

INSPECTION REPORT

BOOTH WOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Loughborough

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119973

Headteacher: Ian Watson

Reporting inspector: Michael J Cahill
19623

Dates of inspection: 25 - 28 February 2002

Inspection number: 243697

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Old Ashby Road Loughborough Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE11 4PG
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Martin Peters
Date of previous inspection:	29 September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19623	Michael Cahill	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
12289	Susan Burgess	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31742	Janet Marsden	Team inspector	Art and design Music Religious education	
23054	Graham Johnson	Team inspector	English Geography History Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
31862	Julia Coop	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education Foundation stage Special educational needs	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Booth Wood Primary School is on the outskirts of Loughborough. It provides education for children aged from 4 to 11 years from the local and well-established local authority housing estate as well as for those from a newer estate and a few whose parents are working at the local university. Many children's attainment on entry to the reception (four plus) unit is well below average in most areas of learning, including literacy and numeracy. There are nine classes; those for 4 to 7 year-olds are single age while those for 7 to 11 year-olds are mixed across two age groups. There are 233 pupils on roll (114 boys and 119 girls) making it around the average size for primary schools. Almost all pupils are from white backgrounds; seven are learning English as an additional language of whom two are at early stages. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational need is around the national average, while the proportion with full statements of special educational need is well above it. The percentage of pupils who claim free school meals is close to the national average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Booth Wood Primary School is effective in enabling most pupils to make good progress from a well below average starting point. It provides good value for money. The school is well led and managed; pupils' attitudes, relationships and personal development are good. Nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory; much is good or very good. There is a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere; pupils enjoy coming to school.

What the school does well

- The Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their full time education; pupils make progress that is good overall as they move through the school.
- The leadership of the school is clearly focused on improving pupils' achievements.
- The school promotes pupils' moral and social development well; as a result, pupils' attitudes to the school are good; relationships among pupils and between adults and pupils are also good.
- The school tracks pupils' progress well and gives them good support in their personal development; the provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- The school is a caring community, with a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere, where all are welcomed and valued.
- The school works well in partnership with other schools and with the local community; it provides a good range of extra-curricular opportunities.

What could be improved

The school is committed to continual improvement. It recognises the need to:

- Raise the level of pupils' attainment in geography by the end of Year 6.
- Increase the proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation in swimming by the end of Year 6.
- Improve aspects of the accommodation, particularly with respect to provision for the Foundation Stage, music, the library and outdoor play.
- Improve the attendance of those pupils who regularly miss school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good level of improvement since the school was last inspected in 1997. The school has dealt effectively with the issues identified at that time and has also considerably improved the overall quality of teaching. National Curriculum test results at both seven and eleven have improved in line with national trends in most respects. There is now a much better partnership between the headteacher, staff, and governors.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1999	2000	2001	2001	
English	C	E	C	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	B	C	C	B	
science	B	C	B	A	

Schools are described as similar when they fall into the same band for free school meals, in this case between 20 and 35 per cent. At present 23.6 per cent of pupils claim their entitlement. Caution should be exercised in interpreting National Curriculum results; each pupil represented more than three per cent of the last Year 6 and this percentage can make the difference between average and above average or between above average and well above average.

Children in the reception class make good progress and improve to a level just below national expectations before they move into Year 1. Pupils' progress continues to be good as they move through Key Stage 1 and is satisfactory overall through Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are potential higher attainers make satisfactory progress throughout the school. The overall trend in the school's results in the national testing programme for seven year-olds over the last four years has been upwards. Test results at eleven have fluctuated but represent an improvement since the last inspection in line with the national trend. The school has set realistic targets and has been largely successful in meeting them, although the 2001 English results were not as good as expected.

Overall attainment exceeds national expectations for seven-year-olds in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. In English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history and music pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for both seven- and eleven-year-olds. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection with respect to design and technology, ICT and physical education. Pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for seven-year-olds in geography but below expectations for eleven-year-olds. Attainment in physical education is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6 except that too many pupils fail to achieve the national standard in swimming. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainments are in line with those expressed in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and to the school. They are enthusiastic about their work and the other activities offered.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Most pupils behave well, both in lessons and around the school. Lack of facilities sometimes results in over boisterous behaviour in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults are good. When they are given the opportunity, pupils enjoy taking responsibility.
Attendance	Slightly below the national average and lower than at the time of the last inspection. There is concern about the increasing number of term-time holidays and regular, occasional absence.

Relationships are a strength of the school. Pupils develop good attitudes towards each other and their learning. This owes much to the very good example set by the adults in the school community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection, the teaching in many lessons was at least good, including a substantial minority that were very good; there was very little unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a substantial improvement since the last inspection. The teaching of English, including literacy, was almost always at least satisfactory; in more than 40 per cent of lessons it was good. In mathematics, including numeracy, all of the teaching observed in Years 1 and 2 was very good and half of the lessons in Years 3 – 6 were at least good; there was no unsatisfactory mathematics teaching.

The teaching has many strengths, including teachers' good knowledge of the subjects and how pupils learn, pupil management skills and high expectations of work and behaviour, and good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants that makes sure that the needs of all pupils are met. An area for improvement is the use of pupils' skills in information and communication technology to support and extend their learning in other subjects.

From the Foundation Stage onwards, pupils are successfully encouraged to become confident in their ability to learn and to work independently where that is appropriate. Pupils work hard, with interest and a good level of concentration. Most take care with the presentation of their written work and are more than willing to offer answers to questions and contribute to discussions.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range and quality of learning opportunities in the Foundation Stage and makes satisfactory provision for teaching the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is good provision for personal, social and health education and for extra-curricular activities; the school works closely with other educational establishments and has forged good links with the local community to enhance pupils' learning. In some subjects, there is not enough provision for pupils of potentially higher attainment.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory; support within classes is positive and ensures that pupils are fully involved in all activities. Individual education plans are not sufficiently focused and targets are often not expressed in a form that can be easily shared with pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory; the school successfully involves outside agencies in the teaching of these pupils. Those beyond the early stages of learning English are successfully included in all aspects of school life.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for social and moral development is good, with a strong emphasis on personal, health and social education and citizenship. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory; preparation for life in a multi-ethnic society is satisfactory but needs further development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a safe and secure place for pupils to learn in. There are good procedures for keeping track of pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science; those for other subjects are also clear and

	workable. The use of information on pupils' progress to plan further work that moves their learning on is satisfactory, but more use could be made of it in setting targets for pupils.
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Links with parents are satisfactory but are limited by the amount of involvement that most parents choose to have in the life of the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides good leadership that is clearly focused on raising standards through improving the quality of education that the school provides. He is supported well by the key stage co-ordinators who have taken on significant extra responsibilities during the absence of the deputy headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have a good knowledge of the school and are very supportive of it. They are increasingly contributing to planning its development and recognise the need to have more focused and sharper priorities. They make sure that all statutory requirements are fully met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The governing body, headteacher and senior staff keep all aspects of the work of the school under continuous review. Action taken has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievements.
The strategic use of resources	Development and financial planning are sound. The school makes appropriate use of specific grants to raise standards and actively seeks to obtain best value for the money allocated to it.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory overall. However, the recent removal of four condemned mobile classrooms, only two of which have been replaced, has resulted in the library having to be squeezed into a corridor, making it almost impossible for children to browse and enjoy selecting books. What was the music studio has become, for a significant part of the timetable, a classroom; it is not possible to teach the full music National Curriculum elsewhere in the school because of the open-plan nature of the building. The mobile classroom used by the reception class is too small for thirty children and the full range of teaching and learning resources needed.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The views of the 43 parents who returned completed questionnaires and of the 11 who attended the pre-inspection meeting were taken into account. Percentages refer to questionnaire returns

What pleases at least 90 per cent of parents	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and they make good progress; the amount of homework set is right. • Teaching is good and the school has high expectations of children. • Behaviour is good. • They are well informed about their children's progress and are comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school helps children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well the school is managed and led (15 per cent) • The degree to which the school works closely with them. (13 per cent) • The range of activities outside lessons. (8 per cent)

The inspection team fully agrees with the positive views expressed by parents. Inspectors judge that the school tries hard to involve parents in its work and that it is well led and managed. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment on entry to the reception (four plus) unit of most children is well below average in all areas of learning except physical development, which is below average. By the time they enter Year 1, the majority of children are still below, but close to, the early learning goals in most areas of the curriculum. Some children achieve the goal in one or more areas. This good progress is directly due to the good quality planning, teaching and organisation and the good use of assessment in the reception class. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls.
2. In the National Curriculum tests and assessments for seven year-olds in the summer of 2001, results show that pupils' attainment was close to the national average in reading, writing and science, below average in mathematics. In respect of the proportion of pupils who achieved the higher National Curriculum level 3, the school's results were below the national average in science, close to it in English and mathematics. The overall trend in the school's results in the national testing programme for seven year-olds over the last four years has been upwards. When compared with those of schools with a similar take-up of free school meals, results are well above average in reading and writing, and close to the average in science and mathematics. There were some gender differences in attainment in the national tests in 2001 at the age of seven, but they were not at a significant level.
3. The Year 2001 national test results for eleven-year-olds were close to the national average in English and mathematics and above average in science. When compared with those in schools nationally with pupils from similar circumstances, results in 2001 were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. Test results at eleven have fluctuated since the last inspection but overall they represent an improvement in line with the national trend. On average over the last three years, girls have performed slightly better than boys in English and science; boys have performed significantly better than girls in mathematics. Last year's results taken on their own showed a lower level of difference and the school recognises the need to continue to monitor progress and performance carefully.
4. The school exceeded its target in English at the end of Year 6 in 2001 and came close to it in mathematics. The targets for 2002 are challenging given that the present Year 6 pupils did not perform well in their national tests as seven-year-olds. The school recognises that much focused support is needed if they are to maintain the standards set by last year's group. (Caution should be exercised in interpreting National Curriculum results; each pupil represented around three per cent of the last Year 6 and this percentage can make the difference between *average* and *above average* or between *above average* and *well above average*).
5. Among the factors that have led to the improvement in results are the school's successful introduction of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and the overall improvement in the quality of teaching resulting from more focused monitoring and support. The work of the key stage co-ordinators in promoting more common approaches to planning and teaching has also made an important contribution to raising standards.
6. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with statements, make the satisfactory they are effectively supported within lessons. Teachers normally set work that matches their needs and teaching assistants ensure that these pupils are fully included in activities. In particular, those pupils who receive individual support as part of the provision for meeting their stated needs are gradually improving their basic literacy skills. The good relationships that the support teacher develops with them make an important contribution to their confidence and progress. When they participate in lower ability sets for literacy and numeracy, pupils' progress is also satisfactory.
7. The inspection team judged that overall attainment exceeds national expectations for seven-year-olds in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education. The school makes good use of its improved ICT facilities to promote skill development in this area. The

facilities for physical education are adequate for teaching younger children. In English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, history and music pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations for both seven- and eleven-year-olds. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection with respect to design and technology, where standards were judged to be below average, and the co-ordinator has led a very effective revival of the subject. The headteacher's support and leadership has been a significant factor in the improvement in ICT and aspects of physical education, particularly gymnastics.

