupils' attention and involve them effectively in understanding characters from *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. The learning activities were purposeful and kept pupils fully occupied. Teachers ensure that a good range of resources is available, which adds considerably to pupils' understanding. They give clear instructions to ensure that pupils are then fully engaged in learning. Teachers plan carefully, particularly in literacy, to ensure that their lessons are well matched to pupils' abilities. They share the lesson objectives effectively with the pupils to enable them to know what they are trying to achieve. The quality of day-to-day planning in foundation subjects does not always match the high-quality planning in the literacy and numeracy lessons. Some teachers rely too heavily on the published scheme of work, and do not indicate which skills and attainment targets they will cover in individual lessons.
19. Teachers' very good use of questioning is an important factor in the high-quality teaching. Good lessons often start with a brisk question and answer session, in which teachers question extensively to find out what pupils know. The questioning adds pace and urgency to the lesson. For example, in a very good mathematics lesson, the teacher posed good individual challenging questions to check on the knowledge of counting back in tens. This was followed by questions to check on the strategy used; '*how did you?*', '*why?*' This showed that the teacher was also interested in how pupils reached their answers. Teachers use questions effectively as a basis for ongoing assessments. For example, pupils were asked to explain in detail the composition of the pentatonic scale in music. In the introductions, questions are effectively used such as '*can you tell me?*', '*what is?*' in order to find out what pupils have remembered. This was seen in an English lesson when the meaning of 'noun' was explored.
20. Teachers have good class management strategies. They start and end lessons promptly, and introductions and whole class feedback sessions play an important and positive part in the lesson. For example, in a mathematics lesson the whole-class session was reinforced effectively with practical aids to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour consistently. From reception teachers place an emphasis on correct procedures such as not calling out, not talking when others are answering, and raising hands to answer questions. This ensures that no time is wasted in lessons because of poor behaviour and lack of attention. The support assistants work very well with designated pupils, for example ensuring that the hearing impaired pupils have a full understanding of the lesson and the task, so that they are fully involved in learning. These pupils' responses may not be as quick as other pupils, but are considered as being just as important. This results in all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, being fully engaged in all lessons.
21. In lessons where teaching is satisfactory, but are not as effective, there are occasions when the pace of lessons drops and the rate of learning slows down. Where there is a lack of pace, pupils tend to put in less effort. In addition, teachers do not have high enough expectations, particularly of the average and above average pupils. They are too frequently given undemanding tasks. For example, in a lower literacy set in Year 3, a

pupil became frustrated because the task using adjectives was too simple and did not require him to apply his knowledge. The standard achieved was lower than expected. Teachers do not use information and communication technology sufficiently to extend pupils' skills and promote standards.

22. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is good across all areas of learning. It is never less than satisfactory and is often very good. The teachers and nursery nurse plan the curriculum very effectively together, setting clear objectives to promote the six areas of learning. They provide a well organised, stimulating range of activities with an appropriate balance between free choice and more structured teacher-led activities. The control and management of pupils are very good and staff set high standards for behaviour. This supports children in their personal and social development very well, they feel happy and eager to learn.
23. The very effective use of support staff and well-prepared resources promote children's learning successfully. Staff make good use of day-to-day assessment to record children's attainment and plan future work. They use varied and suitable teaching methods and ask challenging questions, such as, 'What might happen next if it was in our classroom?' The teachers' good knowledge enables them to give a structured approach to teaching the basic skills so children make good progress in most aspects of literacy and numeracy. Less effective teaching is caused by insufficient focus on developing children's speaking skills, affecting the rate of progress across several areas of learning. Teaching takes account of children's different attainment and good support is given to children with learning, physical or behavioural difficulties.
24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Class teachers are aware of their individual needs and show a reliable knowledge of the targets in pupils' individual education plans. They make consistently good efforts to fully include pupils in class. Planned activities are usually suitable for pupils and careful explanations help them to understand what is expected of them. Classroom assistants provide good support to pupils. They have established good relationships, inspiring trust and confidence. Good use is made of praise to encourage extra effort and most pupils show a keenness to do well. All staff observe pupils' progress carefully and maintain accurate records of their progress towards targets in their individual plans. Pupils know their targets and realise the importance of working towards them, even when they find this difficult.
25. The quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. Although some teachers link their marking effectively to pupils' literacy targets, teachers do not consistently note incorrect spelling, grammar and poor presentation. They do not always identify ways in which higher standards could be achieved. In the pre-inspection questionnaires, 22 per cent of parents indicated dissatisfaction with the amount of homework set, and written comments were added. Inspection evidence confirms that teachers do not consistently use homework to support standards of attainment. The school does not ask parents to hear pupils read daily, although spelling is usually a part of weekly homework, and pupils have other tasks set such as research and mathematics. There is no clear progression in the amount and demands of homework.

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

26. The school plans a good curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. It covers the required areas of learning and includes a broad range of interesting activities, stimulating and relevant to children's needs. The curriculum contributes effectively to all aspects of development, although the school recognises the need to plan a wider range of outdoor activities, such as providing opportunities for children to pedal and steer wheeled toys, to

promote children's physical development. Teachers create too few opportunities for children to talk about what they are doing, however, and this affects standards they could achieve, for example in communication, language and literacy.

27. The curriculum for pupils between the ages of 5 and 11 years is satisfactory. It includes a full range of subjects and meets statutory requirements in all subjects except for information and communication technology. This subject is unsatisfactory because it does not cover the full range of required skills and experiences. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs, including those with impaired hearing, is good. The school community ensures that all pupils are included in all aspects of school life. All pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. A particular strength of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is the way in which they are included in all lessons. They receive good dedicated support from all teachers and learning support assistants to ensure that they are fully involved. Pupils for whom English is an additional language have their needs identified early and receive an appropriate learning programme.
28. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and all pupils have the required daily amount of time of one hour. Although teachers include some activities that extend numeracy skills in other subjects, for example science, this is not consistently promoted in all subjects. The school has developed its strategy for teaching the skills of literacy. However, those aspects related to developing pupils' reading are not consistently established. There is no policy for the development of literacy skills across the whole curriculum and this restricts standards.
29. The provision for personal, social and health education throughout the school is good. Although new to the role, the co-ordinator is already beginning to develop a coherent whole-school programme that is relevant to the needs of pupils. In spite of it being in its early stage of development, some very good lessons in this area were seen during the course of the inspection. A class of Year 5 pupils confidently identified strengths and weaknesses in themselves and recognised the strengths and weaknesses in others. They later discussed how to make efforts to improve their weaknesses. Groups of pupils in a Year 6 class that include a high number of pupils with special educational needs, discussed aspects of bullying and name calling and showed good developing moral attitudes to deal with these incidents.
30. The school has recently developed a whole-school approach to curriculum planning, using nationally produced guidelines to enable all subjects to be fully covered. Curriculum planning procedures are improving, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to enable pupils' skills to be built on soundly. The appropriate emphasis on numeracy and literacy has meant that other subjects have not been a main focus for development. However, all teachers are analysing what is taught in order to ensure comprehensive coverage of the National Curriculum. The information from this analysis is planned to be used to review what is provided for pupils.
31. The school provides a sound range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, participate in a good range of physical activities and competitive sports. There is a sound range of clubs and groups including football training, country dancing, Christian Union and music that includes learning to play the recorder and the ocarina. Pupils make visits to museums, art galleries and other places of interest. All pupils visit the local Baptist church and Year 1 pupils visit a local museum. Year 2 pupils enjoy a short residential visit at a nearby environmental centre that enhances their work in geography and science as well as help develop their social skills. Year 5 has a residential trip to Scarborough and Year 6 pupils visit museums, art galleries and the theatre.

32. The local community makes a satisfactory contribution to learning. The school has a close link with churches; for example, during the inspection the pastor of the local Baptist church led an assembly for the younger pupils in the school. The pastor also contributes to the football training. Members of the fire brigade and the police visit the school to talk to pupils and talk about their work.
33. The school has very good and constructive relations with partner institutions. These include other local primary schools in a cluster group arrangement. There are close links with a nearby secondary school that has Beacon status³. The learning support and advanced skills teachers from this school are helping the school with the curriculum and staff subject expertise, for example in science. Initial teacher training students from Bedford are well supported by the school.
34. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for pupils' spiritual development. There is a thorough policy for collective worship, which is well implemented throughout the school. Whole-school assemblies at the beginning of the week develop suitable themes for pupils to reflect upon. At the end of the week, 'celebration assemblies' recognise significant contributions by pupils and enhance the value the school places on pupils' efforts. These help pupils to reflect on their own contributions and to create a sense of community. Whole-school assemblies are supplemented by effective smaller group assemblies, where pupils are given further opportunities to reflect on relevant themes. Assemblies for singing are particularly impressive, with considerable enthusiasm from the pupils.
35. Spirituality is less well developed in lessons. Teachers rarely plan for spiritual development and only a few examples were observed during the period of inspection, mainly when considering the local environment or appreciating different types of music. In other subjects, such as art and science, there are only occasional discussions about the wonders of the natural world. Pupils show limited curiosity for matters beyond their own immediate experience.
36. There are good arrangements for encouraging pupils' moral development. Class rules are well promoted throughout the school. Pupils know what is expected of them and have a clear understanding of the boundaries of behaviour in the classroom. Staff provide good role models, showing patience and tolerance. Pupils follow this example and often help those less able than themselves. They are particularly tolerant of pupils with special educational needs. In English and personal, social and health education, there are frequent discussions about how pupils should behave towards each other. Staff are effective in recognising opportunities to reinforce pupils' understanding of right and wrong, especially when minor incidents have occurred. There is substantial evidence to suggest that the degree of poor behaviour and bullying has been much reduced in recent times; much of this improvement is as a result of the consistent implementation of a clear moral code. As a result, pupils trust each other and are confident in most school situations.
37. The school has satisfactory arrangements for pupils' social development. Staff encourage pupils to share resources and work together during group work, although there are relatively few references to the development of collaborative skills in teachers' planning. In the playground, many pupils show an ability to organise games. Residential trips to Stibbington and Scarborough are highly valued by pupils and parents. They provide good opportunities for pupils and staff to mix in different circumstances and help pupils to learn to enjoy experiences away from home. The school does not provide many opportunities for older pupils to develop responsibilities. Some deliver registers and

³ Beacon schools are recognised by the DfEE as centres of excellence and have been awarded funding in order to provide a programme of activities designed to disseminate good practice. These schools provide high quality support and advice to others through a programme of consultancy, in-service training, documentation and visits.

occasionally help younger pupils with their reading, but the school does not have a concerted programme for developing the potential of older pupils in anticipation of them leaving. There are plans for a school council and a 'Middleton News' club, but these are not yet in place.

