

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **COTTESMORE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

RAF Cottesmore, Oakham

LEA area: Rutland

Unique reference number: 120041

Headteacher: John B. Williams

Reporting inspector: Brenda Iles  
12000

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> March, 2002

Inspection number: 243025

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary with Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: RAF Cottesmore  
Oakham  
Rutland

Postcode: LE15 7BA

Telephone number: 01572 812278

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Wg. Cdr. Keith Whitfield

Date of previous inspection: 29/09/1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12000	Brenda Iles	Registered inspector	Science Art and Design	What should the school do to improve further The school's results and achievements How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents
17454	Brian Aldridge	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education	
23453	Carole Cressey	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Geography History Religious education	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
23997	Margaret Buck	Team inspector	Equal Opportunities English as an additional language English Design and technology Music	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Cottesmore Community Primary School is situated on the RAF base in the village of Cottesmore close to the town of Oakham in Rutland. The school has 270 pupils on roll, 143 boys and 111 girls, which includes 32 children who attend the nursery on a part-time basis from the age of three. Forty one children were in the reception year at the time of the inspection. The large majority of pupils educated at the school are from families who serve at the station and live in service accommodation. Fifteen per cent of pupils attend the school from the local village. There is a range of attainment on entry but overall it is average. There are no pupils who speak English as an additional language and no pupils are entitled to free school meals. An average number of pupils (44) are on the school's register of special educational needs, six of whom have statements, which is more than usual for a school of this size. This represents an increase since the last inspection. The school has consistent very high mobility varying between 132 per cent and 65 per cent in the last four years. This reflects the significant number of moves many pupils experience during their school lives due to the frequent relocation of RAF families. In 1999, three quarters of the school population changed within a few weeks. The headteacher has also been seconded for two terms in 2001 to lead a school experiencing difficulties and returned to Cottesmore in September. The school has experienced staffing difficulties; currently five temporary teachers are covering posts that have been difficult to fill following retirement and staff moves.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Teaching is good in Year 1 and in most classes in the juniors and standards achieved at the age of eleven are above average in English and mathematics and science. The school cares very well for its pupils and the school has a warm ethos, good pastoral leadership and very supportive and knowledgeable governors. There are areas of management that need improving. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average in Year 6
- The care pupils receive is very good
- Governors offer very good support to the school
- Behaviour is good
- Attendance is very good

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in ICT are too low
- The use of assessment information to measure the progress individual pupils make
- Systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision
- Induction procedures for new staff

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in September 1997. Despite many challenges and changes the school has met local needs well and the issues raised in the last report have been addressed to a satisfactory level. Standards continue to be above average in literacy, numeracy and science in Year 6. Cultural provision is now good. Improved procedures for assessing pupils' progress have resulted in regular testing in the basic skills but individual targets are not yet sufficiently precise to enable the school to measure the value it adds to pupils' learning over short periods of time. The curriculum has been adapted

appropriately in the light of new national guidance and the national literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented effectively. Arrangements for the professional development of permanent staff have been implemented successfully and staff have good access to training opportunities. There is room to improve and support the induction arrangements for temporary staff and monitoring and evaluation arrangements. The quality of education has improved and the capacity for further improvement is good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	A	B	D
Mathematics	B	A	B	C
Science	A	B	A	B

**Key**

well above average A

above average B

Average C

below average D

well below average E

Standards were above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics in the 2001 tests for seven-year-olds. Teacher assessment in science showed above average attainment. Comparing the school with its benchmark group for free school meals provides unreliable evidence because the school serves predominantly the educational needs of families based at the station providing a pattern of full employment. Similarly trends over time do not provide reliable evidence about progress because the school's population suffers annual changes which range from 65 to 132 per cent in each year group.

Inspection evidence shows that standards are similar to the most recent test results in Year 2 and Year 6. By the age of eleven, attainment in English and mathematics and science is above average with higher achievers being well above average. Reading and the development of investigative skills and knowledge are strengths and have developed well since the last report. Standards in ICT are below average and have not maintained the pace of national change. In religious education pupils' achievements meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus by Year 6 but they are below the local expectations in Year 2 because the scheme of work has not been covered adequately. In history, geography, art and design and physical education standards are similar to those of most seven and eleven-year-olds. There was insufficient evidence available to judge standards in music and design and technology. When the very high levels of school moves are taken into account pupils make good progress. While boys appear to achieve better than girls by age eleven, the proportions of boys and girls in some cohorts is unbalanced and data is unreliable. Inspection evidence shows that girls have the same opportunities as boys and the school ensures the full inclusion of all pupils. The proportion of boys with special educational needs is higher than girls. They receive good support and this enables them to achieve their best and frequently meet average levels. The school usually meets its targets. However, the very high levels of joiners and leavers means that targets are not based on the assessments of pupils who actually take the tests. This is a consistent and significant challenge for the school.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Attitudes to school and to learning are good
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good. The small number with challenging behaviour are usually managed well so they rarely disrupt the learning of others. Most pupils behave well in lessons and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good and provision to support pupils' personal development is good.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. Pupils come regularly to school and this supports learning well.

Pupils benefit from the care and support they receive which enables them to settle quickly into the school community, make friends and enjoy very good relationships with adults.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage of learning and in Year 2. It is consistently good in Year 1 and mainly good in the juniors. Examples of very good teaching were observed in Year 1 and in Years 3 and 6. Unsatisfactory lessons were observed in three classes taught by temporary staff. Weaknesses lie in behaviour management and a slow lesson pace which slows down rates of progress. Literacy, numeracy and science are effectively taught and support the above average achievements of pupils well. All pupils are included fully in activities and pupils with special educational needs receive the support they need. Teachers ask challenging questions of higher attaining pupils and this supports their development well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is of sound quality. While the curriculum is appropriate for the age range, elements of ICT have not been covered adequately.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision is good
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision in all aspects is good
How well the school cares	The care pupils receive is very good

for its pupils	
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The very good care pupils receive enables them to feel secure and concentrate on their learning within a warm and welcoming ethos. This underpins the school's priority to meet the changing needs of its mobile population.

The school has good relationships with parents and encourages their involvement 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 headteacher provides good pastoral leadership and is supported well by the deputy head. Management is satisfactory.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors provide very good support and have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory because there are no systematic procedures
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory

The school has a higher than average number of staff who support pupils needs well. Weaknesses in monitoring and evaluation lead to inadequate support for temporary staff and inhibit the evaluation of rates of progress and the value the school adds to individual pupils' learning. Governors are a significant strength and make a very good contribution to school leadership and management. The principles of best value are applied well.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school</li> <li>• Children are expected to work hard</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• They feel comfortable approaching the school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The information they receive about their children's progress.</li> <li>• Closer partnership with the school</li> <li>• More homework to support learning.</li> </ul>

Inspectors support parents' positive comments. Newsletters, the curriculum notice board and opportunities to talk to staff about their children's progress are good. Pupils receive amounts of homework appropriate for their ages but there is some inconsistency in classes taught by some temporary staff. The school works hard to develop partnerships with parents to minimise the disruption of consistent family movement, which has an impact on the effectiveness of parent groups such as the 'Friends of the School'.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Test results for seven and eleven-year-olds show variations from year to year which reflect the changing nature of the school's population and the very large number of pupils who join and leave the school at non-standard times. With levels of pupil mobility at over 60 per cent, comparisons of standards with benchmark tables are not helpful because they do not take into account the specific challenges of frequent and regular change the school manages. The school meets the needs of pupils well and by the age of eleven standards in national tests show pupils attain levels that are above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Particular progress has been made in improving the quality of reading and investigative science. The national initiatives for literacy and numeracy have been implemented effectively.
2. The 2001 test results for seven-year-olds show pupils achieved standards that were above the national average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. These are lower than in the previous year and in relation to teacher assessments. This is partly because a significant number of pupils who took the tests were not at the school when the teacher assessments were made. In addition, there were many changes of teacher due to staff illness and this discontinuity had a negative impact on pupils' achievements. Pupils currently in Year 2 have also experienced these difficulties. However, standards continue to be above average in speaking, listening and reading and science. They are average in numeracy and writing.
3. The high level of pupil mobility makes school target setting difficult. The priority to assess pupils when they start at the school enables teachers to meet individual needs early on and to provide the appropriate levels of support. The standards achieved in the core subjects by the age of eleven therefore reflect the school's success. Inspection evidence shows there is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls in lessons. While test results show that boys generally outperform girls there is gender imbalance in some year groups. The staff and governors are aware of the difference in test results and ensure that the self-esteem and confidence of girls are promoted through the school's culture. Teachers ensure that girls have opportunities to take the lead role in discussions and group work and the staff present positive role models of successful women. The governors plan to look in more depth at the impact of the local setting in their planned analysis of gender differences.
4. Higher attaining pupils are also fully challenged. For example, the proportion of eleven-year-olds who reached the higher Level 5 in science was well above average and current evidence supports the view that the most able pupils reach their potential. When the high levels of mobility and average baseline assessment results are taken into consideration this represents good overall achievement.
5. Inspection evidence shows that pupils currently in Year 2 are achieving standards that are above average in speaking and listening, reading and science. Numeracy and writing skills are average. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been implemented appropriately in the infants. Good progress is made in all subjects in Year 1 where teaching is good. The level of consistency and staff expertise in Year 2 is not as high and therefore pupils in Year 2 progress more slowly than those in Year 1.