8. Pupils' attainment is in line with expectations for seven-year-olds in geography but below expectations for eleven-year-olds because some aspects of the subject are not given enough emphasis, notably map work and learning about the locality of the school and a contrasting one. Attainment in physical education is broadly in line with national expectations by the end of Year 6 except that too many pupils fail to achieve the national standard in swimming. The multi-purpose hall is barely large enough for physical education lessons with large classes of older pupils. At the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' attainments are in line with those expressed in the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. (For further details of pupils' achievements and progress in the Foundation Stage and in the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, see paragraphs 67 - 149)

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. As at the time of the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils are interested in their work, enjoy reading and generally sustain their concentration during lessons. They are supportive of each other when working in groups and pairs, for instance performing balances with a partner in physical education, composing lines of themed poetry together in the Literacy Hour, or sharing books to research the life of Florence Nightingale in history. Pupils also work well independently when required. For example, pupils in Year 2 confidently logged on and retrieved earlier work on computers and those from Years 5 and 6 enjoyed writing their own introductions to a suspense story.
10. Behaviour in class, in assemblies and around the school is generally good although pupils do not always consider others in their movement through the open plan building. However, this is not always sustained when pupils play outside, where a high incidence of minor accidents and mishaps has become routine. Lunchtimes in the hall are orderly and sociable and pupils undertaking various tasks and errands, such as acting as librarians or helping to prepare a classroom for afternoon lessons, do so quietly and sensibly. The school actively and consistently discourages bullying. Although in the past there have been isolated instances, parents at the pre-inspection meeting confirmed that they were dealt with in an effective and open way. There were five fixed period and two permanent exclusions last year. All the pupils involved have now left the school. This figure is higher than that at the time of the last inspection.
11. Attendance, at 92.5 per cent, has fallen since the last inspection and is well below the national average. Unauthorised absence is almost exactly double the national average. This situation is mainly due to the non-attendance or poor attendance of a very few pupils. Another factor is the increasing number of parents who take their children on holiday during term time, particularly at the start and end of the school year. Most pupils are punctual to school but a few are regularly late. Registration sessions are efficient and orderly.
12. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are good. Pupils are polite and confident with adults and are happy to talk about their work. Personal development is good and enhanced by the increased responsibilities that pupils undertake as they progress through the school. Even the youngest in the main school collect and deliver the registers and all classes have a rota of monitors. Year 6 pupils set up the hall for assemblies, give younger children spelling practice and help reception children during lunch and break times. The two Year 6 volunteer Junior Road Safety Officers give talks in assembly and organise fund-raising competitions.
13. Although there is no School Council, the weekly Eco-Committee meetings enable pupils to take responsibility for decision-making. During the week of the inspection, they drafted a letter to the local education authority to complain about the length of time it was taking to rectify the sewer problem next to the newly created sensory and wild gardens at the front of the school.

14. Pupils enjoy all the extra-curricular activities available to Key Stage 2 children, such as football, netball, cross-country, chess, choir and recorders. There is good support for chosen charities such as Comic Relief, Children In Need and Blue Peter appeals.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. On the evidence of pupils' work and the lessons observed during the inspection, the overall quality of teaching is sound. During the inspection it was good or better in 65 per cent of lessons, including 25 per cent that were very good. Most of the rest was satisfactory; there was very little unsatisfactory teaching. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when only one lesson was judged to be very good and nine per cent were unsatisfactory. Criticism of some teaching at that time was that it was too teacher-directed, with too few opportunities for pupils to take control of their learning. There was also an over emphasis on photo-copiable worksheets, the pace of lessons was too slow and management of pupils was weak. The school has dealt effectively with these weaknesses although there is scope for further development of the investigative approach. Other reasons for the overall improvement include the successful adoption of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and increased emphasis on monitoring by the headteacher. Lessons are usually planned so that work is matched to the needs of individual pupils and no child is disadvantaged. However, pupils who have not taken advantage of the specialist language support, provided by the local education authority for those who need to learn English as an additional language, sometimes have less than satisfactory access to what is being taught.
16. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage was consistently good; it was good in more than three-quarters of lessons observed in the infant classes, including 43 per cent that were very good. In Years 3 – 6 over half of lessons were judged to be good, including 17 per cent that were very good. The teaching of English, including literacy, was almost always at least satisfactory; in more than 40 per cent of lessons it was good. In mathematics, including numeracy, all of the teaching observed in Years 1 and 2 was very good and half of the lessons in Years 3 – 6 were at least good; there was no unsatisfactory mathematics teaching.
17. Teaching of pupils with special educational needs in the improver groups is satisfactory. Work is set at an appropriate level of difficulty and focused on improving basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils respond appropriately but often too much time is spent explaining tasks, which are the same for all pupils despite the varying range of their abilities. Within class lessons, teachers try hard to adapt teaching strategies to meet the different learning needs of pupils. Teaching assistants support pupils well and ensure that they participate and benefit from class activities. As a result pupils often make at least good progress. However, in general teachers do not make sufficient use of individual education plans when planning work. In addition, many of the numerous individual targets are too general to be of use in planning specific work and measuring progress.
18. Particular strengths of the teaching include teachers' knowledge and understanding of the curriculum and of how children learn. This was particularly evident in Years 1 and 2 where teaching and learning was planned in small steps and teachers and teaching assistants were always supporting individuals and checking on their progress. A well planned and taught ICT lesson in Year 1, for example, resulted in pupils making good gains in their keyboard skills because of this level of attention to detail.
19. Teachers manage their pupils very well and, as parents reported, have high expectations both in terms of the standard of work and of behaviour. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils and a pleasant and purposeful working atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils show a lot of interest in what they are set to learn, concentrate well and work hard because they are set tasks that are both interesting and appropriate to their stage of learning. Pupils in Year 6, for example, became absorbed in the challenge of writing the introduction to a suspense story, enjoying describing an image of *a dark glow in the sky*.
20. **Other features common to the good or better teaching seen during the inspection included:**
- teachers clearly identified what pupils were to learn and made this clear to them at the start of the lesson;

- good use of questions to revise what had been already learned, to extend learning and to check for understanding;
 - very good pace – *not a second was wasted but nothing was rushed* (comment on a Year 2 music lesson);
 - a good balance of whole class, group and individual work and of different activities – speaking and listening, writing, practical;
 - good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants.
21. **Where teaching was less successful the reasons included:**
- the learning intentions were not specific enough to the lesson;
 - there was insufficient attention to challenging potential higher attainers;
 - too little time was allocated to the lesson or too long was spent on one part of it;
 - insufficient use of ICT to support and extend learning.
22. **Learning and progress**
Pupils of all abilities are being successfully helped to become confident in their ability to learn and to work independently where that is appropriate. In almost all lessons in the Foundation Stage, three-quarters of those in Years 1 and 2 and more than half of those in Years 3 – 6, learning was judged to be good or better. Pupils' attitudes to their work, and their behaviour, were rarely less than satisfactory; in three-quarters of lessons they were judged to be good, including a quarter where they were very good.
23. **The quality of marking**
The quality of teachers' marking of work in books varies between classes and subjects. At best it includes comments that clearly show pupils what is good (or not) about their work and how it can be improved. There were good examples of marking that really challenged pupils in Years 3 and 4 to improve their science understanding. In some cases, however, the pupil does not correct work that is wrong or the teacher has not made clear what is wrong or how it should be put right. Some opportunities for giving pupils more control over their learning and for involving parents more fully are missed.
24. **Homework**
Homework is set regularly and is making an important contribution to improving pupils' achievements. Sometimes pupils do not think of what they are being asked to do as homework, for example when pupils in Year 2 are encouraged to bring in a piece of music that they enjoy and talk about the beat. (For further details about the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage and in the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, see paragraphs 67 - 149)

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

25. The school teaches every aspect of all of the subjects of the National Curriculum. As at the time of the last inspection, the proportion of time set aside for each subject is appropriate, and similar to that seen in many schools across the country. Most aspects of the curriculum are given the right degree of importance, although there is an imbalance in some subjects. For example, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunity for mathematical investigation, and some areas of geography are not taught in enough detail. The curriculum for design and technology has improved significantly since the time of the last inspection, although there is still scope to offer pupils further opportunities to evaluate and improve upon the models they have made.
26. Teachers sometimes create good opportunities for pupils to learn from two subjects in the curriculum at the same time. For example, pupils in Year 2 sometimes practise thoroughly their reading and writing skills while they are learning history. However, pupils in general are not offered sufficient opportunities to write at length in geography, history and religious education. Across the school, there are some good examples of teachers making good use of ICT to provide information relating to other subjects, although pupils are not always encouraged enough to interpret or comment upon the information they have acquired.
27. A good curriculum is offered to children in the Foundation Stage. All of the recommended areas for learning are covered at the right level, and very good opportunities are provided for children to

extend their knowledge and understanding of the world about them. The teacher creates a stimulating learning environment in which children are offered carefully structured opportunities to improve their speaking and listening skills, and where good foundations are laid for reading, writing, counting and sorting. As a result of this thorough work, children make good progress and are well prepared to tackle the statutory curriculum when they are five.

28. Across the rest of the school, the quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory. In Years 1 and 2, all subjects are taught in sufficient detail, and enough time is set aside for pupils to acquire a solid foundation in literacy and numeracy skills. In Years 3 to 6, the range of learning opportunities is satisfactory overall, although there are some shortcomings. For example, in some subjects such as history, geography and religious education, pupils of greater aptitude and ability are not encouraged enough to write at length or to demonstrate what they really know and understand because they are offered tasks with closed questions that anticipate their level of response.
29. The school provides a sound and systematic programme for the teaching of reading and spelling. Pupils of all ages practise these skills thoroughly, reading regularly to adults. However, closer guidance could be offered to older pupils in extending their choice of reading. The school has rightly identified the need to improve the quality of writing among older pupils of greater aptitude and ability. While they practise aspects of writing in different styles and for different purposes, there is scope for them to apply fully the skills they have learnt to a range of real and practical situations.
30. The school employs appropriate strategies for the teaching of literacy and numeracy; teachers generally follow closely the national guidance for these subjects. Lessons are generally well planned so that there is enough time for class discussion, individual work and for learning to be summarised at the ends of lessons, although initial explanations are sometimes too long. Some literacy lessons are planned imaginatively to include simultaneous learning in other subjects, such as history and drama.
31. In most respects, pupils have equal access to the curriculum regardless of their gender, race or disability. The school works hard to ensure that each has the opportunity to take part in school life, taking particular care, for example, to ensure that every child is heard to read regularly by an adult and that all are included in class discussions. Those with special educational needs make progress similar to that of other pupils when they are working in class, but miss lessons in some subjects when they are withdrawn to receive special help. Those of greater aptitude and ability do not make as much progress as they might in a minority of subjects, such as history and geography, because they are not always challenged to demonstrate what they know and understand.
32. Pupils for whom English is an additional language progress at the same rate as other pupils. Many are confident members of the school and take a full part in its activities. The school makes prompt use of outside agencies to support a small number of transient pupils in the very early stages of language acquisition, taking every care to offer appropriate assistance within the scope of its resources. However, when parents decline to take full advantage of the services, pupils have difficulty gaining full access to the curriculum.
33. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall. Good links have been developed with a number of outside support agencies and administration of the provision is also good, because the special educational needs co-ordinator has a considerable amount of time to undertake these duties. However, the policy has not been reviewed for some years, while individual education plans contain too many targets that are vague. Because pupils' individual plans lack sharp measurable targets it is not easy to track individual pupils' progress, or involve pupils or parents in the process. In addition current practice in some year groups means that pupils sometimes miss important parts of lessons such as science; this is not satisfactory. The school is aware of the need to develop its practice and provision in line with the revised code of practice.
34. The school makes good provision for the personal and social education of its pupils, both in its timetabled lessons and through incidental opportunities. The co-ordinator has established a comprehensive programme to ensure that pupils develop awareness both of their own value as

individuals and of their responsibilities to others and to society at large. In Years 1 and 2 for example, pupils learn about their place in the family unit and in the school community, growing not only in their understanding of their own worth but also of the contribution of others to their lives. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn to understand and value differences between ideas, cultures and personalities.

