

INSPECTION REPORT

ALCONBURY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Alconbury, Huntingdon

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110809

Headteacher: Mrs Linda Dove

Reporting inspector: Mr D J Halford
12908

Dates of inspection: 16 – 19 September 2002.

Inspection number: 247055

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
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane Alconbury Huntingdon Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE28 4EQ
Telephone number:	01480 890341
Fax number:	01480 890439
E-mail:	office@alconbury.cambs-school.net
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	M Roger Read
Date of previous inspection:	09 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
12908.	Mr D J Halford.	Registered inspector.	The Foundation Stage of Learning.	What sort of school is it?
				How high are standards? The school's results and achievements.
			English.	How well are pupils taught?
			Art and Design.	How well is the school lead and managed?
			Music.	
			Religious Education.	
19431.	Mr J D Holmes.	Lay inspector.		How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?
32264.	Mr C Child.	Team inspector.	Equal Opportunities.	How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			Mathematics.	
			Geography.	
			History.	
16761.	Mr M P Hemmings.	Team inspector.	Information and communication technology.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
			Science.	
			Design and technology.	
			Physical Education.	
			Special Educational Needs.	

The inspection contractor was:

Focus Education

113 – 115 High Street
Uppermill
Saddleworth
Oldham
OL3 9BD

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Alconbury CE Primary School is a Controlled Church of England school of average size with 205 full time equivalent pupils on roll. It is situated in the village of Alconbury and is within the Cambridgeshire Local Education Authority. Pupils come to the school from a wide range of social and economic backgrounds and a small number of families from the near-by American air-base enrol their children at the school. Less than ten per cent of the pupils qualify for free school meals (which is below the national average) and almost fifteen per cent of the pupils are on the register of special educational needs. This is broadly in line with the national average. Four pupils have statements of special educational needs. Very few children come from ethnic minority families and no pupils have English as an additional language. Children enter the Reception Year at the start of the school year in which they are five years of age. Children benefit from receiving pre-school education, and on entry to the Reception year many pupils show below average skills in Literacy and Numeracy but above average skills in speaking and listening skills and social development.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and improving school that has seen significant developments particularly over the last school year. Its strengths outweigh its weaknesses. The leadership of the school is good and offers effective direction. The school creates a positive atmosphere for learning and the needs of the pupils are well known to its staff. Good teaching, particularly in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6, is having a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Standards in the basic skills of English, mathematics and science are rising, although continued improvement is still required. The school gives good value for money

What the school does well

- The school creates a good ethos that encourages pupils to work hard and achieve well.
- There are good procedures for caring for pupils and for their personal development, which helps them to feel secure and behave well
- Teaching is frequently good. This is contributing well to the improving standards in basic skills.
- The school curriculum is good and provides a broad range of opportunities for the pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well.
- Good leadership within the school and an effective governing body are steering the school's improvement well.

What could be improved

- Pupils' standards in writing are not yet high enough
- Pupils' skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) need further development
- The monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency in what is taught and to add precision into the targets for improvement of groups and individual pupils.

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

The school was last inspected in February 1998, when weaknesses were identified in provision for ICT, in the information offered to parents, aspects of behaviour management, an aspect of equal

access to the curriculum for some pupils and unsatisfactory fire evacuation times. All these matters have been addressed and the school has made good improvement in the intervening period. Significant improvement has been seen in ICT provision in the last year. Further development is still required with improved provision of computers and further development of the pupils' skills in using them.

STANDARDS

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

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

Key

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

The school's results have fluctuated significantly over the last three years showing a declining trend overall. This has coincided with a period of significant change in school including the extended absence of staff and higher than average percentages of pupils with significant special educational needs. However, standards attained by eleven-year-old pupils stabilised in 2001 at a position close to the national average in the three subjects of English, mathematics and science. Results in 2002 show improvement in the percentage of pupils gaining the expected levels in each subject, and an increased percentage of pupils attaining the higher level in English and mathematics. However, pupils' writing is still not as strong as their reading. This detracts from their overall performance.

Standards of attainment for pupils aged seven in 2001 show a generally similar pattern, with reading being better than the national average and writing being close to the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining the expected level in mathematics was below the national average, but not significantly so. In the 2002 tests, pupils' standards of attainment again show some improvement.

This inspection confirms a picture of improving attainment through the school. Children enter the Reception with attainment which is generally below average in aspects of literacy and numeracy. Most achieve the expected levels by the time they are six and continue to make good gains in their learning. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for improvement in literacy and numeracy and is on course to achieve them. Pupils' attainment in other subjects of the national curriculum is average, with the exception of art and design, where standards are above average and ICT, where standards are below average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils enjoy their work, concentrate well and are able to sustain their efforts in most lessons.

Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is good in classrooms and around the school. They behave well in the playground and use the grassed play area well.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils work well with each other, are often seen to use their initiative to organise themselves well and support each other in their lessons
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance percentages are broadly in line with national averages and school has good procedures to encourage attendance. Pupils arrive at school on time.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

The quality of teaching is good overall and is having a positive impact on the pupils’ learning. It is often very good, particularly in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6. Throughout the school, including in the Reception, teachers plan effectively and there is a good level of consistency in the planning which is undertaken jointly by teachers working with the same year groups. Also, teachers throughout the school demonstrate a good grasp of the teaching of Literacy and Numeracy. In the best lessons, pupils are managed well, classrooms are well organised and resourced and pupils are clear about what it is they are expected to learn. In the small percentage of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory teachers spend too much time talking to the pupils, the pace and purpose of the lesson is lost and pupils’ learning is unsatisfactory.

Throughout the school the pupils work with interest in their lessons showing good levels of concentration. Older pupils use their previous knowledge when approaching new information, for example in the Year 5 and 6 religious education lesson when they considered aspects of Jewish life.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum which is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities which include residential visits.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well. They are supported well and regularly work at the same task as their peers.
Provision for pupils’ personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision is made for each of these areas of personal development. More opportunities could be provided for the pupils to reflect in prayer during acts of worship to enhance the pupils’ spiritual development further. However many opportunities are provided for

	pupils to know they are valued and to increase their self-esteem.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good standard of care for its pupils. They are well known as individuals and this contributes positively to the good quality relationships which exist in the school.

The school has a sound relationship with parents. Appropriate information is given on pupils' attainment and progress. The good provision for pupils' personal development is influential in improving standards and contributes to the good atmosphere for learning. However, the use of assessment systems is insufficiently developed to accurately track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the school is good. The senior management team have a good capacity to lead the school to further improvement and most curriculum coordinators have a clear vision of development for their subjects
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors have developed a good overview of the strategic development of the school. This is a significant improvement on the position reported when the school was last inspected.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is an area requiring further development. More needs to be undertaken to effectively monitor the quality of teaching and learning. National test results and other standardised tests are analysed well but not used effectively enough to target further improvement in individual pupils.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Effective use is made of funding directed at helping staff with professional development. Teaching assistants are generally well used throughout the school, but are not consistently used as effectively as they might be when the whole class is under the direction of the class teacher.