6. Pupils make greater gains in learning between the ages of seven and eleven than between five and seven. Pupils make good progress where the quality of teaching by permanent staff is good. In classes where staff have been working for only short periods of time the teaching is more variable and this leads to some lack of consistency in provision and a slower pace to the learning. More able pupils achieve standards well above those usually found for this age group in Year 6 because they are well taught and consistently challenged. In science, a high proportion of pupils achieve levels that are above average with more able pupils achieving very highly. Science is a strength of the provision and pupils benefit from the subject's good leadership, good teaching and a very practical approach to learning in the subject. This shows good improvement since the last report.
7. Direct comparisons of standards with the last report are difficult to make because the baseline on entry is currently lower than it was, following social changes experienced on the air base. Bearing in mind the considerable changes made to the primary curriculum nationally and the stronger emphasis now placed on literacy, numeracy and science, standards in other subjects have been maintained overall. Standards in writing are lower and this aspect of literacy is a current priority area for development that is having a positive impact on pupils' work. The issue of a lack of challenge for more able pupils has been addressed well.
8. The needs of pupils who are less able and those with special educational needs continue to be met well in the juniors through carefully structured programmes of work linked carefully to the literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 who experience special educational needs are taught literacy and numeracy in a learning support group. Pupils achieve well in this group. Targets are specified in individual education plans, which are accurately based on their needs. Pupils learn how to use letter sounds to build words and understand the importance of changing their voices to represent different characters. Most make good progress in developing reading skills. Pupils practise writing words, sentences and stories and learn how to use full stops and capital letters. Faster learners are well challenged and use speech marks accurately. Pupils' number skills develop well and they count in twos, fives and tens. As a group they solve money problems and pick out the important words expressed as short stories. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress. Learning support assistants and the special needs teacher maintain careful checks on how well all pupils are achieving. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make sound progress because special educational needs provision is not as precisely targeted in these year groups. The lack of learning support assistants in literacy and numeracy lessons in Years 1 and 2 hinders the progress of less able pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are also identified and supported. For example, a pupil in Year 2 is taught in Year 3 to meet his needs in the core subjects. This enables pupils to work alongside older pupils of similar abilities. While this provides appropriate challenge for younger pupils it is not as effective where pupils work with children younger than themselves. Teachers, teaching assistants and the nursery nurse enable the full inclusion of Foundation Stage children in lessons. Their needs are identified at an early stage through baseline assessment.
9. The assessment of pupils' learning is regular and thorough but there is insufficient use made of the information to track individual pupils' progress. Consequently, there is insufficient measurement of the precise gains made in learning. Targets are set for groups and individuals but they are often too broad or the timescale set for their achievement is too distant and pupils leave the school before they are achieved fully. Teachers have a good knowledge of pupils and make their expectations of learning in lessons very clear. Pupils therefore know how well they learned in lessons and apply their reading, writing and number skills to other aspects of the curriculum well, for

example when creating graphs in science and writing in an autobiographical style within history. Rates of progress are linked to the quality of teaching and the impact of turbulence within the school, including changes in staffing and the personal circumstances of children's lives. While assessment procedures are now thorough data could be used more effectively to judge the value the school adds to pupils' learning.

10. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in ICT are below average in aspects such as sensing and control technology. In other aspects pupils achieve at least the expected levels but progress is slow due to inadequate resources. The school has used funding to train staff appropriately but the programme was not as successful as the school had hoped it would be and consequently a new programme of training is being offered to ensure staff develop greater confidence in their subject knowledge and expertise. ICT is a current school priority. More resources of good quality are also being purchased to support the development of the subject and a computer suite is to be installed in the near future. The factors which have inhibited progress are largely beyond the school's control.
11. In art and design, design and technology, aspects of music, physical education and history standards are at the expected levels. The standards in these subjects are broadly similar to those at the time of the last report. Although they appear lower in history and geography the school delivers the subjects at an appropriate level for the age range and the differences relate to the changed priorities to enhance subjects such as literacy, numeracy and science. Very little music was taught during the inspection so judgements about performance and composition could not be made. However, the quality of singing was good and in music clubs pupils played wind and stringed instruments with confidence and enthusiasm.
12. Children make sound progress in the nursery and reception classes. By the end of their time in the Foundation Stage the majority meet the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all aspects and more able children are likely to exceed them. The curriculum is appropriate for the age range and where teaching is good play activities support early learning well. Learning objectives should be more precise to provide more challenging tasks for more able children to increase further the pace of learning.
13. Details of pupils' achievements in subjects can be found in the subject paragraphs in 'Section D' of the report.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. Pupils' attitudes to school, good behaviour and relationships, good levels of personal development and very good levels of attendance have a positive impact on achievements. Despite significant changes in pupils and staff since the last inspection standards have been maintained at similar levels to those described previously. Pupils are keen to come to school and undertake activities with enthusiasm. They receive very good support on entry to the school and this helps them to settle quickly in school routines and make friends. The positive attitudes generated by the pupils are particularly creditable given the instability many experience through constantly changing schools.
15. The pupils in the nursery and reception classes settle into school well and quickly adapt to routines, generally paying good attention in lessons. Throughout the school pupils are usually eager to learn and concentrate well. In a small number of lessons attention and application wanes when teaching is not sufficiently interesting. Pupils are very keen to participate in the good range of clubs provided. For example, their keen approach to playing rugby, country dancing and guitars enhances their skills, knowledge and enjoyment in learning.

16. Behaviour is good. Most pupils behave well in assemblies, around the school and in the playgrounds. A small number of pupils, mostly boys, have challenging behaviour and misbehave in lessons but no major disruptions occur. While some boisterous behaviour was observed there was no aggression and pupils and parents feel no significant bullying, racist, or sexist behaviour occurs. No pupils have been excluded over the last two years, a figure well below the national average. Pupils have a good sense of fairness and are developing a good awareness of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils with special educational needs also behave well. They listen to their teachers and the learning support assistant carefully. Pupils with statements of special educational needs depend a great deal on the sensitive yet firm approach of their helpers. This specialised attention enables pupils to concentrate and complete their work. They work well in groups and are positive about their work. They achieve their learning objectives because the adults consistently reinforce specific targets so pupils know what to do to improve.
17. Personal development is good. All pupils undertake duties and responsibilities keenly. From the earliest age they return registers to the office. From Year 4 they proudly and politely act as door monitors. Pupils gain in self-confidence and self-esteem through the positive relationships they enjoy with staff. The use of circle time is having a positive impact in this area, for example, in a Year 6 lesson discussion and activities helped to develop awareness of citizenship through pupils nominating their peers and voting secretly for achievement awards.
18. Relationships are good throughout the school and good interactions between pupils and teachers have a positive impact on learning. Pupils work together well in groups, pairs and independently. For instance in a Year 1 art and design lesson a small group produced some very good work on healthy foods, sharing stencils and pastels with no direct supervision from any adult.
19. Attendance rates are very good and well above the average for primary schools. Pupils arrive promptly enabling lessons to start on time. The school promotes regular prompt attendance well so pupils develop very good practice from the earliest age in the nursery.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT**

20. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Year 2. In Year 1 it is good and in the junior classes it is mainly good. Four out of ten lessons were good and a further two in ten were very good. The remainder were mainly satisfactory. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is mainly good. Just under one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory but this related to lessons taught by temporary teachers, some of whom were new to the school, new to the profession and receiving support. In these lessons teachers lacked the breadth of knowledge and experience to make learning exciting and the pace of learning was not fast enough. In two lessons in design and technology, one in Year 2 and the other in Year 4 the teachers lacked the depth of subject knowledge and organisational strategies necessary to make the lessons successful. In one lesson the pupils repeated work they had covered before and insufficient gains were made.
21. New staff follow an appropriate induction programme during their first year of teaching and monitoring procedures and support meet the requirements laid down for newly qualified teachers. However, induction procedures for more experienced staff new to the school are not thorough enough. While the staff handbook gives good guidance on school policy and practice there is no formal induction programme to help them to adapt to the challenges of the school or to monitor the quality of their teaching systematically. This

leads to some inconsistencies occurring and too little support to improve weaknesses in teaching.

22. Teaching assistants support pupils effectively both in classes and in withdrawal groups. For example, the teaching of the additional literacy strategy enables small groups of pupils to have targeted support. They also discuss their anxieties with an adult. During the inspection it was noticeable that many pupils needed to talk about their expected moves away from the school and were anxious about leaving their teachers, the support they receive and their friends. These issues are dealt with very sensitively and pupils are appropriately refocused to their learning following discussion. Good relationships enable pupils to feel secure and they learn to the best of their abilities. The emphasis placed on developing literacy skills enables pupils to use the specific language they have been taught to explain their thoughts and ideas. This is a strength in science and by the age of eleven pupils use words such as respire, micro-organisms, carbon dioxide and hypothesis confidently.
23. In very good lessons teachers inspire and motivate pupils, for example in Year 1 in literacy the teacher modelled reading and writing very well and supported pupils to write their sentences independently on the whiteboard using capital letters, full stops and interesting words. This resulted in well formed sentences and good progress in understanding the structuring and sequencing of events in a story. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to discuss their ideas, for example in Year 3 the pupils discussed the detail of their pictures and drawings in art and were well supported to critically analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their efforts in order to make improvements.
24. Most teachers have good subject knowledge across most subjects with the exception of ICT. Objectives are communicated clearly to pupils and this ensures pupils understand the purpose of their learning. Tasks are usually well matched to meet the needs of pupils of different ability groups. The review of learning at the end of lessons enables pupils to understand how well they have achieved and what they are to learn in the following lesson.
25. Teachers pose questions to individual pupils to encourage them to speak to an audience and to share ideas and opinions. This helps pupils to value the different viewpoints of their friends and teachers. While teachers regularly assess pupils' learning and maintain records of how well they have achieved, the information is not used to set precise targets for learning or to measure more precisely the value added to learning between pupils' joining and leaving times. Evaluation techniques are not strong enough to support new staff to have a thorough understanding of the gains their pupils have made and the expectations the school has for them over each term.
26. Where teachers are enthusiastic and confident learning is brisk. By Year 6 relationships between teachers and pupils show a mature understanding of the school's expectations and a strong desire to meet them. Many pupils describe Cottesmore as their favourite school because they like their teachers and lessons, and clubs are interesting. Consequently, attitudes in lessons and in clubs are very good. The enthusiasm evident in the guitar club reflected the skills and expertise of the headteacher to teach the guitar. Pupils know they are valued as individuals. They name subjects such as art, literacy, numeracy and science as their favourite lessons
27. Teachers provide positive caring role models and manage behaviour positively. Rules are displayed clearly to reinforce expectations and when necessary pupils are reminded to take turns and to listen to others.