38. There are satisfactory arrangements for promoting pupils' cultural development. In subjects such as English, history and geography, pupils are encouraged to develop a sense of belonging to the local community. They discuss their local surroundings and know of the main businesses and facilities. There are regular visits from local people, including the elderly, local churches and the community policeman. Good use is made of the local Milton estate to provide a sense of the historic development of Bretton and convey a sense of it being on the edge of the countryside.
39. There are few planned opportunities to develop a broader cultural awareness. Many pupils lack a sense of belonging to the City of Peterborough and there are only very occasional trips to the facilities in the city centre, such as the Cathedral. Some multi-cultural resources are available in subjects such as art, music and geography, but the school lacks an up-to-date policy for developing pupils' understanding of cultures different to their own and for promoting an awareness of multi-cultural Britain. At present, there are no arrangements for monitoring teachers' planning for the inclusion of multi-cultural elements. The multi-cultural aspect of pupils' cultural development is not sufficiently promoted.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. **The school provides a very caring and supportive environment. Its provision for pupils' health, welfare and guidance makes a significant contribution to their personal and academic development. Parents spoke highly of the care of teachers and the support staff; and highlighted the special educational needs unit as a great benefit to the school. Teachers and their support staff know the pupils very well. They effectively monitor pupils' personal development and will act quickly when they see a need. The school seeks to ensure that pupils have equal opportunities. There are very good systems in place to support the academic and personal development needs of pupils with special educational needs, especially those in the hearing impaired unit, and pupils make good progress. The entry process into the school and the later transition to the secondary schools are well planned for and handled sensitively.**
41. **Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour, and eliminating any oppressive behaviour, are very good. This is reflected in the good behaviour and orderly atmosphere in the school. The comprehensive behaviour policy provides clear guidelines and procedures for promoting good behaviour, and dealing with any disruptive pupils or incidents of bullying. There is a good balance of rewards and sanctions, with staff offering a consistent approach to behaviour management. Where there are concerns the school has implemented sensitive monitoring and behaviour modification procedures. These include 'safe corners', behaviour logs which monitor individuals, and the involvement of outside specialists. These strategies are being very effective and have resulted in improved patterns of behaviour, and fewer incidents of exclusions over the last three months.**
42. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good and reflect in the high levels of attendance in the school. Parents are regularly informed about their responsibilities regarding the need to ensure their children attend school regularly and promptly. The school is focusing now on improving punctuality into school in the

mornings. Appropriate links have been established with the education welfare officer who gets involved in following up cases where necessary.

43. The school has good systems in place for child protection and ensuring pupils' health, safety and welfare. The school follows the local authority procedures and guidelines for child protection. The special educational needs co-ordinator and headteacher are the staff with designated responsibilities. Staff are regularly updated on changes to the legislation and receive appropriate in-service training. There are appropriate links with the relevant outside agencies such as the educational psychologist, school nurse and hearing impairment service, whose representatives visit regularly. Well-established systems are in place to take care of pupils who may fall ill during the day, and there are effective procedures to meet the medical needs of pupils. An appropriate number of staff is qualified to provide first-aid.
44. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy, and appropriate procedures in place to address the issues of safety and security of pupils in the school. The construction of secure fencing around the school has resulted in the improved safety and security for staff and pupils. This was ably demonstrated when there was an incident during the inspection week. Parents commented favourably on the improved security measures at the parents' meeting. The caretaker and staff representative undertake regular health and safety checks and risk assessments. The governors take an active role in fulfilling their responsibilities for health and safety, with the health and safety governor conducting termly inspections.
45. The overall quality of assessment, recording and reporting is satisfactory. However, teachers' use of assessment information to inform their planning and to monitor and support pupils' academic progress is unsatisfactory. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good and contribute to the caring approach of the school. The arrangements for assessing pupils with statements of special educational need are very good and used well to target their learning needs.
46. Most teachers keep detailed and regular records of their assessments of pupils' progress. In the reception classes, teachers assess children's attainments on entry to the school in September. In Year 2 and Year 6, teachers' assessments of pupils' work for national results are accurate when compared to the pupils' test results. The school has also started to assess pupils' progress by setting optional national tests in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5. Analysis of these tests has been started, but is underdeveloped.
47. Assessment procedures are satisfactory for English and mathematics. However they are more haphazard for other subjects, including information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education. The procedures to assess pupils' attainments in reading are unsatisfactory. Pupils' reading ages are not measured and teachers have few means of assessing how well pupils are achieving relative to their previous standards in reading. The procedures to assess pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics are accurate and consistent. They are based on an appropriate balance of observation, marking, focused assessments and commercial, standardised tests. There is currently no system for assessing pupils' work in ICT. Teachers do not yet keep checklists of what pupils have done or of how well they have achieved. As with all other subjects, there are no consistent procedures to guide teachers to a more informed understanding of pupils' levels of attainment and in the monitoring of individual or group progress. Many teachers set some reasonably accurate targets for improvement at the end of lessons. Target-setting sometimes involves identifying areas to be covered in the curriculum rather than targets related to raising standards.

48. The school has very recently introduced assessment procedures in a range of subjects. Previously, teachers did not have the means to tell how well pupils were progressing. However, teachers know the capabilities of pupils in their classes well and adapt their planning to take account of this knowledge. Teachers keep records, such as individual education plans, for pupils receiving extra help with their education. These records are useful, relevant and easily available. They are used effectively to target improvement.
49. The school has introduced some good methods for pupils to assess their own progress, such as in class discussions, and through paired work, group reading and feedback sessions. These are good methods of adding further information to the school's knowledge of what it does and what it needs to do to improve. They are used in many classes. Pupils do not yet have a more detailed knowledge of how well they are doing by comparing their attainments against the different National Curriculum levels.
50. Assessment procedures for the Foundation Stage are good. Staff assess children's skills thoroughly on entry to reception and during everyday observations, recording their progress towards meeting the early learning goals. The results of assessments and the baseline tests are well used to group children, monitor progress and to plan future lessons. Less effective is the use of an analysis of assessment results to identify areas of the curriculum that require a particular target focus in order to raise standards. For example, the Foundation Stage is not included in the school's targets to improve standards of literacy and numeracy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory. This year the school has clearly identified as priorities the need to foster better links with parents and establish more effective liaison between home and school. The school recognises that the recent disruptions, caused by the amalgamation of the two schools and staff changes, have resulted in some concerns amongst parents. Some of these concerns focused on the extent to which the school works closely with parents and keeps them informed. Most parents felt happy to come to the school if they had problems, and knew they would be listened to. However, a few parents felt the school was not very welcoming and approachable. The school no longer operates a full open door policy because of a number of unfortunate incidents and the subsequent tighter security measures. This means parents now have to make an appointment to meet teachers to discuss any concerns they may have. Meetings can be organised at short notice if there is a pressing issue. A number of parents expressed concerns regarding the lack of out-of-school activities offered to pupils. Inspectors find that the school provides a satisfactory range of activities for pupils, but they are not always open to all year groups, especially younger pupils.
52. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Information regarding the school and its activities is detailed in the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents. However, the governors do not report the examination results and attendance figures appropriately in accordance with statutory requirements. Regular contact is maintained through letters, which tell parents how their children are doing, and in some classes the home/school book. Parents of children in the reception class are invited into the school at the start of each day. They are encouraged to share a book or join in an activity with their child before school. During this time they can also meet with staff to discuss any concerns they may have. Curriculum information including details of projects and topics to be covered is circulated to parents each year. Twenty-five per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that they were not kept well informed about the progress their children were making. Consultation evenings are held regularly, providing opportunities for parents to review their child's progress and achievements.

The pupils' annual reports are detailed and identify some targets for improvement. A number of parents commented that they thought the reports rather bland, and the use of a general data bank of comments meant they could not always recognise their children. Only the social comments are individualised and handwritten. Parents are consulted regarding issues such as the home/school agreement. A successful numeracy workshop was held to introduce parents to some of the activities their children would undertake. The reception teachers run a reading workshop for new parents to help them teach their children to read. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and are involved in the review processes.

53. The school has yet to encourage parents to contribute effectively to children's learning. Reading books currently go home once a week. This does not enable parents and carers to spend enough time listening to their children read regularly. This lack of practise is having a significant impact on the standards of reading. Pupils are currently showing low levels of attainment in reading across the school. The school offers opportunities for parents to become involved in their children's learning by helping out in the school. A small number of adults are volunteering to help in the classroom with various group activities, or listening to pupils read. The Friends Association is run by a committed group of parents and staff. A small number of fund-raising and social events are held each year. These are well attended and generate additional funds to help purchase resources for the school, such as the picnic benches in the playground and some computer equipment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The leadership and management of the school are sound overall. The school has undergone a period of significant disruption in the last two years during which the previous junior and infant schools were amalgamated. There were high levels of staffing change and pupil mobility and delays in the completion of the building, which linked together the different parts of the school. These restricted the initial development of a team approach and standards in pupils' attitudes and attainment fell significantly. The governing body was unsuccessful in trying to appoint a permanent replacement for the headteacher, who left at the end of last school year. The deputy headteacher was appointed as acting headteacher for the current school year. She has been very successful in giving a clear lead to the work of the school, focused strongly on improving standards of behaviour and encouraging a team approach. Most parents and many pupils expressed their appreciation of the positive lead the acting headteacher has given, particularly in improving the learning environment and working atmosphere within the school.
55. The purpose of the school, set out clearly in its vision statement and aims, is reflected successfully in its day-to-day activities, especially those relating to personal values, relationships, caring attitudes and ensuring equal opportunities for all pupils. The aim to ensure that pupils are achieving to their highest potential has yet to be established. The acting headteacher has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is clearly reflected in the school's plan for improvement, which is targeted effectively on raising standards of attainment. The newly-created acting senior management team has quickly adopted a positive, enthusiastic and responsible approach to their roles. They are beginning to work closely with other staff, particularly in separate key stage teams, to improve communications and raise the quality of teaching and learning. Staff with responsibilities for co-ordinating the key stages, and for literacy and numeracy, have begun to monitor and evaluate teaching. Working closely with the acting headteacher and the school's adviser from the local education authority, they have identified various issues from these observations. These were then discussed with, and evaluated by, staff and are contributing to raising teaching to a consistently high level. Staff with

responsibility for other subjects have begun to monitor teaching plans, but are not yet effectively involved in evaluating what pupils achieve in their particular subjects.