The school is generously staffed with a high proportion of teaching assistants. The accommodation is spacious and well maintained to a high order of cleanliness. The school is maintaining a small budget surplus which is being effectively managed and used prudently during a period of when numbers of pupils on roll are falling. Governors apply the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What some parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils like school and make good progress • Teaching is good 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information to parents could be improved • The amount of work pupils do at home.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects children to do their best, become mature and be responsible. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The management of the school• The range of extra-curricular activities. |
|---|--|

The inspection team agree with all the positive points made, whilst indicating that the best quality teaching is seen in Year 2 and in Years 5 and 6. It does not agree with the negative points. The school provides adequate information to parents and the curriculum is enriched by a wide variety of extra-curricular activities. It is rare in schools nationally for residential visits to be made available for pupils throughout Key Stage 2 (Years 3 – 6). Pupils get an appropriate amount of work to undertake at home. The inspectors believe the leadership of the school to be good.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The 2001 National Curriculum test results for pupils aged 11 show that in terms of average points scores standards of attainment are close to the national average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' results are below average in English and mathematics when taking into account their prior attainment, and broadly average in science. Standards in English and mathematics are well below the average when comparing them against schools with a similar percentage of free school meals and they are below average in science. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points scores for all three subjects has varied since 1998, but generally declined since 1999. Results have stabilised across all three subjects in 2001. Results in the 2002 tests for 11-year-old pupils have shown improvement in English and mathematics, particularly in the increased percentage of pupils gaining the higher level. Results in science in 2002 are similar to those achieved in 2001. Pupils' achievements, in relation to their prior learning are generally good as many pupils enter the school with attainment below the national average in literacy and numeracy skills.
2. The 2001 National Curriculum test results for pupils aged 7 shows that standards of attainment are above the national average in reading, close to the national average in writing and below the national average in mathematics. In comparison with similar schools, standards are below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. The 2002 results indicate a similar position to that reported in 2001.
3. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good throughout the school. They are attentive and listen well in almost all lessons and other occasions. They listen effectively to their teachers and their peers in a wide range of situations, including in assemblies and when singing. Most pupils speak clearly and audibly and are able to express themselves well. In reading, standards of attainment, by the age of eleven are good, and rather better than the 2001 results would initially indicate. Most pupils are able to say why they have selected the book they are reading and say why they have chosen it. They have favourite authors and know why they like them. Standards of writing are below average and remain so throughout the school. This is an important weakness and has a negative effect on pupils' work in other subjects. The school is aware of the position and has been working to improve pupils' writing. It remains a high priority in the school's development planning, but further improvement is still required.
4. The standards achieved in mathematics across the school is satisfactory as is the progress made in the teaching of mathematics since the last report. The results of tests taken as the children enter school show a level of attainment slightly below the national average, while the results achieved by the pupils at the end of Year 6 show results broadly in line with the national average. The progress made by the children as they move through the school is good. The number of pupils reaching the standard expected for their age at the end of Year 2 in 2001 was slightly below what might have been expected, as was the number of pupils achieving scores above the national average. However, results achieved in 2002 show a significant increase in the number of children attaining at or above the nationally expected level.
5. The standards of attainment in science of the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 and Year 2 match the national expectation. In the 2001 tests for seven and eleven year old pupils, the percentage gaining the expected level for their age was close to the national average. The

percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was close to the national average for Year 6 pupils and well above the national average for Year 2 pupils. Early indications are that a similar performance has been achieved in the national tests in 2002.

6. Standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are below those expected for the age of the pupils by the time they are eleven. The position has improved from that reported when the school was last inspected and the pupils have limited access to more opportunities to develop their skills in the use of ICT. Again the school recognises this weakness in its current provision and has good plans for improvement. Nonetheless, further improvement is still needed.
7. In art, pupils standards of attainment are above average, and in other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, pupils' standards of attainment are generally in line with those expected for their age, although in some subjects standards are hampered by unsatisfactory writing skills and some inconsistent quality in aspects of presentation.
8. Pupils with special educational needs are provided for well and are regularly seen to work at the same tasks as their peers. They are supported well and make good gains in their learning, in relation to their prior attainment.
9. Pupils use their developing literacy and numeracy skills well in most subjects. Speaking and listening skills are developed well in lessons where pupils express their feelings about what they like about others in their class and amongst older pupils when they seek to describe accurately the different forms of scientific enquiry that can be undertaken. Numeracy skills are used effectively in work in history, where pupils create family trees.
10. There are encouraging signs of improvement in pupils' attainment seen in the results in 2002 and in the clear plans identifying areas of weakness. The school is setting realistic targets for improvement and is on course to achieve them.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and have been maintained since the last inspection. They are happy to come to school and welcome the friendly, caring ethos that exists. Pupils are keen to be involved in the activities that the school has to offer, including a variety of clubs, visitors, and residential and non-residential trips.
12. There are good relationships between the staff of the school and the pupils, and the pupils themselves. Both children and adults show respect for each other. This can be seen in the way that pupils are treated and spoken to by staff and the attitudes the children display towards each other. This has been systematically developed through such institutions as the school council and the befriending system, in which older pupils are encouraged to care for the younger ones.
13. Behaviour is good both during lessons and at other times. Pupils are polite, well mannered and keen to take responsibility. Classroom management is good and there is an agreed code of conduct throughout the school, giving a consistency of approach which generally supports high standards. Pupils are very clear about the system of sanctions and rewards that exist and have been involved in drawing up the school rules. In the most successful classes, strategies are in place to encourage a high level of independence within the pupils, such as the drawing of the required equipment for an art lesson on the board, to support some of the younger pupils in the school so that they can organise themselves.

14. Children in the Reception class have settled quickly into school routines using strategies to support them such as the wearing of badges to restrict numbers in the role-play area of the classroom and fixing their name cards to the door when going into the outside play area.
15. No incidents of bullying, racism or sexism were seen or reported during the inspection. However, the children are aware of the effects of such behaviour on others and the seriousness that the school would attach to them.
16. Attendance is satisfactory. Due to an error within the computerised system of recording attendance, over the past two years, the level of authorised absence has been recorded as being greater than it actually was. This error has now been corrected and the accurate figures are broadly in line with the national average.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching is good. The position reported when the school was last inspected has been maintained. It is very good in 12 per cent of the lessons, good in 39 per cent of lessons and satisfactory in 44 per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in only three lessons. The quality of teaching is consistently good in Year 2 and in the classes accommodating pupils in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teaching in Reception is satisfactory.
18. Teaching in English and mathematics is good. The National Strategies for literacy and numeracy have been successfully implemented and are delivered effectively. This is having a positive effect on pupils' learning but has yet to have a marked improvement on the quality of pupils' writing.
19. Teachers' planning is good. Where pupils of the same age are accommodated in different classes, the teachers plan together well and there is good level of consistency in what is planned to be taught. There are, however, some differences in what is actually taught to these pupils from the plans which have been collectively formulated. Pupils are managed well in most classes and pace of working is good.
20. Where teaching is at its best, particularly for pupils aged seven, and for pupils in Years 5 and 6, expectations are high and pupils are clear about what it is they expected to learn. Their interest is maintained and, given the fact that the pupils regularly show good attitudes to their work, good progress is made in these lessons. In the small number of lessons where teaching is unsatisfactory teacher explanations are too long, the pace of the lesson is lost, pupils' interest wanes and learning opportunities are missed.
21. There are two areas where teaching across the school could be improved. Currently, there is some inconsistency in the quality of teachers' marking. Positive comments are frequently written upon pupils' work and some teachers follow these up by highlighting particular aspects for improvement for individual pupils. This is good practice and consistent application throughout the school would help pupils improve more. Also, appropriate assessment information is gathered but could be used more effectively to target improvement in individual pupils and in groups of pupils as they pass through the school.
22. Pupils' developing literacy and numeracy skills can be seen in work in other subjects, although the quality of pupils' writing remains unsatisfactory, and this has a negative effect on the pupils' finished work. However, many pupils read well, are good at gathering and selecting appropriate

information and show satisfactory number skills. This combined with their positive attitudes to the work they undertake and their good ability to work together in pairs and in groups, leads to the quality of their learning being good.

23. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and teaching assistants have a good knowledge of the pupils' needs and individual education plans are used well to ensure that pupils make good gains in their learning.
24. The school has an appropriate policy for homework, which is set to consolidate pupils' learning. The majority of parents are satisfied with the amount and range of work undertaken at home, and the inspection findings are that the provision is satisfactory.