28. Where teaching is very good or good there is good pace and timing and teachers remind pupils how long they have to complete their tasks. This ensures that objectives are met in the allocated times. In a Year 4 literacy lesson the teacher ensured pupils had opportunities to develop expression in their reading and visited each group to ensure pupils were fully supported in their work. By the end of the lesson pupils described how they had organised their writing and more able pupils successfully organised their work in paragraphs.
29. The teaching of reading is a strength. Pupils read for a range of purposes. They have favourite books and develop a wide repertoire of favourite authors by the time they are eight. For example, pupils in Year 3 described the aspects of a Shakespeare poem they liked and compared the work of J.R. Tolkien with that of J.K. Rowling. The teaching of phonics from the Foundation Stage supports the development of reading well and pupils apply their phonics knowledge to new words in both reading and spelling systematically. Teachers model reading well, using pause, expression and volume to create effects. While some boys say they prefer reading information books, most read for information and pleasure at school and at home.
30. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory in classes and good in the learning support group for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Each day the learning support teacher reviews the progress individual pupils have made and plans work based on the last lesson. The support staff have a good understanding of pupils' needs and plan their work accordingly including a wide range of practical learning activities. For example, when pupils were counting in fives and tens, the teacher used bank notes to support pupils' thinking about the money problems they attempted later in the lesson. This linked well to pupils' understanding of the way adults count paper money in real life situations. When pupils work in their classrooms teachers ensure that the work planned is at a level that suits their learning needs. Teachers are developing the skills needed to complete these plans and the coordinator is aware of the need to ensure that all teachers work within the new Code of Practice and accept responsibility for the special educational needs provision in their classes.
31. The quality of teaching is similar to that described in the last report. The frequent staffing changes mean that the school is consistently reviewing teaching and learning but the weakness lies in inconsistent monitoring arrangements to recognise strengths and develop teachers' weaknesses. The opportunity to train teachers by recognising and building on existing strengths is an area for development.

## **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS**

32. The school provides an appropriate curriculum for pupils. It is broad, balanced and relevant and planning successfully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, the ICT curriculum does not provide full coverage of the Programmes of Study. While all of the strands of the curriculum are taught they are not yet exploited to a sufficient depth. Because of the limited resources pupils have not studied how computers can be used to control other devices or used to measure events. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and appropriately matched to the 'Early Learning Goals' though it is not always as challenging as it might be for more able children and this is a minor weakness. The school's curriculum is underpinned by its commitment to providing a very supportive and caring environment for the significant number of pupils who move in and out of the school. This has a positive effect on pupils' achievements and their attitudes to learning.



33. Since the last inspection the curriculum has benefited from the successful implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This ensures that all the elements of the subjects are now covered effectively. The introduction of the 'Early Learning Goals' and the QCA schemes of work for all subjects ensure that all the key elements of these subjects are planned. Where the needs of the school are not fully met by the use of these schemes they are adapted and amended and additional material is used from other appropriate commercial schemes. The key elements of investigation and enquiry are now covered well and enliven pupils' learning in subjects such as science, geography and mathematics. The curriculum does not benefit from planned links with other subjects to add interest and enrichment to pupils' learning. Where these occur they are the result of the initiative of individual teachers rather than a planned whole school policy.
34. Arrangements for pupils' personal, health and sex education take account of the needs of boys and girls. The school has a clear commitment to providing pupils with age related knowledge and understanding of health, sex and drugs issues. However, there is too little detail available to support temporary teachers to know precisely what knowledge and skills are to be taught. The development of citizenship and the responsibilities of the individual and the group are strengths. They are apparent throughout the curriculum and in the sensitive way the school is organised and supports pupils. The school has a very clear commitment to equality of opportunity and this has a positive effect on the self-esteem of all pupils and the progress they make. The curriculum prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.
35. Pupils with special educational needs are included in the full range of curriculum activities offered by the school. Challenging work is set in the learning support group and each pupil has targets laid out in individual education plans. These targets are at times not specific enough to determine the precise timescale for achievement. The school needs to monitor carefully the impact of their provision to ensure a healthy balance is maintained between withdrawal and inclusion in class lessons. Pupils develop self-esteem by working alongside pupils of their own age in classes and benefit from the integration of both approaches.
36. The staff give generously of their own free time to provide the pupils with a varied programme of extra-curricular activities. These are open to boys and girls and are well attended. Clubs include football, rugby, netball, drama, folk dancing, Internet club, guitar and recorder.
37. The school's links with the community are good. The use of the RAF base, its personnel and staff, promote pupils' interest and extend their knowledge and understanding well. Visits to local places of historical and geographical interest add an interesting dimension to pupils learning and bring the subjects alive for pupils. Links with local secondary schools are sound. Before pupils transfer to the high school, information on pupils' progress is exchanged and pupils enjoy time at their new school to familiarise themselves with routines and staff to ensure a happy and secure transfer.
38. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and is good. The school's caring values and principles are very apparent and have a very positive effect on the quality of the teaching and learning.
39. Assemblies provide pupils with good opportunities to consider important issues such as poverty, the effect of natural disasters and the importance of caring. Music is effective in creating a reverent atmosphere for worship and there are moments for quiet reflection on the issues discussed. However, there is no focal point for worship to create a more

reverent atmosphere for the sharing of special moments. The whole school shares personal, national and international tragedies. The planting of a garden in memory of pupils and adults who have recently died helps pupils to understand and value each others feelings as well as helping all concerned to come to terms with the sadness and loss that death and separation bring.

40. Within lessons staff are aware of the many opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of their place in the world and the wonders of nature. Pupils show excitement and delight in the results of their exciting investigations in subjects such as mathematics and science. Successes in both academic and personal achievements are recognised and valued by all. Emphasis is placed on developing a mutual respect between staff and pupils. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in the context of how it will affect other people. In assemblies, issues such as kindness, friendship and caring are taught well through stories and parables.
41. The pupils are aware of their responsibilities to the school and their local community and the international community. Recent events in America on September 11<sup>th</sup> prompted pupils to write to President Bush and pupils were proud and delighted to receive a reply from him to thank them for their kind thoughts. Pupils have opportunities to develop responsibility, self-confidence and independence. The good relationships apparent in lessons ensure that pupils feel comfortable, discussing issues which concern them, asking for help and support in their learning and in coming to terms with moving school and losing touch with friends and family. The organisation of lessons provides good opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate. A sense of citizenship is developed as pupils take part in local sport, music festivals and health initiatives. Older pupils support fundraising events to collect money for world tragedies and local charities.
42. Provision for cultural development has improved and is now good. Pupils have good opportunities to learn and appreciate the richness of their own and other people's culture through literature, music, art, geography and history. Through religious education lessons most pupils study the major world religions and all pupils are made aware of important festivals such as Christmas, Divali, and the Chinese New Year. A very effective assembly helped pupils to link their own 'golden rules' with the rules of other major faiths such as Buddhism. However, Year 2 pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to learn about other faiths and traditions and this limits their cultural development.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS**

43. Pupils are very well cared for. The school takes particularly good measures to settle pupils into the school and to prepare them for moves to other schools. The staff are very sensitive to the needs of individual pupils both in relation to the constant turbulence caused by service families regularly moving and also to the sudden departure of a parent and the worry and threat this may cause. The very good level of pastoral support allows pupils to feel secure and develop confident attitudes to learning. Pupils of all ages settle quickly into school. Standards have improved since the previous inspection in spite of the large turnover in staff.
44. Procedures and awareness in relation to child protection are very good. The headteacher rightly recognises the importance of regular staff training and frequent reminders to maintain awareness of potential issues. Health and safety procedures, including first aid and accident procedures and monitoring are very good. The school security is good. The school has a good quality behaviour policy. The strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' self-esteem and self-confidence is having a positive impact on pupil's personal

development. A small proportion of staff are not applying the policy consistently, which reduces the effectiveness of the very good practice evident in almost all classes.

45. Potential issues are dealt with very well and parents and pupils feel confident that the school handles isolated incidents of bullying very effectively. Incidents are monitored and recorded very carefully. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very thorough and contribute well to the very good overall levels of attendance.
46. The head shows good leadership in promoting the school ethos and care and concern for pupils. This is mediated through caring interventions by teachers, classroom assistants, support staff and volunteers. Over the week, on several occasions when pupils, usually boys, seemed upset, they were quietly, caringly and effectively counselled and supported by staff.
47. A key issue at the last inspection was the need to implement procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress. Procedures for assessing the attainment of pupils are now good. There is an assessment co-ordinator in post who has worked hard to produce and share with staff a detailed policy for assessing, recording and reporting pupils' attainment and progress. As yet she has not had the opportunity to work with subject co-ordinators to monitor the implementation of policy and evaluate its effectiveness.
48. Generally assessment practice has improved and is more consistent. There is some good practice in using assessment as a natural part of teaching and learning. For example in Year 1, where teachers plan the key questions they will use to assess pupils' learning in relation to the objectives for the lesson, and use the plenary session to discuss what pupils have learned rather than what they have done in the lesson.
49. Overall, staff are collecting a substantial amount of data on attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, as well as in the foundation subjects that make up the rest of the curriculum for pupils. However, because there is no structured formal programme for monitoring and evaluating the implementation and success of the policy, a small number of teachers are not recording assessment outcomes in all subjects, particularly in design and technology and music. This applies mainly when there has been staff illness and temporary or new staff assume responsibility for classes. There is a need to ensure that new staff are clear about the procedures and expectations of the school to assess and record pupils' learning.
50. Insufficient use is made of the data collected to enable the school to measure the progress individual pupils make between their entry and leaving terms and to evaluate the value the school adds to their learning. Individual pupil targets for learning in English, mathematics and science are set across the school but they are often too broad and do not detail precisely enough the next steps pupils need to take to secure the next level of attainment as pupils move through the subject programme of study.
51. The learning support teacher and class teachers assess pupils with special educational needs frequently in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. For example, there is some good quality work which focuses on how well pupils communicate and pay attention during sessions in the learning support group. Pupils are eager to see how well they have achieved at the end of each session and try hard to improve their performance. Results of reading, writing, number and general cognitive ability are recorded several times each year. Again, there is too little analysis of this information, consequently teachers are working very hard to assess and record but with insufficient measurement of the value they are adding to pupils' learning. The school has useful procedures to

identify and meet the needs of its pupils with special educational needs at an early stage. These procedures follow the guidance of the new Code of Practice.