56. The school has agreed whole-school targets for pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy at the age of 11 years. They indicate improvements in 2002 to 74 per cent of pupils to achieve Level 4 or above, which is broadly in line with the current national averages. Class teachers, year teams and the senior management team analyse an increasing range of assessment and test results to identify strengths and weaknesses in pupils' attainment and to target support effectively for lower-attaining pupils. This information indicates that the school is unlikely to achieve its unrealistic school targets for 2001, but is on target to achieve them for 2002. Staff are using this information to set improvement targets for groups of pupils, with some teachers setting individual pupil targets for improvement. These are still in the early stages of development and some inconsistencies in their use are limiting their impact. The school is planning to review then extend their use and staff are gaining in both confidence and competence in using these procedures to raise standards. The willingness of all staff to work together as a team to develop new procedures and seek to improve attainment shows that the school has the capacity to improve rapidly.
57. The governing body was particularly supportive of the school during its amalgamation in trying to get the new building completed. However, governors were not effectively involved in shaping the direction of the new school. They were kept informed about developments through detailed reports from the headteacher. However, few were effectively involved in monitoring and evaluating standards or in working with the headteacher to set targets for improvement. Recent developments and changes have encouraged governors to become more involved, for example, in monitoring pupils' behaviour and arrangements for pupils with special educational needs. Some governors have been involved in lesson observations, although these are not yet sufficiently developed to give governors a clearer understanding of standards of teaching and learning. Their valuable and supportive role as a 'critical friend' and in contributing more to developing a team approach is not yet effectively established. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory requirements, although aspects of the information for parents and the curriculum for information and communication technology are not fully met. The governors have set performance targets for the headteacher, although staffing changes have led to the staff appraisal system not being effectively maintained. The school, with the approval of the local education authority, is planning to introduce performance management later this school year, and link it appropriately to teaching quality and staff professional development.
58. The governing body, mainly through its finance committee working closely with the acting headteacher and the financial secretary, has established sound procedures for financial planning and management. Finances are linked effectively to the school improvement plan. Governors monitor the budget carefully through regular and detailed information provided by the financial secretary. The expected outcomes for each priority for improvement are identified, although procedures to evaluate the cost effectiveness of spending decisions are not clearly established. The school's budget has benefited from some additional funds to cover some of the costs associated with the amalgamation. The governors have adopted a strategic aspect to their financial planning to enable the current underspend to be used effectively as the school moves to the normal level of primary school funding. Specific funds, for example those for special educational needs, literacy and numeracy, have been used effectively to improve resources and target support for particular groups of pupils.
59. The teaching and management of special educational needs are well co-ordinated. Good systems have been established, including a well thought out approach to the writing of

individual education plans, which is consistent throughout the school. Good efforts are made to include parents in pupils' learning and there are effective arrangements for annual and interim reviews. Staff are well allocated throughout the school and particularly good use is made of the learning support teacher's time. Suitable 'in-house' training is provided for new staff and there are frequent joint planning meetings between the special educational needs co-ordinator, class teachers, learning support and general assistants. The school's managers are strongly committed to improving the provision for pupils with special educational needs, which is reflected in the recent development of specialist rooms, which provide a good environment for group work.

60. The school has improved its resources for information and communication technology very recently, although some initial installation difficulties have restricted their impact on improving standards. The newly organised school administration area makes good use of new technology to provide good quality day-to-day financial and organisational information. It contributes significantly to the smooth running of the school. The school makes sound use of the principles of best value, for example, by taking other quotes from different suppliers. It gives sound value for money.
61. There are sufficient well-qualified teachers to meet the demands of the curriculum, especially those with specific qualifications to meet the needs of hearing impaired pupils. However, the school has had a high level of staff changes, due mainly to recruitment problems. This has led to some staff changing year groups, on occasions in mid-year, which has impacted on standards. Although many staff are on temporary contracts, there is a strong team approach. All staff show a strong commitment to the school and to raising standards. The school has a good staff development policy, with all staff, including support and supervisory staff, having good opportunities for training. Procedures to evaluate training courses and feedback to other staff contribute effectively to school improvement.
62. The school has a satisfactory level of resources overall, although there are some areas of concern which restrict opportunities to develop pupils' learning. For example, the range of fiction books is inadequate, particularly to extend the reading skills of higher-attaining pupils and to interest boys. The school has recently joined the local authority's school library service and has targeted the shortage of fiction books as a priority for development. The new ICT suite has improved computer resources. There are few computers available in classrooms to enable pupils to apply their skills systematically, although financial planning shows that these are to be improved in the next year. Resources for physical education are good, particularly for games, and are used effectively to promote high standards. Resources for practical sessions in science, art and design and technology do not enable teachers to organise a broad range of different activities. Play equipment for children in the Foundation Stage is planned for improvement.
63. The accommodation is very good. It provides an attractive working environment and is enhanced effectively by attractive displays to celebrate pupils' work. The very recent building improvements have significantly enhanced the range of learning opportunities. The new ICT suite and the joining corridor have provided much needed facilities, including an additional library area, a good-sized staff room and an attractive reception/entrance hall with good security features. The number of rooms is adequate and of good size. The school has made good use of the previous computer room to create a small teaching room for a third Year 6 class. This has allowed staff to make smaller teaching groups and is proving effective in raising standards, especially in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. Further plans indicate improvements to be made to the outside areas, including the creation of an environmental area to be used for work in science.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. In order to raise standards and improve the school's effectiveness, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) raise standards in literacy by:
 - a) improving the teaching of reading;
 - b) improving pupils' speaking and listening skills;
 - c) extending literacy skills by using them consistently to promote standards in all subjects;(paragraphs 2, 7, 9, 88-89, 91-92, 99, 134 and 139)
- (2) improve standards of attainment in numeracy, science, information and communication technology and religious education by ensuring teachers consistently challenge pupils of average and above average ability to extend their skills, knowledge and understanding;
(paragraphs 3, 5, 21, 97, 100, 108 and 118)
- (3) improve assessment procedures and use them to inform planning and set targets for improvement;
(paragraphs 45, 47 and 56)
- (4) improve home-school communication to increase parental involvement in pupils' learning;
(paragraphs 51 and 53)
- (5) extend the recent developments in the role of the governing body in targeting school improvement;
(paragraph 57)
- (6) fulfil statutory requirements in information and communication technology and reporting to parents.
(paragraphs 52 and 146)

In addition to the issues listed above, the following less important issue should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. This is indicated in paragraph 39.

- Further develop pupils' appreciation of the benefits of cultural diversity.

THE WORK OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS UNIT

65. Pupils with hearing impairment are included in main school classes for most of their time at school. In these classes, pupils make good progress across the full range of subjects. Their progress in developing communication and literacy skills is particularly good, and is reinforced by individual and small group sessions in the unit rooms. The emphasis on 'total communication', involving speech, gesture and signing helps pupils to communicate effectively in whole-class settings and to take a full part in lessons.
66. All staff, teachers and learning support assistants have a very good knowledge of the techniques required to promote the learning of the hearing impaired. They have established very good relationships with the pupils and make good judgements about the level of communication required, varying the level of signing and complexity of language to meet the age and abilities of individual pupils. This helps pupils to sustain their concentration over long periods of time when they need to listen, watch and speak to support staff and class teachers. Good use is made of signs and gestures to convey more subtle meanings, and staff are prompt in responding to pupils' questions or in correcting misunderstandings.
67. Staff have high expectations of pupils and expect them to contribute to whole-class discussions. Most class teachers are adept in including the hearing impaired in these discussions, often waiting for their response while pupils are digesting the full meaning of signed communications. Arrangements for ensuring that all pupils can watch the teacher and see support staff signing are good. At Key Stage 1, the hearing impaired are often placed in a central position when sitting on the carpet, enabling them to observe responses from other pupils. At Key Stage 2, staff support pupils discreetly, without obstructing the view of the teacher and the board. The difficulties posed by the quick-paced, whole-class introductions and conclusions to literacy and numeracy lessons have been largely overcome. Staff work hard to keep pupils up to pace and, on the occasions when pupils' responses are to previous questions, teachers cope well and are careful to value the contributions of the hearing impaired.
68. Very good judgements are usually made about the level of staff intervention in pupils' learning. Some of the hearing impaired tend to be very reliant on their designated support staff, but good efforts are made to reduce their level of dependency. Staff point out other pupils to them and help to explain what is being said. Pupils often work in groups without direct supervision, enabling them to strengthen relationships with other members of the class. Other pupils are patient and friendly towards the hearing impaired and react entirely naturally to their presence; for example, pointing out to visitors that one of their number cannot hear so may not be able to respond immediately to questions. The strength of relationships usually continues in less formal situations between lessons and during breaks, when the hearing impaired are fully involved in playtime games and conversations. Despite occasional frustrations as a result of their lack of hearing, pupils are generally well behaved and cope very well with the pressures of involvement with the 'hearing world'. The majority have developed an impressive clarity of speech, which they supplement with strong gestures when communicating with the fully hearing. Many other pupils have learnt some simple signs, which enhances the level of communication.
69. Pupils with hearing impairment follow the main school curriculum and usually study the full range of subjects. There are thorough individual education plans in which three general, cross-curricular targets are supplemented by detailed targets related to pupils' hearing impairment. Individual plans are readily accessible in classrooms and are well understood by support staff and class teachers. This enables staff to provide consistent strategies to promote pupils' learning in all lessons. Support assistants carry notebooks in which they record significant progress by pupils. This information is collated on a

regular basis and helps the co-ordinators of the hearing impaired units to make accurate judgements about the rate of pupils' progress towards the targets in their plans. Parents are kept well informed and there are very good efforts to involve them in their children's learning through regular contact with staff.

70. The unit for the hearing impaired is very well managed. The two co-ordinators have substantial experience, which they have used to gradually improve arrangements for pupils. Their strong commitment towards inclusive practices is shared by all staff and provides a good model for pupils, starting at the beginning of the week with well organised signing to the whole-school assembly. There is very good liaison with class teachers and with the special educational needs co-ordinator, which leads to close co-operation between all adults in classes. The budget allocation is well used to provide a suitable level of staffing. Good support is provided for new staff, who are supervised carefully and given advice which helps them to feel confident in their role. Regular training is provided for support assistants and for class teachers, including advice on signing. Records are well kept. All files are up-to-date and supplement detailed main school files. This helps to maintain good relations with outside agencies, including doctors and therapists. Records indicate a good level of co-operation in devising pupils' communication programmes, although there are problems caused by the current lack of access to a speech and language therapist. The unit is well supported by the commitment of the acting headteacher, who shows substantial awareness of its work. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is closely involved with the unit's work and promotes the interests of the hearing impaired throughout the school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

87

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

37

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	31	38	31	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	384
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	94
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	88
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	43
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	22

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.5
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	18	20	23
	Girls	24	24	25
	Total	42	44	48
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	70 (76)	73 (84)	80 (82)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	18	23	20
	Girls	23	25	25
	Total	41	48	45
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	68 (77)	80 (85)	75 (79)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	28	24	52

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	15
	Girls	19	12	15
	Total	35	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	67 (53)	54 (56)	58 (63)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	15	15	18
	Girls	17	11	15
	Total	32	26	33
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	64 (60)	52 (54)	66 (56)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	296
Any other minority ethnic group	18

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	6	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)	18
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.3 : 1
Average class size	25.3

Education support staff: YR– Y6

Total number of education support staff	28
Total aggregate hours worked per week	545

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/ 2000
	£
Total income	679,643
Total expenditure	665,021
Expenditure per pupil	1,774
Balance brought forward from previous year	95,766
Balance carried forward to next year	110,388

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 21%

Number of questionnaires sent out	372
Number of questionnaires returned	78

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	35	4	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	52	33	9	6	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	44	15	13	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	43	19	6	2
The teaching is good.	43	38	9	9	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	36	19	16	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	27	10	12	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	36	10	6	1
The school works closely with parents.	26	35	19	17	3
The school is well led and managed.	24	41	14	13	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	42	9	6	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	29	26	10	12

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

71. Children start school in the September of the year in which they become five. Entry to the two reception classes is part-time at first. There are enough number of staff and other adult helpers to support children effectively, particularly those who have special educational needs. This good quality support has a significant effect on children's learning and progress, as activities are very well organised and managed. Most children have received some pre-school education, although a few come straight into the reception classes.
72. The education for children in the reception classes is good and a strength of the school. Parents are appreciative of the good start given to their children. Attainment on entry for most children, particularly in relation to their personal, communication and language development, is below the average expected for their age. This means that although children receive good teaching and make good progress, they do not fully catch up in all the learning areas, to reach the standards expected by the end of the reception year. They are on track to achieve the early learning goals set for personal, social and emotional, physical and creative development. They are just below the standards expected in the areas of learning for communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Many children enter the reception classes with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the reception classes they achieve the early learning goals in this area. This shows good achievement and reflects the skilful teaching and support children receive. They feel secure, respond well and quickly settle into the welcoming atmosphere of the reception classes. Each morning children have a good start to the day because the door is open for 10 minutes before school starts, with parents and carers welcome in class. Children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own registration. They find their own name on the board with increasing independence, put it in the appropriate lunchtime cup and choose their starting activity confidently. Children happily join in all activities while staff encourage the less confident to explore new situations. Adults ensure that resources are carefully organised and easily accessible, which helps the children become independent. They concentrate for reasonable periods, show interest in what they are doing and try hard to do their best.
74. The adults provide good role models for children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect, such as encouraging children to use 'please' and 'thank you'. This leads to trusting relationships and children co-operate well with each other in class and small group activities. This trusting approach helps the children to understand one another's point of view and to be tolerant. They are effectively developing an awareness of the feelings of others. All children are fully accepted including those with special educational needs and the hearing impaired children. Children's behaviour is very good. They look after equipment carefully, take turns and share fairly. Older children are given increasing responsibility, such as being tidying-up monitors. They show independence in dressing and personal hygiene, offering to help each other dress after physical education. At lunch-time many children are not skilled in using a knife and fork. Some lack social skills, for example preferring to eat food, such as spaghetti, with their fingers.

