

INSPECTION REPORT

ST LUKE'S C.E. LOWER SCHOOL (DUSTON)

Old Duston, Northampton.

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122009

Headteacher: Mrs S Edmonds

Reporting inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 18th – 21st February 2002

Inspection number: 243893

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Main Road Old Duston Northampton
Postcode:	NN5 6JB
Telephone number:	01604 752707
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr G Kent
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Registered inspector	Foundation Stage; Equal opportunities; English as an additional language; Mathematics. Science; Information and communication technology (ICT); Art and design; Design and technology; Physical education.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well are pupils taught; How well is the school led and managed; What should the school do to improve further.
13526	Richard Barnard	Lay inspector		The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well does the school care for its pupils; How well does the school work in partnership with parents.
23453	Carole Cressey	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Geography; History; Music; Religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS	10
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS	18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Luke's C.E. Lower School is a smaller than average sized school. A total of 77 pupils attend the school made up of 41 boys and 36 girls aged from four to nine. Most pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds and live in an area that is economically average. None is at an early stage of English acquisition. Ten pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is about average. Twenty-three pupils have special educational needs, which is average, and none has a statement of special educational need. The number entering the school each year is small and therefore standards on entry vary from year to year. On balance, most pupils have levels of attainment that are above those expected for their age and almost all have benefited from pre-school educational experience. There have been several significant changes since the last inspection. The number of pupils attending the school has fallen significantly and almost all of the teachers have been at the school for less than a year. The school has been part of the local authority programme of review and is to become a primary school from September 2003.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with some significant strengths. The headteacher leads and inspires the staff and has built a highly effective team well supported by the very capable governing body. Leadership and management are very good. The quality of teaching is good and has a positive impact on learning and raising standards. Standards are above average in English, mathematics and science. The school makes good use of funds and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, music and design and technology are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4.
- Standards achieved in the Foundation Stage are above average and progress is good.
- The quality of teaching is good with some very good and excellent features.
- The leadership and management are very good and the excellent headteacher inspires confidence in staff, parents, pupils and governors.
- The pupils' behaviour, relationships and attitudes are very good and underpinned by the very caring staff.
- Links with parents are very good.

What could be improved

- The use of computers in several subjects.
- The use of individual targets to encourage progress.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection in June 1997 and the headteacher and governors have done much to restore parents' confidence in the school by improving the quality of education and raising standards. Issues from the previous report have been tackled well and the school is now in a secure position to build upon its strengths. Leadership and management provide a firm steer to school improvement and are very good. The quality of teaching is now good and the curriculum is much better organised. Standards at the end of Year 2 are much higher than before and they have also risen to above average in English, mathematics and science for pupils at the end of Year 4. There is an air of confidence but no complacency about what has already been achieved; the school is very well placed to build upon its strengths.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

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

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

The school has made good headway in raising standards since the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress throughout the school and standards are set to improve as a result. The children make good progress in the reception year and by the start of Year 1 have exceeded the early learning goals in all the areas of learning. They are particularly successful in personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, physical and mathematical development where standards are higher than those expected for their age. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4 and well above average in writing. Overall, boys and girls do equally well. The school sets challenging targets which it is on course to meet. The pupils achieve at a sufficiently high level in almost all aspects of their work due to effective teaching. Standards in art and design, music and design and technology are above those expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4. In geography, history, information and communication technology (ICT), religious education and physical education standards are appropriate for pupils aged seven and nine. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as they receive effective support. The more able are given challenging work and achieve well. Pupils make very good progress in applying their literacy skills in other subjects but they have too few opportunities to apply their knowledge of computers to their work in other subjects and this aspect of their progress has been unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of school. They are well motivated and persevere with their work, taking much pride in presenting it well. The pupils join in well at the start of lessons, contributing effectively to discussions. They settle quickly to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils have a clear understanding of the differences between right and wrong. They know that their actions may affect others and are developing into mature and considerate people. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils are good at working together in groups. Relationships are very good and the pupils support one another well. Reception children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development.
Attendance	Very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school and arrive in good time. Attendance is well above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5 - 7 years	aged 7 - 9 years
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

Throughout the school the quality of teaching is good with some very good features. The teaching of reception children is good and contributes well to their personal, social and emotional development and skills in communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. In Years 1 to 4 the teaching of English, mathematics and science is good with some very good and excellent lessons. Teachers have generally good subject knowledge, which they use well to plan interesting and sufficiently challenging lessons. The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is very good and teachers encourage the pupils to apply these skills effectively. Numeracy skills are also used well to support learning in subjects such as art and design and design and technology. The teachers have high expectations and the pupils respond well by working hard and producing work of good quality. They achieve a very effective balance between developing skills and techniques and providing opportunities for pupils to experiment and investigate. Support staff make an important contribution to the teaching and their guidance of pupils with special educational needs is particularly effective. The teaching meets the needs of all pupils and there is sufficient challenge for the more able. There are several strengths in the teaching including the thorough planning and preparation of lessons. The teachers manage behaviour very well and most pupils are attentive and very well behaved listeners. Teaching of ICT is satisfactory although teachers do not use computers sufficiently to promote learning in other subjects.

Pupils' learning is good. They show good commitment to working hard and show much enthusiasm and interest in subjects such as religious education, history, geography and music, often inspired by their teachers. They work very hard in physical education. Other good skills in learning such as co-operation and collaboration are marked strengths.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school promotes equal opportunities well. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities and visits to places of local and national interest. The curriculum for reception children is good. The school's approach to teaching literacy is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support staff contribute very well to the pupils' learning, although some targets in individual education plans are not precise enough.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school is very successful in promoting the pupils' spiritual and moral development. There is a strong code of conduct underpinned by the school's promotion of care and value of others. Social and cultural provision is good and pupils are prepared appropriately for life in a culturally diverse society. There are very good links with the community and other schools.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very effectively. All staff are caring and know the pupils very well. They monitor pupils' personal development thoroughly. Assessment procedures are good but more remains to be done to sharpen up targets which guide pupils on how they might improve further.

Parents have an excellent opinion of the school and support their children's education very well. Many parents provide very good help in the school. The Friends of the School are very supportive socially and financially.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads and guides an effective and hard-working team excellently and inspires and enthuses those around her. Although most of the teachers are new to the school they already play an effective role in leading the subjects.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Excellent. The governors take a vigorous part in monitoring how well the school is doing. The school has very good long-term plans and staff and governors have much vision and enthusiasm.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The staff analyse performance in tests and use the information well. Challenging targets are set for staff and the governors monitor them well. The school is always seeking ways in which to improve.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Staff and governors are careful to ensure that funds are used well to provide best value for supplies and services. The school has good resources, except for ICT, reading and the Foundation Stage. There is a good number of staff. The accommodation is good, although the playgrounds have uneven surfaces.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy school, have positive attitudes and behave well. • The teaching is good and helps their children to make good progress. • The headteacher leads the schools very well and inspires confidence in parents and staff. • All staff are approachable and show much concern for the children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents raised no issues.

The inspection team fully endorse the positive views of parents.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards have improved much since the previous inspection and generally are above average by the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards are sufficiently high. Inspection evidence shows that standards are rising and the school is well on course to achieve its demanding targets. The reasons for the improvement are due to much improved teaching, thorough planning and a well-balanced curriculum, effective subject leadership and strong school leadership and management. The school sets challenging targets for performance in national and other tests and is on course to meet them. However, individual targets for pupils are not sharp enough. This success has been achieved against a background of changing staff and some uncertainty about the school's future and is a tribute to the dedication and drive of the outstanding headteacher and rigorous governing body. There is now a cohesive and committed team of teachers and support staff who are sharply focused on raising attainment and ensuring that all pupils make as much progress as possible. As a result of this excellent teamwork standards are rising consistently throughout the school. The school is poised to achieve even higher standards in the future as the impact of consistently good and better teaching makes an increasingly powerful impact on pupils' learning.
2. Throughout the school the pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and by the end of Year 4 many of the pupils identified earlier in the school as having learning difficulties attain average standards for their age and this represents good success. The support given to pupils with special educational needs contributes much to their good progress. The classroom assistants and voluntary reading helpers ask well-focused questions and are always knowledgeable about individual pupils so that the work they set is pitched at the right level. More able pupils also make good progress. The teachers match work well to the needs of the pupils and effective grouping of pupils by ability in lessons such as mathematics and English helps to promote effective learning. The school identifies gifted and talented pupils and provides extra and sufficiently challenging work for them; they make good progress, particularly in English. Boys and girls make good progress. Although there are a few variations in performance in national tests between girls and boys they are not significant as the number of pupils taking the tests is small. Nevertheless, the school is aware of differences and has been successful in closing the gap in performance.
3. There are variations in the attainment on admission of children to the reception class from year to year due to the small size of the cohorts. The current group of reception children is generally quite well advanced in their skills, knowledge and understanding and none has special educational needs. Other groups in the school, particularly the current Year 4, had average attainment on admission. Children in the reception year make good progress overall and very good progress in personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development. Progress in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world is good. By the end of the reception year, the children achieve well and exceed the early learning goals in all of the areas of learning. They are particularly successful in writing, music, and physical skills.