52. A useful marking policy indicates how staff should communicate success in learning to pupils. They are appropriately different for infant and junior classes. However, the coding system is over complex and needs simplifying to ensure greater consistency across classes of older and younger pupils. Good practice in marking, for example in Year 6, provides good feedback to pupils to enable them to improve. However, despite making positive comments about effort some teachers are not indicating well enough the next steps pupils need to take to improve. As yet the co-ordinator has not had the opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of the policy.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS**

53. The partnership with parents is good and has a positive impact on pupils' attitudes to school and their learning. This is an improvement on the satisfactory partnership described at the time of the last inspection, and reflects the efforts of the headteacher, staff and governors to maintain good relationships with an ever-changing group of parents. The success of these efforts is shown in the positive views given by parents, particularly in the parental questionnaires. Parents believe their children like school, make good progress, and behave well. They particularly praise the caring leadership of the school, the standards of care and the warm ethos. Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. A small number of parents wanted more information on how their children are progressing and felt the school should work more closely with parents. Inspectors believe that the school provides parents with good information about their children's progress through annual reports and regular consultation sessions. Regular newsletters encourage parents to be involved in their children's education. These are particularly helpful in updating parents on staff changes and their impact on the pupils. The school is developing good initiatives to help parents become more involved in their children's learning. For example, the nursery notice-board gives details of activities for the week and curriculum notices provide details of the curriculum each term. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are very well informed and involved in their children's education.
54. The special educational needs co-ordinator ensures that parents are full participants in reviewing the progress their children make when measured against their individual education plans. These reviews meet the requirements of the Code of Practice and are planned to coincide with the regular parents' consultations. These regular consultations ensure that good links are maintained between parents and the school.
55. Parents make a sound contribution to their children's education. Many support homework and encourage reading at home. The great majority ensure the regular and prompt attendance of their children. Some provide good help in the classroom, and the newly reformed parents association has already provided valuable funds for resources.

## HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

56. The headteacher provides good pastoral leadership. This underpins the caring ethos of the school, which supports the needs of pupils and families who regularly join and leave. The deputy headteacher and governing body give very good support and have a very good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Through close partnership there is a clear understanding of future priorities.
57. The school's circumstances are complex and present considerable challenge to maintain continuity of practice and progression in learning. The very high levels of movement of pupils, staff and governors mean that the school is consistently responding to changing needs. The impact of the 85 per cent of families who are based on RAF Cottesmore results in frequent change in class groupings and sizes as families are posted to other bases in the United Kingdom and abroad very regularly.
58. Staff manage emotional trauma, loss of friends and induction of new families well. Pupils and their families benefit from the liaison which supports their integration and prepares them to move from the school. Parents are comfortable to approach the headteacher and staff and most compliment the school for its welcome, care and friendliness.
59. Recent research to review the pattern of mobility, led by a governor working with the headteacher, has drawn very good attention to the unique circumstances of the school. For example, links have been drawn to the very high level of mobility in 1999 and the dip in national test results. Similarly, assessment information has been analysed and documented by the governing body in collaboration with the headteacher. There is a high level of enthusiasm by the governing body to develop procedures and practice to support the mobile population further and minimise the impact of constant change and disruption, for example, by recruiting governors on a rolling programme to ensure there is a consistent stable core of people to prioritise the management of change and provide more knowledgeable support to the headteacher.
60. Since the school was last inspected the headteacher has been seconded to support a school experiencing difficulties. The deputy head successfully led the school through a programme of change, updating policies and gaining the 'Investors in People' award. Performance management systems have been implemented effectively and permanent staff are clear of the targets they have to achieve. Subject coordinators fulfil their duties responsibly, managing small budgets and supporting staff development according to school priorities. All subjects have their discrete action plans that identify priorities for improvement.
61. Alongside these strengths there are areas for development that arise from the consistent pattern of change. The school experiences recruitment difficulties and currently five temporary teachers are covering posts which have been difficult to fill due to retirement and staff moves. The situation will be partly resolved during next term when at least one experienced teacher has been appointed to fulfil a vacancy. Office and support staff changes are also frequent as many staff live on the air base and experience regular relocation. These features of mobility are appropriately managed but the school can do more to secure better induction arrangements and to improve the monitoring arrangements to judge the quality of temporary provision and provide more support where there are weaknesses. The staff handbook provides teachers with useful guidance but there is no formal induction programme to ensure consistency of provision.
62. Monitoring procedures and programmes for evaluating the school's effectiveness are informal and, while there is evidence of the monitoring of teaching and governors reports

based on visits and discussions with staff and pupils, there is no systematic, structured programme. Senior staff monitor newly qualified teachers and give appropriate support. Teachers' files and assessment records are mainly well maintained but gaps in monitoring have led to the records in one Year 2 class not being maintained adequately. There is more that can be done to monitor the quality of provision and evaluate its effectiveness.

63. A weakness lies in the management of Years 1 and 2 and the coordinator was absent during part of the inspection. While staff work conscientiously, aspects of their roles such as planning are at times duplicated because there is insufficient liaison and guidance to support new staff and enable them to concentrate on developing a repertoire of exciting teaching strategies.
64. The school improvement plan provides a sound overview of school priorities and accurately identifies areas for future development. However, the quality could be improved by ensuring links are made to the school's aims and objectives and success criteria are more precisely defined and linked to expenditure and the setting of targets. The brief strategic plan lacks sufficient focus on the school's complex circumstances.
65. The governing body provides very good support and very effectively supports the headteacher, school initiatives, teaching and learning. For example, there is already an awareness of the need to improve the school plan through audit, review prioritisation and full involvement of all learning partners. They also understand the importance of developing further the use of assessment information to judge the value the school adds to pupils' education during their time, however short, at the school. The annual report to parents is of very good quality and provides parents with well written and interesting information about the school's work.
66. The governing body has established good procedures for monitoring the school's provision for special educational needs. A named governor takes an active interest in the delivery of the provision and the progress of the pupils. The coordinator is successfully developing the provision for special educational needs with the aim of extending the good quality practice evident in the juniors to Year 1 and 2. There is insufficient time spent on monitoring the impact of provision and checking to see that individual education plans are written and maintained by class teachers.
67. Financial planning and monitoring is good. The headteacher and governors have a clear understanding of the very significant impact that the constant changes to pupil numbers have on the management and planning of the budget. The long and short-term financial planning takes careful account of known commitments, resource implications of school development planning and flexibility in relation to pupil numbers. For example, the use of temporary contracts is essential to maintain the flexibility required. The school receives an additional allocation to support the very high level of mobility. The school has wisely used this special allocation to support pupils. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively. Day-to-day administration is good, in particular the system to monitor the constantly changing number of pupils. The school has a good awareness of the principles of best value. The very good analysis of performance data recently undertaken by a governor has identified issues which challenge the school to improve further. The school benefits from generous accommodation and is appropriately staffed resourced. A minor weakness lies in the resources for children in the foundation stage which are old and in need of replacement. The school's capacity to succeed and improve is good.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

To further improve the quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should attend to the following key issues:

### **1. \*Improve standards in ICT by:**

- providing training to raise the knowledge and expertise of staff
- providing sufficient resources to support teaching and learning
- monitoring the impact of new provision on standards
- ensuring that computers are used across the curriculum

Paragraphs 10, 24, 32, 90, 93, 98, 118-122

### **2. Improve aspects of leadership and management by:**

- adopting systematic procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on standards
- developing induction procedures for new staff
- giving support to the unsatisfactory management of Years 1 and 2

Paragraphs 21, 31, 34, 49, 61-2, 101, 103, 125

### **3. Develop the use of assessment procedures by:**

- setting precise short term targets for attainment for individual pupils
- measuring the progress of individual pupils' performance on a termly basis to judge the value added to their performance between joining and leaving times.
- adopting a procedure to maintain consistent adherence to a simplified marking policy

Paragraphs 9, 25, 50-1, 52, 65, 90, 95

### **The governors should consider the following more minor issues for inclusion in the action plan:**

- provide greater challenge for more able children in the Foundation Stage of learning

Paragraphs 12, 32, 71-2, 75

- renew resources for the Foundation Stage which are in need of replacement

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	12	25	20	6	0	0
Percentage	0%	19%	40%	32%	10%	0%	0%

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	16	254
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	44

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	81
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	101

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0



National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	29	20	49

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	26	27	28
	Girls	18	17	19
	Total	44	44	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (93)	90 (100)	96 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	27	27
	Girls	18	19	19
	Total	42	46	46
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (93)	94 (93)	94 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	12	16	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	12
	Girls	13	11	14
	Total	23	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (83)	79 (83)	93 (89)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	10	10
	Girls	11	10	13
	Total	19	20	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (83)	71 (83)	82 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	228
Any other minority ethnic group	8

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

### Teachers and classes

#### Qualified teachers and classes: Yr-y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.2
Average class size	23.1

#### Education support staff: YR-Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	176

#### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	541,389
Total expenditure	533,041
Expenditure per pupil	1,904
Balance brought forward from previous year	-8,061
Balance carried forward to next year	287

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	5
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

270

Number of questionnaires returned

101

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	37	5	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	44	4	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	51	5	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	54	13	1	6
The teaching is good.	52	42	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	43	26	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	41	5	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	2	0	4
The school works closely with parents.	24	48	16	4	9
The school is well led and managed.	50	42	5	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	52	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	45	10	4	15

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

The school's provision for children in the Foundation Stage is in the Nursery and two reception classes. Overall, the school continues to provide an appropriate range of experiences to promote the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development. Inconsistencies in the provision between nursery and reception highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed. All children now receive an appropriate curriculum based on the six areas of learning. While there is an appropriate range of equipment and resources, many of them are old and in need of replacement.