Communication, language and literacy

75. Many children start in reception with levels assessed as being below those expected for their age in literacy. Good teaching enables them to make good progress in the basic skills of reading and writing. Fewer children than the national average are on course to achieve the standards expected in this area at the end of reception. This is partly because most children have underdeveloped skills of spoken language. Teachers have not fully identified this and so miss opportunities to develop vocabulary, although they show children that they value their efforts in communicating. They do not ask all children to repeat new words or develop their talking in sentences enough. This affects children's progress and ability to talk about what they know, understand and can do in other areas such as knowledge and understanding of the world.
76. Children enjoy listening to stories and looking at the pictures. Their reading attitudes are promoted very effectively by lively reading from the teachers. They successfully encourage children to join in reading familiar parts and to guess what will happen next. Children respond enthusiastically and understand that print carries meaning and goes from left to right. For example, they enjoy acting as 'the teacher' using her effective method of pointing to the words with a cardboard hand. They handle books carefully. Children take a library book and a reading scheme book home only once a week. This home practise contributes satisfactorily to promoting early reading skills, although it has not been extended effectively to enable more children to read more frequently at home.
77. Children link sounds and initial letters successfully, and the higher-attainers are starting to have a go at writing simple words. They know that writing is used for different purposes, for example recording instructions to make a jam sandwich. They confidently 'play write', using the supplies of paper, boards, pens and pencils readily available for them, such as at the receptionist's desk in the 'health centre'. Children's handwriting is developed through a carefully structured approach, but fewer children than expected make recognisable correctly formed letters.

Mathematics

78. Children make good progress in developing numeracy and mathematics skills. Fewer than expected are likely to achieve the required standards for their age at the end of reception because of their lower than average attainment on entry. They all count to 10 and a few to 20, matching and ordering objects up to 10 with increasing accuracy. They receive good teaching with a well planned, stimulating range of activities and resources to develop their skills. For example, a very good lesson finished with all children joining in a range of number rhymes and songs. They were fully involved in an exciting game to identify and correct number order. The teacher used questions skilfully, 'How did you find out?', encouraging children to explain their thinking and realise they found out a missing number by counting on.
79. Teachers build very effectively on children's knowledge and provide good opportunities to discover new knowledge through practical experience. They help children recognise and create simple repeating patterns and state what will come next, by threading coloured beads and then printing a repeating pattern using 'rounds' and triangles. Children find it difficult to explain their thinking using correct mathematical terms. A few match the labels, heavier and lighter, to pans on the weighing scales. They compare quantities appropriately, such as bigger and smaller, full and empty. Staff promote numeracy well throughout the day, for example, by asking questions such as 'how many more and less' when giving out equipment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

80. Many children enter reception with a basic general knowledge. Teachers build on this knowledge effectively by planning a very good range of learning experiences. For instance, to develop children's language describing what they touched, adults provided very good quality support as they managed different tactile experiences. Small groups of children moved round the different activities. They described objects such as cotton wool, cornflakes and jelly, using the words 'cuddly', 'crusty' and 'wobbly'. The teacher focused on thoroughly assessing and recording individual children's progress. A consistent team approach to asking effective questions meant children made good progress in their language development. It also highlighted that children's language is underdeveloped for their age. Many children do not know the names for objects such as shell, cork or fir cone. They seldom ask questions about why things happen.
81. Children confidently use equipment such as a computer to support their learning. They are starting to recognise letters on a keyboard and use the 'mouse' to select suitable clothes to dress a teddy. They independently play audio-tapes in the listening centre. All children select carefully from a range of resources to construct, build and join materials together.

Physical development

82. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development. They are likely to achieve expected standards at the end of the reception class. Teachers have developed a good understanding in children so that they are aware of moving safely and how to use space. For instance, children constructed an obstacle course for wheeled trucks. The nursery nurse encouraged them to introduce more equipment and make better use of the large space available in the hall. The school has correctly identified a need to develop children's learning in the outdoor play area, such as providing opportunities for pedalling and steering wheeled toys. Staff already ensure that children regularly use the outdoor environment.
83. Children use a range of tools, objects and construction toys with increasing skill and control. They cut and stick materials reasonably accurately, for example, when making a pasta collage picture.

Creative development

84. Children's creative development is in line with standards expected and they make sound progress in art, music, dance and imaginative play. They develop a satisfactory sense of rhythm; enjoy singing and putting appropriate actions to songs. Teachers provide good opportunities for them to explore a range of media and materials. The effective use of additional adults to support children in small groups means they achieve success in learning new skills. Children draw, paint and print to create a desired effect. They model using a range of construction materials and experiment with rolling out and shaping sparkly play dough. They freely explore pattern-making in damp sand and on clay tablets and experiment with bubbles in water. They showed great pride in their embroidered designs.
85. Children confidently take part in imaginative play, such as dressing up in the 'health centre' and acting as the receptionist, doctor, nurse or patient. Some additional adult intervention in their imaginative play would encourage children to develop their talking more and practise adapting it for different purposes. Overall, teachers use a good mix of directing activities to develop specific skills and allow children to learn by playing freely.

ENGLISH

86. Pupils enter the school with standards that are below national expectations. Standards seen during the inspection show that they remain below national expectations when pupils reach 7 years and are well below when pupils reach 11 years. Therefore, standards seen were better in Key Stage 1 than those reached in the national tests in 2000. They matched the results obtained in 2000 in Key Stage 2. There has been a decline in the national test results from 1999 to 2000 because of frequent staff changes. At Key Stage 1 in 2000, standards were well below the national average in reading and below in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving higher than expected levels was above average in writing, but well below in reading. At Key Stage 2, standards were well below the national averages, although the percentage of pupils who gained Level 5 and above was close to the national average. The standards achieved by the school are well below those attained in similar schools in writing and reading in Key Stage 1, but have risen to be below those standards in Key Stage 2. There is a difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Girls obtain significantly better results than boys in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language receive good quality support and make good progress in their language and literacy skills.
87. Standards in speaking and listening are below national expectations when pupils are 7 and well below those standards when they are 11 years. In Year 2, many pupils listen carefully, for example when they followed instructions given about how to respond to notes of a different pitch. However, the listening skills of some pupils are not well developed and they are easily distracted. Many pupils talk confidently and respond appropriately to others. For example, a pupil explained that he did not like the book *The Hunter* because a girl was lost. However, he found it difficult to add further detail, which is the expected level. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and this affects their ability to explain. This was seen in a mathematics lesson, when a pupil found it difficult to explain what he was doing, although he had correctly followed the procedure.
88. When pupils are 11 many listen carefully, for example, when they were discussing a parable. They gave their own views on God and miracles and responded to others' views. However, their lack of an extensive vocabulary affects their ability to explain and give ideas. For example, a Year 6 pupil was unable to elaborate on her statement regarding capital punishment. The teacher questioned skilfully, offering phrases that the pupil could use before she could expand on the topic.
89. The standard of reading is below national expectations for pupils aged 7 years, and well below that level for pupils aged 11 years. In Year 2, many pupils accurately read books that have an appropriate level of challenge, and they enjoy reading. An above average reader talked enthusiastically and to a good level about the book that she was reading, which had a good level of challenge. However, the limited vocabulary of some pupils affected their ability to talk about the book that they were reading. This also shows in their difficulty to respond to questions in other than short or one-word answers.
90. The majority of pupils in Year 6 read well below national expectations. Above-average readers read fluently. However, the books chosen did not have a good level of challenge and, therefore, pupils were not achieving at an appropriate level. There are too many pupils who are reading at a low level. There is a wide variation in levels of reading in other years in Key Stage 2. The good readers read with expression and a good level of understanding. This was seen when a Year 5 pupil read *The Illustrated Mum* with vivacity, and talked about the books that she had read. She knew many authors and had favourite books. However, there was little evidence of pupils reading widely, to include both non-fiction and poetry. The majority of pupils do not read with emphasis and do not

clearly explain what they have read. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 have poor library skills and find it difficult to retrieve information.

91. Standards in reading are also restricted because the school does not promote reading consistently. Very few pupils in any year are heard to read daily. Talking to pupils and evidence from the home-school books show that some pupils are seldom heard to read at home. The school's recently introduced reading support programme is not yet providing enough opportunities for these pupils. Home-school books show a wide variation in reading comments, but the general pattern is that they are infrequently used, particularly in Key Stage 2. Reading is not monitored consistently. The result is that many pupils do not achieve at an appropriate level and are not reading widely enough. In particular, the library does not provide books that would interest boys or help the above average reader to develop even further. The school does not have any procedures at the moment for consistently assessing and recording pupils' progress in reading.
92. There is evidence of good progress in writing from September. However, standards remain below the national average at 7 and well below by 11 years old. In Year 2, many pupils find it difficult to write ideas in clear sentences. When pupils write, they use a limited vocabulary as they do also when speaking. The work of most pupils shows a lack of imagination, although there are a few examples of thoughtful comments. For example, a pupil aged seven wrote '*You can see children playing good games. It makes you want to play*'. Teachers work hard to improve pupils' vocabulary, although, on occasions, the words teachers offered showed a lack of understanding of the meaning, for example, when describing a 'bad' character. Some pupils did offer good alternatives such as '*evil*'. Spelling of simple words is not always accurate. The handwriting of most pupils is consistently formed and ready to be joined, which is a satisfactory level.
93. In Key Stage 2, pupils satisfactorily write for a variety of purposes. For example, they describe science experiments and write about the Tudors in history. Also pupils write letters, film reviews and newspaper reports. In all years, there is limited imaginative writing, although there are rare examples. For example, a Year 6 pupil wrote '*the heat penetrated the fuselage, a blindingly scorching heat, like putting your hand in boiling water*'. Grammar and punctuation in this year are generally poor, for example pupils do not use capital letters accurately. Spelling is also poor with frequent mistakes such as '*sandwiches*'. The presentation of pupils' work in Year 6 is also often poor, with headings and dates not underlined. Many Year 6 pupils do not join letters consistently when writing. In other years in Key Stage 2, presentation is often of a satisfactory standard and there is a wide variation in writing, with, for example, satisfactory levels of attainment seen in Year 4. Pupils used draft books effectively and wrote with imagination. For example, a pupil wrote '*swirled into a grey wind.....a dream*' and an able pupil spelt difficult words such as 'aggravated' and 'vicious' correctly.
94. Pupils enjoy the literacy sessions. This is because of the good relationships between teachers and pupils. They participate well in group sessions, and this was seen in a Year 1 lesson where they all shouted 'SPLASH' before the teacher had read the word. They are eager to start on their focussed tasks. They try very hard, for example pupils in a Year 2 lesson wanted desperately to complete the questions set. All pupils behave well, including those with special educational needs. These pupils have very good support from assistants to enable them to stay focused on the task set.
95. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 is very good overall. It is good at Key Stage 2. Teaching is never less than sound. All teachers have very good relationships with pupils, so that pupils are confident learners. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, are fully involved in the lessons because of the commitment and enthusiasm of the support staff who make a positive contribution to these pupils' progress. Teachers

