

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **BENWICK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Benwick, March

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110627

Headteacher: Mrs G. Thomas

Reporting inspector: Mr C. D. Taylor  
23004

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> October 2002

Inspection number: 247018

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: High Street  
Benwick  
March  
Cambridgeshire

Postcode: PE15 0XA

Telephone number: 01354 677266

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S. Caton

Date of previous inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> - 26<sup>th</sup> November 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23004	C. Taylor	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage Provision for pupils with English as an additional language Science Geography History Music	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9957	S. Watts	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
2229	D. Hansen	Team inspector	Provision for pupils with special educational needs English Art and design Design and technology	
8798	D. Maxwell	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Information and communication technology Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Benwick Primary School caters for boys and girls aged four to 11 years. The school is much smaller than most primary schools, with 79 full-time pupils of compulsory school age. The school serves an area of private and local authority housing in the small fenland village of Benwick, six miles from March. Nearly all pupils reside in the village and surrounding farms. Numbers fluctuate slightly from year to year, but have remained broadly steady since 1997. Thirteen per cent of pupils - below the national average - are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils join the reception class with levels of attainment roughly typical for their age, though some year groups have more than the average number of pupils with special educational needs. Because of the small numbers in each year group, one pupil represents a large percentage and this can have a big effect on standards. Overall, twenty four per cent of pupils - close to the national average - are on the special educational needs register. Two pupils have statements of special educational needs. Most pupils with special needs have moderate learning difficulties. Only one pupil is from an ethnic minority and none speaks English as an additional language. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2002 and had been in post for only a few weeks at the time of the inspection.

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

Benwick Primary is an effective school. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour and relationships are good. Consequently, they make sound progress as they move through the school. Standards are broadly in line with national expectations, though they fluctuate from year to year because of the small numbers. Attendance is above the national average. The school benefits from good leadership and a good shared commitment by all staff to improve the school further. Although expenditure per pupil, like in many small schools, is well above the national average, the school provides sound value for money.

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

- Teaching is good in the reception class and throughout the school.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and relationships are good.
- Provision for pupils' moral, social and personal development is good.
- Procedures for ensuring pupils' personal support and guidance are good.
- Leadership and management by the headteacher and the governing body are good.

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

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below national expectations for older pupils.
- Teachers' termly planning is not detailed enough and does not make learning objectives and opportunities for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding clear enough.
- Assessment of pupils' attainment and progress is not used sufficiently to plan work appropriate to the needs of pupils of different abilities and different ages in the mixed-age classes.
- The management role of subject co-ordinators is underdeveloped and does not include the monitoring of teachers' planning and the observation and evaluation of teaching and learning.

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

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

Since the previous inspection in 1997, the school has made sound progress, overall, in improving the areas identified in the last inspection report. It has made good progress in raising standards in religious education across the school by fully implementing the locally

agreed syllabus, developing teachers' expertise and ensuring the subject receives sufficient teaching time. It has made substantial improvements in planning the curriculum for the reception class and in the quality of teaching for the youngest children, though resources for outdoor play still require some improvement. It has made sound progress in adopting schemes of work in all subjects and in developing assessment procedures, though these are not used sufficiently to plan teaching and learning. It has not made sufficient progress in developing procedures to monitor curriculum planning and to observe and evaluate teaching and learning in all subjects. In addition, teaching and learning have improved and standards in the reception class are higher. Provision for pupils with special educational needs has improved and is now good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	C	E	E
mathematics	C	C	E	E
science	C	C	E*	E

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

Standards were well below the national average in English and mathematics and in the bottom five per cent of schools in science. Inspection findings show that attainment in the current Year 6 is broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Standards are in line with national expectations in all other subjects except in ICT where standards are below expectations. It was not possible to make judgements in music and physical education because of insufficient evidence. Standards are currently higher than in the 2002 national tests as the Year 6 class taking these tests contained a higher than average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The school, nevertheless, achieved its targets in English and mathematics, and in comparison with their prior attainment at the end of Year 2, the year group made sound progress. Attainment at the end of Year 2 was in line with the national average in reading, above average in writing and well above average in mathematics in the national tests in 2002. It was well above the average in similar schools in all three subjects. Standards were above average in the teacher's assessments in science. In the current Year 2, pupils are making sound progress. Standards are broadly in line with the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and are close to those expected nationally in all other subjects. Standards were higher in last year's class because there were fewer pupils with special educational needs than in the current Year 2. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress because of the additional support they receive. Suitably challenging targets have been set to improve standards in English and mathematics in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003. To meet these targets, the school has rightly focused its attention on improving pupils' writing skills and on problem-solving and practical investigations in mathematics.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are keen to learn and are well motivated. They are enthusiastic and involved in all school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils are polite and helpful and behave well in class and around school. There were no exclusions during the last year.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships between pupils and with members of staff are good. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to take initiative and to carry out responsibilities around the school.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average. Punctuality is good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
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.*

Teaching is good throughout the school. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills in English and mathematics and across other subjects of the curriculum is good in all year groups. There is insufficient emphasis, however, on developing handwriting skills and the presentation of pupils' work. Strengths in teaching include good subject knowledge, interesting teaching methods, good class management and effective use of support staff and resources. Evidence shows that teaching is currently better in some classes than it was last year. As a result, pupils are now often making good progress during lessons, and will have made sound progress, overall, in acquiring skills, knowledge and understanding during their time at the school. Pupils with special educational needs receive effective support. Where aspects of lessons are occasionally less successful, this is because lessons have not been planned carefully enough or work has not been matched closely enough to the individual needs of pupils of different ability. Homework is used effectively to reinforce pupils' learning, but marking of pupils' work does not always identify how the standard could be improved. In addition, there is not enough use of ICT to assist teaching and learning across most subjects of the curriculum.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The curriculum is broad and balanced. All the requirements of the National Curriculum and the agreed syllabus for religious education are met. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive good support and make sound progress towards the targets in their individual education plans.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, overall. Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good, with clear teaching of right and wrong. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is sound, including visits to the local church, museums and places of historical interest. However, there are fewer opportunities to learn about other cultures in Britain and around the world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory, overall. Procedures for the personal support and guidance of pupils and for promoting good behaviour and attendance are effective. The school has a series of sensible strategies in place to check how well pupils are doing. Teachers do not use these assessments sufficiently, however, to plan work that is appropriate for pupils of different abilities and different ages in the mixed-age classes.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school encourages good parental involvement and receives the valuable support of a strong parent-teacher association.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory, overall. The headteacher provides good leadership. She ensures that the school is moving forward with clear educational direction. Subject co-ordinators check pupils' work, but do not monitor teachers' planning or observe and evaluate teaching in their subject areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors carry out their statutory duties well, with the exception of a few omissions in the prospectus and annual report. They play an effective role in helping to shape the direction of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory, overall. The headteacher and governors monitor and evaluate the school's performance well and have a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses. Subject co-ordinators do not have such a good understanding of the shortcomings in their subject areas.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory, overall. The school supports educational priorities well through shrewd financial planning. Specific grants, including funding for pupils with special educational needs, are used effectively. The school applies the principles of best value by comparing itself with other schools, consulting widely, and ensuring competition through tendering. The accommodation is satisfactory, and there are many attractive displays to stimulate pupils' interest. Resources are satisfactory, overall, but the 'trim trail' needs resurfacing and more ICT resources are needed to assist teaching and learning in most subjects.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children enjoy school.</li> <li>• They make good progress in their work.</li> <li>• The teaching is good.</li> <li>• Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with a problem.</li> <li>• The school expects children to work hard.</li> <li>• The school works closely with parents.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school helps children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Just over a quarter of parents responded to the questionnaire. A seventh of those who responded thought their children do not get the right amount of work to do at home. Some felt there is too much homework and some felt there is not enough.</li> <li>• The same number was concerned about the standards of behaviour in the school.</li> <li>• One in seven who responded felt that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

The inspection findings support the parents' very positive views. The amount of homework set by the school is broadly in line with national guidelines. It is the inspectors' judgement that most pupils behave well in and around the school. Considering the small size of the school, there is a satisfactory range of activities outside lessons.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

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

1. When children join the reception class, attainment is broadly typical for their age, though some year groups have a higher than average number of pupils with special educational needs. Because of the small numbers in each year group, one pupil represents a large percentage and this can have a big effect on overall standards. All children, including those who have special educational needs, make sound progress towards the early learning goals. By the end of the reception year, most children have achieved the levels expected for their age in communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical understanding and in personal and social development. Most have also reached the levels expected in knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. This is a good improvement on the previous inspection when standards were reported to be weak in knowledge and understanding of the world and in aspects of physical development.

2. By the end of Year 2, inspection findings show that the overall attainment of pupils is in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment is close to the standard expected nationally in all other subjects except music, where no judgement was possible. This is similar to standards in English, mathematics and most other subjects at the previous inspection. Standards were reported to be above average in science at the previous inspection and are now typical for pupils of their age. Standards have improved in religious education and are now in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Standards are not as good as the national tests in 2002 when every pupil gained the expected levels in reading, writing, mathematics and science, and standards were well above the average in similar schools. This is because the previous Year 2 had a smaller proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils, however, including those who have special educational needs, make sound progress in Years 1 and 2. There are no significant variations in attainment by gender or by ethnic background.