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

25. The quality and range of the curriculum is good with all pupils having access to a variety of interesting and stimulating learning experiences. The provision in the Foundation Stage of learning enables children to quickly settle into everyday school routines and to make satisfactory progress in all of the areas of learning expected for this age range. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully implemented for pupils in Years 1 to 6, but the school is aware of the need to develop strategies further to improve standards in writing. Since the last inspection the school has been developing pupils' investigational skills in science and in recent years this has led to improving standards, with more pupils achieving the higher levels. The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has been improved but there are some important areas of this subject, such as data handling, control and modelling, that are not covered in sufficient depth. Pupils do not spend enough time on computers to practice and effectively improve their computer skills. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to support their work in other subjects. There are swimming lessons for pupils in Years 2, Year 3 and Year 4 at the nearby Community Pool and by the time that they leave school, most pupils can swim the nationally expected 25 metres. All statutory requirements are met, as are the demands of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education. There is also a commitment to developing the pupils' creative talents as well as their academic ones and they are able to take part in a variety of exciting experiences in music and art. There are visits to places of artistic interest that are complimented by a range of visitors; these include a poet, theatre groups and musicians who have worked with the pupils to develop a variety of skills. Pupils are also able to take part in musical and dramatic performances for parents and members of the community. The curriculum is also enriched by involvement in national and local initiatives, as is exemplified by the school's involvement in the 'Health Promoting School Project' over the last academic year.
26. There is good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education, with activities being carefully planned to help them to learn to respect the values and beliefs of other pupils and adults and to develop their self esteem. Social development is well supported by an extensive range of visits, including residential stays for pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. During these experiences they learn a variety of social skills, such as working together and caring for others. Pupils are given opportunities, in and out of classrooms, to show initiative and take responsibility, which effectively supports their personal development. A good example of this is the school council, with representatives from all year groups, which allows all pupils to express their views about school issues and learn about the democratic process. Pupils in Year 6 take part in the 'Befriender' scheme, in which they 'adopt' new Reception children to help them settle into school. There are 'circletime' activities, in which pupils sit in a circle with their teacher to discuss a variety of issues

and any concerns they might have about school. This was seen to good effect in a session for pupils in Year 2 in which they showed very good attitudes when they were talking about what made someone special. There is appropriate provision for sex education, which encourages pupils to consider responsible behaviour and the values of family life. The pupils are effectively helped to develop positive attitudes towards healthy eating and are made aware of the harmful effects of drugs.

27. The curriculum is fully inclusive and all pupils have equality of access to every aspect of school life. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, with the individual educational plans having specific and manageable targets in them, which enables these pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Teachers plan carefully for the needs of these pupils and classroom assistants are used well to support their learning. The planning procedures, which are based on a two-year cycle to meet the needs of mixed age classes, are good. They effectively incorporate national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught. There are inconsistencies in the manner in which these plans are delivered to pupils of the same age in different classes and the school recognises the need to monitor this more closely.
28. The provision for extra curricular activities is good and includes a computer club (which has been meeting until recently), football, netball, French, country dancing, singing, recorders, flute and brass. A gardening club and a craft club have recently been added to the list. The school also gives all pupils opportunity to take part in an extensive range of visits, including residential stays that enrich the curriculum by providing further significant learning experiences. Such visits have included the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, the Science Museum in London and Ely Cathedral. The Cambridgeshire Life Science Bus was based at the school for three days and was visited by all pupils. Football coaching, organised by Cambridge United Football in the Community, has been available to most pupils
29. There are strong links with the community that make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. The May Festival and the School Fete have become important dates in the village diary. Despite there not being a permanent priest at St. Peter and St. Paul's Church, it has continued to play an important role in the life of the school as two of its members regularly lead assemblies and help deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. Pupils visit the church to take part in Harvest, Easter, Christmas and Leavers services. The local Methodist minister also comes into school to lead assemblies. There are regular visits from representatives of the police and fire services, as well as from the school nurse and dentist, to support pupils further. There are opportunities for pupils to raise money for a range of national and local charities, including 'OXFAM', 'Children in Need' and 'Jeans for Genes', in which they develop an understanding of the needs of others. There are good links with the local Secondary School that successfully prepare pupils in Year 6 for when they transfer there. The links with De Montfort University enable students to come and work in school, to give pupils further learning experiences.
30. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, which shows improvement since the last inspection when it was found to be satisfactory. It effectively enriches the quality of the school's life as a caring Christian community, helping pupils to develop positive attitudes, a sense of responsibility and high self-esteem.
31. The pupils' spiritual development is fostered well through the curriculum and the acts of collective worship. A good example of this was in an assembly led by the head teacher on the theme of teamwork, when pupils were able to reflect on how they could help make their school a better team. There are regular achievement assemblies that are used by the school as a way of

recognising pupils' talents and promoting their sense of worth. In general, however, more opportunities could be provided for the pupils to reflect in prayer during acts of worship, to enhance their spiritual development further. The way the school works closely with the local church enables pupils to take part in a variety of services and celebrations that are a focus of renewal and affirmation for all. Pupils are provided with opportunities to discuss values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the manner in which they affect peoples' lives. The teachers value pupils' ideas and efforts and this is shown by the way that all pupils are encouraged to make contributions during lessons, along with the attractive displays of pupils' work in the school. In music and art, the pupils are able to explore experiences that reflect moods such as happiness or sadness. In circle time activities, the teachers showed they valued pupils' questions and gave them chance to reflect on such issues as what makes someone special.

32. The provision for moral and social development is an integral part of the school ethos, and as such features in many aspects of the curriculum. There is a positive behaviour strategy based on the Golden Rules that enables pupils to be clear about what is acceptable and not acceptable. The pupils are encouraged to develop good moral values through the good examples set by staff. Adults work hard to promote a sense of fairness among pupils and are successful in teaching them to be tolerant of each other. The circletime sessions are used as a way of promoting good moral values, with pupils being able to discuss and develop an understanding of the impact of their actions on others. Such activities help them to take responsibility for their actions and to work and play together with respect and tolerance. Pupils are encouraged to listen to and respect the opinions of others, as was seen during the introductions and round up sessions of most lessons. There are good social development opportunities provided, with pupils being encouraged to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, as was especially evident in mathematics, science and physical education lessons. There are good relationships throughout the school, being based on mutual trust and respect between staff and pupils. The good opportunities for pupils to take part in extra curricular activities and school trips effectively supports their social development. The strong community links help to develop the pupils' understanding of how to become a responsible member of society.
33. As pupils come from an area in which a variety of cultures are not represented, the school has worked hard to provide opportunities to develop their awareness of life in a diverse cultural Britain. The pupils' cultural education is enhanced through work in art, music, history and geography and this is supplemented through the provision of a good range of extra curricular activities, including visits and visitors. Many opportunities are given for pupils to visit places of interest, such as art galleries, museums and theatres. Artwork and music feature prominently in developing their cultural awareness and displays of pupils' work reflect different cultural traditions. In lessons, the pupils are able to experience stories, music and art from a range of cultures and to work with visiting musicians, authors and poets. Books and artefacts have been carefully chosen to ensure that the environment reflects the valuing of different communities. In religious education lessons, there is often emphasis placed on learning about the beliefs and traditions of other faiths and cultures. Links with the local church effectively deepen the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the culture and traditions of Christianity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. The procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The designated person for child protection is the head teacher who has recently undertaken the updated training in Child Protection. The head teacher liaises with local agencies and ensures arrangements meet local needs and requirements. The head teacher inducts teaching staff, learning support staff and

lunchtime supervisors in the policies and procedures. All the staff have had practical sessions on first aid and fire safety, which allows staff to deal with minor incidents quickly and efficiently.