35. A strong feature of the school's provision is its vigorous approach to pupils' education in the responsibilities of citizenship. One result of this is that pupils across the school are well informed about the part they can play in recycling waste materials and the ways in which different environments may be made safe and attractive. Pupils, staff and parents have put some of these principles into practice by creating a sensory garden and wildlife area. Finally, through its science curriculum, the school makes adequate provision for sex and drugs education.
36. As at the time of the last inspection, the school offers its pupils a wide range of extra-curricular activities. These include not only the more common sports, but also dance, chess, cross-country running and basketball. An Eco-committee meets regularly to discuss and react to issues affecting the school environment. Pupils are regularly involved in competitive sports with other schools, and the school generally makes good use of day and residential visits to enhance the quality of their learning. Visitors regularly contribute to the quality of the curriculum, for example, by sharing their experiences or expertise with pupils or by supporting the school's arrangements for hearing them read aloud.
37. The provision for pupils' moral and social development is good and the school makes satisfactory provision for their spiritual and cultural development. At the time of the last inspection, provision for spiritual awareness was judged to be good.
38. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Spiritual development is successfully promoted through assemblies, religious education, lessons in personal, health and social education (PHSE) and in general through the life of the school. However, the opportunities presented by work in the arts, literature and science, for example, are often not recognised or taken advantage of. The daily assemblies include an act of collective worship which meets statutory requirements. Pupils are asked to consider principles such as the importance of teamwork, helpfulness and friendship. These are examined further in circle time and in PHSE lessons. In other areas of the curriculum and through the school's membership of the Eco-schools programme, pupils are encouraged to reflect on the world around them. Year 1 are delighted when different birds come to feed from the bird table just outside their classroom window. The whole school celebrated when a well-known ornithologist unveiled a new carousel bird feeder in the grounds. Pupils are proud of the new sensory and wild garden areas they have created to enhance the approach to the school. In general, however, the extensive school grounds are not, as yet, sufficiently well used to promote understanding and appreciation of the natural world.
39. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. Staff provide good role models and demonstrate strong teamwork. In addition to emphasising the differences between right and wrong, the school promotes the message that pupils can make choices about their own behaviour and that their actions have an impact on others. Each class devises its own rules at the start of the school year and, in one case, pupils sign their own charter. Throughout the school, there are class displays of pupils' thoughts about ideas explored through PHSE such as feeling angry or worried and what being a friend really means. Respect for property and care of the environment is promoted well through the school's membership of the Eco-schools scheme which promotes environmental projects around the school such as the recycling of paper, saving energy and composting. The success of these projects is due largely to the enthusiasm and commitment of one member of staff.
40. Provision for pupils' social development is also good. The school works hard to build up pupils' confidence and self-esteem through a developing programme of PHSE and Citizenship. A variety of extra-curricular activities is available in Key Stage 2, including the successful school choir which performs at a number of events. Pupils take part in a good range of sporting fixtures and every pupil has the opportunity to take part in school productions. Older pupils are encouraged to undertake increased responsibilities and to help reception children settle into school life. The social development of pupils in Years 5 and 6 is further enhanced through an annual residential visit.

41. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Through aspects of English, geography, history and music, children are introduced to their local and national cultural heritage. Good use is made of the local area, including visits to a theatre workshop on a Victorian theme, Planet Works recycling centre, Bradgate Park and the Shree Ram Krishna Temple. During inspection week, Years 3 and 4 much enjoyed a visit to the East Midlands airport as part of a geography topic "Passport To The World". During the Literacy Hour, pupils study Caribbean and Yoruba poetry. In religious education, pupils are introduced to religious and cultural diversity through the study of different aspects of, for example, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. To celebrate Chinese New Year, children in Year 1 enjoyed learning how to eat noodles with chopsticks. Overall, however, there is need to do more to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.
42. The school enjoys close links with other local schools and educational establishments, and benefits from its contacts with Loughborough University, especially with its art and technology departments. Pupils transferring to secondary education have good opportunities to meet staff and to become acquainted with their new school, and there is close co-operation and well-established procedures to ensure that pupils make a smooth transition from this phase of their education to the next. University students sometimes visit to show or try out their work in design and technology, or support the school's reading programme. The school effectively enlists the assistance of the community in its work, not only by inviting representatives from industry to support pupils' reading, but also by encouraging financial sponsorship from trusts and other enterprises. Such initiatives have, for example, enhanced the school's computer facilities and improved those for studying the natural environment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. There is a welcoming, friendly atmosphere in the school. Staff work very well as a team, know their pupils well and act as good role models. They expect, and achieve, good standards of behaviour. Pupils are adequately supervised throughout the day although the hard-surfaced play space is too cramped when pupils are not able to use the grassed areas. Both main play areas are bleak and uninteresting. Very few activities are provided; the only available seating is on the main playground and there is no quiet area.
44. When practical help is needed, for instance when pupils require first aid for the frequent playground mishaps, it is given calmly and quickly. Parents are always informed if there is any cause for concern. There is, however, nowhere for pupils to lie down if they feel unwell. Child protection arrangements are satisfactory, with immediate plans to bring staff training up to date. Health and safety matters are well organised. There is an annual independent risk assessment and termly inspections by the governing body's premises committee. The school has identified a technical problem with the fire alarm system and arrangements have been made to rectify this.
45. The detailed and structured behaviour policy is based on positive behaviour management. Each class also has its own reward system based on group success. These systems work well and parents are pleased with the standard of behaviour achieved. The school is committed to the prevention of bullying and racial harassment. The red and yellow card system is well understood by all. Pupils create their own behaviour record by explaining in writing which of the five school rules they have chosen to ignore. If necessary, behaviour is monitored by a daily or weekly report system in which parents are involved.
46. Pupils' personal development is monitored closely and effectively through formal and informal measures. One classroom has a particularly attractive "target garden" display in which individual work or personal development targets are arranged as flower petals. Instances of good behaviour and consideration for others are noted in the Star Book. All classes have regular sessions in which pupils are encouraged to discuss their feelings and concerns in an open and secure environment. These opportunities make a significant contribution to good standards of behaviour and a reasoned resolution to problems.
47. There are efficient measures to monitor and promote attendance and punctuality, with support as necessary from the Education Welfare Officer. Absences are followed up immediately and detailed records are kept so that any cause for concern can be easily identified. The importance

of good attendance is promoted in a number of documents and attendance certificates are issued to pupils with the best record. Parents are discouraged from taking their children on holiday in term time, particularly in September when pupils are settling into their new classes. The Early Bird County initiative provides pre-registration class activities to encourage punctuality. However, the school's efforts have yet to prove effective as the attendance rate is falling and is now well below the national average.

48. The school has worked hard to develop its approach to monitoring pupils' academic performance and this has led to a significant improvement since the last inspection. It now has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. These include assessments on entry to the four plus class that provide a clear and detailed early learning profile in the required six areas of learning. These profiles are then regularly monitored and updated to provide a good indication of individual children's progress. Subsequently, through Years 1 to 6, good procedures that are clear and workable have been established and are followed. Data from its national tests is analysed carefully to provide the school with relevant information regarding their performance. This analysis also provides detailed information regarding the performance of different pupil groups. In addition regular assessments in English, mathematics and science are now used to set whole school targets. In other subjects, assessment procedures are also clear and workable, providing good information about the progress of individual pupils.
49. The school is aware that the use made of this information is less well developed and has appropriate plans to improve this situation. Currently assessment information is used to identify setting arrangements in Years 3 to 6. Informal evaluations of lessons are used by teachers to adjust subsequent general lesson plans, and in general teachers' marking is supportive of pupils' progress. However the more detailed use of assessments to plan more specific activities matched to pupils' abilities is less well developed. Learning objectives, for example, are identified but in some lessons they are not sufficiently specific, neither do they take into account the differing needs of pupils. Pupils' progress across the curriculum is not consistently tracked.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

50. Parents are, in general, supportive of the school. Of those who expressed an opinion, all were confident that teaching was good. Almost all would feel confident about approaching staff with questions or problems and a similar proportion were happy with the amount of homework given. A significant minority, however, had reservations about the leadership and management of the school and about the quality of the partnership between home and school. However, as only eleven parents came to the pre-inspection meeting and 81 per cent of the questionnaires were not returned, the views of the vast majority of parents are unknown.
51. Several parents, mainly of children in Years 1 and 2, regularly help in class with, for instance, reading, cookery or numeracy games. The very active Friends of Boothwood School organises successful social and fund-raising events which enabled nearly £3000 to be donated to the school last year. This money contributed towards the cost of the computer suite, the sensory and wildlife gardens and Key Stage 1 play materials. In addition, the Friends were able to secure substantial extra funding for ICT through an application to a charitable trust.
52. Almost all parents attend the consultation evenings with their child's teacher and there is very good support for events directly involving pupils, such as sports day, school productions and class assemblies. More formal occasions, however, such as the governors' annual meeting and, in the past, curriculum information evenings, are poorly attended.
53. Parents are fully informed and involved with the individual reviews of their children who have statements of special educational needs, and those pupils undergoing formal assessments by outside agencies. Except during routine teacher parent consultations, parents of other pupils with special educational needs do not have sufficient opportunity to meet staff to discuss their children's progress. They are not regularly informed of the targets on their children's individual educational plans, which are generally not easily understood by people other than professionals. As a result they are prevented from better supporting their children. This requires development.

54. Both the quality and quantity of information for parents are satisfactory. Consultation evenings are held in the autumn and spring terms, with an opportunity to discuss the annual written reports in the summer term. These clearly describe pupils' attainment and progress, include targets for future improvement and contain space for parents and pupils to add their comments. The illustrated prospectus presents the necessary information in an attractive, informal style and the governors' annual report contains a useful explanation of the national testing programme. Teachers sent out advance leaflets on topics to be covered at each key stage. Although there are numerous newsletters, an inconsistent style of presentation can make them difficult to read.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The leadership and management provided by the headteacher and key staff are good. The headteacher provides firm and sensitive leadership, directed at raising the level of pupils' achievements through improving the quality of education that the school provides. Staff respond positively to his leadership and there is a developing sense of good teamwork throughout the school. The deputy headteacher is currently absent from school and the other members of the senior management team provide good support to the headteacher and co-ordinate the work of the year groups for which they are responsible well.
56. The leadership of the school has managed a good level of improvement with respect to the areas identified at the last inspection. There is now full coverage of the design and technology curriculum and much of the credit for this is due to the subject co-ordinator. Subject co-ordinators now exercise more, and more effective, leadership in terms of monitoring the curriculum and now need opportunities to observe teaching and learning. The standard of teaching, including the pace and rigour of lessons has improved. There remains the task of developing work that challenges potentially higher attaining pupils in subjects such as geography. Standards, as measured by the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, have risen at a rate similar to the national picture. The school's aims and values are reflected in all its work. There is a conscious effort on the part of the school to promote the personal and academic development and achievement of pupils; all are welcomed and valued.
57. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities well, including increasingly contributing to shaping the future direction of the school. The chair is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. Other governors, too, are well informed and are involved in the work of the school and have a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The school's priorities for development, however, as expressed in the development plan, are too many in number and too broad in scope. Governors and the headteacher recognise the need for a sharper focus and clearer identification of what will constitute success and how progress towards it will be tracked. The action taken to meet earlier targets in the school development plan, for example with respect to the quality of teaching and learning, the improvement of ICT facilities and the role of the senior management team has been appropriate and effective.
58. Educational priorities are supported through the school's financial planning but because the priorities are not precisely enough identified the link is not as good as it should be. The headteacher has correctly identified this as a key area for development. The school makes sound use of specific grants, for example the standards fund, to achieve improvement. The secretary is efficient in the day-to-day financial control and administration as well as being a welcoming first point of contact for parents and other visitors. The school uses new technology well in its administrative and financial procedures and actively seeks to obtain best value for the money allocated to it. The school provides good value for money.
59. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is good and has contributed greatly to the improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has a very visible presence around the open plan parts of the school and through this he continually monitors the quality of teaching, learning and behaviour. There has also been more formal monitoring by the headteacher and by key stage co-ordinators. Subject co-ordinators make an important contribution to raising standards by providing advice and support to colleagues.
60. The school special needs provision is led by a part time co-ordinator who has considerable experience. She is aware of the strengths and weaknesses in the school's procedures and

practices and the need to reconsider the provision in line with the revised code of practice. In this respect the governors' report to parents also requires revision. She is well supported by the special needs governor who spends considerable time in the school supporting staff and pupils.