3. In English, inspection findings indicate that attainment in the current Year 2 is in line with the national average. Extra support provided for pupils with special educational needs helps them to make sound progress. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are typical of those expected for their age, and most pupils make sound progress in developing confidence when speaking. Teachers have good communication skills and use questioning well to encourage pupils to speak in whole class situations. In reading, standards are typical for their age. Most pupils make sound progress because they are taught effectively and have plenty of opportunities to read at school and at home. Standards in writing are broadly average as teachers show pupils how to construct stories and write for a variety of purposes. Most pupils are beginning to use simple punctuation, and are able to spell simple words correctly. Standards in handwriting are unsatisfactory, however, and not enough attention is given to neatness and overall presentation.

4. In mathematics, inspection findings indicate that attainment in Year 2 is in line with the national average, and pupils make sound progress. There is a good focus on basic numeracy, counting and mental calculation skills, as well as solving simple word problems. In science, inspection findings indicate that attainment by the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations. Pupils have a good understanding of materials and living things, and are given plenty of opportunities to carry out their own investigations. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make sound progress in mathematics and science.

Pupils' attainment in ICT is in line with standards expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and pupils use the mouse and the keyboard with increasing confidence.

5. By the end of Year 6, inspection findings show that standards are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment is close to the standards expected nationally in all other subjects, except in ICT where standards are below expectations and in music and physical education where no judgement was possible. This is an improvement on the national tests in 2002 when standards in English, mathematics and science were well below the average in similar schools. This is because last year's class had a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are currently making sound progress, and there are no significant variations in attainment by gender or by ethnic background.

6. Inspection findings indicate that, in English, pupils make sound progress in their reading as there is a well-structured programme of reading and pupils take books home regularly. Pupils make sound progress in developing their speaking skills and often join in discussions to develop their confidence. Standards in writing are typical for their age as pupils are encouraged to use a wide range of vocabulary to improve their written work. The standard of handwriting is unsatisfactory, however, as not all pupils use a cursive script when writing and presentation is often poor.

7. In mathematics, inspection findings indicate that attainment in Year 6 is in line with what is expected nationally. There is a good emphasis on calculations and number work, but less work in other aspects such as shape and space or handling data. In science, standards are in line with national expectations. Pupils make sound progress in their understanding of physical processes and living things, and they are given ample opportunities to carry out their own investigations. Attainment in ICT is below national expectations. Pupils' keyboard and mouse skills are under-developed, and their general competence and confidence does not meet the expectations for their age.

8. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early so that appropriate work can be devised for them. Targets in their individual education plans are very clear and guide teachers and support staff well. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress, and when supported one-to-one they often make good progress. There is a small minority of pupils who find it difficult to concentrate and behave well in school and this response is addressed through individual behaviour plans. While the progress of these pupils is satisfactory overall, they achieve best where the teacher and support staff are able to manage the pupils' behaviour well.

9. Suitable targets have been set for English and mathematics in the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 in 2003. To achieve these targets, the school has focused on improving pupils' writing skills, and increased emphasis on problem-solving and practical investigations.

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

10. As at the previous inspection, pupils' attitudes are good and parents comment that their children are eager to come to school. This is evident at the beginning of the day when pupils line up quickly to go into classes. Pupils greet visitors and are happy to talk with them. They are courteous to both adults and other children. They enjoy showing their work and are proud that their efforts are displayed on the classroom walls. Pupils' personal development is very good. The school expects pupils to take increasing responsibility and to show initiative. Pupils take the opportunity to voice their opinions through the school council. An example of this was when pupils agreed to organise a sponsored silence to raise money for a school

project. Pupils also show their willingness to help others by supporting a variety of charities, and by entertaining elderly residents at the school's Christmas pantomime.

11. Pupil's behaviour is good, as it was at the previous inspection. The vast majority of pupils behave well and the few who try to disrupt lessons are dealt with firmly. Pupils are interested and enthusiastic in all they are doing and generally listen well and act on what they are asked to do. All pupils are involved in agreeing class rules and understand what is expected of them. No bullying was seen and the pupils spoken to did not express any anxiety. There have been no exclusions in the past year. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well in their learning and personal development by teachers and learning support assistants.

12. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good and are generally good between the pupils themselves. Staff know the pupils well and this is evident at registration and during class discussion times. There is an atmosphere of happiness and enthusiasm in the school, reflecting the positive attitudes of the pupils, and this encourages learning. Pupils are expected to share with others and they show concern if any other children are hurt or upset.

13. Pupils' attendance is above the national average, with most absences due to illness. Punctuality is good and most lessons start on time. This is similar to the previous inspection. Good attendance and a prompt start to lessons help to raise standards.

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

14. Teaching is good throughout the school. During the inspection, it was never less than satisfactory and was good or better in three-quarters of the lessons. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when teaching was reported to be unsatisfactory in a tenth of all lessons. Scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that teaching in some classes is currently better than it was last year. As a result, pupils are currently making good progress in many subjects where their progress over time has been no more than satisfactory. Where teaching is good, this often involves good subject knowledge, interesting teaching methods, good class management and effective use of support staff and resources. Where teaching is occasionally less successful, this is because lessons have not been planned carefully enough or work has not been matched closely enough to the individual needs of pupils of different ability. Consequently, pupils do not make as much progress as they might.

15. Teaching is good in the reception class. The teacher and learning support assistant have a good understanding of how young children learn, and make learning enjoyable. The curriculum is well planned and lessons have clear learning objectives that lead towards the expected goals for young children. This is much better than at the previous inspection. The class teacher and other adults provide good role models and have good relationships with the children. They place a strong emphasis on developing children's social skills, and help them to make choices and to take decisions by providing a range of free-choice activities towards the end of many lessons. They have high expectations and consistently encourage the children in order to build their confidence. They frequently check children's skills and understanding, and provide tasks that are well matched to individual children's needs. They provide good support and guidance for children with special educational needs, and these children make sound progress as a result.

16. Teaching is good, overall, in Years 1 and 2. It is good in English, mathematics, art and design, physical education and religious education, and satisfactory in science. It is good, overall, in Years 3 to 6. It is good in English, mathematics, art and design, and history and satisfactory in science and religious education. Insufficient lessons were seen in geography,

ICT, music and design and technology throughout the school, in history in Years 1 and 2, and in physical education in Years 3 to 6 to make judgements on the standards of teaching. Teaching that is good or better is a major factor in ensuring that pupils are currently making good progress in many lessons. As teaching in some classes is currently better than it was last year, most pupils will make sound progress overall during their time at the school.

17. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good throughout the school. This ensures that pupils acquire sound techniques and accurate information. In a series of history lessons in Years 5 and 6, for example, the teacher's very good background knowledge of the Tudor period ensured that pupils received detailed descriptions of Henry VIII and his navy. Occasionally, however, a lack of expertise or forethought results in less effective learning. This occurred, for example, in a Year 3 and 4 science investigation when the resources supplied to the pupils were not sufficiently different to produce shadows of various intensities. The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is generally good throughout the school, but the development of pupils' handwriting skills requires some improvement.

18. Teachers' planning is usually sound in English and mathematics and benefits from following the guidelines in the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies. Teachers usually make the learning objectives clear at the start of lessons, and review what pupils have learned at the end. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning. Teachers' medium term planning in other subjects, however, often makes no reference to learning objectives, and does not always identify opportunities for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Consequently, the results of assessments are not always used to ensure that work planned for pupils of different ability matches their individual needs. In a religious education lesson in Years 3 and 4, for example, the task lacked sufficient challenge for higher-attaining pupils by not requiring them to write about events in Gandhi's life. In most subjects, planning usually follows local guidelines and this helps to ensure that teaching builds on earlier work in a logical order.

19. Teachers employ a good variety of teaching methods. They usually commence lessons by referring to the previous lesson to reinforce pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of searching questions to make pupils think, and develop pupils' vocabulary by using the correct mathematical, scientific or religious terminology. In Years 5 and 6, for instance, the teacher used precise terms such as *meteorites* and *asteroids* when discussing the size of craters on the moon. In science, there is a good emphasis on pupils carrying out their own investigations. In an interesting practical exercise in Years 1 and 2, for example, pupils examined a wide range of materials to determine which were rigid and which would bend or stretch. Teachers often use pupils' skills to demonstrate good practice to the rest of the class. In a dance lesson in Years 1 and 2, for instance, a number of pupils were asked to demonstrate how seeds grow and flower buds open during the spring. This helped other pupils to evaluate and improve their own work.

20. Good relationships between teachers and pupils produce a cheerful and productive atmosphere. Effective class management is reflected in good behaviour and pupils' positive attitudes to work. As a result, most pupils are keen to learn and usually concentrate well. This was clearly evident in a Year 5 and 6 English lesson where pupils enjoyed the humour in *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, listened attentively to the story and were keen to provide examples of interesting words to use in their own writing.

21. Teachers and support staff work closely together and provide good assistance to pupils with special educational needs, especially when they receive one-to-one support. As a result, these pupils make sound progress. Teachers know their pupils well and generally plan activities that are closely matched to their needs. Individual education plans are well written

and contain precise targets for improvement, usually for language and literacy, but also sometimes for numeracy. Younger pupils receive broadly the same curriculum as the rest of the class, but older pupils do not receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum because of the school's current policy of withdrawing pupils with statements of special educational needs and other pupils from lessons. This is of particular concern where timetabling means some pupils miss out on a series of lessons in subjects such as design and technology.

22. Teachers generally use time and resources well. They usually time activities to keep lessons moving at a brisk pace so pupils maintain a good rate of learning. Teachers make good use of a wide variety of teaching resources, and this helps to maintain pupils' interest and concentration. In a history lesson in Years 5 and 6, for instance, pupils used the Internet and a wide range of reference books to research information on Henry VIII, while the teacher in a Year 1 and 2 class used a range of artefacts to illustrate the Hindu festival of Divali. Teachers mount attractive displays of artefacts and pupils' work in classrooms to stimulate pupils' thinking. The care they take reflects the appreciation they show for pupils' efforts.

23. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, teachers make regular assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, but they do not always use the results to ensure that work is matched to the needs of pupils of different abilities. On a few occasions, the work set does not challenge and extend the higher-attaining pupils sufficiently. In a mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils measured lines with their rulers correctly, but there was insufficient challenge to extend the understanding of the higher-attaining pupils. In other subjects, strategies for assessing pupils' progress are often informal and work is not always matched closely enough to the needs of pupils of different abilities. The day-to-day use of homework to reinforce and extend learning is broadly in line with national guidelines for older pupils and is used imaginatively for younger ones. Teachers' marking of pupils' work, however, is inconsistent. Praise is used extensively by many teachers to encourage and motivate pupils. The best marking also includes helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work, but some teachers give little indication of how standards could be better.

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

24. As at the previous inspection, the school provides a satisfactory curriculum with a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities for pupils. The appropriate statutory curriculum is in place and the school implements the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted schemes of work for all subjects, some of which are in the process of being adapted to meet the needs of all children in the school. Most subjects have up to date policy documents, but the headteacher and governors are agreeing a cycle of review, which will enable draft policies to be ratified by the governors in a manageable way. Medium term plans, however, are insufficiently structured and clear to provide a basis for weekly lesson planning. The governing body has good procedures to liaise with subject leaders, and thereby to develop and improve the curriculum and to raise standards.

25. The school has implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies in a satisfactory way. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, although there is seldom any reference to this in planning. Similarly, worthwhile tasks using ICT, such as researching information, are sometimes provided, but this practice is inconsistent. Good use is made of cross-curricular links in many subjects, for example, when researching Tudor costumes in art and design or when studying the workings of an Egyptian *shaduf* in design and technology. There is a full programme of



personal, social and health education and provision, including sex education and education on drugs, alcohol misuse and citizenship, is satisfactory.

26. The school provides appropriate equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum in most respects. During lessons, teachers include all pupils fully through their planning and interactions. However, the practice of withdrawing pupils with special educational needs from lessons is unsatisfactory, since they regularly miss the same subjects and are not able to take a full part when they return.

27. The community makes a suitable contribution to pupils' learning by supporting in a variety of ways, including visitors to the school and co-operation over homework. Pupils appreciate opportunities to visit places of interest to extend their subject knowledge and understanding. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, enjoy an annual residential visit that combines an emphasis on personal development with a good range of geographical, historical and scientific studies. Pupils are looking forward to dressing up as characters from their favourite stories in a forthcoming book week, indicating a good level of home support for school activities. Pupils are also involved in an annual musical festival, taking part with pupils from other nearby schools. The relationship with nearby schools is satisfactory, including, for example, shared in-service training. There are helpful links with the main secondary school to help pupils in their transition at the end of Year 6.

28. There is a satisfactory selection of extra-curricular activities, bearing in mind the small size of the school, that make a worthwhile contribution to pupils' learning. Football and netball clubs are available after school. The dance / drama club provides a good creative experience and a computer club is run for pupils in Year 6. A choir is formed for special occasions. These activities are for older pupils only, and the headteacher is aware of the lack of opportunities for younger pupils at present. She has plans to extend the choice of activities with support from parents and members of the local community.

29. The provision for pupils' personal development, particularly their moral and social development, is good. Cultural development is also now satisfactory, indicating an improvement since the last inspection. The school aims to ensure that all pupils have good opportunities for personal development, and these are promoted by all teaching and support staff. The school's assemblies, for example, encompass a caring Christian ethos, while the very caring relationships between teachers and pupils help to encourage values of care and respect. Through assemblies and class discussions, pupils are given a firm understanding of moral values in making decisions, and the difference between right and wrong.

30. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. The school provides many good opportunities for spiritual awareness through assemblies, religious education and other lessons. Daily assemblies are used well to build up pupils' understanding of significant values such as friendship. Religious education lessons introduce pupils to the beliefs and practices of several major world faiths, with opportunities to reflect on their meaning. Spiritual appreciation is fostered in a few other lessons, such as through stories or when creating works of art. However, the school does not plan deliberately to include this dimension in art and design, literature or music.

31. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school encourages pupils to understand the importance of helping others and to recognise the needs of people less fortunate than themselves. Within lessons and assemblies, moral issues are discussed. The Good Samaritan story, for instance, is considered in relation to friendships and being a good neighbour. Members of the school council discuss how they can encourage considerate behaviour. Moral issues are frequently considered in assemblies and lessons, for example, when studying the life of Gandhi and the moral stand he took. Pupils are encouraged to think

about and talk through their actions, and to consider their impact on others, for example, through a lesson on Yom Kippur with the older pupils. Pupils take part in a number of fundraising events for charitable causes.

32. Provision for pupils' social development is good. This is reflected in good classroom management, for example, and in the valuable residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6. The governors and staff have a good understanding of the need to promote good working relationships among pupils as a basis for co-operative learning. Older pupils are expected to care for younger ones, for example, at lunch times and in reading stories to younger children.

33. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, overall. In geography, history and religious education lessons, pupils are introduced to people and events that have shaped local history and world culture, as when discussing Gandhi or Mother Teresa. They hear stories and learn of conditions in countries such as India, and see artefacts representative of religions and cultures from around the world. However, there is less evidence to show that the school teaches pupils about the rich ethnic mix of traditions and cultures within present day British society.

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

34. Pupils are well cared for and arrangements for ensuring their health and safety are generally sound. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted a formal policy for child protection. There is now a designated person responsible for child protection who has had the appropriate training, and all the staff are well briefed as to the procedures to be followed. The school liaises with other professionals to enable pupils to receive any help and support needed. The school is welcoming and the caretaker ensures that it is a very pleasant place for pupils to attend and adults to work in. Health and safety policies are in place, as are appropriate fire regulations, safety audits and risk assessments. A governor who works in the fire service has responsibility for inspecting the premises regularly and he is also involved in fire safety and training.

35. The school has very effective systems to follow up pupils' absences and to promote good attendance. Registration is quick and efficient and complies with statutory requirements. There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' behaviour regularly and the small number who misbehave in class are handled firmly. Pupils are encouraged to determine their own class rules so they fully understand what is acceptable behaviour. Occasional incidents of bullying are dealt with effectively. No bullying was seen during the inspection and the pupils spoken to did not express any anxiety. Staff work closely with visiting specialists and adopt effective strategies for helping pupils with behaviour difficulties.

36. Links with the village playgroup are good, as are arrangements for pupils to transfer to secondary school. The school ensures that pupils are familiar with the school to which they are going. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. Pupils have opportunities to develop their personal skills in personal, social and health education lessons, through the school council, and on school visits, including a residential week in Years 5 and 6.

37. Improving the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress was a key issue at the previous inspection. The school has made sound progress in addressing this issue although assessments are still not used sufficiently to plan work that is appropriate to the individual needs of pupils of different abilities and different ages in the mixed-age classes. Statutory assessment takes place in English, mathematics and science at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the school also uses the optional tests at the end of Years 3, 4 and 5. Results are analysed to identify strengths and weaknesses in these subjects and how well different

groups of pupils achieve. There is a new assessment policy in place which, when fully integrated into the school's curriculum planning, will ensure that staff have an overview of how well pupils are achieving.

38. The school has collected together all its assessment information so it is now possible to check on the progress made by individual pupils from entering the school to Year 3. This information is being used to predict attainment at the end of each school year and to set more ambitious targets. Some teachers have set literacy and numeracy targets for individual pupils and are using these when marking pupils' work, but this is not general across the school. Neither are teachers, generally, using the results of assessments to set more demanding work for the higher-attaining pupils in order to raise their standards even higher. Frequent checks to identify pupils who are doing better, or not as well, as expected have yet to be put in place, but the headteacher is aware that this is the next step. In this way staff, pupils and parents will be able to identify improvements in standards and areas needing further development.

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

39. The school maintains good links with parents and the parents' views expressed in the questionnaire, at the parents' meeting and in discussions in the playground are generally very positive. The majority of parents are very pleased with the standards achieved, the dedication of the staff and the values the school promotes. A small minority of parents expressed particular concern over homework. Some felt there is too little homework, while others felt that there is too much. The inspectors judged that the arrangements for homework are in line with national guidelines and that parents are kept adequately informed.

40. The Friends of Benwick School is an active parent-teacher association that raises significant amounts of money for the school, and contributes to pupils' learning and social development. There is a strong community feeling that is promoted by regular newsletters informing parents of activities for children and adults. The school's links with the village and the church are good. The school works closely with the community to organise activities such as those to celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee. Information is sent out regularly from the school and the Friends. The majority of parents feel they receive sufficient notice of events. Parents are immediately informed if pupils do not arrive at school and an attendance register is attached to the yearly pupils' report. The school reports are well presented and parents feel they are pertinent to their own child and give a good indication of the progress being made. The school should ensure that home school agreements are kept up to date.

41. Several parents help regularly in school, listening to pupils read and assisting in the classroom. Most parents take advantage of the regular opportunities to meet with the staff to discuss their children's progress and the school is always willing to discuss difficulties at any time. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are invited to attend reviews and to contribute to their children's individual education plans. They are informed regularly about the progress their child is making. Many parents attend school activities such as sports days and concerts, and accompany children on school visits.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

42. The new headteacher provides good leadership of the school. She is already developing clear priorities and plans for the future, and is committed to meeting the needs of pupils of different abilities and of those with special educational needs. During her first few weeks in post, she has targeted areas for raising standards in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and has identified aspects that are under-resourced. She has gained the respect of pupils and staff, and has introduced a number of new initiatives such as a more

efficient start to the school day and regular whole-school morning assemblies. She has established good relationships with parents and governors, and, as there is no deputy headteacher, she has begun to develop the roles of the senior teacher and the subject co-ordinators. As a result, the school is moving forward with clear educational direction.