4. In 2001, the results of national tests at the end of Year 2 showed that standards in reading and mathematics were above the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. The pupils attained well above average standards in writing when compared with all schools and those with similar intakes. The relatively better performance in writing when compared with reading was due to the school's very effective initiative in promoting writing skills across the curriculum and the lack of a stimulating reading scheme. Teacher assessments in science showed that standards were average overall and a well above average proportion of pupils attained the higher level 3. Pupils at the end of Year 4 achieved above average standards in English, mathematics and science in optional national tests. There has been good improvement over time in raising pupils' performance in national tests at a rate which is better than the national trend. Most improvement has been in writing and mathematics. Indications are that standards are continuing to rise steadily due to good teaching. This improvement has been achieved against a background of significant staff turnover. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 4. The current Year 2 pupils are likely to attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science and they achieve particularly well in writing. The improvement in science is due to good teaching.
5. Throughout the school, pupils apply their literacy skills very well in several subjects. Their writing in history, geography and religious education is imaginative, thoughtful and clear, and they make good use of their skills in spelling, handwriting and grammar to create stimulating writing which includes good vocabulary. Pupils are beginning to organise their writing well in science and make effective use of notes, headings and labels to make their work clear; in design and technology they use labelled diagrams and sequence instructions correctly. Numeracy skills are used well to enhance the pupils' work. In art and design they apply their knowledge of pattern and shape very well when designing "Joseph's coat". In design and technology they carefully measure strips of wood to cut and make a photograph frame. They are also good at reading measurements in science and satisfactorily present some of their findings in graphs and charts. However, pupils have limited opportunities to apply their skills in using computers to enhance their work in other subjects, either through the extended use of the Internet or for making graphs and charts.
6. Throughout the school pupils have above average skills in speaking and listening. They confidently discuss their work and speak audibly and clearly in public. They are able to sustain a conversation and talk about their interests with an awareness of who is listening. Pupils are very attentive and good listeners. They clearly show an understanding of complex instructions. In discussion times they are thoughtful and considerate of others and the older pupils are able to take in several viewpoints and then enter into informed discussion. Reading standards are good and the pupils read accurately and with expression. They cope well with a range of texts and sensibly discuss their preferences for a variety of authors. They read well when extracting information from reference books. Pupils write in an imaginative and creative style when recalling events in their lives. They use different styles of writing effectively and include a wide vocabulary to maintain the reader's interest. Handwriting, spelling, grammar and punctuation are of a good standard.
7. The pupils have good skills in number work and secure knowledge of number and multiplication facts. They also have a good understanding of space, shape and measures. Their good vocabulary and understanding of mathematical ideas equips them well in solving problems of increasing complexity. Pupils clearly explain

strategies they use to investigate and solve problems. Their skills in data handling and using graphs are average and hampered by insufficient use of computers.

8. Pupils have good scientific knowledge and a secure knowledge of scientific terms and procedures. They readily and systematically carry out experiments ensuring the processes they use are consistent. Pupils have a good knowledge of life and living processes and explain clearly a variety of life cycles. They understand well physical processes and understand circuits and forces. They successfully combine this knowledge when making models in design and technology, for example making torches.
9. Standards in ICT, religious education, history, geography and physical education are in line with those expected at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils have good skills in swimming and games and are beginning to improve their tactical prowess. Their writing in religious education, history and geography is of good quality. In ICT the pupils have secure basic skills in word processing, control and modelling but are less secure in applying their skills. Standards in art and design, music and design and technology are above those expected for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 4. Pupils make very good progress in these subjects as the teaching is often of high quality.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes, values and relationships have improved since the previous inspection and are now very good. These, together with good levels of personal development and their very good attendance, have a very positive impact on their achievements. Pupils enjoy coming to their school and show great interest in activities. Attendance rates are very good being well above the national average. Pupils arrive in good time ensuring lessons start on time.
11. The children in reception have settled into school very well and have quickly adapted to routines. They pay very good attention in lessons, work very effectively and have very good relationships with the Year 1 pupils in the same class. For example, their excellent behaviour and co-operation in a physical education lesson enabled them to meet the challenge of hopping while passing balls very well. The children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development.
12. Throughout the school pupils show very good attitudes to learning and concentrate very well in lessons. In all classes pupils show impressive levels of concentration and try very hard to please their teachers. This is particularly evident in music where attitudes were excellent in every lesson observed. For example, the enthusiastic musicians of Year 2 achieve high standards of skill in keeping a steady pulse when learning songs from other cultures. Pupils enjoy all subjects and show much enthusiasm for practical work. They are creative and imaginative in art and design and design and technology. They concentrate very well in lessons in English and mathematics and are keen to improve their work. A particular strength in pupils' attitudes is the way they apply their skills learned in literacy lessons to work in other subjects.
13. Behaviour is very good at all times. No pupils have been excluded over the past two years, a figure well below the national average. Pupils have an excellent sense of fairness and share an awareness of the impact of their actions on others. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was observed during the inspection and pupils and parents raised no concerns in these areas.

14. Pupils' personal development is good. The pupils are mature and sensible. They undertake duties and responsibilities keenly, such as acting as the headteacher's personal assistants at lunchtimes. They support local events well. When given the opportunity they use their initiative well. They are confident and are developing good levels of self-esteem. Relationships are very good throughout the school and have a very good impact on learning. For example, co-operation in group work in a Year 3 science lesson helped pupils learn very well about fair testing and the classification of different types of rocks.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

15. Teaching has improved much since the previous inspection and it is now good with some very good and excellent features. The quality of teaching has a significant impact on the pupils' success in most subjects and promotes effective learning. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good overall and is very good and sometimes excellent in promoting the children's personal, social, emotional, creative and physical development. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is also good. Teaching successfully meets the needs of all pupils and the issue regarding challenge for the more able has been tackled well. In the lessons seen, teaching was never less than satisfactory and 94 per cent were good or better with a half being very good or excellent. The improvement in teaching has been achieved through rigorous and supportive monitoring by the headteacher and governors, good guidance through schemes of work, the school's successful appointment procedures and good training. The parents' very positive views about the quality of teaching are fully justified by inspection evidence.
16. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is effective and enables the children to make at least good progress. The staff work together well and this teamwork ensures that the needs of the children are met. Planning is thorough and the teacher successfully manages to balance the needs of the reception children with those in Year 1. One of the advantages of the mixed age class is the opportunity for the more able reception children to work alongside their older classmates. This approach ensures that there is good challenge. The staff also provide a good balance of practical work and opportunities for the children to improve their skills. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is good as there is an effective balance between regular practice of reading, teaching of letter sounds and good opportunities for the children to listen to stories and learn rhymes and poems. Writing is taught very well and the children learn avidly as they practise forming letters correctly, experiment with pattern and write about events in their lives. Without putting the children under pressure the staff move learning on at a good pace through lots of encouragement and by building on what the children already know. The teaching of mathematical development is good and the balance of practical work, recording numbers and oral practice stimulate learning. There is often excellent teaching of creative and physical development as the lessons are planned thoroughly. In these lessons the activities are structured very well and skills are developed and practised so that the children make very good progress and develop much confidence. In a music lesson the high expectations of the teacher ensured that the children behaved well and handled musical instruments with care. There were excellent opportunities for the children to compose and perform. The brisk pace and wide variety of activities held the children's attention and learning was exceptionally effective. The teacher used similar strategies in a physical education lesson. The children were guided carefully and taught specific skills but also given many opportunities to plan their own work. The children respond very well to the teaching and work hard. They apply much creative and physical effort

and are keen to improve. The infectious enthusiasm of the staff does much to inspire confidence in the children and equips them well for the next stage of their education.

17. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and receive good support and guidance in meeting the targets in their individual education plans. The staff are well aware of the pupils' needs and interests and prepare lessons which include appropriately matched tasks with the right amount of challenge to move learning on successfully. Most of the pupils with special educational needs achieve well and by the end of Year 4 attain standards which are appropriate for their age. This success is due to the good support provided by classroom assistants and voluntary reading helpers. Resources to support the teaching are used well and there is a suitable balance between extra help in lessons and occasional withdrawal for specific guidance.
18. Teaching in Years 1 to 4 is also good with some very good and excellent lessons. There are several strengths which are evident in all classes and this consistency has done much to improve the rate of pupils' progress and raise standards. Although all staff have their own approach, and this individuality is encouraged by the headteacher, all teachers share a commitment to planning work thoroughly so that the needs of all pupils are met. They use a common format for planning and most importantly share with the pupils what is to be taught in each lesson. This benefits the pupils who have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. Lessons begin with clear introductions and the teacher share ideas or follow up on work done previously to check on the pupils' understanding. They use well-focused questions and hold the pupils' attention through brisk interchanges and the occasional use of humour. In almost all lessons behaviour is managed very well and the pupils clearly understand their responsibility to contribute to learning. Most are keen and interested and like to share their suggestions. This worked particularly well in an art and design lesson in Year 4 where the pupils contributed their ideas about using a variety of tools and media to create a textured landscape picture. The staff value the pupils' ideas. In a design and technology lesson in Year 2 the teacher allowed the pupils to express their ideas and enthusiasm and this resulted in them making good progress in designing patterns as they were able to draw on their own and others' good ideas.
19. A particular strength in the teaching is the positive relationships between all adults and the pupils and this contributes to making the school a purposeful environment where learning is valued. The consistent use of the school's behaviour strategies and caring contract underpin these successful relationships. The pace of lessons is generally good although there were a few instances where lessons went on too long and the momentum of learning was lost. The work set is sufficiently challenging and the more able benefit from this by working in small groups where they are able to discuss their work and compete against one another in a friendly but purposeful way. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils' learning and parents are satisfied with the amount given. Reading, spelling and some mathematics are sent home regularly and occasionally the pupils carry out small research tasks.
20. There are a few areas where teaching could be better. The staff do not make sufficient use of ICT in their teaching and this hampers pupils' progress in using computers to support their work in several subjects. The lack of computers in some classes also limits opportunities for the pupils to practise and refine their technological skills. The teachers mark the pupils' work and often include positive comments and encouragement. In many lessons the staff work alongside the pupils and offer guidance and support and this works well. However, in general the pupils' books rarely contain sharply focused targets or guidance for the pupils on how they might improve.