plan in detail and most follow the literacy hour with an awareness of the needs of their class. Questioning is consistently good. For example, the teacher rephrased questions again and again until pupils explained '*a domestic incident*' correctly. Teachers use introductions effectively; for example, the content of the previous lesson was revised to remind pupils of the main objectives of the week. The impact of good teaching was clearly seen when pupils talked enthusiastically about the thesaurus work that they had done the previous day. The very good lessons are dynamic and teachers maintain a good pace and challenge, which moves pupils on in their learning.

96. Where teaching was less successful, although sound overall, teachers did not sustain the lesson pace. The result was that pupils did not sustain their interest and attention and did not achieve a high enough standard. Teachers do not always challenge the average and above average pupil sufficiently to make sure that they reach an appropriate level of achievement. There is limited evidence of teachers using pupils' skills in information and communication technology to support standards in English.
97. Most teachers mark pupils' work regularly, with detailed comments to assist them to improve. They list targets for improvement in pupils' books and make effective reference to them. Basic spelling, punctuation and grammar are not always noted, which does not help pupils to achieve consistently high standards. However, teachers focus effectively on specific marking aspects, for example sentence construction, and identify ways in which they can be improved.
98. The school has two co-ordinators who have recently started to monitor written work. They have worked hard to make resources accessible to staff, due to the changes in buildings. The school's literacy policy does not promote the extension of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. The key skills, which are taught effectively in the literacy hour, are not reinforced and developed effectively across the curriculum. Teachers do not consistently use learning activities to extend pupils' literacy skills and use them to achieve higher standards. The school has clearly identified the need to target reading in its improvement planning, especially for Year 6. The standards are currently too low in all years and are limiting the school's efforts to raise attainment. National test results have not been analysed to assist planning, a procedure which assists co-ordinators and teachers. Pupils do not know the different criteria for obtaining the different National Curriculum levels and are, therefore, not informed about their achievement and how to achieve further.

MATHEMATICS

99. The 2000 National Curriculum test results at 7 and 11 years of age indicate that pupils' standards in mathematics are well below the national average, and are average compared to other similar schools. Inspection findings show that numeracy and mathematics standards for pupils at seven years of age are improving, but are still below those expected. They remain well below average for pupils aged 11 years. Even though Year 2 and Year 6 have a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, standards in these years are not as high as they should be. The teachers do not expect enough of more-able pupils, who underachieve. This reflects a concern of parents.
100. Standards for pupils in Year 2 have improved slightly over the past two years, but not quite as quickly as the national improvement. Boys perform worse than girls, because of the higher proportion of boys with special educational needs. Standards for pupils in Year 6 are improving, having declined over the past two years. This was due to a combination of factors; there is an increasingly high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6; the school has a higher mobility rate than average, so many pupils have not been through the school; a few classes have experienced too many

changes of teachers affecting continuity of learning and causing behaviour problems; and, in the past, teachers thought they were doing better than they were. Now they fully understand standards are too low and are determined to improve them.

101. The school now has the difficult task of trying to improve standards for pupils in Years 6, who are trying to make up for the lack of progress shown in test results, and also cover the new work expected this year. The targets agreed with the local education authority for pupils aged 11 in 2001 are close to the national average at 69 per cent, and are unrealistic. A comparison with the school's predicted very low targets for these pupils of 43 per cent, based on recent assessment information, shows they are unlikely to be reached. The school is making determined efforts to improve standards, but the agreed targets are set too high for 2001.
102. By the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge of number and algebra. In Year 1, the more-able 50 per cent of pupils achieve good standards in mental mathematics as they receive very good teaching from a leading mathematics teacher. This has enabled them to make very good progress. They quickly add and subtract numbers to 20 and particularly enjoy having the challenge of a timed target. They explain their reasoning confidently and use this knowledge well to solve money problems. In Year 2, most pupils are beginning to understand the place value of each digit in tens and unit numbers and recognise number sequences. Their knowledge of shape, space and measures is underdeveloped. Most pupils only know the mathematical names of the simplest three-dimensional and two-dimensional shapes. They are not yet confident in describing their properties, such as the number of faces and edges.
103. By the age of 11, less than half the pupils have a sound knowledge of number and many average and high ability pupils could achieve more. They have reasonably quick mental recall of multiplication and division facts up to 10x10. They are developing an understanding of the equivalence between fractions, decimals and percentages. With support they are developing strategies to solve mathematical problems, but most pupils in Years 5 and 6 lack confidence in their ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge. The setting of work involving real-life problem solving is not a regular feature of many lessons. Most pupils have a poor understanding of probability and shape. Throughout the key stage pupils have improved their knowledge of data handling and construct a range of different graphs and charts.
104. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they are well supported. They have plenty of practical experience enabling them to attain appropriate levels. Teachers plan work carefully in ability groups to meet the needs of pupils with learning problems. Hearing impaired pupils receive good support so they work in the appropriate mathematics ability group. They are fully involved in mathematics lessons and achieve appropriate standards. Pupils with English as an additional language also receive suitable additional support and make similar progress to that of other pupils. The school has not identified any gifted pupils in mathematics.
105. **The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages, but ranges from sound to very good. A significant proportion of lessons, 40 per cent, is very good. All teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. They are friendly, encouraging and manage pupils well, so lessons are productive and enjoyable. Teachers have a good understanding of the three-part numeracy lesson structure. They plan thoroughly with clear learning objectives made known to the pupils. They have displays of mathematical vocabulary to improve pupils' knowledge. However, teachers do not always make sure that pupils with less developed language skills can understand the technical vocabulary of mathematics. For**

example, pupils in Years 3 to 5 are not fully confident of the meaning of ‘inverse’ operations.

106. Features of very good teaching and learning are seen when teachers use their good knowledge and understanding of mathematics to set interesting, challenging activities. They encourage pupils to solve problems in their own way and use questions skilfully, such as ‘How did you work it out?’ By sharing methods, pupils learn from each other and develop confidence to tackle new work successfully. Teachers build on from previous learning effectively and maintain a brisk pace moving from one activity to the next in a well-organised way. For example, after identifying a number pattern counting in 5s, Year 2 pupils worked out that 6,372 is not a multiple of 5 as it does not end in 5 or 0. The lesson ended effectively with the teacher reinforcing ways of recognising other familiar multiples, such as multiples of 2. Teachers encourage pupils to complete homework to develop their skills and promote independent learning. For example, Year 1 pupils were asked to find the total of at least two sweet bars. Marking is thorough with helpful comments so pupils know how to improve.
107. Teaching is less effective when the pace of lessons is too slow, so that learning slows as pupils’ attention starts to wander. For example, in less-able groups, pupils were required to sit listening on the carpet for too long to be comfortable. They were not involved enough whilst the teacher gave extra help to one pupil. In a few lessons, teachers’ expectations are not high enough to make sure that more-able pupils are challenged at all times. In one lesson, because the teacher’s subject knowledge was limited, she gave the whole class something to do which was too easy. The result was that the pupils did not develop their knowledge of shapes any further.
108. Recent changes introduced by the school to raise standards have been effective. They include:
- improving pupils’ behaviour, for example in Year 4 and Year 6, so that teachers can focus on learning;
 - increasing teachers’ skills of implementing the National Numeracy Strategy through additional training;
 - introducing extra assessment procedures and using them to identify ability groups and to set individual and school targets; and
 - establishing after-school booster classes to raise attainment and pupils’ enthusiasm for under-achieving pupils in Year 5 and Year 6.
- The full impact of some of these changes has yet to be reflected in pupils’ standards.
109. Pupils’ ability to use information and communications technology to support mathematics is poorly developed throughout the school due to a previous lack of resources. Some teachers enable pupils to use their mathematical skills and knowledge satisfactorily to help learning in other subjects. For example, they measure temperature accurately and draw graphs to record results of investigations in science. They measure accurately when making a photograph frame in design and technology. However, the school does not consistently extend pupils’ numeracy skills to support and promote standards in other subjects.
110. The co-ordinators for mathematics provide clear leadership with a strong commitment to raising standards. They have implemented procedures to monitor and evaluate teaching and planning in mathematics that are effectively improving the quality of teaching and learning. They do not yet monitor pupils’ standards. Appropriate plans are in place to improve teachers’ expertise by providing opportunities for them to observe good mathematics teaching at other schools. Test results are carefully analysed by gender and they are starting to be used to track pupils’ progress. The current focus is on lower-attainers but higher-attainers are not yet included. Analysis is not used to identify areas

of the mathematics curriculum that need to be improved. They have improved parents' knowledge of numeracy by organising a well-supported school 'open morning' to watch mathematics lessons. Inspection findings indicate that these strategies are successfully improving standards.

SCIENCE

111. The results of the most recent national assessments show that by the age of seven pupils' standards in science were well below the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving the nationally expected Level 2 was well below average nationally and also well below average compared with the standards for similar schools. The proportion achieving higher levels was just above the national average. The test results for pupils at the age of 11 show that standards were very low compared with the national average and with the average of similar schools, especially at the higher than expected levels of attainment. In both age ranges, pupils' attainment in the experimental and investigative areas of the subject was particularly weak.
112. Problems of amalgamation and staffing changes in the recent past have meant that strategies for raising standards in science have only been in operation effectively from the beginning of this academic year. The effects of these strategies are only just beginning to appear. This is evident in the improved standards in experimental and investigative science, particularly in the older pupils in the school. However, inspection evidence shows that standards in science remain well below the national average for pupils at the age of seven. They have improved for pupils aged 11 and are below the national average.
113. Throughout the school, pupils' ability to express themselves orally is unsatisfactory. Although they show confidence when trying to explain what they are doing, pupils show frustration at not being able to fully explain what they know. Their writing skills are developing satisfactorily, but their limited range of vocabulary tends to restrict their explanations of what they know and what they can do. The standard of recording and presentation is satisfactory and some good examples were seen during the inspection. The effort made by the school to develop the experimental and investigative techniques has resulted in pupils using a good systematic approach with a clear format for recording their results. This is particularly evident in the work of older pupils. Diagrams and drawings are generally satisfactory and pupils label them neatly. They do not overuse colour, but make sure that the diagram conveys information rather than being used for decoration. They use charts and graphs to record and interpret data accurately. Pupils are good at using this information when they come to conclusions in their investigations. The computer suite only began to be used at the time of the inspection, and information and communication technology is not yet used effectively to record and interpret data or to word process reports in science.
114. Pupils in Year 1 correctly name the parts of a plant and the human body. Year 2 pupils discussing the parts of a plant know that plants grow in soil and that the roots are important for absorbing the water plants need. They identify similarities and differences between different types of plant such as trees and grass. However their overall knowledge at the age of seven is less than expected. Year 3 pupils correctly identify and name animals according to the diet they have. When questioned, some pupils have difficulty explaining what they mean, although they list the animal types correctly. Although the higher-attaining pupils in this class are provided with resources to extend their knowledge they are not given targets to achieve. The result is that their work is the same as the work of the average pupils. Another Year 3 class looking at teeth identify the different types of teeth they have. Changes over time are appreciated when pupils discuss the loss of their primary teeth and their eventual replacement by permanent teeth.