43. The school has good aims and values that are reflected well in its work. The school aims to provide a stimulating, caring and safe environment in which each child is a valued part of the school. It encourages each child to fulfil their potential in all areas of the curriculum, and ensures that a broad and balanced curriculum is delivered to all children regardless of social background, gender, disability or difference in ability. It is largely successful in these aims.

44. The management of the school is good, as it was at the previous inspection. The headteacher has not yet had time to observe teaching in each class, but she has already monitored teachers' planning and has fed back observations to individual teachers, making suggestions to raise pupils' attainment. She already has classroom visits planned which will form part of the performance management programme that is operating successfully in the school. The headteacher has a good grasp of pupils' standards. She has already analysed National Curriculum test results and optional test results to track pupils' progress from year to year and to identify weaker areas of the curriculum, and has discussed areas for improvement with the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators.

45. Since the previous inspection, the role of subject co-ordinators has not been developed sufficiently. Co-ordinators take opportunities to raise standards by monitoring pupils' work, but they do not evaluate teachers' planning and have not yet been given opportunities to observe teaching in their subject areas. The school is aware that this restricts their capacity to raise standards, however, and the headteacher is intending to allocate time for all co-ordinators to observe lessons in their subject areas during the current school year.

46. The school's provision for special educational needs is managed well by the co-ordinator who has taken steps to ensure that the school's provision is in line with the latest Code of Practice and associated guidance. Individual education plans are updated regularly and class teachers and parents are included in the process of developing an appropriate curriculum. Records of pupils' progress are kept and are used well in planning. This ensures that pupils continue to make sound progress. The nominated governor for special educational needs is experienced in this area and supports the school's work well.

47. The governors provide good support for the headteacher and fulfil their statutory responsibilities well, with the exception of a few omissions in the school prospectus and the annual report to parents. They have a good working knowledge of the school and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They are kept up-to-date by detailed reports from the headteacher and by occasional presentations from subject co-ordinators. Several governors, including the Chair, visit the school regularly. A number of governors have observed lessons or have accompanied school visits and have reported their findings back to the governing body. Committees meet regularly to discuss the curriculum, premises and finance. Governors debate standards, staffing and budget issues, and help to determine the priorities facing the school. Several governors have taken part in training sessions, sometimes attending with their 'link' teacher.

48. Educational priorities are supported through shrewd financial planning. The school has planned ahead carefully, ensuring that a large carry-over was available to fund the fourth class this September despite a fall in the number of infants. New housing developments in the village should result in a larger roll which should ensure additional funding for this class. The school development plan identifies appropriate targets and ensures that resources are directed towards raising pupils' attainment. The personnel, resources and timings are identified clearly, and there are sound criteria by which the impact of these developments can be evaluated. New developments are linked appropriately to the annual budget. The school makes good use of resources allocated to support specific groups of pupils such as those with special educational needs. The governors' finance committee monitors the school's budget regularly and satisfactory financial controls are in place. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily. The school seeks competitive tenders for all major spending decisions to ensure it receives sound value for money. It assesses its performance in comparison with other schools, and consults widely to gain the opinions of parents, pupils and staff. Day-to-day administration is efficient and computers are used effectively for placing orders and for keeping pupils' records. There has been no local authority financial audit report since the previous inspection.

49. Staff and governors have a good shared commitment to improving the quality of teaching and learning and under the leadership of the new headteacher the school has a good capacity to succeed. Suitable targets have been set for raising standards in English, mathematics and science in the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2003.

50. Staffing levels in the school are good, with an appropriate amount of support for pupils with special needs. At present there are no newly qualified teachers, but in the past, a mentor has provided good support for newly qualified staff. Job descriptions are in place for all members of staff, but some of these currently need updating. Training needs of the staff have been identified but not all have yet been met due to funding. All the school staff work together as a team and are effective in supporting each other.

51. School accommodation is adequate, although some disturbance is caused during lessons as many rooms lead off each other. The library is underused because it is too small for classes to use during lesson times. Teachers often bring the library books into class so that pupils can use them for research, and they supplement them with books on loan from the library service. Physical education takes place in the village hall, which has some limitations for gymnastic lessons. The school playground has a large variety of games painted on the playground surface and on the adjacent walls and these are well used. The 'trim trail' needs resurfacing as this currently limits the amount of space available for pupils' physical development. Since the previous inspection, the school has developed a dedicated play area for the youngest children, leading off the reception classroom. Generally resources are satisfactory, except in ICT where further hardware and software are needed to ensure that ICT can be used to assist teaching and learning across different subjects of the curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to improve the quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) Improve standards in ICT for older pupils by:
  - Providing more computers and more computer programs.  
(Paragraphs: 51, 71, 107)
  - Using ICT more widely to assist teaching and learning across all subjects of the curriculum.  
(Paragraphs: 83, 97, 102, 103, 107, 111)
- (2) Improve teachers' medium-term planning by including clear learning objectives and identifying opportunities for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress.  
(Paragraphs: 18, 24, 83, 87, 91, 97, 107, 114, 119)
- (3) Make more use of assessment to plan work that is appropriate to the needs of individual pupils of different abilities and different ages in the mixed-age classes.  
(Paragraphs: 14, 18, 23, 37, 68, 77, 78, 81)
- (4) Develop the role of subject co-ordinators to include monitoring of teachers' planning, observation and evaluation of teaching and learning, and management of spending in their in their subject areas.  
(Paragraphs: 45, 78, 83, 97, 102, 114, 119)

In addition to the key issues above, the school should consider including the following minor issues in its action plan:

- The school should improve pupils' handwriting and the presentation of pupils' work.  
(Paragraphs: 3, 6, 66, 67, 69, 75)
- The school should ensure that the marking of pupils' work is more consistent and indicates more clearly how the work can be improved.  
(Paragraphs: 23, 71)
- The school should ensure that pupils with special educational needs receive their full entitlement to the school curriculum.  
(Paragraphs: 21, 26, 70, 91)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	5	18	8	0	0	0
Percentage	0	16	58	26	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	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	79
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2

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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	9	5	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (82)	100 (91)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (91)	93 (91)	93 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Where the number of boys or girls are ten or fewer the individual results are not reported.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	7	10	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (85)	65 (92)	65 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	10	11	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	59 (69)	65 (77)	65 (85)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

*Where the number of boys or girls are ten or fewer the individual results are not reported.*

**Ethnic background of pupils****Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	78	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

*The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

## Teachers and classes

### Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.5
Average class size	19.8

### Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	96

### Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	0
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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.*

## Financial information

Financial year	20001/2002
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	£
Total income	272 600
Total expenditure	270 185
Expenditure per pupil	3 336
Balance brought forward from previous year	28 855
Balance carried forward to next year	31 270

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	82
Number of questionnaires returned	22

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	23	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	41	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	54	14	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	5	9	5
The teaching is good.	50	40	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	64	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	32	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	82	13	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	32	68	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	45	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	31	5	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	50	14	0	0

## **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**

53. The school provides a good start to children's education. The quality of teaching in the reception class is good and the curriculum is well planned in accordance with the early learning goals for young children. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. Together with interesting displays, an attractive environment and good resources, this ensures that children learn effectively during their first year at school.

54. Most children join the reception class at the beginning of the school year in which they become five. During the inspection, there were 10 children on roll - nine children of reception age and a Year 1 child with a statement of special educational needs for whom the reception curriculum is appropriate. Most children have a range of skills broadly typical for their age when they join the school, though children's attainment on entry varies from year to year, and some classes have a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. Many children have attended the village pre-school playgroup and have developed sound linguistic and social skills. Most children make sound progress and achieve in line with national expectations. By the time they leave reception, most achieve the levels expected in personal and social development, communication, language and literacy skills, mathematical understanding, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in physical development and creative development.

55. The class teacher and the learning support assistant have a good understanding of how young children learn. They plan together, manage the children well and provide a good range of interesting activities. As a result, children are happy and enthusiastic, concentrate well and work with interest. They play happily together both indoors and outdoors, co-operate sensibly when sharing equipment, and are well motivated. Their attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good because the teacher's expectations are suitably high, tasks are explained clearly, and work is matched appropriately to the needs of individual children. The teacher regularly assesses children's understanding and provides tasks appropriate to their development. The staff have good relationships with the children and provide them with good role models. The child with a statement of special needs is totally included in all activities and is fully integrated into the class. She receives good support from her special needs assistant. Other children with special educational needs receive plenty of assistance both from their class teacher and from the learning support assistant. As a result, they make sound progress. Several volunteers regularly provide helpful assistance in class, and parents generally help their children's learning effectively at home by reading with them and by encouraging speaking and observational skills.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

56. The class teacher and learning support assistant develop children's social skills effectively. Children enter the classroom confidently in the mornings and put their book bags in the correct place. They sit on the carpet and wait quietly for the session to begin. They quickly learn to put their hands up to answer questions and know how to take turns when sharing resources. Children are encouraged to make their own choices after they have finished the main activity. In one lesson, two children played happily together guiding model cars around the roads on a mat, while another two children co-operated sensibly assembling an alphabet jigsaw. Children put their own art aprons on sensibly and at the end of the session, most put their own coats on unaided. The teacher encourages children to look after each other and shows them how to say "sorry" when they have upset each other.