21. The teaching of the subjects is good with the exception of ICT which is satisfactory. The teachers have good subject knowledge and also a thorough understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. They apply the principles of these strategies very well and adapt them to the needs of the different abilities in the class. The application of literacy skills in other subjects is very good. The teachers encourage pupils to write effectively in history, geography and religious education. Numeracy skills are used well in subjects such as design and technology, art and design and science. English and mathematics teaching is good. Lessons begin with well-paced introductions, the staff make good use of resources and their quick-fire questions enliven learning and keep the pupils on task. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are taught well and applied very effectively to the development of writing skills across the curriculum. The techniques of learning to read are taught well but the rather outdated reading scheme does little to enhance pupils' enjoyment of books. This is compensated for with the use of library books. Teachers use the last part of the lesson to review what has been learned and to check on the pupils' understanding. In the best lessons the support staff also participate in these sessions.
22. A strength in the teaching of mathematics is the way that teachers encourage the pupils to explain their answers and to use a good range of mathematical vocabulary. Mathematical apparatus of good quality is also used to help the pupils to understand new ideas and this promotes effective learning, for example when the Year 2 pupils discussed the properties of shapes they were able to see that different triangles always have three sides. One of the reasons for the pupils' good achievement in science is the way that teachers provide resources which stimulate the pupils' imagination. In Year 4 the pupils intently studied a variety of bones and in Year 3 they were absorbed as they handled a wide variety of rocks. Teachers have good scientific knowledge and use this well to develop the pupils' scientific vocabulary.
23. The teaching of art and design, music and design and technology is very good with some excellent features. The teachers' enthusiasm for the subjects is infectious and inspires the pupils to do well. There is very good teaching of skills and techniques and by equipping the pupils well and giving opportunities for them to explore and investigate the pupils' progress is rapid. In music lessons the teachers provide very good opportunities for the pupils to sing, compose and listen to a variety of styles and musical traditions. They expect much from the pupils and they respond by working hard and refining their compositions. In art and design, the teachers' very good subject knowledge is used well to plan work which includes stimulating discussion, observation of the work of famous artists and direct teaching of techniques. A particularly good feature of lessons in design and technology is the way that the teachers encourage the pupils to critically evaluate their work.
24. As a result of the good teaching the pupils' learn effectively. They concentrate well and listen attentively to instructions. Pupils have a good understanding of what they have achieved because the objectives for lessons are clear and reviewed at the end of lessons. Pupils apply themselves enthusiastically to work. They put in much physical and creative effort and are always looking for ways to improve. In almost all lessons the pupils work productively and produce good quantities of work of good quality.

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

25. The school provides a good, interesting and stimulating curriculum for all pupils and it contributes much to their academic and personal, social and emotional development. The curriculum meets statutory requirements and has improved since the previous inspection. All National Curriculum subjects receive suitable coverage and religious education is taught following the guidance followed by most schools in Northamptonshire. The staff are careful to plan the curriculum to provide for the needs of pupils of different abilities and ages. For example, the organisation of the reception/Year 1 class works very well as the staff balance the needs of the different groups and ensure that pupils receive their entitlement to either the National Curriculum or the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage.
26. Policies and schemes of work for all subjects help to ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are effectively developed across the school. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been implemented with enthusiasm and rigour and have helped to raise standards since the last inspection. The school places considerable emphasis on nurturing high quality personal and social skills and this has very positive effects on pupils' standards of achievements and their attitudes to learning. Arrangements for pupils' personal, health and sex education are good and are underpinned by the school's Christian ethos and beliefs. There are good policies for health, sex and drugs education. Time is made available within lessons to develop these areas in ways which are appropriate for the ages of the pupils.
27. The school has a very clear commitment to equality of opportunity and this is very apparent in the way all pupils are fully included in the teaching and learning. The needs of lower attaining and more able pupils are recognised and all pupils' contributions are valued. This has a positive effect on the self-esteem of all pupils and the progress they make. The curriculum prepares pupils very well for the next stage of their education.
28. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school maintains a register for special educational needs that complies with the national code of practice and meets statutory obligations. Early identification of individual needs ensures that pupils receive additional help when required. Well-structured support is provided in withdrawal groups, by individual support or in class support. Staff are very aware of the individual needs of each child and work in classes is very well matched to pupils' identified needs, which ensures that pupils are making the progress they are capable of. However, individual education plans, which describe the school's strategies for supporting pupils' progress, are not always as detailed as they should be and individual targets are often too general and lacking in sufficient detail to provide an informed picture of pupils needs and progress. Reviews of individual educational plans are carried out and the parents are invited to attend.
29. The school involves the community very well, providing a very good range of extra-curricular and sporting activities to enrich the statutory curriculum and enhance personal and social skills. Clubs include football, dance, choir, guitar and recorders and are available at lunchtimes or after school to ensure all pupils have a chance to take part. The use of visitors and visits to museums, concerts, theatres and galleries promotes pupils' interest and extends their knowledge and understanding. There are good links with the local sports clubs, artists, authors and drama groups, all adding to the quality of pupils and enhancing their learning. Visits from the police and the school nurse add to the quality of pupils' education and develop pupils' knowledge experiences and understanding of the contribution each member makes to the smooth running of a community. Links with the local church are particularly strong and develop pupils' awareness of what it means to belong to a particular faith.

30. The school has very good links with partner schools. Before pupils transfer to the middle school information on pupils' progress is exchanged and pupils enjoy time at their new school to familiarise themselves with routines and staff to ensure a happy and secure transfer. The school meets regularly with other local schools to discuss the teaching and learning. This ensures that there is consistent development of skills and knowledge as pupils move through the education system. The local playgroup meets in the school and there are very beneficial links which help to smooth transition for the young children into the reception year.
31. The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved considerably since the last inspection and provision is now good with some very good features. The school's Christian values and principles are very apparent and have a very positive effect on the quality of the teaching and learning. The pupils are prepared well for life in a culturally diverse society.
32. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Assemblies provide pupils with very good opportunities to consider important issues such as birth, death, poverty, greed and the effect of worldwide disasters. The premature death of the parish priest prompted pupils to contribute to a booklet celebrating his life and work. This was instrumental in helping pupils to come to terms with the loss of a much loved personality and member of their school, church and community. Music is particularly effective in creating a reverent and thoughtful atmosphere for worship and reflection. Within lessons staff are aware of the many opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of their place in the world and the wonders of creation. The school's grounds and the millennium sensory garden are a continual source of delight as pupils explore plants and animals and observe the changing seasons. Successes in both academic and personal achievements are recognised and valued. Pupils have opportunities to share personal events, such as the birth of a new baby, a special trip to Disneyland or the arrival of a new puppy or hamster.
33. Moral development is very good. Emphasis is placed on developing a mutual respect between staff and children. Unacceptable behaviour is dealt with in the context of how it will affect other people and pupils are encouraged to think about the impact of their actions on themselves and others. In assemblies, issues such as kindness, friendship and caring are taught well through Bible stories and fables.
34. Provision for social development is good. The pupils are aware of their responsibilities to the school and their local community. Pupils have good opportunities to develop responsibility, self-confidence and independence through well-planned lessons. The very good relationships apparent in lessons ensure that pupils feel comfortable discussing issues that concern them and asking for help and support in their learning. The organisation of lessons provides many opportunities for pupils to work together and co-operate. A sense of citizenship is developed as pupils take part in local sport and music festivals. Pupils support fundraising events to collect money for world tragedies and local charities. However, there are few opportunities for pupils to have a formal say on the way the school is organised or for older pupils to take an active role in the care of younger ones.
35. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils have a range of opportunities to learn and appreciate the richness of their own and other people's culture through music, art, geography and history. Local artists, authors, actors and musicians are invited into school to bring culture alive for the pupils and stimulate their interest in traditions, skills and events. High quality displays and the emphasis on music and art contribute to providing a rich stimulating and aesthetically pleasing environment which makes a very positive contribution to children's cultural development. Through

religious education lessons pupils study the major world religions. Through assemblies pupils have opportunities to learn about some of the major celebrations of other faiths and cultures such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year. However, there are few links with communities with a diversity of cultural, traditions and religions that would develop further pupils' understanding of how different people live.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

36. The school provides very good care for its pupils which helps them to feel confident and secure. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection, especially in relation to the key issue of health and safety.
37. Procedures for child protection are good and the headteacher ensures all staff have regular reminders in relation to awareness of potential issues. There are very good informal systems to monitor pupils' personal development. Staff know the pupils very well and this allows them to give very good individual support. Very good induction procedures help reception pupils to settle well into school.
38. The school has adopted a very thorough health and safety policy and the staff and governors have dealt with all issues from the previous report very effectively. All risks are regularly reviewed and governors play a full part in identifying and dealing with potential issues. Fire procedures and arrangements for first aid and dealing with sick pupils are very good. The building is very clean, tidy and secure.
39. The school promotes and monitors standards of behaviour very effectively. Praise and rewards are used very consistently in relation to attitudes as well as behaviour, and this has a very positive impact on pupils' self-esteem. Parents and pupils are very confident that any potentially serious issues are nipped in the bud by staff. Very good supervision in the playground is having a very positive impact on behaviour and relationships. Pupils with special educational needs are cared for well enabling them to be fully included in all aspects of school life. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are very effective and contribute well to the very good levels.
40. The school has improved the procedures for assessment since the previous inspection and they are now good. The teachers keep good records of the pupils' progress and this process starts in the reception year where the teacher checks regularly on how the children have improved when measured against the results of assessment on admission to the school. Teachers have a good understanding of National Curriculum levels and use assessment to check on how well the pupils are making progress.
41. The headteacher, staff and governors analyse national test results and look for any patterns in performance. They use this information well, for example in closing the gap in attainment between boys and girls. The school complies with testing requirements for pupils at the end of Year 2 and also uses optional national tests in Years 3 and 4. The results of these tests provide a useful benchmark for checking on how well the pupils are improving each year. Staff also have a clear understanding of how well the pupils achieve in the foundation subjects and keep good records. However, insufficient use is made of assessment information to set targets which guide individual pupils on how they might improve.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

42. The partnership with parents is very good and has a strong influence on pupils' attitudes to learning. The headteacher has been very effective in promoting and

improving this partnership since the previous inspection and the subsequent period when parents' confidence in the school fell.