35. The school has behaviour policies to deal with unacceptable behaviour and to promote good behaviour. Classrooms have their own class rules on display; these are reviewed with each year group annually. Behaviour in the playground is good with no oppressive behaviour being observed during the inspection.
36. The prospectus reminds parents about expectations on attendance and behaviour. The school monitors attendance and the recording and reporting meets requirements. First day contact is made with the few parents who fail to notify the school that their child will be absent. There are satisfactory systems in place to promote good attendance; parents have to complete a holiday request form for absence in term time, parents are reminded that the school cannot authorise more than ten days absence.
37. The working environment is safe and secure and pupils of all ages are supervised at work and play. The school has a Health and Safety Policy and risk assessments are carried out. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in the safety aspects of the school through the school council. All statutory equipment checks are carried out on fire, electrical and gymnasium equipment. The school is maintained and cleaned to a very satisfactory standard.
38. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupil's personal development and guidance are good. There are opportunities in and out of the classroom for them to take responsibility, which effectively supports their personal development. The older pupils act as 'Befrienders' to the younger pupils to help them settle into school life. Pupils are also encouraged to work in pairs or groups as well as sharing equipment. The school council, which has representatives from each class, take forward pupils views as to how school life could be improved. Pupils take this role very seriously and help to supervise areas of the school at break and lunchtimes.
39. The procedures for monitoring academic performance and personal development are satisfactory. The assessment of pupil's attainment and progress is satisfactory. Detailed information of pupils' progress are kept and regularly updated. However better use could be made of this information to accurately target what pupils need to do next to take their learning forward.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The school's partnership with parents and carers is satisfactory. 14 parents attended the parents meeting and 80 returned the questionnaires out of 221 sent out. The majority of responses indicated a positive support for the school. They felt that their children enjoyed school, their children were making good progress, the teaching was good and the school expected the children to work hard. The inspection generally confirms parental views in these areas.
41. The responses also indicated that a significant minority of parents felt that the children did not get the right amount of work to do at home, they were not kept sufficiently informed about their child's progress, that the school did not work closely with parents, that the school was not well led and managed and does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons. The inspection team did not agree with these views, finding that these areas were at least satisfactory.
42. An appropriate amount of homework is scheduled for the different age groups and hence this does not support the parents' views. Pupils did report that they received homework at the

appropriate level. The homework is set and monitored by the class teachers but no whole school monitoring to ensure consistency is carried out.

43. The school offers consultation evenings each term and provided the statutory report on pupil progress during the summer term. The reports to parents are satisfactory with a description of what the child can do. The targets for future development are included in some reports but are not clearly defined. Whilst the reports are satisfactory parents would benefit from having clear targets for development set out, in at least, English, mathematics and science. This would assist them to help their children better at home.
44. The school works satisfactorily with parents and provides a good range of general information for parents with an informative prospectus and a good annual report to parents. A monthly newsletter gives an update of events for parents. The school provides information on entry and has in the past held education evenings. The school invites parents into school to the assemblies, which are well supported. The school has carried out parental consultation surveys in the past but would benefit from a regular systematic approach.
45. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities. There are football, netball, book club and recorder. The school also provides a good range of activities with visits for all pupils to a wide range of venues including residential trips. The school also has a wide range of visitors to the school including musicians, authors, theatre and the police. All of these help to broaden the pupils views and experiences.
46. The annual report to parents is good and provides a picture of the way the governors and staff have managed the school. The parents' meeting to discuss their children's report is well attended and parents have a valuable opportunity to discuss issues concerning their children. The Prospectus is good and is updated annually and meets requirements. The school invites parents to assemblies; Church Services are held for harvest festival, Christmas, Easter and for school leavers at the end of the year; these are well supported by parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

47. The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher is supported well by the newly appointed deputy head and an experienced upper school coordinator. Together they provide clear direction for the school. Gradual improvement in pupils' standards of attainment can be seen. The headteacher has the confidence of the governing body and many of the parents. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and they fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively.
48. Priorities for school improvement are accurately identified and the school's development plan is a useful tool for school improvement. It is appropriately costed and contains clear criteria against which the school can monitor its improvement.
49. The management of special educational needs is good. The provision made for individual pupils is also good. Individual education plans are appropriately in place and there are clear targets to identify the progress pupils have made. There are good procedures for the identification of pupils' special educational needs, and the pupils are well supported in their learning. This enables them to made good progress.
50. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's performance are satisfactory, but could be improved in some in some areas. Teachers' planning is monitored well and much statistical

evidence is being gathered about the pupils' performance in national tests. The school uses this to identify, for example, that boys do not perform as well as girls in their writing. The school has taken action appropriately in this area, and in the 2002 tests for eleven-year-olds, this situation is reversed. More use could be made of the statistical information gathered to target improvement precisely in individuals and groups of pupils. Where subject coordinators are established in their roles, most have a clear picture of the needs of their subject. Some recently appointed coordinators – for example the coordinator of English – have already established a very clear picture of the school's needs. The monitoring of teaching and learning is undertaken but could be improved. Where pupils of the same age are accommodated in different classes, although teachers plan carefully and well together, the delivery of the lessons is not consistent. More systematic monitoring of teaching and learning would highlight these differences and give a clearer focus to what groups of pupils and individual pupils need to do to improve their work. Closer monitoring of teachers' marking would also highlight inconsistencies in marking procedures and target setting for pupils.

51. Governors have a good understanding of their role in school development planning. They are well informed and have an appropriate range of sub-committees which operate effectively. The governing body contains a good balance of experience and expertise and is confident in its actions. The school has clear aims and a good level of commitment to improvement.
52. The school's finances are controlled effectively and allocated well to those areas which have been identified for improvement. The last few years have seen significant staff changes in school and the fall in numbers occasioned by the intake of a small year group in Reception in September 2002 leaves the school with little financial flexibility. Nonetheless, the school finances are managed prudently and whenever opportunities arise the governors make every effort to ensure that they gain the best value for the money they spend.
53. The accommodation is appropriate in size and provides a good quality learning environment for the pupils. Recent expansion of the buildings, making good use of New Deal finances, is good. The buildings are maintained to a good order of cleanliness. There is an adequate number of teachers and a good level of teaching assistants. The quality of learning resources is good and they are adequate in most subjects. The school has recently established a small computer area but this needs further improvement to give pupils sufficient opportunities to develop their skills appropriately.
54. The school grounds are well maintained. They contain hard play areas and a large grassed area for games and recreation. The pupils had access to a new and interesting range of outdoor play equipment. During the inspection the weather was consistently good and the pupils were able to make full use of the grass at break-times. The area of hard play space available is small for all the pupils to use together.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

55. The school has already identified areas for improvement for the future. As the school seeks to build upon its recent improvement, the governors, headteacher and staff need to give particular attention to the following areas:

- (1) Pupils' standards in writing are not high enough.

- (2) Pupils' skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) need further development
- (3) The monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency in what is taught and to add precision into the targets for improvement of groups and individual pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	[]

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	20	23	3	0	0
Percentage	0%	11.5%	38.5%	44.2%	5.8%	0%	0%

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		205
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		30

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	12

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	17
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Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	92.7
National comparative data	93.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	16	19	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	12	13
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	31	30	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (94)	86 (94)	89 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	14
	Girls	19	17	19
	Total	32	30	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (94)	86 (94)	94 (94)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	11	14
	Girls	13	11	14
	Total	23	22	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (83)	73 (69)	93 (94)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	11	13
	Girls	13	11	13
	Total	25	22	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (83)	73 (83)	87 (86)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	184
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.81
Average class size	25.63

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	211

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
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Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	514 686
Total expenditure	514 684
Expenditure per pupil (230 pupils)	2 238
Balance brought forward from previous year	20 000
Balance carried forward to next year	45 825

Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 36.2%

Number of questionnaires sent out

221

Number of questionnaires returned

80

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	36	4	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	53	44	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	61	10	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	50	9	10	4
The teaching is good.	43	53	3	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	31	50	14	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	36	10	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	40	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	36	40	16	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	38	41	15	6	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	44	48	8	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	13	41	29	14	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

56. Children enter the Reception Year for full-time education in the September of the school year in which they are five years of age. When the number of pupils admitted to the Reception class is in excess of thirty some children are taught alongside some Year 1 pupils. However, in the school year that has just begun the number of pupils admitted is significantly smaller than in previous years and all the children are accommodated in the same class. At the start of the new school year children begin on a part-time basis, with the youngest children attending in the morning and the older children attending in the afternoon. This organisation was in operation during the inspection, which took place in the second week of the new school year.
57. Teacher assessment is undertaken in the first term of the children's full-time experience. Information is gathered using the Cambridge LEA baseline assessments. This information indicates that although a wide range of abilities is represented, the children's attainment is below the average expected for their age in the important areas of numeracy and literacy, but rather better in personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the Reception Year, most of the children have made appropriate progress and some have made good progress. Many achieve the Early Learning Goals expected of them by the start of Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. When they start school, most children display above average personal and social skills for their age. Some children come to school from some distance away and from relatively rural settings, but the majority have had the opportunity of attending a nursery, at least on a part-time basis. This helps them to develop their skills in sharing and taking turns. Although the inspection was undertaken during the children's earliest experience of life in their new school most were quickly adapting to the new routines and to working alongside each other. They are supported by an experienced teacher and an able teaching assistant, and the children benefit from attending in very small numbers. The children attending in the morning were accommodated in a group of nine. Most like to join in the activities available for them and show an increasing enthusiasm for their learning. Those who are more reluctant to join in benefit from the individual attention they receive from the teacher and can generally be persuaded to try new things and share their interest and experience with others. The teaching has good features. The class teacher's planning is very detailed and the children make good progress. They achieve well and by the time they begin Year 1 they have exceeded the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning.