68. The overall attainment levels of most children entering the school are similar to those expected nationally. This is lower than at the last inspection due to differences in cohorts and social differences which have arisen due to the very mobile school population. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and, as a result, most children are on target to reach the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. This is confirmed by baseline assessment.
69. Teaching overall is satisfactory. The nursery and reception classes plan together and this ensures that learning is effectively built on as children move from the nursery to the reception class. Medium term plans provide an appropriate framework for covering the six areas of learning. However, short-term plans do not always contain sufficient detail on what children need to learn in relationship to the small steps set out in the 'Early Learning Goals'. Staff are usually calm, kind, sensitive and caring which ensures children feel secure and are happy to leave their parents and carers at the beginning of the day. Praise and encouragement are used well to promote positive behaviour and personal, social and emotional development. However, the planning and organisation of activities and the use of staff could be sharper to extend learning further. Activities are sometimes too adult directed and staff miss opportunities to extend learning through appropriate interaction in well planned, high quality activities which children have chosen for themselves. This has a limiting effect on the progress children make. Where teaching is good, such as in parts of the numeracy and literacy lessons, activities are focussed well on specific learning intentions and good adult questions and comments extend children's thinking. Baseline assessment is shared with parents and is used to identify children's strengths and weaknesses. Staff maintain a useful record system, which records children's progress towards the early learning goals in all areas. This results in a complete picture of children's progress in all areas of the curriculum. Assessment activities are not always sufficiently well related to the stepping-stones to plan precise targets for learning.

#### **Communication, language and literacy.**

70. Teaching of communication, language and literacy is satisfactory and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. The school provides an appropriate range of experiences and activities to develop children's language and literacy skills. The implementation of the literacy hour in the reception classes is effective in developing children's early reading and writing. Children enjoy stories and rhymes, joining in familiar ones with enthusiasm. There are planned 'special times' for children and adults to share conversations with each other and children are eager participators and

interested listeners. Reception age children eagerly look forward to taking home 'Calypso' the class bear. They enjoy writing and talking about his daily adventures as he accompanies them on family outings and helps out with chores. However, there are missed opportunities for staff to interact with children in freely chosen activities, such as construction or imaginative play, to extend learning further.

71. Formal teacher directed activities in both the nursery and reception help children to recognise familiar letters, sounds and words. Nursery children proudly bring in objects from home beginning with a particular sound and together adults and children explore sounds. However, there are some missed opportunities in the nursery to extend the learning for older children and the link between sounds and letters is not always made clear. Older children in the reception classes are beginning to write their own simple sentences using recognisable letters, sounds and words, such as; 'I love my mummy'. Activities lack sufficient challenge at times. For example, writing corners and imaginative play situations and activities do not always contain enough high quality resources, materials and ideas to stimulate children to write for a variety of purposes and audiences. When this does happen, for example in the class 'office', children make appointments for their teacher. This develops their writing skills and helps the children to understand that the written word is a powerful tool. Younger children are learning to recognise their own names and most older reception children are able to write their first names accurately using capital and small letters. Children in the reception class read simple books with confidence using letters and sounds to read unfamiliar words. The reading areas in the reception classes are lacking in comfort and this limits children's enjoyment of the range of books available.

### **Mathematical development**

72. Teaching of mathematics is satisfactory and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Children have opportunities to compare, match, sort, order, sequence and count using a range of games, routines and experiences. Through topic work they explore number, pattern, shape and measurement. Nursery children measure and compare their heights and a dinosaur mobile effectively helps them to count and recognise numbers. Older children measure and compare the height of their plants and flowers.
73. The numeracy strategy is appropriately implemented in the reception classes and has a positive effect on children's attainment. Children respond enthusiastically to the mental part of the lesson and enjoy exploring numbers to a hundred. They confidently count in twos and tens. Higher attaining children count forwards and backwards with increasing confidence. Occasionally the length of the sessions is too long for the children and they become a little restless and distracted which limits their progress. The language of time is developed well as the children listen to stories about night and day, make simple clocks and complete times tasks. However, these activities are not always sufficiently well matched and challenging. Children, consider size, shape and position when playing with construction toys or emptying and filling containers in the sand play. A lack of planned adult intervention results in missed opportunities to extend children's mathematical thinking as they create three-dimensional models or cut out shape pictures.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world.**

74. Children are developing a sound understanding of the world around them. Nursery children are delighted as they observe the changes that occur as chocolate melts in readiness for making cakes. Older children observe the growth of the daffodil bulbs, cress seeds and broad beans. They are learning the importance of sunshine and water to

enable plants to grow. Children learn about the passage of time through celebrating birthdays, talking about the days of the week and the changing seasons and weather. Children are becoming confident in using the computer. They use the 'mouse' skilfully when using different programmes to support their learning. An understanding of other cultures and ways of life different from their own is a strong feature of the nursery and reception classes. Divali and Chinese New Year are celebrated along with Christian festivals and celebrations such as Christmas, Easter and Mother's Day. Construction toys encourage children to design and make their own models. However, these activities are not always sufficiently challenging for the older children and there are missed opportunities for adults to interact and extend children's ideas. Planning for knowledge and understanding of the world is not always sufficiently specific. Scientific aspects are planned appropriately using a commercial scheme but other aspects of this area of learning do not always have clear enough learning intentions. Consequently learning lacks the precise focus needed to raise achievement higher.

### **Physical development**

75. Teaching is satisfactory and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Children move around their classroom and school confidently avoiding other children, furniture and equipment. Regular structured physical education lessons provide appropriate opportunities for children to develop spatial awareness, control of their movements and an understanding of the importance of regular exercise. Opportunities for outdoor play are limited by the size of the small closed off area. As a result, although children are able to access the outdoors, daily activities tend to be difficult for staff to control and children's opportunities to make faster progress are inhibited. The school has plans to extend the safe outdoor area address as soon as finances allow. Children are developing confidence when handling pencils, crayons, modelling tools, construction toys and malleable materials.

### **Creative development**

76. Teaching is satisfactory and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Children enjoy an appropriate range of experiences in art, music and story. However, imaginative play situations are not sufficiently well planned. Situations such as a 'the office and shop' are well conceived but lack a sufficiently wide range of stimulating resources to promote further children's imagination and extend their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. A range of musical instruments, songs and rhymes helps to develop children's understanding of sound, rhythm and pattern. There are suitable activities available for children to develop their senses through investigating texture, shape and colour. Children print their own pattern on their 'Mothers Day' card and there are examples of interesting paintings depicting different times in the day. However, tasks are often too teacher directed and insufficient use is made of children's ideas.
77. While displays show children paint and model, however, during the inspection no children were observed using recycled materials to create their own models or pictures and no child was observed painting. Materials such as dough, water and sand are available for children to explore but they are not accessed as regularly as they should be in order to ensure children make develop ideas and skills through opportunities to choose materials and tools independently to express themselves.



## **Social, personal and emotional development**

78. Teaching is satisfactory and most children will achieve the early learning goals by the beginning of Year 1. Most children enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is good. They respond well to the rules and routines of school life. Children are learning to share and work together in a variety of situations, such as when playing games, building models with large bricks or listening to each other's contributions. Emphasis is placed on helping children to develop an understanding of appropriate behaviour and of what is right and wrong. Relationships are very positive and children are encouraged to be polite and kind to each other and reflect on their feelings, actions and experiences. The sharing of assemblies and celebrations, such as Christmas and Easter, provide quality opportunities for children to appreciate the significance of worship and belonging to a larger community.

## **ENGLISH**

79. Standards in English are similar to the last inspection and continue to be above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Results in the 2001 national tests show that pupils achieve standards above the national average in reading at the age of seven and in English by the age of eleven. Standards in writing of seven-year-olds were in line with the national average. There is little to be gained by comparing the school with its benchmark group for free school meals because the school serves predominantly the educational needs of families based at the station and there is a pattern of full employment. There are also very high levels of mobility. Taking account of changes in cohorts, test results over the last four years generally have been above the national average in reading in Year 2 and in English in Year 6. There has been some variation in writing in Year 2 but overall the trend has been closer to the national average. Over a period of three years boys do better than girls in English but during the inspection there was no significant difference noted between the performance of boys and girls.
80. When pupils enter Year 1 speaking, listening, reading and writing skills are broadly typical for their age. Inspection evidence indicates that in Year 2 and Year 6 pupils attain standards in speaking, listening and reading above those typical of their age group. Standards in writing are in line with those expected of their age group.
81. In all year groups the majority of pupils listen carefully, particularly when the teaching is good and activities are interesting. In Year 2 pupils talk with confidence about stories they enjoy and a more able pupil in Year 2 explained that 'amazed' means 'astonished'. In Year 6 pupils reflect on their time in the school and talk about their travels to other parts of the country and the world. Many pupils differentiate between conversation with their friends, discussion with their teachers and the more formal talk with members of the inspection team, and adjust their vocabulary and expression appropriately. The older pupils, particularly in Year 5 and Year 6, although articulate in conversation and small group work, are less confident in speaking out in front of the whole class to communicate their ideas to the group as well as the teacher.
82. Average and below average pupils in Year 2 have a good knowledge of key words and a good grasp of letter sounds, which helps them tackle new words. They are keen and enthusiastic about reading. A Year 2 pupil enjoyed reading about pirates; adopted a 'pirate' voice when reading the words spoken by his favourite character, and talked animatedly about the story. An above average pupil explained that 'her heart is broken' was not to be taken literally but meant the character was sad. By Year 6 pupils read a wide range of modern fiction, popular classics and poetry, including Tolkein and Rowling,

and explain the reasons for their preferences. They find information from a variety of sources and texts to support learning in other subject areas.