43. Parents hold a very high opinion of the school. In the pre-inspection survey, at the parents' meeting and during the inspection they praised highly all areas of the school's work. In particular they feel that behaviour and teaching are good, and the school expects their children to work hard and become mature. Inspectors agree with these positive views.
44. The school works hard to involve parents in the life of the school and their children's education. Newsletters give very good information on staffing, events and policies in a very readable format. The recent introduction of mathematics targets sheets on a termly basis gives parents very good information of what is expected of their child and how they can help. Annual reports are satisfactory. They contain limited information and evaluation of individual standards and give little specific indication of areas for development. The school is very open to parents who feel that they can come in with problems. Reading records are used very effectively as a means of communication between school and home.
45. Parents are very well involved in their children's education and provide very good support to the school. They encourage children to complete their homework and regularly hear them read. Many provide very well organised and regular help in lessons. They ensure children's prompt and regular attendance. All attend the well-organised and informative consultation sessions. The Friends of the School are very supportive in arranging social events and especially in raising considerable sums to provide extras for the pupils, such as music tuition.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

46. The leadership and management of the school are very good and the headteacher is excellent as she provides inspiration to the staff and a firm steer to school improvement and raising standards. The headteacher is supported very well by the staff, most of who are new to the school. The governors also contribute to effective school management through fulfilling their statutory responsibilities excellently. The parents' view that the school has improved much since the previous inspection is fully justified. Parents speak highly of the work of the staff and their commitment to providing a good quality of education. Since the previous inspection standards have improved, teaching is much more focused and there is a challenging curriculum. Much of this is the result of more effective leadership and management. Because there is now a sense of urgency and purpose in raising standards and an excellent commitment from all staff, the school is very well placed to build upon its success as it prepares to become a primary school.
47. The role of subject leaders has been developed well and staff share responsibility for promoting good standards, monitoring the work of their colleagues and keeping a check on how the pupils make progress. Governors also monitor the work of the school through regular visits, analysis of pupils' work and observations of lessons. This rigorous approach is also underpinned with much co-operation and common purpose. Teamwork is a real strength and all staff and governors share in the aims of the school. The school has clear aims and is successful in meeting them.
48. The governors also play a very good part in ensuring that funds are spent wisely. They pursue best value very well by tendering for contracts for supplies and services, comparing the school's performance with other schools and through their involvement in strategic planning. The governors meet regularly and have a good structure of

committees who provide focus and a sharp edge in setting targets for the school. This has been achieved very well through the use of performance management. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and staff and also provide resources to enable the staff to succeed. This robust approach to school management is beginning to pay dividends in raising standards and in attracting a well-motivated and enthusiastic staff. There are very effective procedures for appointing staff and the success of these procedures has meant that, in spite of an almost complete change of teachers, the rate of improvement has been maintained.

49. The school benefits from very efficient administration. The bursar and secretary are very knowledgeable about the day-to-day running of the school and keep a careful watch on spending. They are good organisers and this frees the headteacher from administrative burdens and enables her to balance a heavy teaching commitment with management responsibilities. The school has built up a healthy budget surplus during a time of potential re-organisation. The funds saved have been allocated for building improvements and for the costs of preparing the school for primary status. The most recent audit report made a few minor recommendations which have been carefully considered by the governors and acted upon. Funds are used wisely and regular reviews by the headteacher and governors ensure robust control. Specific grants have been spent well and resulted in improvements to the provision for ICT and replacement windows.
50. There are several strengths in management. The newly appointed co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs (SENCO) has settled well into her role. The management of the provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
51. The school has very good strategic plans and staff, governors and the headteacher set priorities and review the school's success in meeting them regularly. Targets in the plan are prioritised and include costs and measures of success. The school manages the timing of new initiatives well to ensure that the staff are not overburdened but that the pace of change and improvement is kept moving. There is a very good system of accountability and success is measured in terms of the impact on standards and learning. The staff and governors have an excellent approach to meeting the schools' targets.
52. The school has an excellent system to support staff who are new to the school. The teaching staff have good expertise and their work is enhanced by a strong and effective team of classroom assistants. All staff are enthusiastic about further training and share their expertise with colleagues which helps to bring consistency to the teaching. Staff working with reception children also have much experience and contribute much to the children's attainment and progress. Those working with pupils with special educational needs show much care and thought and have good expertise. Because of the quality of teaching and effective management systems the school would make an ideal provider of initial teacher training. Other staff are part of the team. The caretaker and cleaners help to create a pleasant and clean working environment. The midday supervisors also work well with the pupils.
53. The school's accommodation is good and it is used well. There is a new computer suite which is being used well to raise standards in the subject. The library is attractive and has an adequate range of books. Resources for most subjects are good although there are shortages of computers in the classrooms to enable the pupils to practise their ICT skills in other subjects. The school's reading schemes are rather dated and lack inspiration. Although there are adequate resources in the reception class much of the equipment is in need of replacement.

54. The school has come far since the previous inspection and now adds much value to the quality of education through good teaching and sharply focused leadership and management. Although the cost of educating the pupils is above average funds are used well. The pupils start school with above average skills, knowledge and understanding and make good progress throughout the school. By the end of Year 4 standards are above average in English, mathematics and science and the pupils make good progress in almost all subjects. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

55. The school has made much headway since the previous inspection and in order to maintain this momentum, and further improve the good quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

***Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in using ICT by:**

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects
- Providing further training to raise the staff's confidence in teaching ICT
- Improving ICT resources in the classrooms.

(Paragraphs 9, 20, 21, 53, 82, 84, 95, 96, 103, 110-16)

***Make more effective use of assessment information to set targets which guide individual pupils on how they might improve.**

(Paragraphs 1, 20, 28, 41, 80, 87-88)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improve resources for reading (Paragraphs 53, 70)
- Improve resources for children in the reception class. (Paragraphs 53, 56)
- *Improve the reports to parents on their children's progress and attainment. (Paragraph 44)
- *Include more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn about a wider variety of cultural traditions. (Paragraph 35)
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. (Paragraph 34)

* The school has identified these issues in its development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

27

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

19

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	9	12	1	0	0	0
Percentage	19	33	44	4	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	77
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	23

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	10	11	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	7	10
	Girls	11	11	11
	Total	18	18	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (88)	86 (94)	100 (94)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	10	10
	Girls	10	11	9
	Total	17	21	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81 (94)	100 (82)	90 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	68
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.4
Average class size	19.3

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	109

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	242,158
Total expenditure	227,548
Expenditure per pupil	2,371
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,090
Balance carried forward to next year	36,700

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2.4
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.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	77
Number of questionnaires returned	32

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	78	16	3	0	3
My child is making good progress in school.	81	16	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	25	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	59	31	3	6	0
The teaching is good.	81	19	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	19	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	9	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	31	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	88	6	3	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	84	13	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	75	25	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38	44	9	3	6

Other issues raised by parents

Parents expressed much satisfaction with the work of the school and the improvement made since the previous inspection. They also commented very favourably on the leadership and management at the school and the quality of teaching. They raised no issues of concern.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. Children start at the school at the beginning of the academic year in which they are five. They are taught in a mixed class of reception and Year 1 pupils. At the time of the inspection there were eight children in the reception group. Although attainment on admission varies from year to year due to the small cohorts, the current group of children have above average skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. Most children have benefited from some pre-school educational experience. No child in the reception group has special educational needs or English as an additional language. The teaching is good and achieves a balance between opportunities for the children to learn through play and more formally structured sessions guided by the teacher or support staff. The curriculum is good and follows national guidance for the Foundation Stage. Generally resources are adequate and the school has made suitable provision for outdoor play. However, many of the resources in the classroom are rather worn and in need of replacement.

Personal, social and emotional development

57. The children make very good progress in this aspect of their development and by the end of the reception year exceed the early learning goals in personal, social and emotional development. This is because of the very good teaching which focuses very well on providing opportunities for independent learning and also includes opportunities for the children to collaborate and co-operate. Staff are skilful in intervening at the right moment to move learning on and their helpful comments provide re-assurance and encouragement which enables the children to feel confident when selecting resources and choosing who to work with. The school's successful approach to personal, social and emotional development ensures that the children are prepared well for work in Year 1.
58. The children are very sociable and are good at playing together and sharing equipment. They readily take turns and show very good skills in organising themselves into groups in physical education lessons. The children get themselves ready for physical activity and move around the school showing maturity beyond their years. They listen attentively and follow instructions willingly. They enjoy their work and persevere very well. Their behaviour is very good and most already understand how their actions affect others. They respond well to praise and reward. The children develop a good awareness of the needs and feelings of others in lessons in religious education and talk enthusiastically about their diva lamps and the reason why they made them. The children are confident in approaching visitors and love to talk about their work.

Communication, language and literacy

59. By the end of the reception year most children have exceeded the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy and are competent in the early stages of reading and writing. They also listen attentively and speak clearly and confidently to adults and their friends. The teaching is good and the children make good progress. The staff work well together and achieve a good balance of free choice activities and structured guidance. The teacher makes very good use of books to enthuse the children about reading. In a music lesson, the teacher made very good use of well-

known tales to stimulate the children's interest. The children have a rich and wide vocabulary which they use to good effect in their role-play. In the little pigs' house they discuss how they will deal with the wolf who is trying to eat them. Meanwhile the wolf, using a deep-throated voice chants threats and seeks to frighten them. The children disarmingly resolve the potential disaster by graciously inviting the wolf to tea and firm friendships are established! The teacher focuses very well on promoting effective reading and writing by achieving a good balance between practising the sounds that letters make and providing opportunities for the children to enjoy listen to and enjoy stories. The children often repeat these stories in their play and, because they have a good general knowledge and wide vocabulary, they often embellish them imaginatively.