Communication, language and literacy

59. A good emphasis is placed on developing the children's skills in language and communications. Some children speak well and are confident, but many show below average skills in their new surroundings. The children receive many opportunities to express themselves and significant efforts are made to enable the children to extend their speaking skills. They are regularly praised and given positive encouragement. They are offered a wide range of opportunities to speak in different contexts, such as number rhymes, which the group say together, and the teacher encourages small groups to take turns to speak in front of the rest of the group. Discussion in

pairs as they work on a simple computer program also helps the children's confidence in speaking.

60. The children are also encouraged to listen actively. They listen well to stories and simple poems, and some can recognise the humour of a poem centred upon the sound of 'a', which concludes with 'ants in her pants'. The teacher gives children individual attention as they try to write the letter 'a' shape. They listen carefully to the sound and receive clear instruction on the correct formation of the letter. Some children respond well to this, but for others the task is very difficult.
61. This active listening promotes the good development of the children's reading skills. Most enjoy listening to stories and the environment of the classroom is good in that it contains good quality books which are attractively displayed. Some children show an interest in the books and are willing to talk about the stories. At this early stage the children's reading skills are in advance of their writing skills. Most can hold pencils correctly, but some cannot.
62. The teaching is good and the children make appropriate progress. Although currently attainment is below average in this area of learning most will achieve the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Mathematical development

63. Baseline assessment information indicates that in past years, whilst children show a wide range of mathematical understanding, overall, they demonstrate skills which are below those expected for their age.
64. Teaching, however, shows good features in this area of learning. Numbers are well displayed around the classroom and there are good opportunities available for counting, sorting and matching, by shape, by colour and by number. The teacher works at a pace which helps her to clarify the children's understanding. For example, where a child can count relatively speedily up to ten, and a little beyond, the teacher focuses attention on the value of the numbers, and soon discovers that whilst the number sequence is known, the child is less secure on the number values.
65. Most children can recognise and name the shapes of numbers and can count up to five. Some have an understanding of 'more than' and 'less than'. As with literacy, the teaching is good and the children make appropriate progress at this early stage in the term. Most will have attained the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

66. Children experience a wide range of activities to stimulate their interest in the world around them. They talk openly to the teacher about their families and whether their brothers or sisters are older or younger than they are. They can make simple statements about the weather and take an interest in the living things that are around them. Some children listen intently to a tape recorder entitled 'At the farm' and use pictures of farm animals appropriately as they listen to the recording.
67. The children are able to use the computer with some confidence. They can manipulate the mouse and move the cursor to the desired position in the screen. Some show good levels of accuracy. Some can change the size of the shapes on the screen. They are enthusiastic about

this work and clearly enjoy it when their turn comes. Children are seen to work in pairs at these computer activities and most are able to take their turn without disagreement.

68. Most children enter the Reception year with broadly average levels of attainment in this area of learning. Teaching and learning are sound and children make appropriate progress in attaining the Early Learning Goals by the time they enter Year 1.

Physical development

69. When children enter the Reception Year, most do have appropriate physical skills for their age. In a Physical Education lesson seen, the children could run, skip and change direction effectively. They timed their movements well whilst listening to a tape recorder which was telling the story of 'Going on a Bear Hunt'. Most children used the space in the hall and demonstrated good levels of skill in making striding movements in time with the music.
70. In the class there are ample opportunities for children to use scissors, pencils and paint-brushes to increase their manipulative skills. The classroom also has ready access to a good outdoor play area specifically for these children. Floor decking is used appropriately to provide differing heights for the children to move between safely, and a large boat upon which the children can explore provides an interesting physical and creative environment for them to use. There is adequate provision for the development of the children's gross motor skills.
71. Overall, children make appropriate progress in this area of learning. Teaching shows good features and enables most children to achieve the Early Learning Goals by the start of Year 1.

Creative development

72. The children work well with a wide range of creative media and materials. Two children were observed painting with care. They were well supported by a good teaching assistant. They made good attempts to mix water colours and were excited by the changing colours which were produced.. The children were beginning to recognise repeated patterns and were seen to make the most of the opportunities provided for them to develop their skills through painting, music and play.
73. Teaching is satisfactory and children make appropriate progress and attain the Early Learning Goals for this area of learning by the time they enter Year 1.

Teaching and Provision:

74. The teaching is satisfactory overall, but shows some good features in important areas. The number of children involved in the Foundation Stage of Learning is small and the inspection took place at the earliest part of the new school year. The principle activities were clearly strongly focussed on establishing new routines for these children.
75. However, the quality of teacher planning is good. Over time it will ensure the provision of a good range of opportunities for the children to develop their skills in all the areas of learning. There is a good emphasis on the teaching of basic skills and this is important since the baseline assessment information indicates that many pupils' skills are below average in these areas.
76. The numbers of pupils are small and consequently, their needs will be well known to the teacher, who has wide experience in dealing with young children. She is well supported by a skilled

teaching assistant. Teaching clearly builds upon the prior learning of the individual children and they are given good opportunities to consolidate their learning.

77. Overall, the provision for these children has maintained the standard reported when the school was last inspected. It enables the children to make sound progress in their learning. By the end of the Reception Year the children are appropriately prepared to begin their Year 1 programmes of study.

ENGLISH

78. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged eleven showed that the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level was close to the national average, and the percentage of pupils gaining the higher level was above the national average. However, in comparison to similar schools, the pupils' performance is well below average. Early indications of the pupils' performance in 2002 shows that a similar percentage of pupils have gained the expected level but a higher percentage have gained the higher level. In both 2001 and 2002, the school exceeded the targets it had set by a moderate percentage. Inspection findings indicate that pupils are achieving well and making good overall progress with English.
79. Results of the 2001 National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven showed that the percentage of pupils gaining the expected level in reading was above the national average and close to the national average in writing. Almost one-third of the pupils gained the higher level in reading, and almost one-tenth gained the higher level in writing. The results in 2002 show that a similar percentage of pupils gained the expected level in both reading and writing, with a higher percentage moving on to the higher level in reading and a lower percentage gaining the higher level in writing. Inspection evidence confirms the position that pupils' skills in reading are better than in writing.
80. The majority of children enter the Reception Year with literacy skills which are below average for their age and whilst many make good progress through the Foundation Stage, their skills, particularly in writing make moderate progress. In Year 1 teachers build upon this good start and many pupils develop the skills to read unfamiliar words. They print letters clearly and spell simple words correctly. They begin to write sentences expressing their own ideas. In Year 2, average attaining pupils read confidently and have a good range of books of appropriate difficulty. They can talk effectively about what they like or dislike in stories. Many write in sentences are starting to use full stops and capital letters in order to punctuate them. Higher attaining pupils read fluently. They are beginning to make their sentences more interesting and extending them and are developing an understanding that sentences need an interesting start. By the age of seven, most pupils have developed the skills of literacy to the levels expected nationally.
81. The good progress they make owes much to good teaching, especially in Year 2. During the inspection, teaching was good. The evidence of pupils' progress over longer periods of time, through scrutiny of past work, indicates that teaching is having a positive impact on this. Teachers have high expectation of what pupils can achieve and they implement the National Literacy Strategy confidently and well, teaching basic skills directly and effectively. Teachers prepare well for lessons and planning is clear. In one lesson when where double letters were being highlighted, pupils readily identified 'yellow', 'rabbit', 'well' and 'apple'. A good discussion ensued concerning the difference with 'root', where the double letters were vowels not consonants, and a pupil who suggested 'banana' was given a very clear explanation of why this was not an appropriate choice.