Consequently, children make sound progress in developing social skills and their level of personal, social and emotional development is typical for their age at the end of the reception year.

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

57. Teaching of language and literacy is good. Most children have speech and language skills typical for their age when they join the school. The teacher and the learning support assistant constantly talk with the children to widen their vocabulary. They ask open-ended questions to develop children's fluency and confidence. Children are encouraged to explain the activities they are doing, and to discuss the books they are reading. In one lesson, children spoke about the *story sacks* they had taken home. In another, they discussed the features they could identify on close-up photographs of a feather, a leaf and a dandelion. Children look carefully at the pictures in storybooks, and most can recite some nursery rhymes unaided. The teacher sets up a portable playhouse in the dedicated outdoor play area, and encourages role-play activities to stimulate children's language development. As a result, children make sound progress, and their language development is typical for their age at the end of the reception year.

58. Children listen to stories enthusiastically, and enjoy looking at books. In one lesson, children enjoyed listening to a story about *The Red Bird*. They listened carefully, followed the illustrations and the text well, and joined in reading frequently occurring words such as *worms*. Children take reading books home regularly to share the stories with their parents and other adults. All children have a home-school reading record listing the books they have read, but there is no space for parents and teachers to exchange comments and encouragement about children's progress. Children enjoy looking at books and listening to recorded stories. They hold the books correctly and turn the pages carefully. They are taught the sounds and the names of letters, and most can soon identify the initial sounds of common words. By the end of the reception year, most pupils recognise a wide range of words that occur frequently, and most read simple sentences accurately. A few higher-attaining children read simple books confidently. Children make sound progress, and most can read as well as expected for their age.

59. Children are given many opportunities to develop their writing skills. At the beginning of the year, children make suitable attempts at early writing. They are systematically taught to write the letters of the alphabet and to recognise the sounds associated with each letter. During one lesson, for example, children suggested words beginning with *r* and identified items that were *red*. Later they began to overwrite the letter *r* and then practised writing the letter freehand. During the inspection, children were being taught to write their own name. By the end of the reception year, most can attempt short sentences such as *mi dog was in a haws (house)* unaided, using letters that are reasonably neat, generally correctly formed and approximately the same size. A few higher-attaining children can write longer sentences such as *Tomorrow it is the village sports day* accurately. Overall, children make sound progress, and standards of writing are in line with those expected nationally for children of their age.

### **Mathematical development**

60. Teaching is good and children are given many opportunities to use numbers and to explore shape and size. During the inspection, good use was made of large dice to recognise and place 1 to 6 in the correct order. Children working in pairs rolled the dice, counted out the correct number of cubes to make a tower, and then identified which tower had *more* or *less* bricks. Children sing a range of counting songs, sort objects into those that are *longer* or *thinner*, and use weighing scales to measure objects that are *lighter* and *heavier*. They play a

computer game to discover whether a spade is *under*, *over* or *on* a bucket. By the end of the reception year, children count to ten accurately, add and subtract numbers within ten correctly and write numbers to 20. They recognise simple shapes such as circles, squares and rectangles, and use coins to add together two small sums of money. The teacher and learning support assistants help children with special educational needs effectively so they are fully involved and make sound progress. At the end of the reception year, most children have mathematical skills in line with those expected for their age.

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

61. Good teaching ensures that there are many opportunities for children to learn about the world around them during lessons, outdoor activities and on visits in the local area. Children examine different uses of water and gain a simple understanding of the water cycle. They carry out their own investigations to discover objects that *float* and those that *sink*. They study a variety of creatures and their young, and identify the differences between living things and inanimate objects. Children explore the local area, visit the bridge and the river and draw maps of their route to school. They say what they like best about the village, and how they might improve it. They compare their school to a Victorian classroom, and look at changes that have occurred in clothing since Edwardian times. They learn to use a computer mouse to click onto the correct pictures to find the teddy bear, and sequence pictures of a growing plant in the correct order. During the inspection, children learnt about magnets and mirrors. They investigated the reflections seen in a range of concave and convex mirrors, and discovered for themselves which objects a magnet would pick up. Children make sound progress and their levels of knowledge and understanding are typical for their age at the end of the reception year.

### **Physical development**

62. When children join the school, their manipulative skills and co-ordination are usually typical for their age. The teacher ensures that there are many opportunities for children to develop better control by using pencils, crayons and paintbrushes. They pour water and sand onto waterwheels and into moulds, play with small plastic farmyard animals, assemble construction toys and learn how to use scissors. More energetic activities take place in the village hall or outside in the playground. During one lesson, children moved around the hall like spaceships, keeping their distance from each other and changing direction carefully. They followed instructions well when asked to move like robots or as aliens. Outside, children developed better co-ordination and balance on the climbing frame and rode scooters round the playground, taking care not to collide with anyone else. They co-operated happily, taking turns and sharing equipment sensibly. The provision of a dedicated outdoor play area with a large sandpit next to the reception classroom is a good improvement since the previous inspection, but there are still insufficient resources for outdoor play, resulting in teaching which is no more than satisfactory. While more tricycles are currently on order, the 'trim trail' cannot be used at present as the landing area requires re-surfacing. Overall, children make sound progress and their physical development is in line with what is expected nationally by the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

63. Good teaching ensures that children make sound progress in developing their creative skills. Children use a variety of paints, paper, card, fabrics and construction materials. They discover how to create different shades by mixing colours with white paint, and learn how to hold a brush correctly to create wave patterns. During one lesson, children used foam brushes to paint pictures of red objects and made prints of rabbits and stars with foam printing blocks. They used glue to stick red tissue paper onto cardboard 'stalks' to



create *five red poppies*, then sang a song about the poppies. Children use wool, felt and buttons to create collages of fish and seashells in underwater scenes, and make *alphabet owls* with different coloured papers. They colour large cardboard butterflies with pencil crayons, make samplers using simple stitches, and decorate models of *Elmer the elephant* with squares of coloured tissue paper. For the Queen's Golden Jubilee, children used gold coloured paper, glitter and paint to produce attractive portraits of her majesty. Children enjoy singing nursery rhymes and join in happily with the actions that often accompany the songs. As a result, children's artistic and musical skills are developing soundly and are broadly in line with those expected at the end of the reception year.

## ENGLISH

64. Standards are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the previous inspection. Pupils' attainment is broadly average when they enter the school and they make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. The standard of teaching has improved since the previous inspection, and pupils sometimes made good progress in the lessons observed. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress because they receive effective support.

65. By the end of Year 2, most pupils demonstrate satisfactory speaking and listening skills. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, read the story *Where's my Teddy?* with their teacher, then discussed the plot, taking turns to answer questions and to recall new words. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed a lesson where they read an extract from *The Sand Horse* and then suggested alternative verbs such as *roared* and *swirled* to describe the wave action on a beach, successfully making the passage more interesting to the listener. By Year 6, pupils' speaking skills are further developed and most pupils can discuss issues with more demanding content confidently. In a science lesson in Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils planned investigations into the depth of moon craters using specialised vocabulary such as *meteorites*, *craters*, and *asteroids*, introduced during the visit of a scientist to their class a few weeks before. Provision for pupils with special educational needs concentrates on particular themes for discussion and on developing appropriate vocabulary, and this fosters good working relationships with adults.

66. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing sound basic reading skills. Most pupils are beginning to read simple texts and usually work out new words for themselves. They base sensible guesses on picture clues, and use initial letter sounds and familiar clusters of letters to identify unknown words. The most able pupils read fluently and with meaning. They speak a character's line from a story with expression, and have effective strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Pupils are beginning to achieve satisfactory standards in writing at this early point of the school year. Some are already forming simple sentences for their own stories and other descriptive writing, though most are not yet using capital letters and full stops consistently. Pupils spell simple words correctly and show a grasp of spelling conventions when guessing more difficult words. In a Year 1 and Year 2 literacy lesson, for example, pupils focussed on the formation of three-letter words such as *cat* and found rhyming words such as *mat* and *bat*. They benefit from learning rhymes and songs that they enjoy repeating from memory. Pupils practise handwriting skills, but not enough attention is given to neatness and overall presentation. As a result, what they have learned is not transferred to work in other subjects, and presentation of written work is often untidy. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in class and in individual or small group withdrawal sessions.

67. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build successfully on earlier learning and most achieve satisfactory reading skills by the end of Year 6. Several older pupils demonstrated higher levels of reading ability in an art and design lesson when they used a range of resource

books to research the details of Tudor costumes. Support for pupils with special educational needs makes a positive impact on their self-esteem and on the confidence with which they read. In writing, most pupils of average ability reach the standard expected nationally, and the higher-attaining ones do better. They structure stories and factual accounts sequentially, mindful of using interesting and appropriate vocabulary, so that the reader enjoys an interesting reading experience. Sometimes, pupils improve their efforts through re-drafting their work. Spelling is mostly correct and pupils use their dictionary skills to good effect. Most pupils explain tasks precisely, but a number still find reaching their targets hard due to uncertainty about the meanings of words or because they experience difficulty in ordering their ideas. Some pupils in Year 6 still need considerable support with writing tasks. By Year 6, handwriting is still very variable. Many pupils do not work neatly or form their letters well, and presentation is unsatisfactory. Not all pupils use a joined handwriting script and many are still using a pencil instead of a pen.

68. Teaching across the school is good, overall. Most teachers ensure that pupils know what is expected of them by writing the learning objectives where everyone can see them. Teachers monitor pupils' progress during written tasks and intervene helpfully to move learning on. Assessment of pupils' previous learning, however, is not always used sufficiently when planning lessons or for ensuring that tasks are closely matched to the needs of pupils of different age and different ability within the mixed-age classes. In a Year 1 and Year 2 lesson requiring recognition of a series of pictures, for example, the task was insufficiently challenging for higher-attaining pupils. While the learning support assistant gave good support to a group of lower-attaining pupils, and the teacher concentrated successfully on group reading, the highest-attaining pupils did not achieve as well as they could.