60. The teaching of writing is very good and parents are involved well in supporting reading at home. The children make very good gains in writing because the teacher provides good opportunities to practise forming letters correctly. There are also times for the children to write in informal situations such as the home corner when they make shopping lists. The children often record significant events in their lives and already many can write short sentences, occasionally use punctuation and spell most simple words correctly. Their writing is legible and letters are formed correctly. The teacher and support staff work together well and have high expectations of the children. The children respond enthusiastically and concentrate very well showing much desire to improve. They particularly enjoy songs, rhymes and poems and many have a wide repertoire that they spontaneously recite. The way that the staff often link language and literacy to other areas of the curriculum is a particularly successful method of extending the children's skills, knowledge and understanding.

Mathematical development

61. Progress in mathematical development is good and by the end of the reception year the children exceed the early learning goals in mathematics. They have a good understanding of number and count forwards and backwards accurately and at speed. They benefit much from working for part of the time with the Year 1 pupils, responding enthusiastically to the challenge. The teaching is good. The mixed age class works particularly well for the more able children as they have good opportunities to work alongside older pupils. There is a successful balance in matching work to the abilities of the children combined with good opportunities for the younger children to learn through practical experiences and to record their work. As a result, the children move on at a good pace in their learning without feeling under pressure and they thoroughly enjoy mathematics.
62. By the end of the reception year, the children recognise numbers to 10 and beyond and sequence them correctly. They are already accurately completing simple addition sums up to 10. They have a good knowledge of the names of common two-dimensional shapes and enjoy making patterns and ordering shapes by size and colour. The children learn effectively through the practical opportunities provided by the staff to experiment with sand and water and find out about size and capacity. The children have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary and understand the differences between *more than* and *less than*, and *big*, *bigger* and *biggest*. They also know several mathematical signs and symbols. The children concentrate well and work hard, they form numbers correctly and present their work neatly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. By the end of the reception year the children exceed the early learning goals in knowledge and understanding of the world. The teaching of this area of learning is good as the staff provide a wide variety of activities and the children make good progress. The children enjoy the activities provided to help them develop skills and knowledge in science, religious education, design and technology, history, geography and ICT. The children get very involved in basic scientific experiments and enjoy using equipment which helps them to understand how living things grow. They know about the five senses. The children make good gains in finding out about animals and their habitats and enjoy exploring the rich environment of the school's grounds. In lessons in religious education the children learn about the main Christian religious festivals and know that different religions have celebrations such as Diwali. In their topic about themselves the children begin to appreciate that things often change over time. They know about some famous historical personalities such as Florence Nightingale. The children accurately describe their journey to school and recognise several features in the village. They have a good vocabulary to describe direction and recognise some features on a map. The children have appropriate skills in using computers. They know how to load a program and enjoy using the mouse to move objects around the screen to dress a teddy bear. They write their own names and include capital letters appropriately. The pupils have appropriate making skills. The children enjoy making things and use a variety of materials well. They make models using recyclable materials and construction toys, follow instruction well and draw simple plans of their work.

Physical development

64. The teaching of physical development is excellent and the children make very good progress. By the end of the reception year they will exceed the expected goals for their age. The school has a small area for outdoor play and the staff compensate for this by using the hall to provide stimulating and challenging lessons. The children make very good progress in developing skills in games. They play together well and devise simple games involving catching and balancing. They successfully control a ball using their hands and the teacher then encourages them to extend their dexterity by using a bat. The children thoroughly enjoy physical activity and they work hard, applying much effort and concentration. The teacher moves lessons on at a very brisk pace, gives clear explanations, and intervenes skilfully to promote learning. The children get themselves ready for lessons and enter the hall sensibly. They join in warm-up activities with gusto and know how exercise affects their bodies. In games they improve their throwing, rolling and catching skills as the teacher carefully explains a variety of techniques to improve performance. The children listen carefully and practise their skills until they become proficient in directing and stopping moving balls. The teacher also pays good attention to teaching the children how to improve other physical skills such as holding pencils correctly and using a variety of tools such as scissors.

Creative development

65. The children achieve very well in their creative development, they make very good progress and by the end of the reception year will have exceeded the early learning goals in this aspect of their work. Their success is due to very good and sometimes excellent teaching which includes the development of skills and techniques and the good opportunities for the children to experiment and investigate a wide variety of media. In music lessons they concentrate intently and show very good skills in playing

a variety of instruments. They have remarkably advanced skills in playing together and are also able to sing as well as perform actions at the same time. The teacher has high expectations and encourages the children to use musical terms such as *tempo* correctly and to use and name a variety of instruments. By listening to a wide range of music the children appreciate how music can express mood and feelings. The children's art skills are developed very well and some of their work is very good. They paint detailed pictures of people who help them and the stunning use of reflective paint brings portraits of the "lollypop man" to life. The children make good models of peg dolls and give careful thought to the materials they use. They are skilful in mixing paint and understand that some colours make another. They are very careful when painting to keep colours clean and before starting work dress appropriately.

ENGLISH

66. Standards in English have improved since the previous inspection due to better teaching, more effective leadership and management and the school's emphasis on improving writing across the curriculum. The staff have enthusiastically adopted the National Literacy Strategy and by extending opportunities for pupils to write well in other subjects have ensured that progress for all pupils is good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and many of the targets in their individual education plans are linked to improving their performance in English. The support staff work well with pupils with special educational needs; their skilful questioning, helpful advice and use of resources mean that the pupils achieve well and many of them reach average standards. The school has also improved the challenge for the more able and these pupils make good progress and achieve well. From year to year there are some variations in the performance of boys and girls in the national tests at the end of Year 2. This gap is closing and the school is well aware of the need to provide work which stimulates the boys' interest and encourages them to perform well. Analysis of the school's performance shows that standards in reading and writing are rising at a rate above the national trend.
67. National test results at the end of Year 2 in 2001 showed that standards in reading were above average and they were well above average in writing. The proportion of pupils achieving above average levels in writing was very high and among the top five per cent of schools. The variation between these aspects of English was due to the school's increased emphasis on improving pupils' writing and partially to the reading scheme, which is rather uninteresting. When compared with schools with similar intakes, standards were above average in reading and well above average in writing. Evidence from test results at the end of Year 4 show that standards in English are above average. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils make consistently good gains in reading and writing and that standards overall in English are above average at the end of Years 2 and 4.
68. Areas of weakness highlighted at the last inspection have been addressed very well. Literacy is given a very high priority throughout the school and the school builds well on the effective foundation for learning provided for children in the reception classes. Pupils of above average attainment are now suitably challenged and achieve high standards. The school has enthusiastically implemented the National Literacy's Strategy and this has had a very positive impact on the improved quality of teaching and learning. Considerable focus is given to ensuring pupils use the skills they are taught in the literacy hour in other subjects. This approach has been particularly effective in raising standards of writing across the school. The school has also implemented the Additional Literacy's Strategy and the Reading Partnership initiative

to provide additional support for those pupils needing extra help to reach the expected standard.

69. Pupils in all classes make good progress in their speaking and listening skills. The very good relationships, apparent throughout the school, encourage pupils to share conversations with adults and each other. In lessons, pupils have very good opportunities to express their ideas and opinions, confident that they will be listened to and their contributions taken seriously. Throughout the school the emphasis is on encouraging pupils to think about their work and evaluate and talk about their learning. In lessons they listen carefully to their teachers and appreciate the contribution other pupils make to the lessons. As a result, pupils are very confident speakers, eager to answer questions and to talk and evaluate their own work and that of their peers. In assemblies, pupils listen attentively to music and story, joining in when it is appropriate. By the end of Year 4 pupils are attentive listeners and express themselves well using interesting, technical and grammatically correct language.
70. Pupils in all year groups make good progress in their reading skills. Pupils are encouraged to read for a wide variety of purposes, including information and pleasure. Books are particularly well displayed to support topic work and the 'author of the month' encourages pupils to develop knowledge of different styles and genres. However, some guided reading books are not sufficiently challenging and are not always very well matched to pupils' and interest levels.
71. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make good progress in their reading and by the end of Year 2 standards are above average. Very effective strategies are used to develop a secure understanding of phonics, word families and spellings. These give pupils considerable confidence in tackling unfamiliar words and this has a positive effect on the good progress they make towards becoming fluent and confident readers. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 read aloud with considerable confidence and use punctuation, such as question marks, and exclamation marks to add expression to their reading. They have a good understanding of different types of books and express a preference for particular stories, such as the adventures of 'Harry Potter'. Teachers now frequently hear pupils read and systematically record strengths and weaknesses to help pupils make progress. Pupils take books home and family members regularly hear their children. This has a positive effect on the progress pupils make in reading.
72. The school's involvement in the Reading Partnership programme is of considerable benefit to lower attaining pupils. Pupils make significant strides in their reading skills as they regularly read to the committed, well trained and skilled volunteers who come into school. In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to make good progress in reading and by the end of Year 4 standards are above average. Higher attaining and average attaining pupils understand plot, setting and characterisation. They show a mature understanding of different writers' styles and accounts and make deductions and inferences from their reading. Pupils are developing independent research skills as they use dictionaries, thesaurus and encyclopaedias. The school library is well organised and books are attractively arranged to extend pupils' reading and research skills. However, some books are out of date and there is a lack of access to the Internet which restricts pupils' research skills. Both of these facilities would enhance pupils' reading skills even further.
73. Pupils in all classes make good progress in writing. Standards in Year 1 are already very high. Higher and average attaining pupils write at length interesting stories, accounts and instructions. Independent stories and poems contain very imaginative phrases such as 'rockets zooming high'. By the end of Year 2, pupils confidently write interesting stories and accounts, observing the rules of punctuation and spelling and

grammar. Above average pupils use appropriate layout, interesting adjectives and connectives which grasp the readers interest. Handwriting is neat and work is well presented. In formal handwriting lessons pupils are taught to join their letters together. However, pupils are not yet using a joined script in their independent work.