83. Writing is mainly sound. Pupils' achievements reflect the quality of teaching across the school and teachers' expectations impact on the quality of presentation in books. The most able seven-year-olds write well. They plan and sequence events and choose words for effect. For example, 'the little, little acorn had grown into a little bud. It lived underground in the mucky, mucky mud'. Other pupils are developing their ideas and increasingly show they understand the need to use capital letters and full stops. By the age of eleven pupils write sustained stories with attention to characterisation and plot. Throughout the school in literacy lessons there is emphasis on practising the skills of spelling, punctuation and grammar in exercises. However, there are some good examples of using different forms of writing in other subject areas for a real purpose, for example, in recording the merits and disadvantages of belonging to different social classes in Victorian times in Year 6, and in recording how to make an electrical circuit in Year 2. Standards of handwriting are sound and older pupils develop their own personal style.
84. Teaching is good across the school although there is variation between years and within years. Out of eleven lessons observed two were unsatisfactory. Staff employed permanently within the school usually provide good quality teaching.
85. The National Literacy Strategy is making a significant contribution to raising standards. Also the Early Literacy and Additional Literacy Support programmes in Years 1 and 3 are ensuring that selected pupils consolidate their learning at a level typical for their age group. All teachers pay considerable attention to the teaching of reading and the best practitioners model for pupils how to read with expression, intonation and awareness of punctuation, using interesting 'big books' that capture pupils' interest and imagination. Useful active play-based approaches to developing language and literacy skills are used in Year 1 and Year 2, for example, there are role-play areas linked to topics in other subject areas. Generally teachers' subject knowledge is good and the best lessons are well planned with careful attention to determining the key questions that will be used to assess pupils' learning by the end of the lesson, as seen in Year 1. Teachers use humour, clear expectations about the kind of behaviour that will support learning and good relationships to engage pupils in learning. On occasions teachers skilfully address the needs of individual pupils who are upset, particularly boys, and encourage them to participate in the lesson. Good lessons progress at an effective pace and pupils sustain high levels of purposeful activity as seen in a lesson based on exploring the traditional tale 'Red Riding Hood'.
86. When lessons are less successful teachers do not successfully plan different work for groups of pupils of differing abilities. Work is insufficiently challenging and sometimes exercises in textbooks, such as copying out dictionary definitions, are used without considering if they actually relate to the objectives for the lesson. Thus pace dips and pupils do not learn at a fast enough rate. There are missed opportunities to use questioning effectively to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding as the lesson progresses and at the end review and discussion focuses on what has been done, rather than on what has been learned.
87. Pupils with special educational needs are supported in or withdrawn from lessons for small group work. They gain from this provision and consequently make good progress overall. However, there is a need to ensure that a balance is maintained between withdrawal and appropriate opportunities to routinely experience discussions, conversations and interactions with pupils who would provide models of higher levels of

language and literacy skills. There is also a need to ensure that pupils feel socially included and part of their class group.

88. Pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to learning, particularly when the texts chosen are interesting and there is emphasis on active approaches to learning. They mostly work well together and take turns in group tasks. Relationships with their teachers are mainly good and help them to do their best.
89. Management of English is sound. The co-ordinator is new to post and is being well supported by a colleague. There has been very high quality support from the governors, which has resulted in a useful analysis of pupils' performance as well as an audit of the library. The school assesses pupils' attainment and collects a considerable amount of data with an emphasis on test results, but as yet teachers do not measure the progress of individual pupils to determine the value added by the school. Individual pupil targets for learning are set across the school but they do not always detail the next steps pupils need to take to secure the next level of attainment as pupils move through the English programme of study. Work is routinely marked and teachers try to follow the policy for marking but the coding system is over-complex. There is some good practice in marking, particularly in Year 6, but teachers do not routinely offer advice to pupils on how to improve. Computers are used to draft and present writing, however, resources are limited and this results in limited access, which slows pace of learning word processing and presentation skills. The school plan already identifies this aspect of its work as a priority for development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

90. Standards are above the levels expected in Years 2 and 6 and pupils do particularly well in their number work. In the 2001 tests, Year 2 pupils achieved in line with the national average. In the Year 6 2001 tests pupils achieved above average results when compared to all schools. This maintains the standards observed at the last inspection.
91. Boys achieved higher results than girls but there were no differences between the performance of boys and girls in lessons. Comparisons with similar schools are not reliable because in the Year 6 cohort only two pupils have attended the school from the beginning of the juniors. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress against the targets in their individual education plans. Pupils with the most marked special educational needs are taught in a learning support group and make good progress. Higher attaining pupils are provided with plenty of challenges and are encouraged to think hard about their work. Trends in the achievement of each year group are exceptionally difficult to track because each group changes, frequently at short notice. However, much of the teaching in the juniors, four out of the five lessons observed, was good or very good and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Teaching in Year 1 was also good.
92. Year 2 pupils add and subtract numbers up to 100 and some of the high attainers understand and use numbers above 100. Pupils have a good understanding of how numbers are used to calculate and solve problems. They know that two-dimensional shapes are the faces of three-dimensional solids, measure length and mass accurately and show a good understanding of right angles and symmetrical shapes. Pupils use their knowledge of number to accurately estimate and compare the mass of objects. By Year 6 pupils apply their knowledge of number and refine their skills in solving problems. At times they work with numbers beyond 100,000 and have good understanding of how the position of digits affects their value. They understand how decimals and fractions can be

expressed as ratio, proportion and percentages and apply them appropriately to mathematical situations. Pupils competently convert pounds to euros and centigrade to Fahrenheit. Good use is made of mathematical investigations to support the application of skills and knowledge and encourage independent decision-making. This was evident when pupils identified numbers below 100 that are equal to the sum of two square numbers. In their data handling, pupils used and interpreted a range of information using different forms of graphs, for example, they understand straight-line graphs, negative numbers and how graphs are used to display information in their science work. Insufficient use is made of ICT to support learning and the presentation of data.

93. Teachers have successfully implemented the numeracy strategy and teaching is mainly good. Pupils make good progress in learning how to calculate mentally and develop different strategies for working out problems. Most lessons are introduced by a brisk mental and oral arithmetic session. In the one unsatisfactory lesson observed in Year 3 the introduction was too slow, the teacher waited too long for answers and the movement between activities lacked pace. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 2, explanations lacked the precise clarity of good and very good teaching and pupils did not fully understand the expectations made of them. In the good and very good lessons, the pace is brisk and pupils are given work to complete within specific time limits. In a lesson in Year 6, which was taught very well, the teacher made very good use of the overhead projector. By tearing the angles of triangles and quadrilaterals the teacher demonstrated that the angles of a triangle added up to  $180^\circ$  and those of a rectangle to  $360^\circ$ . This was greeted by enthusiastic gasps of delight as pupils could see the physical proof of something they had known. The very good use of resources, subject knowledge and challenge in this lesson ensured that pupils remained interested, concentrated very well and developed a great curiosity towards their work. In Year 1, lessons are very well planned and teachers ensure pupils are very clear about what they have to do. Pupils in this year group were very excited as they found their estimates of length were correct. Where pupils are excited and curious, their learning is rapid and they make good progress.
94. The subject is well managed and the coordinator's teaching skills provide a good role model for less experienced staff. Pupils are assessed regularly and teachers keep careful records of their scores and results. Teachers know their pupils well and some teachers, in Year 1 for instance, keep meticulous records about individual pupil's achievements during lessons. However, insufficient use is made of these assessments to measure the rates of progress of individual pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

95. Standards are similar to those achieved in the 2001 tests for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 and are above average. Standards in science have risen since the last report and higher attaining pupils are well supported to achieve their best. The increased focus on practical investigation in which pupils apply their knowledge and skills to research problems has a positive impact on attitudes to science and pupils' learning. Variations in achievement between cohorts are due to the high numbers of pupils who join and leave the school and frequently the school targets set for subjects are based on the performance of different groups of pupils from those who are actually tested. This makes comparisons with other schools difficult.
96. Inspection evidence shows that teachers use questioning effectively and the precise use of subject vocabulary which is reinforced consistently enables almost all pupils to develop confidence to use the terms in their own responses and recording. Pupils apply the principles of fair testing and processes of enquiry systematically to their work and are enthusiastic about the subject. Many pupils across the age ranges say science is one of

their favourite subjects. They make good progress through good quality teaching and consequently all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils discuss similarities and differences in the growth and development of living things and are excited by their learning about the lifecycle of frogs. There was a sense of wonder as they talked about their attractively illustrated work, which described how frogspawn turns to tadpoles, which then develop into frogs. They are confident to ask questions and teachers make good use of first-hand experiences and information sources to help pupils to independently seek answers to their questions. Year 2 pupils accurately sort foods into groups and have a good knowledge of how carbohydrates, proteins and vitamins are all essential to a healthy lifestyle. They recognise the importance of exercise and in the lesson observed good links were made to spiritual development as pupils planned a menu for a special occasion. They also categorise natural and manmade materials and have a good knowledge of the conditions necessary for plant growth. Good links are evident with design and technology as pupils reflect on the contribution they made to selecting appropriate plants to grow in the new quiet garden area. Pupils enjoy their science work.