69. Where teaching is good or very good, teachers' efforts are clearly focused on the lesson's main learning objectives ensuring pupils' attention and energy are channelled into achieving a successful outcome. In a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson, for example, pupils used worksheets and computers to identify and replace verbs in an extract from a story. By the end of the lesson, most had successfully completed the task although the presentation of their work was untidy. Most pupils were able to explain the lesson objectives that had been set earlier, and could identify whether they had met them.

70. The additional time given to literacy activities each day provides good opportunities for pupils to extend their writing horizons and to use literacy skills for different purposes. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for instance, are challenged with speed writing for particular tasks. This prepares pupils well for efficient note taking in the next stage of their education. Pupils are beginning to see real purpose in re-drafting work to improve their results. Role-play is improving pupils' speaking and listening skills and increasing their confidence when meeting visitors. Discussions with pupils reveal they enjoy oral work, listening to their teachers read, and writing and listening to poetry. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good quality support, but older pupils sometimes lose their entitlement to lessons in other subjects when they are withdrawn from classes for small group sessions.

71. Homework is used sensibly to reinforce pupils' learning. Teachers stress the importance of reading regularly, and parents and carers are invited to support their children at home by listening to them reading and adding comments to the home-school reading record. Marking of pupils' work, however, is inconsistent. In the best examples, pupils are clearly advised on how well they are achieving and how they might improve further. In other cases, there is little indication of how standards can be improved. Occasionally, pupils are provided with opportunities to use their word processing skills during lessons, but overall, a lack of suitable ICT software is hindering older pupils, in particular, from acquiring more

advanced word processing skills such as those required for desktop publishing. Computers are not always fully utilised during literacy lessons.

72. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator is an experienced teacher with good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. Through checking teachers' planning, observing literacy lessons and scrutinising pupils' work, she has a sound overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. Analysis of statutory tests has resulted in the school focussing on the improvement of pupils' writing skills. Overall, resources are of satisfactory quality but the school is in need of more books for group reading. Library provision is unsatisfactory, however, as the space allocated to the school library is too small to be used by more than one or two pupils, and many books have to be kept in classrooms. In addition, many books are looking dated or worn. To offset this, the school currently makes good use of loans from the library service to support pupils' independent research in other subjects of the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

73. Standards in mathematics are average by the end of Years 2 and 6, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection. Pupils enter the school with broadly average attainment and they make satisfactory progress throughout the school due to carefully planned and directed teaching. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress due to effective support. The standard of teaching is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The most recent work in the current Year 5 and Year 6 class indicates an improved approach to teaching and higher standards than the previous year.

74. In the Year 1 and Year 2 class, a good start to introducing the idea of doubling captured the children's interest well. Their delight on being handed a toy badger to indicate their turn was tangible, and the children tried hard to work out the correct answers. The main task - solving simple word problems about dogs burying bones - provided a good basis for understanding number. Most pupils recognised how the language linked to the arithmetic process, following a very thorough explanation by the teacher. Tasks were sensibly adjusted for pupils' abilities, with additional support provided for pupils with special educational needs, so that they made appropriate progress. The higher-attaining pupils used several counting strategies to solve their problems, and most recognised when two steps were needed - as in burying and giving away bones. The teacher's very good relationships, and the strategy of having pupils make up their own problems, extended the task well, helping to reinforce the children's skills and maintaining their very good attitudes. Standards vary year by year since the numbers of children in each year group are small. Standards in the current Year 2 are broadly average. This is lower than last year as the previous year group had fewer pupils with special educational needs.

75. In a Year 3 and Year 4 lesson, pupils were confident in counting in tens. Most pupils measured lines using their rulers correctly and measured the lengths accurately, noting *cm* or *mm* as needed. Many pupils took good care in this work, although there was insufficient challenge to extend the understanding of the higher-attaining pupils. In another lesson, a lively introduction gave a good focus on number tables, which reinforced pupils' learning and knowledge of numbers in the 2, 3 and 4 times tables. In preparation for the main activity, the teacher gave a very thorough explanation of how to find the difference between two numbers, such as 295 and 306. Most higher-attaining pupils formed a good understanding of the benefit of using 300 as a stepping stone to give  $5 + 6 = 11$ . Many of the average or lower-attaining pupils relied on making jumps of one at a time, counting from 295 to 306. The teacher's good preparation and approach motivated pupils well so that they sustained a very good level of interest and worked hard to complete the tasks. While most pupils tackled a reasonable number of questions, the presentation and working out by many pupils was untidy, with poorly

formed numerals. The time allowed for the written task was also too short, curtailing the opportunities for pupils to reinforce their skills, including those of working independently. Pupils are given good opportunities for mental work, and at times make very good progress through very good interactive teaching. Work in pupils' books indicates that standards, overall, are broadly average.

76. Pupils continue to consolidate their skills in the Year 5 and Year 6 class, for example, through an activity that required them to recognise the answers to questions on the 3 and 4 times tables. Few pupils know their tables well at present, and their mental skills are currently below average. During a lesson on equivalent fractions, the teacher prepared the children carefully by inviting them to fold a circle into differing parts - 2, 4 or 8 - and to explain how they compared. Most pupils recognised that  $\frac{2}{4} = \frac{4}{8}$ . Higher-attaining pupils were also confident with the relationship  $\frac{1}{3} = \frac{2}{6}$ . In a well-chosen task, the higher-attaining pupils recorded the results of their dice throws as fractions. Several were able to argue that they had found all the possible fractions and set them out clearly in patterns of equivalent fractions. The average pupils used an ICT program that helped to reinforce their understanding. With some support, most pupils dragged equivalent values correctly into a box and were rewarded with a smiley face. Overall, taking the variation from year to year into account, standards in Year 6 are broadly average.

77. While all aspects of the National Curriculum are covered in teachers' planning, there is in general an over emphasis on arithmetic and number work, and insufficient work on shape, space and measurement. Problem-solving and investigational work is also under-represented, although teachers provide good opportunities for practical work. Teachers pay good attention to using the correct language of mathematics, though pupils write very little about their findings and observations. Numeracy is used widely across the curriculum when drawing graphs in science, for example, or when analysing weather data in geography. A scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 5 and 6 from last year indicated much work that was similar for all pupils with insufficient gradation for pupils of differing abilities. Planning for this year indicates closer attention to providing tasks that are more precisely matched to individual pupils' stages of learning.

78. The subject leader provides helpful support to colleagues and takes an active part in developing the subject. She monitors lesson planning but has not yet had the opportunity to observe lessons. Assessment of pupils' attainment is made informally as a part of on-going work and there are procedures in place to track pupils' progress through the school. Teachers do not always use these assessments sufficiently, however, to ensure that work meets the needs of pupils of different ages and different abilities. The quality and range of learning resources is satisfactory, though there are very few books in the school library to support pupils' wider interests in the subject.

## **SCIENCE**

79. Standards in science are in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is not as good as at the previous inspection when standards were reported to be above average at the end of Years 2 and 6.

80. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school. As at the previous inspection, there is a good emphasis on pupils carrying out their own practical and investigative work. As a result, pupils make sound progress and develop an appropriate range of investigative skills. In an interesting Year 5 and 6 lesson, for example, pupils carried out their own investigations into the effect of different sized meteors on the depth of craters. They dropped stones of different sizes into containers of sand, measured the depth of the 'craters' and plotted the results on a graph. Despite the limitations of the resources used,

pupils took care to conduct a fair test, predicted the outcome, and tested their own hypotheses. They worked sensibly and effectively in small groups and attempted to explain their results.

81. Teaching has a number of good features. Teachers give instructions clearly and try hard to get pupils to use correct scientific vocabulary. They ask relevant questions to make pupils think and explain their observations. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources to maintain pupils' attention and concentration. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2, for instance, pupils used an interesting variety of materials such as bubble wrap, foam, polystyrene and wood when investigating which materials would squash, bend, stretch or twist. Teachers monitor pupils' progress by assessing pupils' knowledge and skills at the end of each topic. Teachers do not use this information sufficiently, however, to plan work that closely matches pupils' individual abilities.

82. Teachers generally have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and this helps them to explain scientific ideas in a way that pupils can understand. Occasionally, however, teachers do not plan investigations carefully enough. This occurred in a Year 3 and 4 lesson, when pupils carried out their own investigations into factors that affect the intensity of shadows. While pupils worked sensibly, the materials chosen by the teacher to create the shadows were not sufficiently different to form a range of shadows of varying intensity. Teachers manage their classes well, and, as a result, most pupils concentrate hard, are keen to answer questions and have good attitudes towards their work. Attractive displays of pupils' work show pupils that their efforts are valued. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support from teachers and learning support assistants and make sound progress as a result.

83. The subject co-ordinator has only recently been appointed. The school agrees that her role needs developing further as, to date, the co-ordinator has monitored pupils' work, but has not monitored teachers' planning and has not been given the opportunity to observe and evaluate teaching in the subject. The school uses a scheme of work that covers the National Curriculum, but learning objectives are not clear enough in teachers' medium-term plans and opportunities for the assessment of pupils' progress are not always identified. Resources for the subject are generally satisfactory, but there is only limited use of ICT resources such as CDs and the Internet to assist teaching and pupils' research. Good use is made of visits, for example, to Hinchingsbrooke Park where pupils go pond dipping and investigate a variety of plant and animal habitats. Visitors, including a visiting Cambridge astronomer, make a good contribution to pupils' understanding.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. Standards in art and design are in line with national expectations throughout the school. This is similar to the previous inspection. Pupils have a sound knowledge of artistic techniques and experience a range of media. Photographs of pupils' work from the past, together with current work, indicate that pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their artistic skills.