74. In Years 3 and 4 pupils progressively develop their ability to write for different purposes using a wide range of styles and by the end of Year 4 standards are above average. The pupils' work shows an awareness of the need for different presentation skills, vocabulary and style and a very good use of well-chosen vocabulary to capture the imagination of the reader. Pupils produce diagrams and posters to record scientific observations and experiments. They write poems, prayers, letters and geographical and historical accounts. The school's portfolio of work provides a very clear picture of the progress pupils make across the school. There are excellent examples of pupils writing up experiments about electrical circuits, instructional writing about making a moving toy and historical accounts of the Great Fire of London.
75. Writing is very well organised. Higher attaining pupils use paragraphs, correct punctuation, complex grammatical structures and rich appropriate vocabulary to enliven their writing. Year 4 pupils used a wide range of skills and knowledge to produce a school newspaper. Interesting articles covering book and film reviews, sports commentaries, crosswords and puzzles, result in a very high quality piece of independent work.
76. Considerable emphasis is placed on developing handwriting and presentation skills. Such activities are very well planned and purposeful. One such lesson involved pupils producing a copy of a poem written by the headteacher which was linked to their shared text work and to their geography work and music. This grasped pupils' imagination and turned what could have been a tedious task into an exciting and meaningful activity. The end result was a very polished piece of work of which pupils were very proud.
77. In English lessons behaviour is invariably very good. Pupils show very favourable attitudes to learning and enjoy very positive relationships with their teachers. This makes a considerable contribution to their rate of progress and the high standards of attainment achieved. Pupils are very eager to learn, stay on task and show very good levels of independence and concentration. Opportunities to work collaboratively and to develop personal skills are well used. Pupils enjoy English lessons and respond very well to the structure of the literacy hour.
78. Teaching overall is good with some very strong features. In lessons seen during the inspection a significant number were excellent or very good and the rest were good. All teachers are confidently implementing the National Literacy Strategy. Teaching is very carefully structured and well planned to meet the needs of pupils of all attainment levels. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are given a particularly high priority and pupils' are encouraged to use their knowledge and understanding of basic skills in their extended writing and when writing in other subjects. Opportunities for extended writing are made within the curriculum to ensure that progress in this aspect of English is maintained. Teachers are very aware of the need to engage the interest of both boys and girls to ensure they reach the standards they are capable of. Teachers use praise, comments and questions very effectively to check understanding and extend thinking. Expectations are high and the teacher's enthusiasm, clear explanations and secure knowledge have a very positive effect on attainment and progress. Displays in classrooms remind pupils of the strategies they need to improve their work, such as good handwriting, correct spelling and punctuation. Plenary sessions check that pupils have understood the lesson and also extend their

thinking, pushing them just that bit further. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss their work and to explain what they have learned during lessons.

79. Relationships are very good and teachers have high expectations of their pupils' behaviour and attainment resulting in very good discipline and high standards. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support staff are used effectively to give additional help to designated individuals and groups of pupils. Their contribution greatly enhances the learning opportunities for the pupils.
80. Assessment and record keeping are now good. National Curriculum Tests and school tests are used effectively to identify areas for school development. Teachers mark work on a regular basis and in some classes pupils are given helpful suggestions on how they can improve their work. Assessment is not yet used effectively to set individual targets for pupils to enable them to know precisely what they need to do to improve and move on to the next level. This would involve pupils more in their own learning and improve standards even further. Homework is set to extend work done in lessons and to check that pupils have fully understood new learning. The portfolio of pupils work provides very good examples of the progress pupils make but the work is not levelled to make it a useful tool to help teachers standardise work.
81. The curriculum meets statutory requirements. The subject leader is very enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subject and is very effective in further improving standards. Formal monitoring of the teaching and planning takes place and staff are given feedback on how to improve the quality of the teaching and learning.

MATHEMATICS

82. Particular strengths in pupils' above average attainment in the 2001 National Curriculum tests were in number and shape, space and measures. The results of optional national tests at the end of Year 4 showed that pupils attained above average standards. There has been substantial improvement in standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 since the previous inspection due to effective teaching and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. There are slight variations between the performance of boys and girls in the national tests at the end of Year 2, with boys doing a little better than the girls; however, this is not significant. The pupils make good use of the skills they have learned in mathematics in some of their other work. In design and technology they carefully plan their work and measure accurately. In their history work they come to a good understanding of time by using timelines. The pupils recognise regular and irregular patterns in their artwork and appreciate the patterns found in different cultures such as Indian pattern. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use computers to extend their mathematical understanding.
83. The school has done much to raise the achievement of the more able by setting challenging work and improving the pace of lessons. These pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress as they receive effective support from classroom assistants and the work planned for them is at the right level to challenge them. Throughout the school all pupils make good progress, they enjoy mathematics and are very responsive when learning number and multiplication facts and in using a variety of strategies to solve problems.
84. By the end of Year 2, the pupils' skills in mental calculation and knowledge of number facts are good. They have a secure understanding of addition and subtraction and use their knowledge well when solving problems using simple fractions and money.

The pupils also make good progress in developing an understanding of simple multiplication and understand that multiplication is repeated addition. The pupils have a good understanding of mathematical vocabulary and recognise several signs and symbols which they use well when attempting to solve problems. The pupils have a good knowledge of shape and measures. They accurately describe two-dimensional shapes and identify patterns in shapes and number. They also measure correctly using centimetres. Their skills in data handling are average. The pupils make simple bar charts to present information but these skills are not sufficiently enhanced through using computers.

85. By the end of Year 4 the pupils have above average skills in most aspects of their mathematical development although their skills in using and interpreting data are average. The pupils have good number skills and confidently and correctly calculate using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They have a secure understanding of the value of hundreds, tens and units and also have developed good strategies including starting with the largest number, halving and doubling to calculate quickly and accurately. The pupils enjoy the challenges at the beginning of lessons to recall number and multiplication facts quickly. They know much about shape, space and measures and make good progress in identifying the properties of shapes and classifying them. The pupils measure accurately and make good attempts when estimating length and weight.
86. Teaching and learning are good. The teachers have focused very well on raising standards in mathematics and have paid good attention to raising girls' attainment which is now at a similar level to the boys'. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy and lessons are planned thoroughly to include well-paced introductions, good opportunities for pupils' to practise their skills and a time at the end of lessons to reflect on what has been learned and how well the pupils' have understood. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this equips them well to ask sharply focused questions which are matched to the pupils' level of understanding. When questioning the pupils the staff give them sufficient opportunity to think before answering but also reward quick and accurate responses and this encourages the less confident to have a go. Most lessons have brisk pace and time is used well to ensure that the pupils have sufficient opportunity to complete the tasks. On a few occasions lessons go on too long and the momentum is lost.
87. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. Mathematical apparatus is used well to help the pupils grasp new ideas and this works very well with those who have special educational needs. There is a good emphasis in the teaching on developing pupils' mathematical vocabulary and knowledge of signs and symbols and this helps the pupils when solving problems. Teachers also rigorously question the pupils about different strategies they have used and this is successful in guiding other pupils on how they might tackle similar problems. The pupils are enthusiastic about mathematics and several say it is their favourite subject. This is reflected in the good effort pupils put in and the amount of work they complete. They are productive and hard working partly because of the teachers' high expectations but also because they want to succeed. The pupils take care of equipment and willingly share it with their peers. They respond well to homework and say that it helps them to improve. There are very good relationships between staff and pupils are confident in asking for support and help. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and accurately, but there are few examples of written guidance for pupils on how they might improve their work. Although some targets are shared with the pupils they are not specific enough.

88. The staff have worked together successfully on improving standards in mathematics and the headteacher and governors have effectively monitored the quality of teaching and analysed pupils' performance in national tests and their work in lessons. There are good records of pupils' progress and procedures for assessment but the information is not linked to individual targets for the pupils. The school has good resources to support the teaching of mathematics.

SCIENCE

89. The good improvement in standards since the last inspection has been achieved through a well-organised and challenging science curriculum, effective teaching, the good use of resources and increased opportunities for the pupils to experiment and investigate. The teachers also encourage the pupils to use skills learned in literacy and numeracy sessions to enhance their work not only in presentation but also in using skills such as note taking, bullet points and creating charts and diagrams which illustrate their findings. The results of teacher assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2001 showed that standards in science were average overall but pupils' knowledge of physical processes and life and living processes was well below average. The school has successfully used analysis of the pupils' performance to target improvement and through more focused teaching inspection evidence shows that standards in science are now above average by the end of Year 2. Boys and girls perform equally well.
90. Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school, due to consistent teaching which includes well-planned lessons and a wide-ranging curriculum. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They benefit from the practical approach to the teaching of science, and the opportunity to use equipment and see the results of their experiments helps them to understand different scientific principles. The more able thoroughly enjoy science and several older pupils have done extra research at home to enhance their own skills, knowledge and understanding. The more able make good progress and a well above average proportion of pupils achieve the higher level 3 in assessments.
91. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have a good understanding of scientific vocabulary and they use this well when recording their work. They make good use of the skills learned in literacy lessons to write in a scientific style which is clear and factual. Although they use charts to record their work they have a limited understanding of how to use graphs to present data particularly using computers. The pupils have a good understanding of physical forces and in an excellent lesson they carried out a test to find out the effect of changing surfaces on movement of model cars. Pupils discuss knowledgeably their ideas about different ways of pushing and pulling and their enthusiasm and the skilful intervention of the teacher ensures that the pupils make significant gains in their understanding. They use their mathematical skills very well to measure the distance cars travel down a ramp and successfully predict which surface will cause least friction.
92. By the end of Year 4, the pupils have a good knowledge of the parts of the body and understand how joints and muscles work. Through their studies of the skeleton they gain a good understanding of pivots and levers. They are keen to research information and often follow up work done in the classroom by looking up information on the Internet or in books. Pupils also understand complex vocabulary and use it well in their writing. They have a good understanding of materials and their properties and know that some liquids and solids may be irreversibly changed whilst others may return to their original composition.