Good links are made with art when pupils record the information they have discovered in the form of a comic book. The teacher sets the higher-attaining pupils challenging targets to show that they have extended their knowledge through the work they produce.

115. Year 4 pupils show satisfactory development in the investigative skills when they explore the reliability of the senses to detect and accurately determine temperature. They predict and record what will happen satisfactorily. From their diagrams and recordings they show that they know how to read a thermometer correctly. Year 5 pupils also show sound investigative skills when testing materials that dissolve in water. Some pupils use colour too heavily in diagrams and this restricts what they are trying to show. When investigating forces Year 6 average and higher-attaining pupils show a sound knowledge and understanding of their effects and uses. For example, they know that there are forces acting in more than one direction on an object and that gravity is a force pulling towards the centre of the earth. Higher-attaining pupils soundly explained what they had found. Some pupils, who had acquired some knowledge of forces, experienced real frustration when limited language skills impeded their explanations.
116. Pupils' progress in science is satisfactory during the first three years of their National Curriculum work. In their last three years, the rate of progress improves and is good. The progress of pupils with special educational needs, including those whose hearing is impaired, is good. This is largely due to the good support they receive and the way they are integrated into the classes. Pupils with English as an additional language make sound progress. They make good progress when good individual support is given to enable them to develop their knowledge and use of scientific language. Behaviour in lessons is good as a result of the good management techniques of the teachers and support staff. Any behavioural problem is dealt with quietly and efficiently so that pupils' learning is not disrupted.
117. Teaching is sound throughout the school, with some examples of very good practice at Key Stage 2. Teachers plan lessons in detail to ensure that pupils of the same year group have similar experiences. Where planning is good, teachers clearly identify and develop the skills within the area of science from the guidelines in the nationally produced framework for the subject. At present this is not a consistent practice throughout the school. In all lessons, teachers make pupils aware what the learning intentions are and frequently they are written on the board. In most lessons, teachers return to these intentions at the end to effectively review what has been learned. They match tasks effectively to the differing ability groups including the wide range of pupils with special educational needs. However, whilst the tasks are suitable for the higher-attaining pupils, their learning is not sufficiently extended because teachers do not set high enough expectations and targets for them.
118. Teachers have a secure knowledge of science and in all lessons the correct terminology is introduced where it is appropriate. Although many pupils have difficulty in expressing themselves they are able to show that they understand these terms. Teachers question skilfully in order to make pupils think as well as to explore and apply the knowledge they have. Good attention is given to writing skills, although speaking skills are insufficiently developed. Teachers are very clear in the way they give instructions to pupils and they check that pupils understand what they have to do. Teachers organise their classes effectively and manage their pupils very well. This contributes to the good brisk pace of lessons and ensures that pupils retain their interest and concentration.
119. Currently pupils have few opportunities to use computers and improve their skills in information and communications technology, such as recording and interpreting data as well as word-processing reports in science. Teachers mark pupils' work diligently and give good examples to indicate how they may improve their standards.

120. Teachers make good use of nationally produced guidelines to ensure full coverage of the subject. All teachers have a good system for monitoring what is taught with respect to content. However, there is not enough monitoring of how science skills are developed through the school. The co-ordinator for science works very hard and gives a very good lead to the subject. Good use is made of a system for analysing test results and assessments. This analysis is being successfully used to identify pupils who need additional help and identifies areas of the science curriculum that need greater emphasis. The subject is being further advanced through the good support given by a local Beacon secondary school for both the curriculum and staff expertise in science. However, the learning resources and materials for science are currently insufficient for the size of the school and they are not maintained or stored effectively. These limitations in resources restrict standards of attainment.

ART AND DESIGN

121. Standards are in line with expectations for pupils aged 7 but are below expectations by 11 years. There are some good examples of work on display and in sketchbooks. However, there is little evidence of the skills of drawing and painting being systematically developed through the school. There is not enough pupils' work on display throughout the school and in sketchbooks.
122. By the age of seven pupils show careful control in the use of pencil and crayon. Year 1 pupils produce a collage using natural materials effectively to create a picture of a place they visit. In one lesson, a hearing impaired pupil produced a collage of very high quality showing good skills of drawing and sticking as well as an appropriate use of materials and colour. Later in a celebration assembly the same pupil clearly described the picture and how it was made. Year 1 pupils have also shown satisfactory skills in a display of weaving with paper and wool. A display of observational drawing from Year 2 pupils showed that they have average drawing skills. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils observed closely objects from nature and satisfactorily drew shells, cones from pine trees and plants. Pupils of all abilities accurately drew the shape and size of the different objects.
123. Year 3 pupils had difficulty drawing patterns they observed on wallpaper because the pencil skills in this class were not sufficiently developed. A small number of pupils did not understand what a pattern was and over 80 per cent of the pupils had difficulty identifying the start and the end of the pattern. Year 5 pupils showed very good skills in the choice of coloured chalk when drawing a still life inspired by Cézanne. In a good lesson, pupils worked in small groups drawing a section of a Greek Myth and their drawings were later to be transferred to textiles and put together to show the story. This work was inspired through previously studying the Bayeux Tapestry. At the end of the lesson pupils' explanations of what they were doing were restricted by their limited knowledge and use of words. Year 6 pupils draw a shoe accurately that has good proportion and shading. Other pieces of work on display show where pupils have explored mixing and blending colours. This work was undertaken because the teacher found they did not have the basic skills of colour mixing.
124. In all classes, pupils with special educational needs are given good support and guidance in developing their artistic skills and ideas and make good progress. Those for whom English is an additional language are given good support in developing their range and use of technical words, artistic skills and techniques. They achieve standards similar to those in their age group. The behaviour of pupils is good. They are eager to answer questions and contribute ideas for discussion. Pupils work co-operatively and discuss how they will develop their tasks. They also show real enjoyment in what they are doing

in art. In a personal, health and social education lesson following an art lesson, Year 5 pupils expressing likes and dislikes stated how much they enjoyed art lessons.

125. The quality of teaching is sound with some good practice at both key stages. Teachers are confident and show a secure knowledge of the subject. They have good management skills that contribute to the good behaviour of pupils. They share what is to be learned in the lesson with the pupils by writing these intentions on the board as well as discussing them. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported, particularly when working directly with the teacher or a learning support assistant. Planning follows the guidelines in the nationally produced scheme, but the skills to be developed within those guidelines are not systematically developed.
126. Resources for art are not sufficient for the size of the school and restrict the range of activities and standards achieved. There is a good storage area for resources, but the organisation limits their accessibility and does not encourage staff and pupils to use them fully.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. Evidence was gained from pupils' art and design books, work on display, photographs and talking to staff and pupils. Standards overall meet those expected nationally at the age of 7 but are below expected standards at 11 years. Pupils' making skills are developed soundly overall throughout the school. Teachers use national guidance effectively to ensure that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are given regular opportunities each term to develop their skills. For example, Year 2 pupils use a range of textiles successfully to create a pattern like *Joseph's coat* and Year 5 pupils investigate and choose the most suitable material before making a musical instrument, for example a drum. However, pupils' designing and evaluating skills are not built on effectively in Key Stage 2 and these limit the standards achieved. For example, Year 3 pupils test a range of materials before choosing one from which they will make a photograph frame. They draw detailed initial design drawings showing front and side perspectives. However, they do not evaluate their designs or explain why their chosen material was the most suitable for its purpose. This does not encourage pupils to apply their knowledge or use their literacy skills to promote higher standards.
128. Pupils clearly enjoy practical activities and are very attentive and keen to participate. Teachers use this positive approach successfully to ensure that pupils remain attentive and listen carefully to instructions. For example, Year 1 pupils watched carefully as the teacher used another pupil in a role-play activity on 'what not to do when cooking'. They were all very enthusiastic to contribute their ideas. The teacher skilfully encouraged different ideas and then used follow-up questions very effectively to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of food hygiene and safe practices. As all the class remained interested in the discussion, the teacher then successfully involved them in investigating how different fruits and vegetables were prepared for cooking and eating. This significantly improved pupils' knowledge and understanding of different foods.
129. Not enough teaching was seen to give an overall judgement on its quality, although it was never less than sound in the two lessons observed. Teachers share the lesson objectives with the pupils to give a clear focus to their learning. They manage their classes effectively to ensure that pupils sustain their interest and stay focused on the activity. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on designing and making a head-dress for a pantomime character, the teacher and support staff worked successfully together to enable individual pupils to extend their ideas. They assisted pupils who were having difficulties in planning and drawing their initial designs. This ensured that these pupils

continued to try to develop their ideas rather than losing interest and concentration. Teachers do not always set clear expectations over what they expect pupils to achieve within the lesson. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed drawing their head-dress designs. However, they were not aware of the need to consider and evaluate them before moving to the next stage of the design and make process. This did not give them a clear target for their work and resulted in some pupils making less progress than expected in their work.

130. Teachers use national subject guidance effectively to provide a sound range of learning activities to cover all required aspects. They provide pupils with opportunities to work with different materials, for example, when making slippers in Year 6 or making different types of bread in Year 3. However, planning does not consistently identify which key skills are to be covered. This does not ensure that pupils build on prior knowledge and extend their skills and understanding of the different aspects of the subject. For example, teachers' plans at Key Stage 2 do not identify which techniques are developed to enable pupils to join different materials together. Although the range of design and make projects enables pupils to use different joining techniques, the activities do not consistently build on earlier knowledge and skills. This does not ensure that pupils extend their skills and attain high standards.
131. There are weaknesses in the subject management, which limits its development. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken on the responsibility. Although she monitors teaching plans to check that the work meets the required curriculum coverage, she has not been able to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and standards of learning. Teaching resources are limited and this restricts the range of activities. The co-ordinator is currently compiling a resource list to check that each unit of work has a full range of resources to support teaching. Procedures to assess the standards of pupils' work and to identify the key skills that pupils have learnt are not established.