85. Teaching was good in the lessons observed. Teaching of art and design is well integrated across the curriculum and good use is made of the subject to develop work in other areas. In the Year 1 and Year 2 class, for instance, design technology techniques were employed when pupils evaluated the designs on a number of tablemats before drawing their own designs and selecting small samples of material to show their preferred choices of fabric and colour. Detailed observational drawings of live owls brought to the school by a visitor, for example, stimulated pupils to achieve some good descriptive written work in literacy.

86. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 used a variety of reference books to research details of Tudor costume before creating attractive collages of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. This not only built on pupils' knowledge of the Tudor period gained in history lessons, but also successfully helped to develop pupils' independent learning skills. The application of art and design is also starting to develop pupils' awareness of non-European cultures. Displays in the Year 5 and 6 classroom, for example, showed traditional patterns used to decorate fabric made in Kenya, carefully and colourfully reproduced by pupils. Similarly, a poster in another classroom illustrated the symbolism and artefacts, such as lanterns and dragons, used in Chinese New Year celebrations.

87. Attractively mounted autumnal displays include pupils' paintings and collages from across the school. High quality displays encourage pupils to take a pride in their work and also improve pupils' self esteem. An analysis of pupils' work and observations of displays indicate that a wide range of media are introduced, including clay, paints, crayons, pencils, paper, card, fabric and threads. Sound use is made of sketchbooks to record detailed firsthand observations and pupils are encouraged to make drawings from real life. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has identified the need for improved planning and co-ordination of pupils' experiences throughout the school to ensure that skills are developed consistently and in a logical order. Informal records of pupils' work are kept using a camera, but the co-ordinator is aware of the need to refine the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment in the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

88. Standards in design and technology are broadly in line with national expectations across the school. This is similar to the previous inspection.

89. It is not possible to make a judgement on the standards of teaching and learning throughout the school. In the one lesson observed, however, teaching was sound and pupils' attitudes to the subject were satisfactory. In order to construct a three-dimensional character made of paper, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used a template to explore the mathematical application of triangles to provide stability in design. The class worked effectively in small groups to produce their characters. They reinforced the paper, decorated the characters, used scissors to cut and score lines, and fixed their shaped characters using adhesive, with the help of the adults in the class. Pupils received appropriate support that was matched to their abilities and this enabled them to make satisfactory progress.

90. Aspects of design and technology are sometimes taught during art and design lessons. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, enjoyed a lesson in which they studied costume and building design in Tudor England. They carried out their own research into how half-timbering was applied and used this knowledge in constructing models of Tudor houses. The tasks and activities pupils are given motivate pupils effectively, and as a result, they show enthusiasm in lessons. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of design principles is also reinforced through cross-curricular studies. In geography in Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils use drawing and labelling techniques to explain the design of an Egyptian *shaduf*, used for drawing irrigation water from the River Nile.

91. Management of the subject is satisfactory. Although the co-ordinator has only been appointed this term, she has a good understanding of what is needed to improve standards. She provides sound support for staff and has highlighted more staff training and better assessment of pupils' work as priorities for future development. Currently, evaluation of pupils' work takes place at the end of lessons, but there is no agreed system for recording assessments of pupils' work. In addition, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching and learning in the subject. Good use is made of support staff to provide additional guidance for

individuals and small groups. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support, but do not make as much progress in design and technology as other pupils when they are withdrawn from lessons for individual or small group sessions in literacy and numeracy.

92. Use of an approved scheme of work ensures that pupils learn design and technology skills in a logical order, and that activities are appropriate for pupils' ages. Occasionally, pupils' are given opportunities to develop their own ideas and record the techniques and materials they intend to use. Overall, however, there are too few opportunities for pupils to select their own materials and tools, and to review and evaluate their work.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

93. Standards are broadly in line with what is expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the standards reported at the previous inspection.

94. No geography lessons were observed as curriculum time alternates with history and all classes were engaged on history topics during the inspection. An examination of teachers' planning and pupils' work confirmed that topics are well planned, and the work covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. In some year groups, however, there is a long gap of a term or more between geography topics, and this has an adverse effect on standards. Pupils with special educational needs make sound progress as they receive additional help from teachers or learning support assistants. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils use atlases and large-scale maps when studying farming and tourism in Kenya. They look at photographs of homes and schools in Kenya, and compare shops and foods with those available in their own local area. This good use of a variety of resources is an improvement on the previous inspection when an over-reliance on worksheets was recorded in some classes.

95. Pupils acquire a sound knowledge of contrasting areas. Pupils in Year 2, for example, describe differences and similarities between their own area and places in Japan. They compare the weather, buildings and transport in Benwick with those in Tokyo, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of living in these different settlements. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good use of a day's excursion to compare the features found in their own village with those in the city of Peterborough, while all classes benefit from studying the facilities available on a visit to Hinchingsbrooke Park. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 compare the fenlands with a contrasting upland area during their annual residential visit to Derbyshire.

96. Pupils show a sound awareness of environmental issues when studying ways in which the local area has developed. In Year 1, for example, pupils explore the local area, discuss features they like and dislike, and draw simple maps of the features that they pass on their way to school. The local area is used effectively when pupils in Year 2 visit the village shops and identify buildings and land use features observed *en route*.

97. Management of the subject has improved since the previous inspection and is now sound. The adoption of a suitable scheme of work has ensured that there is now a logical development of geographical skills, though clear learning objectives and opportunities for assessing pupils' work are often missing from teachers' medium-term plans. The geography co-ordinator monitors pupils' work satisfactorily, but does not evaluate teachers' planning or observe the quality of teaching and learning across the school. Resources are satisfactory, overall, and the limited number of geography books in the school library is supplemented by loans from the library service. However, there is not enough use of ICT resources such as CD-ROMs and the Internet to support teaching and learning throughout the school.

## HISTORY

98. Standards match those expected nationally at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is in line with the standards reported at the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs receive additional help from teachers and learning support assistants and make sound progress.

99. While teaching was good in the two lessons observed in Years 5 and 6, not enough lessons were observed to make an overall judgement on the standards of teaching throughout the school. Individual topics are generally well planned, though teachers do not always make the learning objectives clear in their medium-term plans. In the lessons observed, the teacher explained the aims clearly at the start of the sessions and made good use of open-ended questions to reinforce previous learning. Pupils were managed well and, consequently, had good attitudes to their work and concentrated sensibly. In a lesson on Henry VIII, for example, pupils used a variety of information books and the Internet effectively to research a series of questions about Henry's character and actions. The teacher worked effectively by acting out the role of Henry in the introduction, and by reminding pupils during the closing discussion that different historical sources may give contrasting views of the same historical event.

100. Teachers make good use of a wide variety of historical resources. When studying the Victorians, for example, pupils examine a wide range of artefacts including an oil lamp, a dolly tub, scales with weights, and a mangle. In an interesting Year 5 and 6 lesson on Tudor costume, pupils looked at illustrations of Tudor clothing and used a variety of fabrics and other materials to produce a collage of Tudor dress. Visits to museums and historical buildings within the local area are used effectively to provide first-hand learning experiences. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils explore a re-constructed Anglo-Saxon village and visit the Rural Folk Museum at Ramsay. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 visit Stibbington for a re-enactment of life in Victorian times, and hold an Ancient Greek day, with a market in the morning and an 'Olympic Games' in the afternoon. Pupils ask their grandparents to complete questionnaires about the Second World War, and enjoy hearing first-hand accounts of the 'blitz' from a local elderly resident.

101. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about famous historical characters such as Guy Fawkes, and enjoy comparing their own families with those in past historical times. They compare modern toys with those used by their parents, and learn about historical sequence by placing pictures of babies, children and adults in the correct chronological sequence.

102. Management of the subject has improved since the previous inspection and is now sound. While the co-ordinator monitors pupils' work, however, she does not yet evaluate teachers' planning or observe the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The school has adopted a satisfactory scheme of work based on local guidance and this now ensures that pupils develop historical skills in a logical order. There is sometimes a long gap of a term or more between history topics, however, and this does not help pupils to remember what they have learned previously. Resources are satisfactory, overall, and are supplemented by books on loan from the library service and by artefacts supplied by the museum service. Good use is made of video recordings, but too little use is made of CD-ROMs and the Internet to assist teaching and learning in most classes.



## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Standards match national expectations by the end of Year 2 but are currently below national expectations by the end of Year 6. This is a decline in standards in Year 6 since the last inspection. The recently appointed headteacher is aware that older pupils have not had sufficient opportunities to practise their ICT skills across the curriculum and, as subject co-ordinator, has already begun planning for the progressive development of pupils' skills throughout the school.

104. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have sufficient planned opportunities to use computers and they make satisfactory progress. Much of the work is linked with other subjects, which helps to make the tasks relevant. Pupils have satisfactory word processing skills. They enter simple text related to a literacy session, for example, and use the return key to go to a new line, working carefully with good concentration. Pupils know the sequence of steps to save their work, achieving this after clear instructions from the teacher. They understand how to form capitals and how to insert correct spacing, completing their sentences with a full stop. Exercises drawn from published materials provide a suitable range and sequence of tasks year by year. For example, pupils use a computer to write stories, draw pictures, carry out arithmetic sums and play music.