97. In a Year 3 lesson led by the coordinator the pupils made very good progress in setting up an experiment to investigate the most effective conditions for plant growth. They set seeds and applied the principles of fair testing very well to control the outcomes of the experiment. They predicted outcomes and good links were made to literacy and numeracy as the teacher explained the importance of directions and the appropriate of graphs to record the information about rates of growth. A strength across age groups is the emphasis on scientific enquiry. Good progress has been made in addressing this issue highlighted as a weakness in the last inspection. Older pupils plan their investigations, select appropriate resources with a good level of independence and communicate their findings clearly. There is scope to extend the use of ICT to present evidence and outcomes of investigations. At present limited resources mean pupils do not have sufficient access to computers to develop their skills and research projects.
98. The quality of teaching is mainly good and the teaching in Year 3 by the coordinator is very good. One lesson was satisfactory, led by a temporary, less experienced teacher. All lessons are clearly planned with precise objectives that are communicated well to pupils at the start of lessons. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and consequently they achieve their best. Pupils' behaviour is well managed and pupils achieve the targets they are set in the appropriate time. The pace of most lessons is good providing a good balance of direct teaching, discussion and exciting, investigative opportunities. In the satisfactory lesson the pace was not as brisk so pupils made slower progress. Oral and written marking of work is good and enables pupils to know when they been successful and how to improve. Homework is used to encourage pupils to research information independently and to build on their learning in lessons.
99. Teaching assistants work alongside pupils in the junior classes, providing appropriate guidance and encouragement and supporting well those with special needs and challenging behaviour. There are occasions when pupils are withdrawn from lessons but teachers ensure that any learning missed in class is followed up. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
100. The co-ordinator provides effective leadership and has very good subject knowledge. The curriculum has been reviewed to take account of new national guidance and the policy offers good guidance to staff. Governors' expertise and professionalism is used as a valuable resource for teaching and learning, for example, working alongside medical practitioners to measure heart and pulse rates. There is no systematic planned programme of monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. While lessons have been

observed in previous years there has been no recent opportunity to support the work of newly qualified and temporary teachers. The action plan indicates the intention to introduce more regular monitoring in the near future.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

101. Standards in art and design and design and technology are in line with the national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. This picture is similar to the last inspection.
102. Strengths are evident in observational drawing in Year 2 and work in the style of other artists in Year 6. The subjects are well led and managed. The coordinator is very knowledgeable and has revised policies and practice in the light of new national guidance; however, monitoring arrangements are limited. The coordinator samples displays and supports staff on an informal basis. She provides a very good role model through the very good quality of her own teaching and displays. The subjects have not been a recent priority and she has not yet had the opportunity to lead the subject forward through a formal programme of staff training. This position is similar to that of most primary schools. There is a list of the topics for the autumn and spring terms this year. However, given the level of turbulence in staffing, there needs to be clearer guidance for new and temporary teachers, so they are clear what they must teach and how it fits into the whole programme of work. Considerable effort has gone into the procedures for assessment and recording outcomes linked to each unit of work. However, this policy is not being fully implemented.
103. Discussions with pupils and the mainly good teaching observed indicate that attitudes are positive and pupils enjoy the opportunities they have to explore their thoughts and feelings creatively. For example, in Year 1 pupils have enjoyed planning making their socks, filled with lavender for mothers' day. Their paintings are bright and attractive and are well linked to their work in literature and science. In Year 2 the quality of drawings of feathers and leaves reflects close observation of detail and careful use of the strength of pencil lines to create beautiful interpretations. The attractive display of this work in one class further enhances the successful learning outcomes. Good links are made to other subjects such as science and history. This is evident in a large class pictures completed in pastels to represent the Great Fire of London and in drawings of the life cycle of a frog. The use of ICT to support art and design is also evident and pupils create their own characters, sometimes in the style of Roger Hargreaves 'Mr Men', using the draw, fill and spray tools.
104. By Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about their study of artists such as Picasso. They describe briefly his different styles, which reflect the moods of different periods of his life. Pictures painted in his style are of very good quality and show a mature awareness of form, perspective, mood and character, for example, 'Child Holding a Dove' and 'Girl before a Mirror'. Pupils' sketchbooks show understanding of the design process and in discussion pupils describe the most and least effective aspects of their designs. In Year 2 pupils proudly showed inspectors their puppets and some pupils had made puppets for homework.
105. There was little observable evidence of pupils' practical work in design and technology because the subject is taught in half termly units; however, planning and discussions confirms appropriate coverage. The coordinator is starting to put together a portfolio of photographic evidence using the new digital camera but this is a new venture that is part of the subject priorities for development. Pupils experience designing and making 'healthy plates' in Year 1 and lavender 'smelly socks' for Mother's Day presents. In Year 2 pupils make hand puppets using templates to work with felt and other materials. In Year 3 pupils

design and make photograph frames and in Year 4 pupils make Mother's Day cards with simple paper springs or sliding parts. In Year 5 and Year 6 no work was made available but in discussions with pupils it was evident that they had designed and made tea-bag holders, torches, games and pizzas.

106. Art makes a positive contribution to pupils' social and moral development. Good collaboration was observed in Year 3 as pupils supported each other to develop their cutting skills and to evaluate the most successful colour mixing to create a background on which to mount their collage figures. In the five lessons observed in these subjects, teaching of permanent staff was very good in two out of three lessons and good in the third. Two unsatisfactory lessons, both led by temporary staff, were due to weaknesses in subject knowledge and the organisation of activities that led to slow progress in learning. The task of making a Mother's Day card was interesting and the teacher used her good relationships with the pupils to encourage them. However, there was no opportunity for them to design the card using reflection on their previous experiences of designing and making. There was little opportunity for pupils to exercise choice about materials because the resources provided were of a limited range and the teacher cut paper and the slits in the cards to insert the sliding part for several pupils, thereby limiting the opportunity for them to further develop their skills. Pupils did not always get the help they needed to improve because assessment was not planned or used effectively.

107. Two very good lessons were observed in Year 1, which involved stitching 'food' on to a fabric plate. They were well planned and prepared; the teachers made clear what pupils would learn; and quickly dispersed them to their tasks. Work was appropriately matched to pupils' prior learning. The very good range of resources was sufficiently interesting to engage pupils in making choices, and the challenge of stitching absorbed their attention. The teachers offered very good advice and appropriate intervention and, together with the good quality support of parents, provided lots of positive comments and deserved praise to encourage pupils to persist in mastering the skills need to sew. Pupils behave well and apply effort to the set tasks. They enjoy opportunities to make things, work sensibly and safely together.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

108. Due to the schools timetabling arrangements and the timing of the inspection it was not possible to observe any history lessons and only a limited number of geography lessons. Judgements are based on the analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with teachers and pupils.

109. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the majority of pupils achieve standards that are broadly in line with those expected for their ages in both subjects. This is a slightly different picture from the one at the last inspection when overall standards were higher than at present. The differences arise from the revised emphasis placed on literacy, numeracy and science and the exceptional level of transience experienced in Year 6. Most pupils make appropriate progress in relation to their prior levels of learning.

110. By the age of seven, the pupils show a good understanding of the distinction between the past and present when they examine old and new toys. Very imaginative teaching in Year 2 brings the 'Great Fire of London' alive for pupils as they take on the roles of Thomas Farymor and his daughter Harriet in their very own Pudding Lane bakery. These opportunities deepen pupils' learning as they explore the events and feelings of people who lived a long time ago. By the age of eleven, the pupils have widened their historical knowledge to develop an understanding of the more distant past. Through their study of topics on the Anglo Saxons, Vikings and Tudors the pupils gain a sound range of factual

knowledge. Older pupils have a very secure understanding of chronology and can name significant events and people from the past.

111. Throughout the school pupils are learning about the impact of events and people on the course of history. Younger pupils explore the life of Florence Nightingale and the way she changed care arrangements for the sick. Older pupils in Year 6 describe the effects of Victorian inventions and imagine life without telephones, electricity and mechanised transport.
112. Pupils are encouraged to think as historians as they use a range of sources to find out about recent and past events. Year 3 pupils' skills of enquiry were developed well as they studied different original accounts of the Vikings. Such challenging work encouraged pupils to realise that there are different accounts and viewpoints of the same historical events. Good links were made to literacy. Year 5 pupils were encouraged to think as archaeologists as they tried to explore the finds at the Anglo Saxon burial site at Sutton Hoo. They were encouraged to use their observations to make deductions about the person whose grave it might have been. By Year 6, pupils are using eyewitness accounts to find out more about Victorian and post-war Britain. They write well argued accounts of the impact of the Education and Factory Acts and discuss the morality of using young children as chimney sweeps.
113. In geography, by the age of seven, the pupils know that maps and plans represent a locality. Year 1 pupils recorded a simple traffic survey and can write and locate their own address. A study of 'the Isle of Struay' provides Year 2 pupils with good opportunities to compare their own RAF base with an island location and to develop the appropriate geographical vocabulary connected to islands. 'Barnaby Bear' provides all pupils in Years 1 and 2 with a knowledge of different destinations near and far as he accompanies them and their teachers to Barcelona, Legoland, Saudi Arabia and New Zealand.
114. By the age of eleven, the pupils have acquired a sound geographical understanding of their locality and places far away. They name some countries and continents of the world and locate capital cities. As they study different aspects of the weather across the world they are encouraged to think of themselves as meteorologists. They use the Internet and the RAF weather station to identify weather patterns, recording their findings accurately in a database. In a Year 3 lesson, very enthusiastic and challenging teaching ensured pupils used a wide range of geographical skills, knowledge and understanding as they planned a holiday destination. Pupils were engrossed in their tasks and worked extremely well together as they negotiated in plotting routes, identifying modes of transport and deciding on different leisure pursuits and climate preferences. Older pupils develop further their geographical enquiry skills as they create their own water filtering system and discuss issues of conservation. In both subjects pupils are consolidating their study skills through field trips and the use of maps, atlases, CD-ROMs and the Internet.
115. In the three geography lessons seen in the junior classes the quality of teaching was varied. One lesson was very good, one unsatisfactory and one satisfactory. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2. The very good teaching observed was enthusiastic and the very effective use of a wide range of resources and independent activities challenged pupils' thinking and had a positive effect on the quality of learning. Where teaching is less good and occasionally unsatisfactory, behaviour management limits pupils' progress and interest in their tasks. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, for example in another Year 3 class, confidence in teaching the subject is lacking, resources are not stimulating or well organised and this impacts on the progress the pupils make in acquiring new skills and knowledge.