82. Pupils aged six and seven regularly respond well to their teachers and teaching assistants. They show an eagerness to learn and considerable enthusiasm for their work. They behave well in lessons and cooperate well in small groups.
83. In Years 3 and 4 pupils continue to make appropriate progress. Many average attaining pupils are punctuating their sentences accurately and in Year 4 there is an increasing accuracy in the use of speech marks. In Years 5 and 6, significant progress is made. Handwriting is developing and is sometimes seen to be of a good standard. Some story writing is lively and imaginative. There are examples of good beginnings and endings to stories. For example, 'Goal! Harry punched the air. There was five minutes to go and we were five-nil up.' The story ended, 'The net bellowed as the ball hit it. No-one could describe how we felt. The cup was theirs!' There are also good examples of pupils' understanding of similes and metaphors on a wall display of poetry about families. Pupils reading skills develop well with pupils able to speak lucidly about books they have read for interest and enjoyment and those from which they have gathered information. Most pupils speak well and are able to express themselves fluently. They are not afraid to ask for time to organise their thoughts. This was demonstrated well in a science discussion when older pupils discussed a wide range of areas of scientific enquiry.
84. The quality of teaching is good for pupils aged seven to eleven, particularly in Years 5 and 6. It makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Although the inspection took place at the start of the school year, good routines had been readily established in the classes that accommodated the older pupils. Planning is good and teachers work well in pairs to do this. Again the National Literacy Strategy is well established and is developing the pupils reading and writing skills. Homework is regularly given and extends the work pupils undertake in school. Teachers, particularly at the end of the key stage, provide suitably challenging work for pupils of different groups in mixed age classes.
85. Pupils aged seven to eleven mostly respond well to their lessons. They behave well and in most cases listen very attentively. They settle to work well, particularly in Years 5 and 6. They show good levels of responsibility, sustain their concentration and are seen to work industriously.
86. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school. They are well supported by teaching assistants who have a clear knowledge of their needs. They are given work which challenges them appropriately, and expectations of success are high. They are regularly seen undertaking work that is similar to that of their peers.
87. The subject is managed well. The coordinator has been in post a relatively short time, but has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. She is aware that that pupils' writing skills are less effective than their reading, and that this has a negative effect on pupils progress in other subjects. She monitors planning effectively but has yet to establish a systematic process for monitoring teaching and learning. The school's resources for learning are good. She is providing clear leadership and is making a good contribution to the subject's continued development.

MATHEMATICS

88. The standard achieved within the area of mathematics across the school is satisfactory as is the progress made in the teaching of mathematics since the last report. The results of tests taken as the children enter school show a level of attainment slightly below the national average, while the

results achieved by the pupils at the end of Year 6 show results broadly in line with the national average. The progress made by the pupils as they move through the school is good.

89. The number of pupils reaching the standard expected for their age at the end of Year 2 in 2001 was slightly below what might have been expected, as was the number of pupils achieving scores above the national average. However, results achieved in 2002 show a significant increase in the number of children achieving at or above the nationally expected standard.
90. The number of pupils in Year 6 achieving the expected standard in 2001 was close to the national average, but the number exceeding it was well below the national average. However, the results achieved in 2002 show a significant improvement in the number of children performing at above the nationally expected standard, while those performing at about the level expected nationally has remained broadly similar.
91. Over the past three years the trend of results within mathematics at the end of Year 2 is generally below the national average, with girls achieving better results than boys, sometimes by a considerable margin. At the end of Year 6, the mathematics results recorded by the school have exceeded the national average, with little difference between boys and girls. Children with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress.
92. By the age of seven children are confident when counting backwards and forwards and can count forward in two's and three's. They are secure when using number bonds to ten and can add and subtract 10 from two digit numbers. They are capable of adding and subtracting two digit numbers and carrying out simple multiplication and division. They can read three digit numbers confidently, but are less secure when asked to read numbers involving thousands. They are unable to make accurate estimates of length.
93. By the age of 11, the children display a good level of confidence when dealing with a range of mathematics questions. They are able to estimate answers and give sound reasons why their estimate will be accurate. For example, when asked to estimate the answer to 51 multiplied by 47, the answer of about 2,500 was given. When asked whether the answer would be more or less than 2,500 the pupil stated that because he had rounded 51 down to 50 and 47 up to 50, he had needed to round up more than round down, therefore the answer would be less than 2,500. They have a good knowledge of a range of mathematical topics including reflections and transformations, area, proportion and ratio and metric and imperial measures. They make good use of standard written methods when recording their work and can solve problems presented in the form of written statements. However, little evidence was seen of mathematics being used within other subject areas.
94. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers display a satisfactory level of knowledge and understanding while the teaching of basic skills is good. Overall teachers have high expectations of their pupils and the majority of teaching seen was good. In most lessons, clear learning objectives were identified and instructions were delivered clearly and precisely. Good relationships between the teachers and the children, with an appropriate level of humour, held the attention of the pupils and created a purposeful and ordered atmosphere. Tasks were differentiated and presented a good level of challenge, while children with special educational needs were well supported. For instance, during a lesson on multiplication and division, one child was given a number square. This enabled him to take a full part in the activities being asked of the other children.

95. Pupils responded well to the brisk pace of lessons and the good questioning techniques used by teachers who often required them to explain how they reached an answer. Their involvement in the lessons observed promoted high standards of learning.
96. The use of ICT within mathematics is unsatisfactory. Very few examples of the involvement of children with new technology were seen either in the course of lessons or in the work the children had completed. When children were involved with computers, being asked to complete a spreadsheet containing a series of calculations, the task was a good use of the power of computers to move learning forward.
97. The role of the co-ordinator within mathematics is underdeveloped. She has been in post some time, and has produced a policy for mathematics in conjunction with the staff. This was last reviewed in 2001. The standard of leadership and management within mathematics is unsatisfactory. The children are tested regularly, but the procedures currently used to track individual pupils or cohorts of pupils require further development. There were no systematic procedures to monitor the standard of teaching and learning across the school within mathematics and the action plan for mathematics, created with the assistance of the LEA Mathematics consultant, did not contain a structured programme to maintain and improve resources.

SCIENCE

98. The standards of attainment of the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 and Year 2 match the national expectation.
99. The quality of teaching is good, being particularly strong in Years 2, 5 and 6, and the attitudes of pupils to their work are positive. Consequently, pupils of all abilities make good progress in their learning and achieve well. The teachers prepare their lessons thoroughly and share the learning objectives with the pupils so that they are clear about what they are to learn. They have secure subject knowledge and, as a result, are able to ask relevant questions to find out what pupils know and to further develop their scientific understanding. In the best lessons the teachers had high expectations of pupils' behaviour and of what they could do and, as a result, set challenging and interesting work. The activities built well on previous work so that pupils could use prior knowledge to support their learning.
100. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given opportunities to develop their knowledge and understanding by being involved in practical activities in which they are effectively taught the basic skills of making close observations. This was evident in the work of pupils in Year 1 in which they have identified similarities and differences between human beings. They also show they can make sensible predictions when carrying out experiments to find out which materials are attracted to magnets. As pupils pass through Year 2, they learn how to handle a variety of simple scientific equipment carefully and safely and to take part in discussions about scientific ideas. A good example of this was when they were discussing pushes and pulls as forces that can change the shape of some materials, when applied to them. There is emphasis given to teaching pupils the basic skills of carrying out an investigation, and as well as showing much enjoyment and curiosity when involved in practical work, they are keen to answer questions. As a result, by the time that they are 7, most of them show secure skills in carrying out a simple, fair test with some help from the teacher.
101. The teachers of older pupils continue to emphasise the basic skills of investigations and provide opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in structured practical activities, to find out information for themselves. This enables them to make good progress in their investigative skills

and also makes a positive contribution to their personal and social development. They are taught how to handle a wider variety of scientific equipment and resources to develop their knowledge and understanding of a variety of scientific ideas well. In lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6, the teachers effectively showed that investigations in science are about trying to find answers to questions, and that these questions must be carefully phrased if they are to be successfully investigated. In these lessons the pupils maintained their concentration, behaved well and were interested in the opinions of others. They communicate their findings clearly using correct scientific vocabulary, and appropriately use their literacy skills in their investigative report writing as well as in their labelled scientific drawings and diagrams. In experiments to show pulse rate before, during and after exercise, the pupils have used their numeracy skills to take accurate time measurements. However, much of the pupils' recording is done on worksheets however the school recognises the need to develop their skills in using a wider variety of formats to record their work. The pupils' conclusions to their experiments are descriptive rather than being evaluative and based on prior scientific knowledge, which hinders them attaining the higher levels in the subject.