61. The school is adequately staffed although the absence of the deputy headteacher and the Foundation Stage co-ordinator has inevitably created problems. There are good procedures for professional development and performance management; individual targets reflect whole school priorities and are focused on raising standards. Arrangements for the induction of staff new to the school are satisfactory. The strong and committed team of teaching assistants makes an important contribution to ensuring that all pupils have full access to what is offered by the school. The school very effectively promotes inclusion.
62. Since the time of the last inspection, four old mobile classrooms have been removed from the school site and only two of them have been replaced. As a result, accommodation is now unsatisfactory. The library has had to be squeezed into a corridor, making it almost impossible for children to browse and enjoy selecting books. What was the music studio has become, for a significant part of the timetable, a classroom. It is not possible to teach music elsewhere in the school because of the open-plan nature of the building. The mobile classroom used by the reception class is too small for thirty children and all that is needed to teach the Foundation Stage curriculum. They therefore work and play in very cramped conditions. The hall is not big enough for all aspects of the physical education curriculum to be safely and easily taught, especially when older pupils need to use the apparatus. These factors have a negative effect on standards of attainment and pupils' progress that staff work very hard to overcome. The accommodation is maintained well and kept clean.
63. Outside, the size and nature of the play areas are unsatisfactory. Although good quality climbing equipment is provided, the playground is too small, resulting in numerous mishaps when play becomes boisterous. Younger pupils are confined, for their own safety, to a bleak area of paving at a higher level. Children are often tempted to stray onto the grassed areas when conditions are not suitable and incur sanctions as a result. There is no quiet area, shade or suitable seating, apart from picnic tables on the already crowded playground. A large potential wild area with a pond remains out of bounds until promised renovation work can be started.
64. Although the Eco-committee, with staff and parents, have worked hard to establish interesting sensory and wildlife areas at the front of the building, the visual impact of these is marred by a large hole dug to reveal problem piping and left fenced off while decisions on a solution are repeatedly postponed. The school is aware that much better use could be made of the extensive grounds and has plans for their improvement. A number of young trees have already been planted to provide shade in the future.
65. The school has spent wisely on resources; they are of good quality and sufficient in quantity. Co-ordinators have ensured that resources are well organised, stored and accessible. Facilities for using computers have been considerably improved since the last inspection.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. In accordance with the existing agenda for school development, the headteacher, with the governing body and staff, should plan to:

Raise the level of pupils' attainment in geography by the end of Year 6 by:

- making sure that all aspects of the subject are taught to an adequate depth, in particular work on maps and plans and on pupils' own and a contrasting locality;

See paragraphs 25, 114 - 118

Increase the proportion of pupils who reach the national expectation in swimming by the end of Year 6 by:

- more effective use of the expertise and facilities available;
- targeting those pupils who need extra support;
- making sure that parents recognise the importance of the National Curriculum requirements in this respect.

See paragraph 138

Improve aspects of the accommodation, particularly with respect to provision for the Foundation Stage, music, the library and outdoor play by:

- urgently seeking a review by the local education authority, in the light of the deficiencies identified in this report;
- pursuing present plans for improving the outdoor play area and facilities.

See paragraphs 43, 62 – 64, 70, 73, 75, 135, 138

This area for improvement is included in the school's development planning

Improve the attendance of those pupils who regularly miss school by:

- continuing to impress on parents the importance of their children not missing units of work in the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.

See paragraphs 11, 47

This area for improvement is included in the school's development planning

In addition, the governing body, with the headteacher and staff should consider the following points for improvement in their action plan:

- **Develop the provision for pupils with SEN in the light of the new code of practice, the school's strong commitment to equality of opportunity and its accommodation needs.**

See paragraphs 17, 31, 33

This area for improvement is included in the school's development planning

- **Refine lesson planning for subjects other than numeracy and literacy to make sure that it is clear what pupils are to learn in each lesson**

See paragraphs 21, 49, 80, 86, 95, 134

This area for improvement is included in the school's development planning

- **Make sure that work is provided in all subjects that provides enough challenge for potentially higher attaining pupils**

See paragraphs 21, 28, 49, 56, 83, 84, 101, 122

This area for improvement is included in the school's development planning

- **Refine the number and precision of the school's priorities for development**

See paragraphs 57, 58

This area for improvement is included in the school's development planning

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	57
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	50

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	14	23	18	2	0	0
Percentage	0	25	40	32	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	233
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	55

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	55

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	23
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	25

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final Year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	18	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	18
	Girls	19	18	18
	Total	36	35	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (77)	92 (90)	95 (90)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	18	17
	Girls	19	16	18
	Total	36	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (87)	89 (90)	92 (90)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final Year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2001	18	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	14	15
	Girls	11	8	12
	Total	25	22	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (63)	73 (75)	90 (90)
	National	73 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	15
	Girls	11	8	11
	Total	23	21	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (60)	70 (83)	87 (88)
	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	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	5
White	188
Any other minority ethnic group	6

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	25.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	98

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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	5	2
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	471087
Total expenditure	450489
Expenditure per pupil	1968
Balance brought forward from previous year	10468
Balance carried forward to next year	31066

The projected carry forward figure from the current year is £9953 (2.2%)

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

19%

Number of questionnaires sent out	233
Number of questionnaires returned	44

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	27	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	5	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	64	7	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	56	42	2	0	0
The teaching is good.	61	39	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	50	43	7	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	77	20	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	40	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	27	61	9	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	36	9	5	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	52	2	2	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	57	23	2	5	14

Some rows may not add to 100 because of rounding

Other issues raised by parents

Parents were greatly concerned at the consequences of the removal of four mobile classrooms and the replacement of only two. They particularly cited the loss of the separate music studio and the downgrading of the library.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. The good provision, in terms of planning, resources and teaching, for children in the Foundation Stage has been maintained since the last inspection. Children's attainment on entry to the reception (four plus unit) is well below average in all areas of learning except physical development which is below average. A varied and interesting range of learning experiences, together with the positive relationships between staff and children, and effective teaching, provides a stimulating learning environment. By the time children enter Year 1, overall attainment remains just below average in all areas of learning except physical development which is average. However, many more able children are in line to attain the early learning goals in all areas of learning, and all children achieve well in relation to their attainment on entry. As a result of this positive and effective start to their early education, all children, including those with special educational needs, and those learning English as an additional language, are fully included in activities and make good and sometimes very good progress.
68. Children start in the unit in the September following their fourth birthday. As a result all children benefit from a year's fulltime education before transferring to the school in Year 1. This is particularly beneficial, as a large proportion of children have no previous nursery or pre-school experience and are very immature for their age. In response to this, the school has recently established an 'acorn' group. This takes place one morning a week and is providing a vital early learning experience for children prior to starting in the unit. This is run by the hardworking and highly experienced nursery nurse. In addition, she has, with the support of various temporary teachers, maintained the good unit provision in the unavoidable absence of the co-ordinator. Her commitment and dedication, together with her warm approach, has been a credit to the school and of considerable benefit to the children. In this she has been well supported by the clear, detailed, yet workable, record keeping system that was established by the co-ordinator. This gives staff a well-informed basis from which to plan work. On entry to the unit, simple but effective assessment procedures provide clear indications of children's attainment in all areas of learning. This early years learning profile is then monitored well to track progress. In addition, initial assessments are used sensibly, to inform planning of group work matched to ability.
69. The quality of teaching is good in all areas of learning. Staff have a good understanding of the needs of young children coupled with high expectations. They work hard to settle younger children into full time education providing a rich and supportive learning environment, which children respond to well and, as a result, blossom. Effective support is given to children who have English as an additional language and children with special educational needs. This enables them to make good progress in all areas of learning. All members of staff ensure that children, including those with special educational needs, have full access to the areas of learning and are provided with individual support when they find conforming to structured activities too difficult.
70. The unit is sited away from the main school in a hut that was not designed for young children. It is small, cramped and space is limited. As a result, children cannot have daily access to activities that support all areas of learning. Sand and water cannot be available regularly; space for creative and 'messy' activities is restricted. Children have to use the top of the sand tray for construction activities for example, while the quiet room is small, and gets unbearably hot, which makes it difficult for young children to maintain concentration. There is insufficient space for a quiet area that is easily supervised, where children can sit and enjoy books for example. The outdoor play area is a tarmac playground that is also not easily supervised or accessible. As a consequence children do not have regular opportunities to use wheeled toys. Despite the unsatisfactory accommodation staff have worked very hard to create a pleasant learning environment and have made the very best use of this restricted area. This, however, is not a satisfactory situation and requires urgent attention.

Personal and social education.

71. Children start in the unit with levels of personal and social development well below expected levels. Because of the positive and supporting environment and consistently good teaching, children make good progress, become confident and increasingly independent; for example,

changing with minimal help for dance lessons or putting on their pumps when they enter the building. Staff provide good role models as they treat the children politely, courteously and with respect. Children enjoy coming to school; they follow the routines and join in activities with enthusiasm. They generally play well together; take responsibility for taking the register to the school and help tidy up, taking pride in their efforts. This is achieved because of the very good relationships between children and staff, who encourage them to share and take turns. Young children, who have more immature behaviour or have special educational needs, are also beginning to take responsibility and share their activities with their friends, because of appropriate management and caring encouragement by staff. Although some children will have attained the early learning goals in this area of development by the time they enter Year 1, the majority will not quite have achieved this level.

Communication, language and literacy.

72. Children start in the unit with levels of attainment well below average. Staff use every opportunity to develop language skills, by joining in and talking about their activities. As a result of this good teaching, based on clear assessments, children make good progress overall although the majority will not attain the early learning goals in this area by the time that they enter Year 1. There is a wealth of learning activities that support children's language skills; every activity is used fully. For example, when making bears, staff encourage children to talk about sizes. When drawing, children are encouraged to talk about their pictures and about the colours they have chosen. Children enjoy looking at books together and talk with some confidence about the story of 'Billy Duck'. Later, using puppets, they hold simple conversations, recreating parts of the story. More able children recognise words in texts and write simple sentences with support, using their knowledge of letter sounds. They have already attained the early learning goals in this area. Less able children, however, have also made good progress, because staff know them well and plan work that is carefully matched to their learning needs. As a result they too tell stories through looking at the pictures recognise many sounds and make marks on paper to represent words. Some children with special educational needs however, find it difficult to listen for prolonged periods of time but, because of sensitive support and encouragement, they are also beginning to experiment with language, and are making good progress from a very low starting point.