93. Pupils' success in science is due to consistently good teaching and some excellent teaching particularly in Year 2. The teachers have a thorough understanding of science and they use their knowledge well to provide stimulating and well-planned lessons which achieve a good balance between introducing new vocabulary and ideas and opportunities for the pupils to investigate and experiment. This very practical approach ensures that learning is good and that pupils come to a clear understanding of all aspects of science. Another strength in the teaching is the way that teachers promote the pupils' thinking skills. In the well-planned and brisk introductions, the teachers discuss with the pupils what is to be learned and assess their understanding by judging their responses. They give the pupils opportunities to reflect and predict what might happen and then allow them to investigate following the principles of scientific enquiry such as fair testing. In many lessons the teachers have additional adults and they use their skills very well ensuring that they are briefed effectively and are clear about the main themes to be taught. The support for less able pupils has a significantly impact on standards.
94. The pupils are very interested in science because the subject is brought to life through stimulating discussions, the opportunities to engage in practical work and the good use of the school's resources. There is a good range of books to support the teaching and learning. During lessons behaviour is usually good and in Year 2 it is excellent as the pupils are totally absorbed and contribute much to discussion. Pupils throughout the school work well together and thoughtfully consider the work that has been set. They engage in lively discussion and take turns to record what they have found out. The staff are readily available to support the less confident and add challenge for the more able by posing questions such as "what will happen if..?" The pupils work hard and present their work well. They keenly research information and make well-founded comments as they observe experiments. At the end of lessons the teachers thoroughly review what has been learned and use this information to plan the next lesson.
95. The subject is led and managed well and the headteacher has a good overview of the quality of teaching and learning because of effective monitoring. There is a helpful scheme of work and a good range of resources to support learning. An area for development in science is the use of ICT to extend opportunities for pupils to research and present their work.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. By the end of Years 2 and 4 the pupils attain standards which are above those expected in art and design and design and technology. Standards in both subjects have improved much since the previous inspection and this is due to the very well structured curriculum and good teaching. There is a very good balance between developing the pupils' skills and techniques and the provision of opportunities for the pupils to experiment and work in a wide variety of media. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. Boys and girls achieve equally well. Pupils with special educational needs enjoy the subjects and produce work which is often at as high a standard as their peers. The more able pupils also achieve well adding much detail to their work, using a variety of techniques. The teachers make good use of detailed schemes of work when planning lessons. They think carefully about providing challenging experiences which enhance the pupils' learning. Standards are much higher than at the time of the previous inspection. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use computers to enhance their work in these subjects.
97. The teaching of both subjects is very good as the teachers have a thorough understanding of how to develop pupils' skills and techniques. One of the most

successful aspects of the teaching is the way that teachers encourage the pupils to critically evaluate their work. This is done rigorously and the pupils learn much from sharing ideas and commenting on others' work. Lessons are planned thoroughly and step-by-step instructions leave the pupils in no doubt about what is expected of them. This worked particularly well in Year 3 where the teacher explained the process of making a purse and provided a wide range of resources and opportunities for the pupils to practise and refine their skills. The pupils concentrated intently and were keen to experiment with different techniques until they achieved the desired effect. Pupils successfully combined skills of sewing and printing to produce attractive and functional containers.

98. By the end of Year 2 the pupils have a good grasp of a wide range of skills and techniques and often successfully combine their creative and technological techniques to making functional, robust and attractive products. In a Year 2 lesson the teacher stimulated the pupils' imagination by showing a wide variety of fabrics from a range of countries. The pupils excitedly discussed which would be useful for making Joseph's coat and then experimented with designing their own repeated patterns. They made good use of their drawing skills and added much detail and colour. The pupils have made good gains in using a variety of tools and techniques in making moving models. They are proficient in planning their work and pay good attention to detail as in labelling their diagram and producing well sequenced instructions. They use a variety of materials and techniques to attach wheels and confidently discuss the process of making and improving their designs.
99. Teachers expect much of the pupils and managed behaviour in lessons very well. Because the lessons are so interesting and instructions clear the pupils concentrate very well. In Year 1 the pupils make very good progress in knowing how to mix paint, blend colours and use a variety of brushes. The teaching of these skills is very good. Much progress is made in using these techniques creatively and the pupils produce good work in the style of famous artists. Another stimulus to learning is the impressive art gallery of pupils' work and prints of famous artists which introduce the pupils to the art of a variety of cultures.
100. By the end of Year 4 pupils are confident artists and skilful in design and technology. They make good moving models and have a thorough knowledge of technical terms. They understand how axles, cogs and levers work and use their knowledge well in designing. Pupils also successfully combine techniques such as printing and collage to produce stunning calendars as presents for their parents. This work shows a very good understanding of colour, form and texture. As Christmas presents for their parents the pupils made photograph frames from wood and after sanding the frame, decorated the edges attractively.
101. Another strength in the teaching of art and design and design and technology is the way that teachers encourage the pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills to enhance their work. Pupils plan out their designs making good use of notes and sequenced instructions. They measure accurately and also when planning work involving fabrics are careful not to waste any. Their very good skills in making and designing patterns are linked to their good knowledge of the properties of shapes.
102. The subjects make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and in particular to their awareness of cultural differences in art. The teaching of the subjects is supported well through helpful schemes of work and well written policies. There has been some monitoring of the pupils' work and staff are beginning to build useful collections of pupils' work as examples of good practice. The school has good resources to support the teaching of art and design and design and

technology. There is a good range of prints, pictures and books which are used well to stimulate learning.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

103. Standards in geography have been maintained well since the previous inspection; in history there was no judgement about standards in the last report. In both subjects standards are in line with those expected and pupils, including those with pupils with special educational needs and the more able, make good progress. A strength in both subjects is the use of pupils' literacy skills to record their work in interesting and well-informed ways. An improvement since the previous inspection is the way that the teachers set challenging work for the more able. Boys and girls show much interest in history and achieve equally well. In history, teachers encourage pupils to think about dates and calculate periods of history through the effective use of timelines. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use ICT in either subject.
104. In history, by the by the end of Year 2, the pupils show a good understanding of the distinction between the past and present. Visits and resources are used effectively. Pupils make comparisons with their own lives and those of children in the past as they examine toys, transport and homes throughout the ages. Pupils learn about episodes and characters from the past such as Florence Nightingale. As pupils move into Year 2 they are encouraged to answer questions about the past from their observations. The events of the Great Fire of London are brought to life for them as they write their own very realistic diaries of the events, feelings and consequences of the fire.
105. By the end of Year 4, the pupils have widened their historical knowledge to develop an understanding of the more distant past. Through their study of topics on the Greeks, Saxons, Vikings, Romans and Tudors the pupils gain a sound range of factual knowledge. Pupils are beginning to place their own town in the context of wider historical events and discover events, place names and artefacts going back as far as the Bronze Age. Pupils have a good understanding of chronology and can name significant events and people from the past. They discuss the different periods in history confidently and can name the characters such as Queen Eleanor and King Edward who had significant links with their own surrounding area.
106. Pupils are encouraged to think as historians as they use a range of sources to find out about recent and past events. Year 3 pupils' skills of enquiry were developed well as they studied artefacts related to the boot and shoe industry in nearby Northampton. Year 4 pupils use eyewitness accounts to find out more about the events of the Great Fire of Northampton.
107. Due to the timing of the inspection and the school's timetabling arrangements there was no evidence available of the geography taught in Years 1 and 2. In Years 3 and 4, pupils acquire a satisfactory geographical knowledge about places near to home and far away. In their studies of the local area, Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of the human and physical features of their surroundings. An in-depth study of the nearby woodland area involved pupils in considerable skills as they searched for different kinds of vegetation and creatures and discussed the geographical reasons for their existence. Older pupils in Year 4 develop further their geographical knowledge and understanding and can confidently name and locate a number of major countries and capital cities. Pupils develop their understanding of different localities as they study the Caribbean island of St Lucia. Through a very effective question and answer session with a member of staff who had recently visited the island pupils discovered a range of geographical facts. Their understanding was reinforced well as they wrote

postcards to friends and relatives to explain the islands climate, industry, vegetation and general characteristics. First hand experiences, photographs maps and books were used very well to bring the subject alive for the pupils and as a result they made good strides in their geographical knowledge and understanding.

108. In the limited number of lessons seen the quality of teaching in both history and geography was good. Teachers use effective strategies for managing lessons and organising pupils. In both subjects pupils are consolidating their study skills through field trips and the use of resources, photographs, diaries, books, maps and atlases. Teachers' planning and pupils' work indicates that teachers have a very good understanding of the subjects. The teaching is enthusiastic and the very effective use of a wide range of resources brings the subjects alive for pupils and has a positive effect on the quality of learning.
109. History and geography are effectively co-ordinated and make an important contribution to the aims of the school. The schemes effectively ensure there is progress and continuity across the school, taking into account the needs of the different age groups within each class. This helps teachers to provide pupils with good opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

110. Standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 are at a similar level as those reported at the time of the last inspection and are in line with those expected. With a new computer suite the provision for ICT has improved since the previous inspection. Staff are involved in training but more needs to be done to equip them to use computers to support pupils' work in other subjects. This aspect of progress is unsatisfactory overall. However, pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in learning and using basic skills of computing. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as do the more able.
111. The pupils are keen to improve their skills in using computers and many have computers at home which they sometimes use to find information about topics. The school has benefited much from having a computer suite recently and the teaching in lessons in the suite is good as it focuses on developing the pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding consistently. Pupils are really enthusiastic and work well together often in pairs. They concentrate effectively throughout lessons and show much pleasure in their achievements.
112. By the end of Year 2, pupils have appropriate skills in word processing. They change fonts, colour and size of text and show good control of the mouse. They use a programmable toy to hit a target and use their mathematical skills when estimating the distance the toy needs to travel. They adjust their instructions using trial and error. The pupils have good skills in using drawing software. They carefully control the mouse and use a variety of the computer's tools to add detail for example in spraying of drawing lines of different thicknesses.
113. By the end of year 4 the pupils have appropriate skills in word processing and this is sometimes linked to their work in English as they create a newspaper. They successfully combine manual and technological skills to make the newspaper interesting and attractive. The pupils have used some software to learn about control sequences of actions but their skills in using computers to support their work in graphing is not well developed. Pupils have insufficient skills to access the Internet and send and receive e-mail although many say that they have used these skills at home.