GEOGRAPHY

132. By the age of seven, pupils reach levels that are in line with national expectations. They have a sound understanding of their local surroundings and in their ability to study aspects of the subject, which are based on their own direct experience. Pupils understand how the area near their school could be changed so that it is safer to walk. They know that cars can be a problem as well as an advantage. Most pupils study 'birds-eye' maps of their locality and identify key landmarks, although they sometimes become confused over directions. Pupils' knowledge of localities beyond their own is much less well developed, largely as a result of spending too little time on this aspect of the subject. With some help, pupils can label England, Scotland and Wales accurately on a map of the British Isles, but they show little knowledge of the position of the British Isles on a world map.
133. By the age of 11, pupils attain levels that are below expectations. They produce only brief pieces of work in the subject and tend to have only a superficial understanding. There is frequently little difference between the work of the least- and most-able pupils, and a considerable proportion of activities involves copying from books or teachers' materials. Pupils identify some basic characteristics of different countries, such as variations in temperature or rainfall. They have little knowledge of human activities in these countries. More-able pupils use correct terminology to describe mountain landscapes and explain the principles of the water cycle by using expressions such as 'evaporation'. The less- able know that it tends to rain more in mountainous regions. Pupils know about some common environmental problems, such as litter and pollution, and some suggest solutions with which they are familiar, for example recycling. Pupils' written work is underdeveloped. Most written explanations are very brief and do not

enhance pupils' literacy skills. Many pupils struggle to read more detailed written information from maps and need words read out to them. Pupils are not challenged sufficiently to extend their numeracy skills in geography, for example, in practical mapping activities or in handling geographical information using computer programs.

134. In the small number of lessons that could be observed during the period of inspection, teaching was good at Key Stage 1 and sound at Key Stage 2. Teachers' planning is consistently good and links in effectively with the curriculum 'map' which has been recently devised. Planned activities are based upon topics from national guidance, although teachers do not always adapt and enhance these to meet the specific needs of pupils in their classes. A deliberate emphasis is placed on understanding the local area, particularly at Key Stage 1. Teachers show good skills in encouraging pupils to develop their observational skills and relate these to map work. Pupils' knowledge of more distant countries and other cultures is not covered so effectively and, as a result, pupils' understanding is less well developed in these areas.
135. Introductions to lessons are clear and teachers make good use of maps and wall displays to provide a point reference for pupils. This helps them to show good levels of concentration during whole-class discussions. Teachers use questions effectively to help pupils demonstrate their understanding. Teachers and classroom assistants are particularly keen to encourage contributions from the less-able, pupils for whom English is an additional language and those with special educational needs. Their reinforcement of key words helps these pupils to be fully involved in lessons. Less attention is paid to the needs of the more-able, who usually work on tasks which are the same as the rest of the class. Extension work tends to be based on more work at a similar level, rather than encouraging pupils to develop more advanced levels of understanding. However, more-able pupils are very willing to help others and the good arrangements for group work encourage a co-operative atmosphere. Pupils are patient, wait their turn and share resources. Staff are enthusiastic and good humoured. This conveys itself to pupils, who usually enjoy lessons and respond well to prompting from teachers. Teachers make good use of the final part of lessons to review what has been learnt and to assess pupils' progress. At present staff do not always record progress towards specific geography targets; some assessment is too vague and makes it difficult to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses.
136. In recent years, geography has not received a great deal of attention as the school's focus has been on literacy and numeracy. This has lessened the time and resources available to the subject, and has been partly responsible for the relatively low levels of pupils' achievements across the full range of geographical skills. There is still relatively little time allocated to the subject. In some classes, pupils have to go a long time between pieces of work, reducing the opportunities to create a continuity of understanding. The co-ordinator has begun to review the curriculum. The adoption of national guidance and the drawing up of a curriculum coverage 'map' provides the basis for further development. Due to staff absence the co-ordinator has had few opportunities to monitor pupils' work and identify areas of weakness.

HISTORY

137. Only two lessons were taught and observed during the inspection in Year 5 and Year 6. Evaluation of standards also includes the evidence of the scrutiny of previous work throughout the school and discussions with the headteacher, staff and pupils.
138. Pupils' attainments are below national expectations by the age of 7 and also by the age of 11 years. Scrutiny of work revealed that much of the written work has often been limited

in quantity and lacking in quality. Attainments are often restricted by pupils' lack of literacy skills.

139. Pupils in Year 6 become increasingly aware of the chronology of a range of events from Tudor times to the modern age. About 60 per cent of pupils are able to extract research information from texts about the life of Sir Francis Drake. They know that '*cimarrones*' were former slaves and outlaws who helped Drake on his journey to Panama in 1572. Other pupils – about 40 per cent of the class – were hampered by their poor literacy skills and could not use skimming or scanning techniques to obtain this information. The more-able were able to say that sailing all the way around the World is known as circumnavigation. Most pupils did not know this even though the word was in the title of the text they were studying. Pupils have used the Internet and encyclopaedias on CD-ROM discs for their research in the past. However, their development of these skills has recently been restricted by the difficulties the school has had in establishing new resources for information and communication technology.
140. Pupils in Year 5 are developing an understanding that the sources of information about periods such as the 1980s, the 1960s and the Roman age will be very different. They know that the Internet can be a useful source for information and that e-mail can be used to gather information and communicate findings. The written work in Year 2 about the Great Fire of London showed that pupils have developed a sound sense of the chronology of events. They are able to imagine what it must have been like to be there on that day and write coherent and vivid first hand accounts.
141. The overall quality of teaching was never less than sound. It was good in Year 5. Where teaching is good, teachers are able to ask thought-provoking questions because they know their subject, for example, when challenging Year 5 pupils to compare different sources of historical information. They organise lessons effectively and match the work carefully to the needs of different pupils. As with literacy sessions, teachers use a plenary session at the end of each lesson effectively to review what has been learned and to check on how well pupils have understood it. Although most teachers rightly emphasise the learning objectives of each lesson, some do not translate the objectives set down in national guidance into goals that are more easily understandable for pupils. In some classes, the national guidance document is the only reference for planning and no lesson plan is prepared or used. As a consequence, the preparation of work is not closely matched to the abilities of pupils with special educational needs or those who might respond to a high degree of challenge.
142. The subject co-ordinator has only recently been appointed and has good subject expertise. The school has focused upon attainment in literacy and numeracy and a full history curriculum has not been taught for a considerable time. Subject developments on the monitoring and evaluation of teaching or standards and staff in-service training have been limited by staff absence. However, the school plans to give history a greater priority in its next school improvement plan. It has recently developed a plan of the history curriculum to ensure coverage. Although it is an improvement upon past practice, the school is developing it further to provide teachers with additional guidance. Assessment is at an early stage of development. Teachers have introduced an effective assessment recording form, but it is not yet used consistently in every class to promote higher standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

143. Few lessons included the use of computers during the inspection. Consequently, evaluation of standards is based upon the five lessons seen in reception, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6. Inspection evidence also includes scrutiny of previous work, and extensive

discussions with the headteacher, the subject co-ordinator, other teachers, governors, and many pupils.

144. Attainment is well below national expectations by the age of 7 and below national expectations by the age of 11 years. Children generally enter the school with below average capabilities in information and communication technology (ICT). Many pupils throughout the school have been provided with too few opportunities to use a computer in their work in recent years. As a result their progress has been slow. The range of pupils' attainments in Key Stage 2 is wide. Standards are usually higher where pupils have access to the Internet at home, as they do in about 50 per cent of cases. The highest attainments though are still below national expectations, and very few pupils attain either in line with or higher than national expectations.
145. Most pupils in Key Stage 2 have not used spreadsheets sufficiently to model or record data or to simulate events. They are learning how to build simple databases, but not how to search them for specific information. Pupils have been planning and preparing to publish a school magazine for some time. They have been unable to create the multimedia compositions it could contain because of the lack of access to appropriate hardware and software. Their knowledge and understanding are not sufficiently developed to use word-processing applications effectively.
146. Pupils in Year 6 use video cameras and digital camcorders skilfully in their presentations. They are developing the ability to decide which type of media is best suited for the purpose or the audience. Most pupils in Year 6 open and close files successfully and run applications, but many are not sure how to save their work on a floppy disk. Their knowledge and understanding of key skills are not soundly developed. For example, they are not sure how to use the *minimize* or *maximize* buttons, or how to cut and paste objects or text from one application or file to another. Pupils in Year 5 using the computer network for the first time learn quickly how to combine text, a bar chart and artwork and then produce colour printouts. They create a range of graphs from data collected. They also compare pie charts with bar charts or line graphs and decide which types best exemplify their figures. Pupils in Year 4 input up to eight commands at a time to a programmable robot. With practice, their results are increasingly accurate. Their learning about control technology is limited however, because they have not been taught enough about this aspect of ICT. As a result, pupils show how to make the programmable robot follow a defined path, but know almost nothing about the programming commands that underlie its operation.
147. In Year 1 and Year 2, pupils are only familiar with the most basic programs. They can remember using computers in reception classes, but have used them rarely since. A few have learned how to use the computer mouse to move the pointer on the screen and to click on various icons in a simple graphics application. The only real gains in learning in Key Stage 1 are again by those pupils with access to computers at home. Their knowledge and skills can vary and have not been consistently used by teachers to improve standards at school. However, pupils show that with good guidance they are well motivated and learn quickly.
148. Pupils in both key stages identified as having special educational needs make sound progress relative to their abilities. For example, pupils with special educational needs have learned how to use fax machines to send their handwritten or word-processed letters to 'fax buddies'. The innovative nature of the curriculum they study, which involves good links with the University of Reading, helps these pupils to improve their standards whilst remaining included in mainstream education.

149. More-able pupils have not been provided with much challenge in ICT, for example in analysing or retrieving information for research tasks. The quality of their learning is not as high as it should be. In religious education lessons, pupils in Year 3 improve their understanding of Rangoli patterns because their teacher has provided colour printouts of a range of these patterns from an Internet website. However, pupils in general are not challenged to use ICT as a part of learning about other subjects.
150. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good throughout the school. They listen attentively to instructions, concentrate well, react with enthusiasm, and handle resources with care. They also show wonderment at what computers can do and are keen to learn.
151. The teaching observed during the inspection was good, and in Year 5 it was very good. However, uncertainties in subject knowledge and limited resources have, until very recently, significantly restricted the quality of teaching in both key stages and the development of pupils' learning. Although teachers have had some in-service training, for example in sessions before the start of the school day, this has yet to promote higher standards. At its best, teachers plan lessons in detail and maintain a good pace. Pupils are not afraid to ask for help when they need it, knowing it will be provided quickly and knowledgeably.
152. The subject is now led well by the recently appointed co-ordinator and receives much support from the acting headteacher and the governing body. The school's long-term planning for information and communication technology is now good. The ICT scheme of work, taken directly from the national guidance document, provides a good focus on the development of skills and knowledge from year to year. The schemes of work for the other subjects of the curriculum have not included enough guidance on how to use ICT to reinforce learning. Learning support assistants have not often been used to support pupils in their computer work. However, the school has appointed a network manager and intends to introduce a systematic program of support in both key stages.
153. The procedures for assessment are good in principle, but have not been used much in practice. The school is now trialling methods for teachers to assess attainments, but has not yet included opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own achievements. The subject co-ordinator is planning to keep a portfolio of pupils' work that has been assessed and moderated to indicate the standards that pupils should attain.
154. Hardware resources are very good in the ICT suite, but not yet satisfactory elsewhere. Few classes have computers, but cabling has been installed and plans are in place to install more over the next year. Software resources are good. Computers with CD-ROM facilities and Internet access are available for individual research in the computer suite, but not yet in a library setting. The school's ratio of pupils to computers is now about 15 to 1. This is just above the national average. The low level skills of many of the staff are planned for improvement through training from, initially, an advanced skills teacher in the receiving secondary school, and secondly through the national 'New Opportunities Fund' scheme.
155. In the past, the school's leaders have given much too low a priority to ICT. As a result the ICT curriculum has not met the requirements of the National Curriculum. The high priority given to ICT over the next two years in the school development plan shows that the situation is improving. The school is now well placed to address the challenge to improve standards because of the recent investments, the well-motivated leadership and the mature attitudes of many pupils.