Mathematical development.

73. This area is effectively supported and children make good progress so that generally by the time they start in the reception classes the majority of children are close to attaining the early learning goals. Consistently good teaching, using many varied activities, develops children's mathematical language skills well. Staff effectively plan to meet the varying needs of the children, through a mixture of structured activities and supported play. Children confidently count objects to 5, and enjoy making their own number books; they talk about size and shapes when making models. Displays also support learning well, children enjoyed explaining that the headteacher was taller than they were, but not as tall as the man in the display. However, the limited space in the room impacts on this area of learning. For example, children cannot regularly use the sand and water trays to develop their knowledge and understanding of size and capacity. Staff make the very best use of the room and activities are well thought out. The outside area is used well when the weather is suitable and sufficient staff are available to supervise the various activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

74. Good teaching with a wide variety of activities that encourages children to use all their senses introduces them to a world of meaningful experiences, which they enjoy immensely and from which they learn well. For instance, through their topic on 'ourselves', children learn about how they have changed. Photographs and displays of different size clothes support learning well. In the 'hospital' area, children confidently 'make patients better'. They use equipment carefully, and with some 'expertise'. This good level of knowledge and understanding of the work of nurses and doctors is clearly based on good teaching that has enabled children to recognise the importance of people who help them. All staff are fully involved in these well-planned experiences and this ensures that children are interested, motivated and challenged.

75. Children confidently use the computer, controlling the mouse to manipulate pictures on the screen. Children also have regular access to the computer room, with activities that are well planned and challenging. For example, with well-planned support, children typed in their names and located the picture icons they wanted to make their own name cards. In this aspect of learning the majority of children have already attained the early learning goals. In addition, staff ensure that children learn about the local area, through walks and visits, which are well planned by the staff. The outside environment, however, is a tarmac playground, that has not been fully developed to maximise learning opportunities. Staff and children have planted pots with plants, to learn about growth, but this area requires further development, to ensure that children have access to a more interesting outside environment in which to develop their skills. Overall, although the majority of children will not attain the early learning goals in all aspects of this area, children still make good progress from very low levels of attainment on entry,

Physical development.

76. Children start in the unit with below average levels of ability, but because of well-planned activities and regular use of the school hall, which compensates to some extent for the limited access to the outdoor play area, children make good progress. All children are in line to achieve the early learning goals in this area when they enter Year 1. Construction activities and varied activities such as cutting and sticking help develop children's hand eye coordination. In dance lessons for example, children move with imagination to the music, as 'Billy Goats Gruff'. Staff encourage children to be aware of space, to change direction, modelling movements well. When using apparatus, all children, including those with special educational needs, respond well to instructions, travel over and along apparatus safely, holding balances, jumping and landing with good coordination and control. This is due to sensitive support, good subject knowledge and clear assessments of children's abilities that are used well to plan lessons that are challenging and motivating. This good level of teaching ensures that children are motivated and enjoy learning.

Creative development.

77. Children's creative development is promoted well through art, music and role-play activities. Sensitive encouragement and good levels of teaching increase children's confidence to explore a range of different activities that are well matched to their needs. As a result all children make good progress despite not quite attaining the early learning goals by the time that they move into Year 1. Children, for example, explore colours and recognise how to make pale shades by adding white. All children are confident at using colours and use observation well to create 'skeleton' pictures. Children also enjoy singing simple songs and are beginning to follow instructions to make sound pictures using different parts of their body. The role-play area, although small, is used well to develop imaginative play. Staff make the very best use of limited space to ensure that children have a wide range of experiences and are well prepared for work in Year 1.

ENGLISH

78. By the ages of both seven and eleven, standards in English are in line with the national average, and are similar to those seen at the time of the last inspection. The findings of this inspection confirm the standards indicated by the school's national test results in 2001. Since 1997, the school's English results in statutory tests for pupils at both ages have improved overall at a rate similar to that seen nationally.
79. When they first enter Year 1, pupils' standards are generally below those expected, but they make good progress by the end of Year 2 because they are taught the basic skills of reading and writing thoroughly and systematically. For example, pupils not only learn the values of the sounds of letters singly and in combination, but are also encouraged to recognize words by sight and to try to sound them out using the skills they have learnt. Many are beginning to read confidently by the age of seven. The same regular practice is applied as they begin to write, so that many are able to record simple stories or relate real experiences in the correct sequence by the time they leave Year 2.

80. Between the ages of seven and eleven, pupils make satisfactory progress overall, although some pupils in Years 4 to 6 make good progress because their teachers have a very clear understanding of what they want their pupils to achieve and consequently have high expectations for the achievement of their pupils. In the two classes containing pupils of Years 3 and 4, pupils' progress is satisfactory. Here they consolidate their reading skills, and begin to write with a growing awareness of purpose and audience. However, pupils of average and higher aptitude and ability could make even better progress here if lesson objectives were more sharply defined and if these pupils were set precise targets for what they were expected to achieve by the end of each lesson. In the Year 4/5 class and for some pupils in Years 5/6, teachers have high, well-defined expectations for what is to be accomplished by the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils make good progress because they are constantly challenged to finish the work expected. By the age of eleven, many pupils read confidently and are developing a preference for particular authors, while some understand how to use their writing skills to persuade, inform or motivate others. Those with special educational needs progress at the same rate as other pupils; they are sometimes well supported by classroom assistants.
81. Standards in speaking are in line with national averages by the age of seven. Building on the good start pupils receive before they are five, teachers provide regular opportunities for their pupils to discuss their work, to offer opinions and to describe their experiences, with the result that some develop into confident speakers by the end of Year 2. Teachers provide good models for pupils to copy, speaking slowly and clearly, and sometimes using the inflection of their voices well when reading stories to capture the mood of an event they are describing. This work is continued among older pupils, so that, by the age of eleven, pupils may describe their experiences at length or support an opinion with sound reasoning. Occasionally, teachers do not take full advantage of the opportunities for speaking they create because the closed questions they ask anticipate the length and nature of pupils' answers; however, teachers ensure that all are included in discussion, and sufficient opportunities are offered in assemblies for older pupils to become confident in speaking to an audience.
82. Standards of listening are generally good across the school. Teachers employ good strategies to ensure that pupils listen carefully when they are speaking, using changes of voice to maintain attention and sometimes checking pupils' understanding with probing questioning. In one good lesson for Year 1 pupils, the teacher engaged the pupils' attention by building their excitement and anticipation as she read the story, making them eager to listen as it developed. Pupils generally listen attentively to each other when they discuss work in pairs or small groups, although some between seven and eleven find concentration difficult, especially if the task they are set is not sufficiently well defined. Many pupils are considerate when adults are speaking, listening carefully and waiting to offer their viewpoint.
83. Standards in reading are in line with national averages and are similar to those seen at the last inspection. Pupils make good progress in their acquisition of reading skills between the ages of five and seven because they are taught systematically. Teachers build step by step on what their pupils already know, and ensure that they practise their skills regularly. Teachers impart an interest and enthusiasm for reading which motivates pupils to move forward. As a result, most pupils make good progress; some for example, reading easy library books with confidence by the end of Year 2. Between seven and eleven, pupils make satisfactory progress. They are well supported in their efforts, developing by the age of eleven a preference for particular authors or styles; some also enjoy reading non-fiction books to gain information. However, older pupils are not always sufficiently guided in the choice of books they read, with the result that their range of experience is too narrow. While these pupils are expected to read books of different genres, they are not always actively encouraged to read more challenging texts, so that those of greater aptitude and ability may not progress as quickly as they might. There is also scope for encouraging these pupils to develop their research skills to a greater extent by setting them open-ended tasks that would oblige them to read non-fiction books more widely. Across the school, teachers make a great effort to ensure that adults hear pupils read regularly, and this strategy has had a very positive impact on standards in reading. As a result, pupils feel well supported and are generally well motivated to learn.
84. Standards in writing are also in line with the national averages for pupils of seven and eleven. When they are five, many pupils can write simple captions to illustrate their pictures or express an idea or event in a short sentence. By the age of seven, pupils have made good progress; most

can write a series of sentences to form a story or a coherent account of personal experiences. These are often punctuated with full stops and capital letters, not always consistently used, and a few pupils venture to employ commas to separate items on a list. Many pupils at seven have a clear idea of some of the conventions of literary writing, such as titles and sub-headings, while some write glossaries serving to explain the meanings of particular terms or words to others. While most work at seven is at the expected level, pupils of greater aptitude are not always encouraged to write at great enough length to demonstrate fully what they know and understand. Between the ages of seven and eleven, pupils make satisfactory progress in learning their writing skills. By eleven, many have experience of writing in different styles and for a range of different purposes, although there are too few opportunities for them to apply the skills they have learnt in extended pieces for writing or for real, practical purposes. Similarly, those of greater aptitude and ability do not use their skills for writing at length in response to open-ended tasks that challenge them to demonstrate the full extent of their abilities. The progress in writing of those with special educational needs is similar to that of other pupils. They are generally well supported in their work in the classroom.

85. Standards in spelling and handwriting at seven and eleven are similar to those seen nationally. Pupils generally make good progress because they are taught systematically and because there are well-established procedures for learning and testing new words. Pupils are encouraged to try spelling words they have not previously encountered, and, as a result, grow in confidence as they move through the school. Standards of handwriting are also satisfactory across the school. Again, skills are taught regularly. However, teachers not always insist that these handwriting skills are applied to the same standard in everyday writing as when they are practised, with the result that some of the oldest pupils still print their writing while a few seven year-olds are already beginning to join their writing confidently and fluently.
86. Over time the teaching of English is good for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory overall in Years 3 to 6, although good teaching was also seen in some classes here during the inspection. Across the school, more than half of the lessons observed were good, a further quarter were satisfactory, and a single lesson was unsatisfactory, this because the pace of the lesson was too slow and the work on this occasion was not well matched to pupils' ability. For pupils at Key Stage 1, the teaching is almost always good because teachers have a good understanding of what their pupils need to learn next. As a result, lesson objectives are clear, and pupils are offered tasks that enable them to make the right degree of progress. Explanations are measured and clear, and pupils are given sufficient time to ask questions and discuss their work. For pupils between seven and eleven, teaching is always satisfactory and often good, especially for pupils in the Year 4/5 class and for some older pupils. Here, the difference between satisfactory and good teaching relates principally to high expectations and clear learning objectives. In the best lessons, teachers have a clear understanding of what they expect their pupils to achieve; lessons move forward at a good pace, and the teacher is constantly focusing the pupils on what they are to accomplish by the end of the lesson. In the satisfactory lessons, the learning objectives are less sharp, and too few short-term objectives are set to ensure that pupils complete the work expected of them. As a result, those of greater aptitude and ability sometimes accomplish too little and are set tasks that are not demanding enough. Overall, the teaching and learning of pupils with special education needs is satisfactory, though these pupils often learn well when they are supported by their class teacher or classroom assistants.
87. All aspects of the English curriculum are taught in enough detail, and the national guidance for literacy is generally applied satisfactorily to support pupils' learning. The school employs good systems for measuring pupils' attainment and progress, but the results of these assessments are not always used effectively to plan what pupils are to learn next, and teachers often focus too closely in their planning on what is to be taught, rather than on what pupils next need to learn. The subject co-ordinator, new to the post, has a very good understanding of how to develop the subject further, and has already identified areas where improvements need to be made. Resources for the subject are generally good; there are sufficient books, clearly arranged and accessible for pupils' use. However, pressures on accommodation mean that the library is no longer housed in an area conducive for research and private study, an aspect of English for which there is much scope for further development. ICT is sometimes used to support pupils' learning, but some subjects, such as geography and history, are not used with sufficient frequency for pupils to practise their descriptive and explanatory skills. Drama is regularly used to enhance the curriculum, and authors sometimes visit the school to share their skills with the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