102. There is some use of pupils' skills of using information and communication technology to enhance their work, as seen in the creation of line and block graphs to show results, but this is an area for further development. By the time that they are 11, most pupils show appropriate ability to identify the need for a fair test and to be able to plan and carry one out, independently of the teacher.
103. The curriculum is good, being broad and relevant, and enables pupils to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills well through carefully structured investigative activities. There is good leadership by a co-ordinator, who has taken a central role in improving the teaching of investigational skills since the last inspection. The planning procedures, which are based on a two-year cycle to meet the needs of mixed age classes, are good. They effectively incorporate national guidelines and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught. However, there are inconsistencies in the manner in which these plans are delivered to pupils of the same age in different classes. Assessment procedures are not effective in enabling the school to successfully track the progress that pupils make, in order to set precise targets for improvement.
104. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, as a result of the effective support that they are given. There is good use made of visits and visitors to provide further valuable learning experiences. These have included a trip to the Science Museum in London and an extended visit from the Cambridgeshire Life Science Bus to support work on life processes and living things. There has been good improvement made since the last inspection.

ART AND DESIGN

105. Pupils' work in art shows good features. Attainment continues to be above what is expected and the school has maintained the high standards reported when it was last inspected.
106. Pupils in Year 2 were observed exploring primary and secondary colours and showed that they could use their art equipment with great care. They recalled their previous knowledge well when being shown how to mix the paint. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 considered some of the qualities of a Paul Klee painting thoroughly and used black and white powder paint to vary a hue. In Years 5 and 6 pupils used a good range of pencils well to produce a wide range of effects, having closely observed examples of line drawing, tone, pattern and texture.

107. Pupils' past work includes a wide range of painting, pastel work, sewing of high quality, good claywork and accurate drawing. Good still life pictures, a very effective piece undertaken to create a Coronation mug and very good collage work to create flower petals illustrate a wide range of good quality art work which has been produced.
108. The quality of teaching is good. Young pupils are encouraged to use equipment carefully and properly. They are well supported in their work. Throughout the school, teachers' planning is precise and undertaken in pairs where pupils of the same age are in different classes. Pupils are encouraged to use the correct technical language and are given a wide range of opportunities to improve their own skills. This good teaching assists the pupils maintain their concentration and respond well with their lessons. It has a good effect on their learning.
109. The subject is coordinated well by a teacher with interest and expertise in the subject. National Curriculum coverage is thorough and pupils' artwork is prominently displayed to good effect around the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. There was insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on the standards that pupils attain, or the quality of teaching.
111. In the one lesson seen in Year 2, the pupils showed an appropriate ability to evaluate a product by tasting and then choosing the most popular type of bread. They showed enjoyment in this activity, being well behaved and eager to make contributions to the discussion about the different kinds of bread. Photographic evidence shows that pupils have access to an appropriate range of activities, involving a variety of materials. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the properties of different materials and how best to shape, assemble and join them. This is shown in the collage glove puppets that they have made. Older pupils are given the opportunity to develop their skills in using a wider range of materials and tools and to develop their ability in evaluating their work and making modifications as it progresses. In years 3 and 4, the pupils have used their scientific knowledge and understanding to help them make models that incorporate a simple electrical circuit. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are given the opportunity to make Greek pots out of clay to support their work in history and to be involved in activities involving paper engineering.
112. The curriculum is satisfactory, being linked to other subjects such as science and history. Pupils have had opportunity to take part in a technology challenge at Sawtry Community College, in which they designed and made flavoured snack bars, with trays and card sleeves to promote and protect them. Leadership is at an early stage of development, as the co-ordinator has only just taken over the role. The planning arrangements are secure and provide teachers with clear information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

113. There is insufficient evidence on which to base a secure judgement in either history or geography, on the standards achieved by children at the age of seven or eleven, or on the standards of teaching.

114. Within history, the teachers' planning is detailed and appropriate. Due to that fact that parallel, mixed age classes exist within the school, responsibility for planning is shared between classes and the resulting lesson plans are used by the teachers to teach a number of lessons.
115. The five history lessons observed covered two topics, the first relating to James Cook using one set of planning and the second relating the Tudors, again using identical lesson plans. Activities were differentiated according to the ability of the children and provision was made for pupils with special educational need. The response of the pupils varied, according to the way the lesson was presented by the teacher. The most successful lessons were characterised by the way in which the teacher was able to gain the interest and involvement of the children and focus their learning. This was achieved by recounting a previous lesson when the children had taken roles and re-enacted aspects of the story of Captain Cook's voyages, and by using prepared materials such as maps, pictures and typed questions. Pupils were able to comment on details within the pictures and from the story, and formulate questions relating to the work they had covered.
116. Two geography lessons were observed using the same lesson plan. Again, the detail contained within the planning supported equality of provision across the classes. The more successful lesson was characterised by good classroom organisation, used the time available effectively and led to all of the children sustaining good concentration throughout. When asked to sort a series of photographs into the season of the year, the children were able to discuss the content of the pictures and put forward reasons for their decisions. This activity supported the children's social development as they were required to work in groups and also helped the development of their speaking and listening skills.
117. Resources within history and geography are satisfactory. The work completed within these subjects is supported by a range of trips to places such as Stibbington and Paxton Pits, and activities such as an Anglo-Saxon evening and a Tudor day, which both involved the whole school. However, no evidence was seen to indicate the use of ICT within either subject either to support research or record findings.
118. The subject co-ordinator has only recently taken responsibility for the leadership throughout the school of both history and geography. She has undertaken a policy review of each subject and has drawn up an action plans for both history and geography, which are linked to the school development plan. She has also undertaken an audit of resources within each subject.
119. The co-ordinator does not yet have a sound knowledge of standards within history and geography across the school. As a result the ability to use assessment information to inform curriculum planning is poor. However, portfolios of children's work in both history and geography are being developed and there is an intention to develop the coordinator's role in monitoring standards through the regular review of lesson plans, curriculum plans and pupil's work within both subjects.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. The provision for information communication technology (ICT) has been improved since the last inspection but there some important areas, such as data handling, control and modelling, that are not covered in sufficient depth, and pupils do not spend enough time on computers to practice and effectively improve their computer skills. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills to enhance their work in other subjects. As a result, by the time that they are 11, most pupils do not attain standards that match the national expectation, having not made sufficient progress as they pass through the school.