116. There is no co-ordinator for history at present and the role is being covered by the headteacher. Geography is effectively co-ordinated and makes an important contribution to the aims of the school. There are no opportunities to monitor the teaching and learning in either subject in order to ensure that all teaching is of a sufficiently high quality to ensure pupils always make the progress they are capable of.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

117. Attainment in Years 2 and 6 is below the expected levels for the age groups. The rate of progress is too slow. This is due to insufficient and irregular access to computers. At times it takes approximately two weeks for all of the pupils in a class to cover a topic. The national guidance for ICT has changed considerably since the last report and the school has not kept up with the rapid pace of change. The subject is identified as a priority in the school plan and a new computer suite is to be installed in the near future. While all of the strands of the curriculum are taught they are not yet exploited to a sufficient depth. Because of the limited resources pupils have not studied how computers can be used to control other devices or used to measure events.
118. Staff training has been prioritised. Difficulties, arising from the quality of earlier training, have led to a further programme being implemented to ensure teachers develop stronger expertise and knowledge. The quality of teaching in the three lessons seen ranged from satisfactory to good. Teachers have a satisfactory level of expertise but where there are gaps in subject knowledge the pace of lessons slows. At times pupils are more knowledgeable than their teachers and the tasks are not sufficiently challenging. However, the greatest inhibiting factor affecting progress is the lack of opportunities pupils have to practise their skills.
119. In a good lesson in Year 1 pupils learned how to form a graph from simple information. Through good encouragement they developed understanding of how the program could complete the block graph from the data they provided. Pupils listened well and were interested and excited by their work. By Year 2 pupils have a good working knowledge of illustration and word processing programs. For example, they produced well-controlled illustrations based on woodcuts of the Great Fire of London. Similarly by Year 4 pupils understand the various functions of cutting, pasting and altering text. Despite these strengths, learning is limited because the two computers in each classroom are not consistently used and some are old and unreliable. Computers are also used to practise skills in other subjects for example, in English, drafting poetry and stories.
120. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to design a multi-media production. They understand how to record sound and use buttons to cue their work. Pupils have used databases to sort information, for example, personal attributes such as hair and eye colour. Pupils use the Internet to research topics, for example the work of Dr Barnardo. They have used CD-ROMs to find information. Pupils eagerly use e-mail to contact friends whose parents have been stationed at the base but how have moved. Following the events of September the 11<sup>th</sup> pupils sent messages of sympathy to American children who were bereaved.
121. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. She has a good level of understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of current provision and what pupils need to learn to meet the expected levels of the National Curriculum. There is a lack of consistency in record keeping. Where it is managed best, teachers record how well pupils have achieved after a topic. In other classes, these records lack sharpness and do not inform teaching and learning well enough.

## MUSIC

122. During the inspection it was not possible to make judgements about standards because of the very number of lessons observed. Two lessons of singing were observed, one of Year 1 and 2 pupils and the other of pupils from Years 3 to 6. Pupils mainly enjoy singing, particularly the younger children and those who participate in the school choir. They sing in tune with awareness of phrasing, pitch and dynamics.
123. In the Key Stage 2 singing lesson the teacher's advice enabled pupils to improve their performance in the lesson. She was positive and encouraging in the main but on one or two occasions, particularly with boys, she was unnecessarily sharp in her approach to managing pupils' behaviour and preventing silliness. Three teachers shared leading the lesson for Key Stage 1 pupils because the teacher who was timetabled was absent. They provided a sound experience for pupils and encouraged careful listening and opportunities to express their feelings and respond to different kinds of music.
124. There are opportunities for pupils to participate in the choir and recorder lessons, and visiting specialists provides instrumental tuition in flute, fife, brass, violin and piano. Good guitar tuition is provided at a club organised by the headteacher. The co-ordinator displays enthusiasm for music and leads singing but opportunities to influence others are restricted because there is no planned programme for monitoring and evaluation.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Pupils in Year 2 reach the expected level in gymnastics and in Year 6 they reach the expected level in games. Pupils in Year 3 attain above average standards in swimming. These areas of the curriculum were the only ones observed. Standards have been maintained in swimming and overall are similar to those described in the last report.
126. Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons. In Year 1 pupils practised throwing and catching using a variety of objects, including balls, beanbags and quoits. Pupils worked well together in pairs and both girls and boys showed sound development of skills as their throws and catches increased in accuracy. In Year 2 pupils developed a sequence of movements based on rolls and balances that progressed from the use of floor space to performances on small tables and mats. Teaching in this lesson was satisfactory although the pace of the lesson was not brisk enough and pupils did not have sufficient time to rehearse and refine their sequences.
127. In Year 3 pupils swim well. They are taught well by qualified coaches and are very confident in the water. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make good progress. Pupils' needs are met very well by learning support assistants. They show sensitive understanding have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. During the lesson, lower attaining pupils developed in confidence as they first walked and then stroked their way across the breadth of the pool. Supporting each other pupils made good progress in developing foot and leg movements. The higher attaining group, which also contained pupils with special educational needs, also made good progress as they synchronised their arm and leg movements in the breaststroke. Pupils progressed onto front crawl leg strokes and with powerful movements made their way across the pool. Pupils produced good quality surface dives as they retrieved rubber bricks from the bottom of the swimming pool.
128. In a Year 6 games lesson pupils continued learning how to bowl and used their new skills in short games of kwik cricket. After a very well led and thorough warm up session, pupils received very good coaching about how to bowl correctly. In this session boys

generally showed higher levels of skills than girls but both groups learned well and showed great enthusiasm for the game. The teacher continually stopped and gave pointers to improve pupils' skills and this resulted in faster rates of learning and more accurate bowling and catching.

129. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory in Year 2 to very good in Year 6. The hallmarks of good lessons are the ways in which teachers manage brisk and well-paced sessions. They structure the lessons allowing time to practise the skills that have been introduced and developed. Teachers are confident about the work they have planned and provide good encouragement to support pupils to evaluate their work. They give good guidance enabling pupils to understand how to extend their skills further.

130. There is no coordinator for the subject at the moment due to difficulties in recruiting permanent teachers. However, there are good links with parents who help to support a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

131. Due to the school's timetabling arrangements and the timing of the inspection, only a very small number of religious education lessons were seen. Judgements are also based on the analysis of pupils' work, teachers planning and discussions with teachers and pupils.

132. Standards at the end of Year 6 are at a similar level to those reported at the last inspection and are broadly in line with the expectations of the syllabus used in Rutland. Standards at the end of Year 2 have not been maintained and are below the expectations of the agreed syllabus. Although planning indicates all the elements of the scheme of work are covered, discussions with pupils in Year 2 indicated they are confused about what they have learned and have limited understanding about the Christian religion and other main world religions. They exhibit a lack of enthusiasm for the subject and do not see it as having a relevance to their lives. This is the result of discontinuity in teaching in Year 2.

133. The picture is more positive in Year 1. The effective use of visits to local churches is developing pupils' understanding of the different ways people worship. They enthusiastically compare two Christian churches and discuss the differences in church symbols such as the cross and crucifix, the bible, bells and church music. This good start is not built on in Year 2. Although role play and discussions are used to develop pupils' religious education there is little evidence available to suggest pupils' levels of understanding of the Christian religion is being deepened or that they are learning a sufficient amount about other religions.

134. In Year 3 there is some very good evidence of pupils' understanding being developed well. They explore symbolism further and are learning to value the beliefs, art and literature that other religions, such as Islam, have inspired. In Year 4, the events of Easter were used very effectively to provide opportunities for pupils to think for themselves about the impact of the betrayal and death of Jesus. Very sensitive teaching encouraged pupils to relate to the feelings of the disciples and to share with their class their own disappointments, fears and concerns. Pupils responded very well and were able to explore feelings of anger, separation and loss in a safe secure atmosphere. Such opportunities are particularly relevant to a community which is so transient and where pupils are often moving and facing up to losing friends and being separated. A deeper understanding of major world faiths, such as Islam, is fostered well. As pupils move into Years 5 and 6 their knowledge base is extended further as they study Hinduism and

Sikhism. They know about the customs, symbols, festivals, holy books and buildings of major religions. In Year 6 important aspects of worship are taught, such as the home shrines of the Hindu religion and the importance of the Bible and communion to the Christians. Pupils consider the effect that religion can have on the moral code they choose to live by.

135. Three lessons were seen. The teaching was good in Year 1 and satisfactory in Years 4 and 5. Strengths in the teaching included the probing of pupils' understanding, clear imparting of knowledge and good use of resources and visits. In the juniors the impact of some good teaching was lost through weaknesses in managing pupils behaviour and the organisation of time and resources to maintain pupils interest and keep them on task at the end of an afternoon.

136. The co-ordinator has only been in place for a few weeks and has not yet had time to make an impact on the quality of teaching and learning.