88. Standards seen in mathematics are in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6. Results in the 2001 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds were below the national average and below the average for similar schools. Nevertheless, these results represent an improvement when compared with previous years. With the extra emphasis on extending those pupils with the potential to achieve the higher Level 3, the school expects that this year's results will be in line with the national average. This is similar to the position at the time of the last inspection; the school's results over the last three years have improved alongside the national average. Results in the national tests for eleven-year-olds in 2001 were in line with national averages for all schools and for similar schools. Over the last five years, results have fluctuated but are now better than at the time of the last inspection. The performance of boys has been consistently better than that of girls at the end of Year 6 and the school is aware of the need for careful tracking of progress and targeting extra support where necessary.
89. Pupils build well on the good start that they been given in the Foundation Stage, where they made good progress so that many of them were below but close to what is expected for their age when they entered Year 1. In a very well taught lesson, pupils in Year 1 demonstrated that they could count together in 10's up to 500. They also responded well to the challenge of counting up and back from different starting points. The teacher has established very good routines for number work, including the use of number fans so that she can check everybody's answers. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in this mental work and all make good progress. Pupils confidently and correctly insert the missing numbers on a number line, saying, for example, *11 is more than 10 but less than 12*. The teacher provided a follow-up written task at three different levels of difficulty and her support and that of the teaching assistant led to good learning and progress.
90. Pupils in one of the two Year 2 classes made very good progress in their understanding of division and their use of the division and equals signs. This was made possible by very thorough teaching, effectively broken down into small steps. The pupils were pleased with their success and the amount of work that they had done and wanted to carry on with the lesson rather than stop for break time. Pupils in the other Year 2 class were equally enthusiastic about moving on to the written work that their teacher had set them to consolidate their learning of mental strategies for adding three two-digit numbers. Most of the class had correctly worked out $32 + 20 + 16$ in their heads and the teacher provided further challenge for higher attaining pupils with $50 + 24 + 19$. She has considerable skill at picking up on pupils' suggested methods and refining and extending them in a way that leads to good learning on their part.
91. Year 3 pupils made sound progress in their understanding and use of the mathematical vocabulary associated with direction. They correctly used words such as *forward*, *clockwise*, *adjacent*, *horizontal* and showed good interest in their work. Year 4 pupils extended this work when they related measurements in degrees to their work on direction and fractions of a turn. Higher attaining pupils showed good understanding when they wrote complete sentences describing movement from a starting point. Other pupils were supported very well by teachers and their assistants and also made good progress. Pupils withdrawn from Years 3 and 4 for work in a smaller group made sound progress in their work on using and interpreting position words such as *left*, *right*, *up* and *down*.
92. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught as separate year groups for numeracy, apart from a small number from each Year group that together make up a smaller, *improvers*, group. This arrangement, as in Years 3 and 4, is facilitating focused teaching and leading to improvements in pupils' attainment. During the inspection, pupils in Year 5 made very good progress in converting between mixed numbers and improper fractions. The teacher strongly emphasised the importance of understanding and gave very good encouragement to pupils to explain their reasoning. One higher attaining pupil, for example, clearly explained the steps in $15/10 = 1$ and $5/10 = 1 \frac{1}{2}$. All the work in this lesson was conducted at a brisk pace and was sharply focused on the learning objectives that were clearly made known to pupils at the start of the lesson. This is very good practice and the teacher rightly fed back praise for their work and learning to the pupils.

93. Evidence from work completed before the inspection shows that the development of pupils' number skills is good throughout Years 5 and 6. In addition, higher attaining pupils show that they have learned how to bisect an angle and to recognise a 3-dimensional shape from its net. There have been some good examples of pupils applying their numerical skills, for example in calculating volumes, where pupils use the correct notation of cm^3 . This work was very well extended for higher attaining pupils when they investigated the different cuboid measurements that could give a volume of 36cm^3 . This was good practice but overall there is insufficient focus on investigation and the co-ordinator is rightly keen to extend the use of investigative work to promote greater challenge and understanding. Recent work in Year 6 indicates that thorough teaching has led to good learning and understanding of co-ordinates and of different types of graphs.
94. **Characteristics of the better teaching seen often included:**
- a clear identification of what pupils were to learn in the lesson and telling them;
 - skilled use of questions to revise and extend learning;
 - careful breaking down of what was to be learned into small steps and continually checking for understanding;
 - good use of time, including a brisk pace and regular changes of activities;
 - good team work by teachers and teaching assistants so that all pupils had ready access to support.
95. **Where teaching was less successful but still satisfactory this was often due to one or more of the following:**
- Lack of pace or too long spent on one part of the lesson;
 - A lack of clarity about exactly what pupils were to learn in the lesson (as distinct from longer term targets).
96. The overall quality of teaching is very good in Key Stage 1 and sound in Key Stage 2. The resources of information and communication technology are insufficiently used to support and extend learning in mathematics. There is scope for more planned use and development of mathematical skills in other subject areas, for example science, geography and design and technology.

SCIENCE

97. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards that are in line with those expected for their ages in all areas of the science curriculum, including scientific investigation. In 2001 teachers identified standards of seven-year-olds as around the national average in those areas that were assessed. Standards in the national tests for eleven-year-olds fluctuated between 1997 and 2001; in 2001 they were above the national average both for all schools and for similar schools. Standards throughout the school are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection, with a definite improvement in the investigative work at Key Stage 2. The present Year 6 did not perform as well in the Year 2 national assessments as had their predecessors; their national test results are expected to be broadly in line with national averages.
98. Examination of the work of pupils in Years 1 and 2 shows that pupils build well on the knowledge and understanding gained in the reception class. Pupils in Year 1, for example, in a well-taught practical lesson, made good progress in their identification of the properties of selected materials. Through handling materials, including clay and play dough, and prompted by the word cards provided, pupils used vocabulary such as *stretch*, *bend*, *squash*, *rigid*, *twist* correctly. Pupils working with clay knew about material changes that *wouldn't go back to how it was*. Pupils in Year 2 were developing this idea during the inspection. The teacher used the two activities of assembling and mixing the ingredients and baking a cake on the one hand and shaping small clay tiles on the other to extend pupils' understanding very well. There was very good development of observation and the correct use of scientific vocabulary in an interesting practical context. The teacher's subject knowledge is very good and she made sure that pupils appreciated that in working the clay they forced air out while in the cake baking they did the opposite. In both year groups there is well-planned development of pupils' recording skills via prepared sheets.

99. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make sound progress in the junior years; in individual lessons learning is often good. Pupils in one of the Year 3/4 classes made rapid gains in their understanding of what a *habitat* is, one pupil remembering that plants as well as animals have habitats. The teacher's own enthusiasm inspired the pupils to contribute ideas and think more deeply about habitats. Her clear instructions and expectations *Really think – I don't want boring things*, made pupils motivated to explore outside later in the day. Examination of earlier work shows that pupils have developed their knowledge and understanding of electrical circuits, forces and solids, liquids and gases. They explain accurately, for example, what they did in separating sand, paper clips, rice and marbles. Pupils are given good encouragement to write accounts in their own words. There are good examples of marking by teachers that is not only supportive and encouraging but also challenging and promoting further learning. For example, after recent successful sorting, a pupil is asked *can you tell me the difference between a vertebrate and an invertebrate?*
100. Older pupils, in the mixed-age classes, were learning about the role of micro-organisms in causing food decay; how they grow and reproduce in food and that this can cause food poisoning. The investigation had been planned well and all three classes shared the same resource of decaying cheese, orange and bread. In one good lesson the teacher used her white board well to build up a summary of the relevant vocabulary and concepts from the pupils' answers to her well composed and targeted questions. She effectively encouraged close observation of the mouldy material (in transparent bags) and made appropriately different demands on pupils of different abilities in terms of recording their findings. The final part of the lesson was used well to lead on to the question of how to prevent food going mouldy by slowing down the development of the micro-organisms. Pupils contributed ideas well and their learning was extended through reference to penicillin and Stilton cheese. In earlier lessons they have carried out experimental work, for example adding bicarbonate of soda to water and causing a balloon to fill; in their descriptions pupils correctly use the language of chemical reaction, dissolving, solutions.
101. There is some evidence in pupils' work of a growing understanding of a fair test, for example in relation to influencing the time a spinner took to fall. However, the development of experimental and investigational skills has not been as good as it could be. More able pupils, for example, have not been given enough opportunities for posing their own questions, 'what would happen if?' and for designing and carrying out their own experiments in an attempt to find out. Most investigational work, even in Year 6, is mainly teacher-directed with known outcomes.
102. The quality of science teaching is good throughout the school. It is soundly based on teachers' good subject knowledge and enthusiasm and follows national guidelines well. Learning intentions for lessons are usually precise and most teachers tell the pupils what they are. Teachers use questions well to revise and extend learning. Teachers are successfully promoting good attitudes to science. Pupils are encouraged to take increasing responsibility for recording their findings in their own words; the subject makes a good contribution to developing and using literacy skills. Encouragement to use annotated diagrams is also valuable. Work on forces and the estimation and measuring of temperatures are two good examples of the use and promotion of mathematical skills. The resources offered by information and communication technology for supporting and extending learning in science are not used enough.

ART AND DESIGN

103. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, on discussions with pupils and teachers, and on a small number of lesson observations. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory with attainment by the age of seven and eleven being judged average. The school has concentrated on raising attainment in the core subjects and in ICT and art and design has not been a priority for development since the last inspection.
104. Work by pupils in Years 1 and 2 includes very good use of new technology. Pupils in Year 2, for example, explain clearly how they have used digital technology to support their work on creating foreground, background and extensions to a picture. Younger children say why they liked particular pictures and have experienced using a range of tools and materials, including fabric. They have also used Clip Art.