114. The computer suite has provided a valuable resource for pupils to learn and practise their skills. The computer hardware is adequate but the school needs to review the software available to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunity to refine their skills by using computers to support their work in other subjects. The school has already identified this as an area for development.
115. The quality of lessons seen in the computer suite was good but the suite is not used sufficiently for work in other subjects and this results in missed opportunities. Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory subject knowledge and are secure in teaching skills. Lessons are planned well and explanations are clear so that the pupils understand what to do. The pupils are keen to learn and settle quickly to work, maintaining good concentration. The more able willingly experiment with new programs and techniques and often help their less confident friends.
116. The school has good priorities to further improve work in the subject and all staff are determined to raise standards further. Suitable records of the pupils' progress are kept and the school has an appropriate scheme of work to guide teachers on planning lessons.

MUSIC

117. By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils attain standards which are above those expected. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, is good due to the expertise of the teachers and their enthusiasm for music which inspires the pupils. Standards of performance are good and many pupils are developing good skills in playing a wide range of tuned and untuned instruments. Standards have improved much since the previous inspection and the work of the subject leader in guiding and supporting her colleagues has been central in this improvement.
118. Music makes a very positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, cultural and personal development and adds to the quality of assemblies. The playing of an appropriate piece of music sets a reverent atmosphere for reflection and worship as pupils arrive for assemblies. All pupils have opportunities to develop their singing skills through the singing of songs and hymns which are challenging. Singing is well taught. Pupils are encouraged to sing with accuracy, expression and articulation and produce a very pleasing sound as they sing confidently in two parts accompanied by the guitar.
119. Younger pupils in Year 1 use their voices and unpitched percussion instruments to accompany familiar songs. They develop a very good sense of rhythm and can clap a steady beat. By the end of Year 2 pupils show a good understanding of musical ideas as they sing and play unpitched percussion instruments to accompany challenging songs from other countries. Pupils sing particularly tunefully as they use their voices very expressively when learning a new African song. Very good teaching in Year 2 ensures pupils develop a very good understanding of simple notation and pupils of all attainment levels, including those with special educational needs, are able to write and perform their own simple composition using untuned percussion instruments.
120. In Years 3 and 4 pupils develop further their appreciation of rhythm dynamics and tempo and by the end of Year 4 have above average attainment in music. Pupils in Year 4 use musical vocabulary accurately when talking about their work and in answering questions posed by their teachers. Singing is controlled, has shape and is well pitched with clear diction. Pupils show high standards of composition and improvisation skills as they use Caribbean instruments to accompany a reggae tune.

121. Teachers' planning shows a very good balance of performing, composing and appraising. Very good teaching provides pupils with clear strategies to improve their skills. Music lessons are well structured and tasks are challenging. Pupils are given very clear strategies to improve their skills. They are encouraged to think as 'musicians' and to use correct musical terms. Pupils enjoy lessons and this has a very good impact on the standards they achieve. Pupils develop confidence in their own musical abilities and are enthusiastic and eager learners. Very good provision is made for those pupils with special educational needs. Through sensitive and effective support pupils are fully involved in the lesson and make similar progress to the other children. A number of pupils benefit from the specialist teaching of the violin during school time. Recorder choir and guitar clubs further enhance pupils' musical skills and make an important contribution to the schools end of term performances.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

122. By the end of Years 2 and 4 the pupils attain standards in physical education which are in line with those expected. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and the curriculum is better balanced and more challenging. Pupils of all abilities make good progress because the teaching is at least good and sometimes excellent. Teachers skilfully build on skills taught in previous years and extend the pupils so that all are challenged. Some pupils also benefit from extra-curricular activities in dance and this contributes to their good progress in using their bodies to express feeling, emotion and mood. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and the supportive guidance of classroom assistants does much to inspire confidence in these pupils who are justifiably proud of their achievements.
123. Pupils in Year 4 have good opportunities to learn to swim. They are supported well through the skilful teaching of basic skills and much encouragement is given to achieving challenging awards. The pupils make very good progress in this aspect of physical education and by the end of year almost all are able to swim 25 metres unaided and understand the principles of water safety. Their skills and achievement are well in advance of those expected for their age.
124. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have good skills in moving round safely, stopping and changing direction and balancing. The teaching in the Years 1 and 2 is very good. They understand the importance of thorough warm-up and work particularly hard during the first part of lessons to ensure that they are fully warm. They know about the effect of exercise and healthy eating on their bodies. The pupils have a good awareness of space and avoid collisions when playing energetic and boisterous games. They really enjoy new challenges and the teachers skilfully move learning on at a good pace through well-timed interventions and by adding detailed instructions for the pupils to follow. Teachers inspire confidence in the pupils and make very good use of demonstrations to help the pupils to improve. In an excellent lesson in Year 1 the brisk and purposeful pace enabled the pupils to make very good progress in improving their skills in controlling balls. The pupils persevered very well and experimented with a variety of techniques to refine their performance.
125. Teaching in Years 3 and 4 is good and the pupils make good progress and attain appropriate levels for their age by the end of Year 4. In gymnastics the pupils devise good sequences of moving through space on the floor and apparatus using different parts of the body. They improve their performance as the teachers add further challenge. Working in pairs the pupils develop good co-operative skills and learn from each other successfully this is enhanced as the teacher use the pupils to demonstrate good movements and sequences. The teachers also assess the pupils' performance and make suggestions about how they might improve.

126. Pupils are very well behaved throughout lessons and although they join in excitedly are aware of health and safety. Learning is good as the teachers focus on building skills and techniques consistently and setting challenges to stretch the pupils. The pupils work hard and apply good creative and physical effort. They are very pleased when asked to show their work to the class and many beam with pride at their achievements.
127. The school has good resources for physical education and the large hall, challenging apparatus and good grounds contribute effectively to pupils' learning. The staff keep good records of the pupils' progress and build on previous learning well. There is a good scheme of work and policy which guide staff on planning lessons. Support staff also contribute much to learning as they intervene effectively to reassure and challenge pupils as necessary.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. By the end of Years 2 and 4 the pupils attain the levels expected in the religious education syllabus which is followed by most schools in Northamptonshire. The pupils make good progress and benefit from effective teaching. All pupils take part in religious education lessons and show good levels of enjoyment. The teachers make good links between skills learned in literacy lessons and work done in religious education and this enables the pupils to explore religious ideas in their writing using sensitive phrases and vocabulary. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and enjoy learning about different beliefs. The more able also make good progress in exploring similarities and differences in some of the major religions. Standards in religious education have improved since the previous inspection as there is a much greater emphasis on following the syllabus and the quality of teaching is now good.
129. Work in Years 1 and 2 shows a sound understanding of the basic beliefs and traditions of Christianity. During the inspection a well planned visit to the local church deepened younger pupils understanding of the importance of symbols, customs and celebrations as well as creating quiet reverent moments to consider issues of death and separation. Pupils were fascinated with the church vestments, music and the beautiful colours and stories of the stained glass windows. A very special moment was created as one member of staff pointed out a stained glass window and a kneeler created especially in memory of her father and mother. Pupils listened respectfully and quietly and were eager to learn more of their role and work in the church. This enhanced their understanding of what it means to belong to a family and to be part of a church community. Pupils in Year 2 develop secure ideas and understanding of basic religious beliefs as they listen to stories about the life of Jesus and explain the simple meanings behind stories such as 'The Good Samaritan'.
130. As pupils move through the school, religious ideas and understanding are developed well. Pupils become aware that having certain beliefs can affect the way they act and behave. This was obvious in one lesson in Year 3 where pupils were eagerly involved in designing posters to persuade people to be more caring for each other and their world. Pupils' own relationship with God is explored as they communicate their thoughts, needs and thanks through writing their own prayers. By the end of Year 4 pupils have a deep understanding of the person of Jesus. They learn about his characteristics and what made him such as a special person. Significant events in the church calendar are explored and pupils have a very good understanding of why symbols such as candles, the crucifix and the Bible are important to Christians. The understanding of the effect of being a believer in a particular faith is deepened further as pupils study the life of Christians such as St Paul, Martin Luther King and Mother Teresa. Pupils' writing about these people show a very good understanding that personal experiences and feelings can influence attitudes and actions.
131. A scrutiny of teachers' planning indicates that pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn about other faiths and beliefs. They learn about the customs, symbols, festivals, holy books and buildings of Hinduism and Judaism. Pupils show interest and enthusiasm for their work in religious education, and discussions and reflections on religious issues make a very important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
132. Teaching and learning are good. A scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils and staff indicate that there is a systematic approach in the teaching, which ensures that pupils' knowledge and understanding is developed well across the school. Pupils are

challenged to consider the effect that religion might have on their own or people's lives. Whole school assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' religious education. The subject leader is enthusiastic and has had a positive effect on raising standards and making the subject one that staff enjoy teaching and pupils enjoy learning.