121. As little direct teaching was seen, there is not enough evidence on which to make an overall judgement on its quality. The school employs an ICT support teacher who takes small groups of pupils to teach them basic skills in the subject. He has secure subject knowledge that enables him to ask relevant questions and to support pupils when they face difficulties. In a session for pupils in Year 2, he taught them how to load, save and retrieve information on a computer. As only groups of four are taught, it takes a considerable time for all the class to learn these skills and as they are withdrawn from literacy and numeracy lessons, they miss the teaching of some important ideas in English and mathematics. While they are in Year 1, the pupils are taught that computers can be used to make words, pictures and to assemble text. They learn about the layout of the keyboard and how to use the computer to word-process some of their writing. As they pass through Year 2, pupils learn how to change the type and size of text and to highlight individual words. During their lessons with the support teacher, their attitudes to learning were positive, treating the equipment carefully and being well behaved. However, the limited access to computers to develop their skills means that, by the end of Year 2, most pupils do not show an appropriate ability to use computers to retrieve, process and display information.
122. Older pupils learn about keyboard shortcuts and are taught how to use programmes to create a variety of graphs to record their findings, in subjects such as mathematics and science. As with younger pupils, there is limited access to computers and, consequently, by the time that they are eleven, most pupils do not show appropriate skills in using ICT to organise and present their ideas, or in using computers to exchange and share information. They are limited in their ability to review, modify and evaluate their work as it progresses. In terms of using ICT to develop their literacy skills, pupils can use word processing to support their work in other subjects, but this is only at a basic level and pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to be involved in more challenging activities, such as desk top publishing. Similarly, there is some use of numeracy skills in basic data handling to support work in mathematics, but these skills are not well developed.
123. There is secure leadership by a co-ordinator with sufficient subject knowledge and expertise that enables her to support and advise colleagues. Planning arrangements are comprehensive and incorporate national guidelines. Assessment procedures are not effective in tracking the progress that pupils make as they pass through the school. ICT is used to support only limited areas of the curriculum and is underdeveloped in most subjects. There has been an improvement in the number and quality of computers for pupils to use in the last academic year and the school has planned intention to provide more. Teachers have undertaken training to develop their skills and are now more confident passing these on to the pupils. The school is currently working with the local secondary college to develop a linked on-line learning programme and its own website. There is a shared commitment to improving provision, as is shown by the teachers being about to undertake a second phase of training to further upgrade their subject expertise.

MUSIC

124. Only two music lessons were observed during the course of the inspection and this forms insufficient evidence to make overall judgements. One lesson was with pupils in Years 3 and 4, and one was with pupils in Years 5 and 6. In the first lesson observed, pupils listened carefully to the teacher play single notes on a pitched percussion instrument and the pupils had to listen to the sound and identify whether it was higher or lower than the previous one. Most were readily able to do that. The lessons moved on to singing 'Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines' which the pupils sang with some enthusiasm, and some accompanied the singing by playing an appropriate range of simple instruments. The older pupils listened well to an interesting and varied range of voice sounds played on a compact disc. They included Mongolian Mouth Music and Alpine Yodelling. The pupils were then encouraged by the teacher to produce their own

sounds in sequence. They undertook this activity well and, with good levels of concentration, produced a long sequence of sounds which they reproduced effectively. They then moved on to the interpretation of a graphic score, which they interpreted very well indeed.

125. The music curriculum is also promoted appropriately through singing, in acts of collective worship and in a wide variety of lessons, through good use of recorded music to accompany dance and physical education and through the teaching of a good range of instruments.
126. From the observations made, pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation by the time the pupils are eleven years of age in singing, composition and instrumental work. Insufficient evidence was gathered to make an overall view of the quality of teaching, but in the lessons seen, it was satisfactory overall. Where teaching is at its best in the lesson for the older pupils, their interest is maintained throughout and good links are made between the sounds that are produced and the ways those sounds might be written down.
127. The subject is coordinated by the headteacher, who has clear plans for its continued development. Since the last inspection the provision has improved to help teachers gain confidence in their ability to teach the subject effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. By the time that time they are in Year 6, most of the pupils attain the national expectation and a significant number exceed it. This is a result of the good quality teaching that they receive, particularly in Years 2, 5 and 6, and the positive attitudes that they show, which enable them to make good progress and achieve well.
129. The planning of lessons is thorough, with clear learning objectives being linked to interesting and challenging activities. Teachers have secure subject knowledge that enables them to explain to pupils how to set about their activities and how to improve their performance. They set good examples by dressing appropriately for physical education lessons and, as a result, are able to demonstrate techniques in an effective way. In dance lessons in Years 1 and 2, the pupils showed the ability to move in a variety of ways with an appropriate awareness of space. They responded well to the music and effectively created a series of 'wriggly' movements. In these lessons, the pupils showed a lot of enjoyment and enthusiasm in their activities and were very well behaved. As they pass through the school, the boys and girls are equally exposed to a wider range of activities which gives them confidence, as well as many opportunities to learn from each other. Teachers ensure that lessons begin with effective warm up activities, as was evident in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4 when these consisted of a timed skipping session to try and improve on previous performance. In the main part of the lesson, the pupils showed good skills in bouncing a ball with accuracy while travelling at speed. Most pupils can follow instructions correctly and watch others carefully in demonstration, using it well to improve their own performance. This was evident in a very good quality lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, in which they were developing their hockey skills. The expertise of the teacher enabled them to make very good progress in their ability to control the hockey sticks when making a push shot. In another high quality lesson for pupils in the other Year 5 and 6 class, the teacher very effectively developed their netball skills by showing them the correct method of passing and catching a ball with accuracy. In these lessons, the pupils co-operated well and recognised the need for safety when using equipment. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in physical educational

activities and they also make good progress. By the time that they are in Year 6, most pupils are able to practice, improve and refine their skills and make evaluations of their own and others performance, along with suggested improvements.

130. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant to all the pupils. There are swimming lessons for pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 at the nearby Community Pool and by the time that they leave school, most pupils can swim the nationally expected 25 metres. The leadership of the subject is at an early stage of development as the co-ordinator has only been in post for one term, though he has a secure overview of the subject. The programme of work is successful in ensuring continuity and progression of pupils' learning. There is a good range of extra curricular activities that include football, netball, and country dancing, that make a positive contribution to the pupils' personal and social development. Pupils can also take part in competitive matches against other schools, in events such as swimming, kwik-cricket and cross- country running. Football coaching, organised by Cambridge United Football in the Community, has been available for most pupils and provides a further quality learning opportunity. The current provision shows that the school has made good improvement since the last inspection.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Judgements are based on two lessons observed and a review of pupils' past work. Throughout the school pupils' attainment is at the expected level for their age, taking into account the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus.
132. In one lesson observed in Year 1, the pupils gave detailed consideration of the different ways of saying 'thank you'. They talked openly of saying thank you to friends, to parents and to God. They express a good range of ideas concerning the ways of expressing thanks – through letters, cards, presents and prayers. They designed and produced simple cards to express their feelings. Older pupils, in Years 5 and 6 were just being introduced to their topic for the new term which centred upon a consideration of Judaism. When being asked by the teacher what they knew, many were eager to offer suggestions. They knew it was a religion and that people who believed in Judaism were Jews. An interesting discussion ensued about whether Jewish people only married other Jews. When asked what they wished to try to find out, the pupils quickly generated an extensive list of factual information to consider. It included where they worshiped, whether their worship involved the use of special clothing, ritual washing or special prayers. Did they have a special figurehead to worship? Did they celebrate birthdays? The pupils made particularly good use of their previous knowledge and understanding of other religions to initiate enquiry into Judaism.
133. In both lessons observed, the teaching was good. Pupils were positively encouraged to express their ideas and they did so well, showing interest and (in the case of the older pupils) good previous knowledge. Both lessons were complemented by good use of resources. This was seen particularly well in the Year 5/6 lesson which had a good range of artefacts for the pupils to handle and a wide range of information books from which the pupils successfully extracted relevant information. Pupils working well in groups informed the class at regular intervals of the discoveries they had made. In both lessons, pupils worked well, with interest and they sustained their concentration well.
134. The school makes good provision for the promotion and delivery of the religious education curriculum. The pupils gain an appropriate knowledge of Christianity and are developing a sound grasp of the principles of other major world religions. Acts of collective worship in school are

regularly led by a visiting minister and sometimes by visiting youth workers. Pupils respond well to these visitors and school worship adds positively to the school's overall provision.

135. It is clear that the school has successfully maintained the standards of attainment and quality of provision which was reported when religious education was last inspected.