105. Older pupils successfully explain how an artist conveys feeling through the way in which a picture is created and discuss their reasoning with each other. They express their understanding well through some creative written work linked to their learning in Literacy. Displays of recent work from pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 contain examples of very good work on human movement drawing. Jointed models of the human figure have been used well to achieve this and a series of accurate drawings has been developed. Pupils have a good attitude to art and design and want to achieve their best. Some pupils in Years 5 and 6 know how to evaluate their own work and make improvements, as well as being able to discuss the work of other artists, including their peers.
106. The work of pupils and their knowledge and understanding, and evidence from teachers' planning, indicate that the standard of teaching in the subject overall is at least satisfactory. In one lesson observed it was very good and the standard of work on human movement suggests that this teaching was at least good. Opportunities given to pupils with special educational needs are the same as those given to other pupils; they make progress that is in line with that of other pupils. Groups of pupils of mixed ability, race and gender, work together, indicating that all pupils have full access to learning in the subject.
107. The subject co-ordinator has identified the need to raise the profile of the subject and has sought to do this by links with the Loughborough University Gallery. The review of the policy and scheme of work will be undertaken when the two-year cycle has been completed this year; this will provide an important opportunity to work with other staff to raise standards. In their response to the questionnaire circulated by the co-ordinator, staff have indicated the need for staff training to raise confidence in some areas. The standardised use of sketchbooks for all year groups has been identified as a development priority. A portfolio of examples of annotated children's work is maintained by the co-ordinator for monitoring purposes and assessment procedures are being standardised with support from the county development group. These initiatives on the part of the co-ordinator are well designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and to raise standards. In addition, she recognises that there is little evidence of three-dimensional art or recent textile work and that the labelling of artwork needs to be uniformly developed to aid learning. There is also a need to improve resources to include more examples of the work of living artists and those from other cultures and continents such as Africa, Asia and South America and also to develop closer working with practising artists.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108. The attainment of pupils by the age of seven and by the end of Year 6 is in line with national expectations. This is an improvement compared with the situation at the time of the last inspection when attainment was judged to be below average. The leadership of the co-ordinator has been crucial to the improvement. She has provided good support for colleagues through the scheme of work and the provision and organisation of good resources. Whole school projects such as the Millennium banner provided a good opportunity for raising the profile of the subject. Work samples collected and annotated by the co-ordinator show that there is good provision and planning for the subject and some examples of above average attainment. For example, there was evidence of good design in the musical instruments project undertaken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2. Judging by the finished articles and associated written work, and the teaching observed during the inspection, the overall quality of teaching is good.
109. Teachers plan well together in teams and make sure that all elements of the designing, making and evaluating process are covered. Because most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes, the co-ordinator has organised a two-year rolling programme of projects. This ensures good coverage of the design and technology curriculum. However, the clear identification of skill development and assessment within each project is not yet completely in place. The teaching of design and technology provides well-planned opportunities for the development and practice of the skills of literacy and numeracy. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully included in all learning activities and make good progress.
110. Pupils in Year 1 build well on the good start that they receive in the Foundation Stage. Last term, for example, they successfully created a Christmas tree using canvas and cross-stitch to use as decoration on a card. Work by pupils in Year 2 on vehicles shows that pupils have been led to give a lot of thought to how to attach axles and wheels to the chassis of their vehicles. Most

pupils clearly took a lot of care in constructing their chassis, with evidence of accurate cutting and fixing of joint supports.

111. Pupils from both of Years 1 and 2 have worked successfully on winding mechanisms, extended in some cases to pulleys. Finished models based on *Incy Whincy Spider* and *Ding Dong Bell* show good understanding of the principles, with those by Year 2 pupils displaying extra sophistication and finish. Teachers have effectively encouraged pupils to write about their projects, for example writing down *lists of the things we might need and the tools we might use*. Pupils have also undertaken evaluations of their models and know that they needed to have a strong base in order to ensure a safe structure.
112. Recent work on sandwich making in the Years 3 and 4 classes shows good development of skills learned earlier in terms of more structured evaluation. This aspect is further developed in Years 5 and 6, where pupils' evaluations of the bridges that they constructed show a keen awareness of the importance of triangles in structures. This was a particularly well-planned project. The pupil who wrote in an evaluation that *simple models are better to make and getting on with your partner is useful* has clearly grasped two important truths. Pupils have also learned a lot about the function and use of cams in their work on moving toys. They looked at a range of toys and discussed how they move, then drew clear annotated diagrams and wrote an explanation of how the toys worked. This was a good example of the contribution that the subject makes to the development of literacy skills. Mathematical skills related to shape, space and measure are also well promoted through work in design and technology.
113. During the inspection pupils from Years 5 and 6 were investigating and evaluating bread products according to characteristics such as taste, appearance, cost and texture. This is preparatory work towards pupils making their own bread. Pupils offer a good list of aspects to consider, including ingredients, flat or rising, cost, shape and quantity. They made very good progress in one lesson in terms of evaluation and also in terms of learning a graphical way of representing their judgements on the four characteristics. The lesson had been very thoroughly prepared and the teacher and teaching assistants gave very good support to pupils; all pupils were fully engaged on the task for most of an afternoon. The teacher stimulated discussion well and built up useful summaries on her whiteboard; this very effectively promoted good learning.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Despite the fact that only two lessons were seen in the course of the inspection, sufficient evidence was gained by analysing work and through discussions with pupils to make judgements on their attainment in the subject. By the age of seven, standards are in line with those expected nationally. Pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of the subject between the ages of five and seven because they are offered work that closely follows the scheme of work the school has adopted and therefore gain knowledge and understanding in the expected detail. However, standards by the age of eleven are below the expected level because some aspects of the subject are not taught at sufficient depth, and therefore pupils' understanding and experiences overall are not well enough developed.
115. By the age of seven, pupils know that some environments are different from the one in which they live. For example, they compare features of the seaside with amenities locally, or contrast life on an island with their own surroundings, noting the advantages and disadvantages of each. Pupils make simple records of the weather, and discuss its effects on houses, clothes and plants in different parts of the world. They learn ways of describing simple natural geographical features, and become more aware of the purpose of those in the urban landscape, such as street-lamp, post-box and telephone cabin. Pupils learn the purposes of a map, drawing plans of a short journey they have made. They begin to understand the notion of relative distance and know that those living far away may live lives very different from their own.
116. By eleven, pupils have studied certain aspects of the curriculum in enough depth; they know, for example, how meanders are formed and about the likely features to be seen along a river between its source and mouth. Some clearly understand the water cycle, using appropriate technical terms to describe its principles. However, pupils have little knowledge of maps other than those in atlases and are not practised in drawing maps and plans to scale. They have some knowledge

of different climatic zones, understanding the range of weather expected, for example in desert or polar regions, but do not have knowledge in the depth expected about their own or a contrasting locality. Across the school, pupils generally have a good understanding of environmental issues, displaying an interest fostered through the work of the new subject co-ordinator. As a result, many pupils can describe ways in which an environment may be improved. They are fully familiar with the principles of recycling and with some of the advantages and disadvantages of the different methods of waste disposal.

117. Insufficient evidence was collected to make a judgement on the quality of teaching and learning for pupils between the ages of five and seven. Pupils' work indicates that teachers display a sufficiently sound knowledge of the subject to teach all of its aspects at the expected level, and that their work is well planned and resourced. Pupils carry out their written and illustrative work carefully, and their understanding is enhanced by attractive displays, such as that for their study of an island habitant. There is a greater body of evidence for the quality of teaching and learning for pupils between seven and eleven. Here, teaching is unsatisfactory overall because pupils of eleven do not display understanding at the expected depth, having a close knowledge in some aspects of the curriculum, such as river systems, but little in others. In much of the work seen, teachers anticipated pupils' level of response by asking closed questions or offering superficial tasks that do not engage their thinking, thus limiting the opportunities for them to display what they know and understand. A significant amount of work is left unfinished. In the two lessons seen, both of which were satisfactory overall, pupils could have made greater progress had the objectives for the lesson been clearer. In these, teachers did not make the most of the close questioning and the creation of a good atmosphere for learning with which they began their lessons, because the work offered was not clearly defined nor well matched to the learning needs of all pupils.
118. The geography curriculum covers all the required aspects of the subject, although some of these are taught too superficially to older pupils to ensure that they can build progressively on their skills and understanding. A clear exception to this is pupils' very good understanding of environmental issues, and of the way in which different environments may be improved. Here, under the leadership of the new geography co-ordinator, parents, staff and pupils have taken initiatives in improving the school grounds and in raising their awareness of the importance of recycling waste materials. Visits, both day and residential, are used to enhance pupils' knowledge. In post for four months, the co-ordinator is currently evaluating the scheme of work and resources to ensure that the requirements of the curriculum are better met.

HISTORY

119. Standards in history are in line with those expected nationally for both seven and eleven year-olds, and are similar to those seen in the course of the last inspection. Pupils of all ages make the progress expected, although pupils between Years 3 and 6 with greater aptitude for the subject would progress even more rapidly if they were given more frequent opportunities to find out and interpret their own information.
120. By the age of seven, pupils have developed a sound appreciation that life in the past was different from that today. For example, they learn about the life and work of Florence Nightingale, and understand the contribution she made to the cleanliness and comfort of hospital patients. They know that the toys of today are more sophisticated than those at the disposal of children in the past, and appreciate that seaside attractions in Victorian times were different from contemporary ones. They learn that past events are regularly commemorated today, firstly through the celebration of birthdays and religious festivals, and later through an exploration of the symbolism and events surrounding Remembrance Day. Pupils develop a sound understanding of what they have learnt because teachers offer clear explanations, use inventive teaching strategies to capture pupils' imagination, and provide a good range of resources to enhance their learning.
121. Between the ages of seven and eleven, pupils continue to make satisfactory progress, although those with greater aptitude for the subject are not given sufficient opportunities to find out information for themselves and are sometimes constrained from expressing themselves at sufficient length by the nature of the work they are offered. By the age of eleven, pupils understand to some degree the chronological order of major historical events. They compare life

in the 1950s with that today, and know something of the lives of the major popular figures of recent history. Pupils in Year 3 learn about the children in Elizabethan times, while older pupils study the aspects of the civilisations of ancient Egypt, and can explain some of the hardships endured by families in wartime Britain. Across the school, those with special educational needs progress at a rate similar to that of other pupils.

122. The quality of teaching across the school is satisfactory, although good and very good teaching was observed in Year 2 during the course of the inspection. Teachers generally display good knowledge of the subject and offer clear explanations to their pupils. In all of the lessons seen, teachers monitor pupils' progress well when they are working individually, offering appropriate support and additional clarification where this is necessary. The work offered is generally at an appropriate level for pupils of average ability, but often it is too heavily teacher-directed. The tasks set do not always match the learning needs of those of greater aptitude and ability, and the length of response pupils are expected to make is too frequently limited by the space allowed for them on photocopied worksheets. In the best lessons, there are high expectations for pupils' learning. In one very good lesson, for example, pupils in Year 2 were expected to make simple notes on the contents of a video they were watching, and to use these as a basis for an open-ended writing task; this they managed well. Across the school, pupils manifest considerable enthusiasm for the subject, and display particular interest when their own lives are compared with those of children in the past. Resources are used well to enrich pupils' learning, and pupils' achievements are shared and celebrated at the end of lessons.
123. The history curriculum covers a sufficiently wide variety of themes in enough detail for most pupils, although there are insufficient opportunities for those of greater aptitude and ability to find out and interpret information for themselves. The subject co-ordinator is new to the post and has not yet had the opportunity to make an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. There are some procedures for assessment in the subject, but their use is not well developed, so staff cannot be yet sure that their lessons are always well directed towards the learning needs of their pupils. Resources for the subject, including artefacts, are generally sufficient and well deployed. Visits are used satisfactorily to support the history curriculum; for example, older pupils have visited a museum in Leicester while younger ones have explored the Victorian exhibits at the Snibston Discovery Park.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

124. Pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Year 2; this is an improvement from the average standards reported at the time of the last inspection. This improvement is a direct result of the better provision of computers, effective staff training and the more detailed scheme of work. Standards at the end of Year 6 remain in line with expectations. This is because the pupils in this Year group have only recently had access to the improved provision and as a result have not had sufficient opportunities to develop their computer skills. However, they are making good progress. As a direct consequence of staff support in lessons, pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language are making the same progress as their class.
125. By the end of Year 2, because of good support from staff, pupils successfully use the word processing programs to create simple stories or to record information from their work in the classroom. The majority can print and save their work, and use different icons to import pictures into their texts. In Year 1 for example, pupils used this knowledge to create speech for their story of Cinderella, progressing in Year 2 to inserting text into pictures. Most pupils edit their work, deleting or inserting letters to correct their mistakes and, with support, research topics using CD-ROMs. Although pupils' spelling skills limit their ability to write without support, more able pupils are beginning to use the 'spell check' facility well. Most pupils recognise the different conventions of the computer and have a good understanding of computer technology and vocabulary and the use of computers in the wider world. In addition, all can access the paint and draw programs to produce good quality artwork.
126. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress when they use computers in the computer room. However, more limited use is made of the computers situated in the classrooms, many of which require upgrading to better support learning. As a result many pupils view computers and

computing as a separate subject not as an integral part of the curriculum. In addition, assessment procedures although used well to track progress are not yet used sufficiently to match work to pupils' different levels of ability. As a result more able older pupils and those who have more regular access to computers are not always challenged in designated lessons. However, all pupils are enthusiastic and keen to develop their skills, more able pupils who have finished their tasks confidently supporting their friends who are struggling. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory level of ability that allows them to identify, evaluate and retrieve information and are beginning to use data handling and spread sheets, to record information and to support their learning in mathematics. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are beginning to explore graphic modelling. Using *drag, copy* and *paste*, most are able to create different shapes to assemble a simple plan of their school. Their limited geographical skills, however, limit the progress they make. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the use of this technology in the wider world and an increasing awareness of the full potential of the Internet and electronic mail. This has been helped by the recent improved Internet access. Good use is made of the room during timetabled lessons and pupils were keen to work after school in order to improve their skills. However, there is not yet a dedicated computer club where pupils can support each other and gain confidence.