105. Previous work and current tasks show that standards are below national expectations by the end of Year 6. Coverage of all aspects is satisfactory, however, and meets statutory requirements. Pupils use word processing to present their work effectively. They use spreadsheets to calculate the costs of a holiday and they search for information on topics such as flying insects, the planets and Plymouth. They carry out simple modelling tasks such as making a plan for a living room and they design a collage. Overall, however, the quality of work is limited. There are only a few examples by each pupil, and the work of all pupils is very similar. The school uses a published scheme to provide worksheet activities and several pupils have completed these with satisfactory skills and understanding. The school has Internet connections and pupils use these sensibly to make searches for information. In a Year 5 and 6 history lesson, for instance, pupils used several web sites to research information on Henry VIII. The computer in the Year 3 and Year 4 class was not working during the inspection. During a lesson on the life of Gandhi, however, pupils were keen to visit a web site when this was mentioned by the teacher, indicating that many are familiar with using the Internet for research.

106. In Years 5 and 6, pupils gained suitable experience from an activity planned to reinforce their understanding of fractions. Most pupils worked through the tasks with good interest and attitudes, but their keyboard and mouse skills were under-developed. Pupils poked the keys with one finger rather than developing elementary typing skills. Most dragged the numbers suitably into the answer box, but were clumsy in doing so. They demonstrated an early understanding of the operation of a program, such as the use of icons and menus. Their general competence and confidence, however, did not meet the expectations for their age. The quality of teaching where computer tasks are linked to planned class work is at least satisfactory, since pupils are given relevant work and are supported in it. Pupils with access to computers outside school generally have a higher level of understanding.

107. Management of the subject is sound. The subject co-ordinator is currently planning to integrate the use of computers across all subjects and to use them more flexibly alongside other planned tasks. She is aware that there is insufficient use of computers to draft and re-draft work in English, for example, and not enough use of CD-ROMs and the Internet to assist teaching and learning in science, history and geography. Her early monitoring indicates that the quality and range of resources is broadly satisfactory, although access to computers is not easy for pupils in Years 3 and 4. The current range of software is satisfactory, but

should be extended as funds allow, particularly for aspects of control technology. Evaluation of pupils' attainment and progress is made informally in class, but there is currently no agreed whole-school system of assessment. An after-school computer club, supported through a Sure Start initiative, provides good additional experience for pupils in Year 6.

## **MUSIC**

108. It was not possible to make a judgement about standards during the inspection as most lessons take place in the second half of the week and only a guitar lesson and part of one class lesson were seen. At the previous inspection, standards were above those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and in line with national expectations at the end of Year 6.

109. Most music is taught by the music co-ordinator, who is a music specialist, with the exception of the Year 3 and Year 4 class who are taught by their class teacher. In the lesson observed in Years 3 and 4, the teacher used extracts from *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* to encourage pupils to think about the sounds made by machinery. Pupils then devised a variety of vocal and body percussion sounds such as *Ping ping* and *Choo choo* to represent the movements of a machine. They co-operated sensibly together and responded well to the conductor when performing their finished composition, and effectively achieved *crescendos* and *diminuendos* in response to the raising and lowering of the conductor's arms. There was a good stress on using correct musical vocabulary during the lesson, and pupils were able to use terms such as *pulse* and *rhythm* correctly.

110. Pupils develop their musical appreciation by listening to a range of music from different times and places. A variety of music is played during lessons, but opportunities to play music as pupils enter and leave school assemblies were missed during the inspection. Pupils sing a selection of hymns and modern worship songs during times of collective worship. They sing enthusiastically and tunefully, even when unaccompanied, and enjoyed signing to one of the songs.

111. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership of the subject. Since the previous inspection, the school has adopted a scheme of work based on local guidance and this ensures that pupils develop musical skills in a logical order. The recently revised subject policy sets out suitable aims, and all classes now receive sufficient time for weekly music lessons. The school has a satisfactory range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments and recorded music, but there are no keyboards and little use is made of CD-ROMs or the Internet to assist teaching and learning. Four pupils learn to play the guitar with a visiting teacher and about a dozen pupils learn the recorder. There is no regular choir practice, but pupils practise for the annual harvest festival and May Day celebrations, and sing traditional and modern music at the Christmas concert. The choir also takes part in the annual music festival at the secondary school in Chatteris. Musicians from the Cambridgeshire Music Service come into school annually to perform for the whole school. Pupils also visit the theatre, and a visiting puppet theatre recently performed a version of the ballet 'Coppelia'. This makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

112. Pupils gain a good range of physical skills in the reception year and enter Year 1 with broadly average standards. They make satisfactory progress and are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2. It was not possible to observe lessons in Years 3 to 6 during the inspection. Observation of pupils at break times and during after school activities such as netball practice indicate, however, that standards are also likely to meet national expectations by the end of Year 6, maintaining the position at the time of the last inspection.

113. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently working to produce dance sequences linked to music from Vivaldi's *Four Seasons*. Following a thoughtful discussion to remind them of previous work, several pupils suggested events that happen in spring, such as seeds growing and leaves sprouting. Using this knowledge, pupils curled up as seeds, and produced a good, dramatic effect as they opened up slowly to the music. With the teacher's good questioning, they adapted their ideas to lengthen the growing time by having one pupil awake each seed in turn - so that the seeds were at many stages of growth. The confident interactions between the pupils and the teacher helped them reflect on their performance and make an improved sequence. Pupils maintained good attention and interest throughout and worked hard to produce the desired effect, supported well by the teacher's on-going encouragement. Following a brief discussion where children recalled earlier work on autumn and winter, pupils enacted swirling winds and a snowball fight. Overall, the pupils made good progress during the well-managed lesson. The teacher's very good relationships with the children ensured that they both enjoyed the session and developed their dance skills to produce a good visual effect. Most pupils' physical education skills meet national expectations, with a few displaying particularly good control, balance and fluency in their movements.

114. The physical education curriculum meets statutory requirements, with suitable activities each term, including provision for swimming. Planning, supported appropriately by national guidance, ensures that pupils develop skills in a logical order. Assessments of pupils' skills are made informally as part of on-going work, but there is no formal whole-school system of recording pupils' assessments. Extra-curricular games activities provide good opportunities to reinforce skills learnt during lessons. During an after-school netball practice, for instance, pupils in Years 3 to 6 practised passing and receiving a ball with satisfactory skills. The school uses the village hall, which is adjacent to the school, for gymnastics and dance lessons. While this compensates well for the lack of a school hall, there are constraints on the times when it may be used. Moreover, the physical education equipment is stored in a large container outside the hall and has to be carried in when used, requiring additional time and organisation. The quality and range of apparatus is satisfactory, overall, and equipment is tested annually. Management of the subject is satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator ensures that pupils enjoy a full range of activities. She provides support to colleagues as required, but does not yet have the opportunity to observe and evaluate lessons as a part of her monitoring role to improve standards.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

115. Standards meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Years 2 and 6, showing an improvement on standards found at the previous inspection. The time allocation is also now sufficient and the agreed syllabus has been fully implemented. As a result, teaching and learning are now satisfactory and pupils, including those with special educational needs, show a good interest in lessons and make satisfactory progress through the school.

116. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 study aspects of Hinduism. They benefit from thorough teaching based on good subject knowledge. The teacher places a good emphasis on discussions to encourage pupils to express their ideas. This maintains their interest and promotes good learning. They know that Hindus pray to Lakshmi, and understand that Divali is the celebration of the New Year, where candles are lit and water is poured onto Lakshmi to bless her. Pupils have made their own *divas* and most took pleasure and pride in painting them attractively. Overall, the teacher's very good relationships with the children and her clear explanations have a positive impact on their learning, so that progress in lessons is good.

117. In a well-presented lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils considered famous people who have changed lives and conditions, although only a few could name personalities such as Martin Luther King. The teacher helped pupils to recall that Mother Teresa was a nun and a teacher who worked in Calcutta. Pupils listened with keen interest to aspects of the life of Gandhi, the teacher holding their attention well through her lively discussion and good knowledge. Most pupils demonstrated that they understood how Gandhi must have felt on being turned out of a railway carriage that, at that time, was reserved for white travellers. The following activity enabled pupils to express the main events of Gandhi's life through pictures, but the task lacked sufficient challenge by not requiring pupils to write about these events in their own words.

118. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study Judaism and lessons are planned according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. A few pupils recalled from previous work that Rosh Hashanah is the start of the Jewish New Year. The teacher helped pupils to make links between Christian Lent as a time of preparation and Yom Kippur as a period of fasting. Most pupils understand that fasting is used for cleansing - ended in Judaism by a blast on the *Shofar* to indicate that forgiveness has come. Pupils made satisfactory gains in knowledge and understanding, helped by group discussions as pupils shared ideas. The following activity gave suitable opportunities for pupils to record their ideas, most having gained an empathy for people and a good understanding of the effects of their behaviour on others. Pupils worked quietly at their written tasks, although several have difficulty in concentrating on extended writing.

119. Assemblies contribute well to pupils' spiritual understanding. The school makes good links with other faiths, often relating these to subjects such as art and design or music, as when decorating Divali lamps. Pupils visit the local church, and the co-ordinator is trying to arrange more visitors to extend opportunities for discussion. Assessments of pupils' knowledge and understanding are made informally as part of on-going work but there is no formal whole-school system of assessment. The subject co-ordinator ensures that pupils cover all aspects of the agreed syllabus. She monitors lesson planning and pupils' work, but has not yet had the opportunity to observe and evaluate lessons in order to raise standards. The quality of resources has improved since the last inspection, and there is now a good range of attractive and helpful artefacts to stimulate pupils' learning.