MUSIC

156. Because of the timetable it was not possible to see music taught in Year 6, but standards in Year 2 and in Key Stage 2 are in line with national expectations. In Years 1 and 2, pupils sing with enjoyment, following the pitch of the song and with a sound understanding of phrasing. This was seen when they sang *Six Currant Buns*. Pupils understand that dynamics are important in creating mood. For example, when they sang *Tiger Tiger*, they explained that when they sang it loudly it made the tiger fierce and they sang it quietly so as not to waken the tiger. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the difference between pulse and rhythm. They explained that they can feel their own steady pulse and that rhythms have a pattern. They follow various rhythms accurately, to an expected level. In Year 5, pupils chanted in parts and satisfactorily maintained their own pitch. They also chanted to an accurate level when the pitch was transposed downwards. Pupils also know and use the pentatonic scale to a good level. They are aware of how the different parts create one effect.
157. Pupils used instruments to accompany different rhythms to a satisfactory level, for example when they played *London's Burning*. They sing from memory and with a sound understanding of phrasing and dynamics. This was seen when they sang *Love is something if you give it away*. Each class in turn researches the composers of the music played in assembly. This information provides all pupils with a sound knowledge of various composers such as Mozart and Karl Jenkins. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in music, and all hearing impaired pupils participate fully in lessons. One pupil sang his name in two notes, which was good progress for that pupil. The extra-curricular music lessons add to the standards achieved, as they reinforce pupils' aural ability to recognise pitch, and pupils learn accepted musical notation.
158. Pupils enjoy music and this showed in their body movements when singing action songs. They listen intently, and this was seen when they carefully followed instructions about playing the xylophones. They take care of the instruments, which they are keen to play. They work well in pairs, agreeing without fuss on who is to play. The interest of some pupils shows in the purchase of their own instruments. This interested and enthusiastic approach contributes significantly to promoting standards of attainment.
159. The quality of teaching is good. All lessons are well planned and no time is wasted, which enables pupils to progress in their learning. Teachers use pupils to demonstrate successfully, for example specific notes on an ocarina, which motivates both those who demonstrate and those who observe. All teachers use praise effectively so that both effort and achievement are commended. This contributes to pupils' eagerness to participate. The feedback sessions at the end of lessons are very well used to reinforce and extend knowledge and understanding. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils explained how their thinking voice was used when making musical conversations. The very good lesson was imaginative and the enthusiasm of the teacher transferred to pupils, who were totally involved in the activity. Pupils delighted in standing or sitting according to the pitch of the note, and a middle note was added which enabled pupils to progress quickly in their learning.
160. The new co-ordinator has added to the extra-curricular activities, which makes a positive impact on pupils' learning. The new assessment procedures are beginning to provide a clear basis for planning, and monitoring pupils' progress and achievement. Only one class lesson was held in the hall, which is an ideal environment in which pupils can explore sound and create music without interference from other pupils' performances.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

161. During the inspection the focus was on gymnastics and games. Although swimming was timetabled during the inspection, it did not take place because the swimming facilities were unexpectedly closed. Attainment meets national expectations for pupils aged 7 and 11 years. Standards at 11 are above those expected in games, especially hockey and football. Good teaching and pupils' consistently positive and enthusiastic approach promote standards that are higher than expected. Information on attainment in swimming, together with talking to pupils, indicates that standards meet those expected nationally by the age of 11 years. The school has given an increased focus to literacy and numeracy, which has limited the time available for the development of pupils' skills especially in Key Stage 1. The school has organised a good range of extra-curricular activities, using staff, parent helpers, volunteers and instructors from the local sporting community, to enhance the range of opportunities. Most of these were for older pupils, confirming a parental concern, although the school has plans to extend the range to include younger and lower-attaining pupils.
162. Pupils clearly enjoy physical activities. They work enthusiastically and are keen to improve their skills. All pupils, including those with special educational, sensory and physical needs, are fully involved. They make sound, and often good, progress in lessons, especially in developing their physical co-ordination and skills. Teachers are fully aware of individual pupils' different needs and adapt activities and equipment appropriately to ensure that they play a full part. Teaching and support staff work very successfully together to give very good guidance and encouragement to pupils, for example, when developing hand-eye co-ordination skills to use a tennis racquet. The introduction and development of new skills are on occasions restricted by the time available after pupils have practised and consolidated previously learned skills. In a Year 2 gymnastics lesson, pupils worked well together to try to develop a group sequence. They worked hard to develop their ideas and link their movements effectively. Most of the class performed a sound range of travelling and balancing movements with increasing poise and control. Pupils repeated movements to remember the sequence. However, time restrictions limited its development and the opportunity to evaluate and try to improve its quality. Year 3 pupils extended their travelling movements effectively on the floor and on the apparatus. They linked their movements together successfully as they moved from the floor on to the apparatus; for example, some higher-attainers showed good control as they moved smoothly from a roll across a mat to a hand and foot balance on a bench.
163. Most Years 5 and 6 pupils show above expected skills and good control when hitting tennis and hockey balls. They have good technique, keeping a good body position and their eye clearly focused on the ball. Teachers enable pupils to extend their skills very effectively through a good range of activities, which initially consolidates skills through practice then applies them well in competitive activities. For example, Year 5 pupils worked enthusiastically with the teacher to practise their forehand and backhand tennis strokes. They then competed against themselves and each other to apply the skills by hitting the ball as many times as they could against a wall.
164. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. It is a significant factor in encouraging pupils to adopt a positive approach and to improve their skills. Most teachers have good subject knowledge and teach physical education with interest and enthusiasm. This encourages pupils to participate. Teachers use their subject knowledge to illustrate the correct techniques clearly and improve the quality of performance. For example, Year 6 pupils watched carefully as the teacher demonstrated the correct wrist technique to maintain control of the ball when changing direction in a dribble. They worked hard to practise the skill and achieved good standards in adjusting the stick position to retain control of the ball. Teachers manage their classes very effectively to enable pupils to sustain their interest and concentration. Most maintain a

brisk pace to ensure that the time is used fully for physical activity and extending skills. For example, in a Year 2 gymnastics session, the teacher used frequent changes of activity and introduced new tasks to ensure that pupils remained interested and focused on what they were trying to achieve and applied their skills in more challenging ways. She had high expectations of pupils to work together to produce an effective gymnastic sequence. They responded very well and were very keen to develop their work. The teacher used demonstrations very successfully to promote and extend pupils' range of movements, although did not take the opportunity to evaluate the sequences in order to identify ways in which the quality could be improved.

165. The subject is managed effectively and reflects the enthusiastic and positive approach of both co-ordinators. They are keen for the subject to contribute fully to the life of the school, for example, through an improved programme of extra-curricular activities and sporting fixtures with local primary schools. They have used national guidance successfully to provide a good structure for teachers' planning. Some teachers use it well to identify clear learning objectives; for example, the key skills to be covered in a lesson against which pupils' progress can be assessed. However, this is not done by all teachers and affects the consistent development of pupils' skills and knowledge.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

166. Pupils' attainments are below national expectations by the age of 7 and also by the age of 11 years. Attainments are often limited by pupils' low levels of literacy, particularly in their reading and writing, but also in their limited spoken vocabulary. By the age of 11, most pupils are developing an increasing understanding of Christianity, as well as of other world faiths such as Hinduism.
167. Pupils in Year 6 become increasingly aware of issues associated with human existence. They understand, for example, that although they might not be regular churchgoers, God still loves them all equally and forgivingly, and '*wants them to live without fear*'. In their research into ancient Sanskrit writings, pupils learn that Hindu and Christian believers share a faith in One God. They are less sure about other things these faiths share, such as the parallels between Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, and God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost. Pupils have a growing understanding of the value of prayer in worship. They make good gains in their learning when teachers provide artefacts such as a range of sacred texts, which are of high quality. When the teacher read a well-known psalm, clearly and reverently, a few pupils identified it as one of the hymns they sing in school assembly.
168. Pupils in Year 5 recall a number of facts about Islam, such as the washing of hands, the recitation of prayers and readings from the Qu'ran. Pupils in Year 4 draw parallels between the Puja Sets used by Hindu priests and the chalice and platen used by Christian priests in the Holy Communion service. They also recognised other similarities such as the use of fruit, incense and flowers in significant festivals, and the preparation needed before purification in both faiths. Pupils' written work showed a growing understanding of Hinduism, but is marred by poor spelling. Year 3 pupils have learned about the objects associated with world faiths. For example, about 60 per cent of pupils understand the meanings associated with the festival of Divali and the creation of Rangoli patterns. They know what the Torah is, but not that it is kept in a synagogue. Pupils know that the Qu'ran is the special book of the Muslim Faith.
169. An example of how low levels of literacy hinder attainment was seen in a Year 1 lesson about the Festival of Hanukkah. Although most pupils listened carefully to a well-told story, few were then able to clearly express their ideas on how it might end. Pupils

throughout the school often encounter difficulties in choosing the most telling words or phrases to describe their thinking.

170. The overall quality of teaching is sound with good teaching in Year 1 and Year 4, and very good teaching in Year 6. Where teaching is effective, lessons are well organised and well timed. Teachers match the work carefully to the abilities of different groups. They help pupils to reflect upon life and to develop a greater understanding of themselves. In both key stages pupils are given time for quiet reflection, although the discussion groups known as 'circle time' are much more features seen in Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2. During such times pupils come to terms with themselves, with their beliefs, their feelings and their aspirations. Teachers do not plan sufficiently for pupils to visit synagogues, mosques and churches of different denominations as part of their lessons. The school has strong links with a local Baptist ministry and he and other church members are regular visitors, supporting the popular meetings of the Christian Union.
171. Staffing changes have restricted the opportunities for the subject to be given clear leadership in recent times. The school has focused upon attainment in literacy and numeracy, and there has been limited development of religious education. There has been some monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning by the nominated governor. However, these procedures have yet to be effectively developed to promote higher standards.
172. The school uses the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus and national guidance effectively to provide a good basis for teachers' planning. However, these valuable documents have not been translated into a more specific scheme of work that reflects the needs of Middleton pupils. This restricts their progress. Assessment is also at an early stage of development. An assessment procedure has been developed for use, but has not yet been used consistently in all classes. The artefacts used to assist religious education are quite good in terms of sacred objects and writings. However, there are not enough children's bibles in classrooms.
173. The strongest element of the school's provision for religious education is in the way teachers and pupils show respect for each other as well as for the faiths of different cultures around the world. This may not be explicitly stated in a policy document, but it is a visible part of the life of the school.