127. The quality of teaching within the computer room is consistently good, and this has improved since the last inspection. Training and an improved scheme of work have had a positive impact on staff confidence and skills. This ensures that pupils make good progress in lessons and although older pupils have only recently benefited from this good level of support they too are making rapid progress. Lessons are well planned and specific skills are taught well. As already indicated however, staff are not yet matching work sufficiently to ability in order to challenge more able pupils. However, they effectively pair pupils of differing abilities together, which pupils benefit from, well.
128. The subject is well led. The recently appointed co-ordinator for the subject is well informed and has a clear sense of vision for the future development of the subject. Assessment procedures recently introduced provide an appropriate way of tracking attainment within each module of learning. These require development in order to better match tasks to ability. The subject development plan is clear and focussed on appropriate developmental areas. Resources have improved within the designated room, and other equipment, for example digital cameras, support learning well. The school is aware of the need to further develop the use of computers within the classrooms.

MUSIC

129. Judgements are based on observation of a small number of lessons, discussions with pupils and teachers, and examination of written work. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. The previous inspection reported similar standards. Music has not been identified as a priority for development while the school has concentrated on raising standards in the core subjects.
130. The progress made by children in Years 1 and 2, from a starting point that is below national expectations, is good. In Year 2, for example, pupils show secure understanding of pulse and respond by moving their whole body to the beat of music by Vangelis.
131. Pupils from Year 4 in the Year 4/5 class are working above the expected level for their age group. They speak confidently about quality of sound or timbre and devise their own compositions to illustrate this. Year 6 pupils have recorded examples of challenging work on dynamics and creating silence in their music books. Overall progress through Key Stage 2 is satisfactory.
132. There are good links with the local high school and community college and pupils have benefited from taking part in larger scale musical events. However, it was noticed that when singing was part of an assembly during the inspection this lacked enthusiasm and expression. Visitors to the school have included The London Mozart Orchestra and players from a range of bands. There is a choir and recorder ensembles that meet at lunchtime, and those pupils who take part in a range of instrumental lessons taught by the visiting specialists are progressing well.

133. Teaching is at least satisfactory overall. Some good teaching of singing was observed in Years 1 and 2. Very good teaching was seen in Year 2 and Year 4/5. Where the teaching was very good, teachers were secure in their subject knowledge and shared their enthusiasm with pupils. The lessons were challenging and contained opportunities for listening, appraising and creating as well as performing. The pace was brisk and pupils were very well managed and given a range of whole-class, group and paired activities to work on. Some of these involved being taught knowledge and skills and others centred on independent experimentation and discussion. The resulting quality of pupils' learning was good. One unsatisfactory lesson was observed in Key Stage 2; there was also evidence in pupils' books to indicate insecure teacher knowledge and the setting of unchallenging work for pupils.
134. The co-ordinator provides good support for colleagues through her own expertise and a well-constructed scheme of work. Her priority for development is providing further support through monitoring teaching and learning in order to raise standards. This priority is well chosen; there is evidence that, where teaching is unsatisfactory, there is insecure knowledge and there are weaknesses in short term planning. Long-term objectives are fairly clear but the means to achieve them are less so. It is important therefore that the co-ordinator addresses staff training needs and sharpens the focus of short term planning by colleagues with less musical expertise. Assessment checklists have been produced by the co-ordinator, to assist colleagues in checking pupils' progress and for assessing learning. It is important that the use of these is monitored.
135. Provision for teaching the subject has suffered as a result of the use of the music studio for a variety of other purposes following the removal and non-replacement of two demountable classrooms. The subject is well resourced and includes examples of untuned percussion instruments from other countries and cultures and a good range of CDs.
136. The subject would benefit from the use of good quality ICT software to promote independent learning in composition. There is a need to build on the good practice seen and develop independent working and composition by pupils throughout all year groups.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. Only lessons in games and gymnastics were observed during the inspection. Discussions with staff and pupils and an examination of records indicate that overall standards at the end of Year 2 are above average and pupils have made good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is a result of the good start made in the reception class and consistently good teaching in Year 1 and 2.
138. At the end of Year 6, pupils are attaining the overall standards expected for their age. In games, pupils are attaining above average standards, due to the good level of competitive sports undertaken, access to the large field and the commitment of staff. Standards in swimming however are below average despite pupils having regular swimming lessons in all Year groups. This is at least partly due to pupils not attending school on swimming days, which impacts on the progressive development of their skills. This is in spite of staff efforts to encourage pupils to attend. In addition the limited size of the school hall directly impacts on the standards in gymnastics for older pupils. It is difficult, for example, to use all apparatus and provide adequate space for older and larger pupils to move around in safety. The school uses a nearby sports hall occasionally in order to allow older pupils chance to experience the full range of activities. Pupils' overall progress through Key Stage 2 is satisfactory.
139. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a good awareness of space, they move with good levels of control to produce good sequences. In games, pupils have good catching skills and are able to use the space well, blocking, collecting and passing the ball well in a simple game. This is due to the good support of teachers who use demonstrations well to support learning. Pupils are enthusiastic but staff clearly encourage safe movements and as result pupils listen carefully and keep to the rules. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and encouraged to participate in team activities. This is a positive aspect and benefits them considerably.
140. In gymnastics, pupils in Years 5 and 6 are well aware of the need to warm up and the effects of exercise on their bodies. Teaching is consistently good and often very good especially when

developing floor work. Pupils move confidently, creating different sequences, holding balances appropriately and refining their performances through supportive evaluations from teachers who have good subject knowledge. Apparatus work however is less well developed and pupils lack confidence to transfer their sequences onto apparatus. Pupils lack experience in this work due to the difficulties within the restricted space. Pupils found it difficult to move freely without straying onto other mats, and the pace of lessons slowed to ensure pupils moved apparatus safely. Pupils' games and athletic skills are enhanced through a good range of extra-curricular sports activities, and competitions.

141. The quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection and is at least satisfactory with some good and very good teaching seen. Teachers are good role models for pupils and set high standards in terms of safety and achievement. Lessons are well planned and structured, with warm up and cool down activities linked appropriately to pupils' work in science on pulse rates. Teachers give clear instructions and manage pupils firmly, praising efforts and evaluating performances well. Less well developed are pupils' own evaluations of their performances through watching each other's work and good role models in demonstration.
142. The role of the co-ordinator has been well developed since the last inspection and although only recently appointed she has a clear understanding of strengths and areas for development. Her plans to improve expertise in dance, continue to develop resources and to encourage pupils to attend swimming lessons through additional rewards for example, are relevant to moving the subject forward.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

143. As only a small number of religious education lessons were directly observed during the inspection, judgements were also based on evidence from scrutiny of books, teachers' planning and discussion with pupils. Attainment in the subject was judged to be in line with expectations at the age of seven and also at eleven at the time of the last inspection. This standard has been maintained with a new scheme of work, presently in draft form, being developed to take account of the new locally agreed syllabus. Most pupils progress from having little pre-school knowledge and experience of personal faith to being able to demonstrate awareness of the key beliefs of some principal religions and an understanding that faith is important to many people. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate a good attitude to the subject and generally respect the feelings and beliefs of others. They make satisfactory progress in developing their knowledge and understanding in this area of the curriculum.
144. By the time they are seven, many pupils correctly retell some of the religious stories they have heard and some can explain the meaning behind them. They show awareness that there are different religions and different ways in which people worship. In discussion they stated that some people pray to God but that others pray to Rama and Sita. Year 2 pupils explained that God must have been helping Jesus and making him special because he was able to share out five loaves and two fishes between a large number of people. Some pupils in Year 2 are able to name certain religious festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Divali. In the lessons observed, most pupils could understand the importance of caring for others, considering peoples' feelings and establishing good relationships. Children are encouraged to respect differences of opinion and belief.
145. Pupils in Year 6 and many in Year 5 can differentiate between sacred texts such as the Bible, Torah and Qur'an, and they understand the importance of these in the religious lives of some people. They show respect for different religions and ways of life and understand how offence can be caused. They show knowledge and understanding of the different ways of worshipping God and know the basic differences between the principal religions. They are beginning to apply some of the moral values on which religious life is based, to their own lives. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 know the main events of the Easter story and describe the feelings of the main characters, some of these with understanding and empathy. Some pupils in Year 4 explain the way in which Hindu shrines are used.
146. In the lessons directly observed during the inspection, teaching was mainly satisfactory, with one very good lesson. In the Year 2 lesson where teaching was very good, pupils were given an

opportunity to explore their own feelings and those of others in a way that made their learning relevant to them. Teaching demonstrated a clear understanding of how young children learn and involved a variety of teaching strategies. Role-play was used effectively with children 'brainstorming' and writing down ideas for speaking parts for the re-enactment of 'The Prodigal Son'. The activities set in one class containing pupils from Year 3 and Year 4, were appropriately differentiated and challenged more able and average ability pupils. However, the work for less able pupils was less well matched to pupil needs and required a high level of support. Pupils with special educational needs are satisfactorily and sometimes well catered for through differentiated work and appropriate support.

147. In lessons seen during the inspection and in scrutiny of books it was clear that teachers make good use of linking religious education closely with literacy studies, particularly with a range of different types of writing and with developing speaking and listening skills. Opportunity for independent learning through research presentation and debate is under-developed. Teachers do not make full use of the information technology suite and of computers generally for encouraging independent research to further aid learning in this subject.
148. The co-ordinator has sought to improve standards in the subject by implementing a new scheme of work based on national guidelines and complementing the locally agreed syllabus. The school policy has been revised but has not yet been presented to the Governing Body for approval. The subject is fairly well resourced with a good range of multi-cultural religious artefacts although there was evidence to suggest that not all teachers are confident in using these. There was also little evidence that computer software is being fully used.
149. Assessment procedures have now been developed and it is expected that these will be carried out as part of teachers' weekly evaluation and are intended to influence weekly planning. It is too early to judge the impact of this development. The co-ordinator maintains a portfolio of annotated pupils' work for monitoring and assessment purposes. Pupils from various faiths and denominations within them are fully included. Further development is necessary to enhance and enrich learning opportunities by establishing closer links with people from other cultures and faith communities perhaps not represented in the school. Encouraging visitors from other faiths to share their knowledge and expertise with the pupils and staff and increasing the frequency and number of school visits to a greater variety of places of worship would help to prepare pupils more fully for life in a multi-racial and multi-cultural society.