

INSPECTION REPORT

SWALLOWDALE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Melton Mowbray

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 119987

Headteacher: Mr. Peter Smith

Reporting inspector: Mr. Geoff Cooper
OFSTED Inspector Number: 23647

Dates of inspection: 24th – 27th March 2003

Inspection number: 248073

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

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dalby Road,
Melton Mowbray,
Leicestershire

Postcode: LE13 0BJ

Telephone number: 01664 565456

Fax number: 01664 482026

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. D. Robb

Date of previous inspection: December 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23647	Mr Geoff Cooper	Registered inspector	Educational inclusion, Special educational needs, Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it? How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9327	Mr Stuart Vincent	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well is the school led and managed
3609	Mrs Margaret Hulme	Team inspector	The Foundation Stage, Religious education	
1838	Mrs Beryl Pollard	Team inspector	English, English as an additional language, Geography, History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
21086	Mrs Elizabeth Strange	Team inspector	Science, Physical education	
11419	Mrs Jeanie Underwood		Mathematics, Art and design, Music	The school's results and pupils' achievements

The inspection contractor was:

Lincolnshire Education Associates

The Innovation Centre,
Europarc,
GRIMSBY,
North East Lincolnshire
DN37 9TT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

To be completed on final draft

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 9
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
 PART B: COMMENTARY	
 HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	 10 - 12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
 HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	 12 - 15
 HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	 15 - 18
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	 18 - 19
 HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	 19 - 20
 HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	 20 - 22
 WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	 22
 PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	 23 - 27
 PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	 28 - 45

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Swallowdale Community Primary is a large infant and junior school with 419 boys and girls aged four to eleven on roll. It is situated on the outskirts of Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire. Almost all pupils are of a white British origin. Very few pupils come from other backgrounds. Two pupils are learning English as a new language but they are not at an early stage of language acquisition. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average. An average number of pupils are identified as having learning difficulties. Of these pupils about 70 per cent are boys. A higher than usual proportion of pupils have a statement of educational needs¹. Most pupils identified as having learning difficulties have difficulty in acquiring the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Some have specific physical needs. Attainment on entry to full time school is below average. During the inspection a small number of teachers were on planned leave of absence. In two classes supply teachers covered their absence. The school is very committed to its work in partnership with the local community.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Swallowdale is a very good school with many strengths. The results of National Curriculum standard tests are above the average of schools with a similar number of free school meals. At the end of Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Teaching is good overall with particular strengths in the Foundation Stage² and in Years 3 to 6. Leadership and management are very good. Given these factors and average amount of money spent on the education of each pupil the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The results of National Curriculum tests and the standards of work seen are above average in English, maths and science at the end of Y6;
- Teaching and learning are good overall and strongest in Years 3 to 6; children in the Foundation Stage get off to good start in their education, the result of very good provision and good teaching;
- Pupils enjoy a very good and enriched curriculum; this includes very good provision for pupils' personal development that results in very good attitudes, good behaviour and positive relationships;
- The high level of care is a strength of the school; it is determined to include all pupils in the educational opportunities available; there are very good procedures for measuring attainment and progress and this information is used well;
- Pupils benefit from the strong partnership with parents and the community;
- Leadership and management are very good at all levels.

What could be improved

- While standards are average in Years 1 and 2, progress is not as brisk as elsewhere in the school;
- Some teaching does not expect enough of pupils; opportunities are missed to make them think;
- Measurements of pupils' progress are not always used incisively to enable higher standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in December 1997. Very good improvement has been made since then. The key issues of that inspection – raising standards, improving the curriculum, development in the role of subject leaders and the governing body – have been well addressed. Improvements in school performance include higher standards of attainment, much more secure provision in the Foundation Stage, better personal development, the development of teaching and strengthening the partnership with parents. Leadership and management have improved significantly.

¹ Statement of educational needs: provision for those pupils with a greater degree of learning difficulties.

² The Foundation Stage: education for pupils in the Reception classes.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	C	C	B	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	C	B	B	
science	B	D	B	A	

At the end of Year 6 in 2002 the results in National Curriculum tests were above average in English, mathematics and science. Compared with schools with a similar proportion of free school meals, results were above average in English and mathematics and well above average in science. The school's trend of improvement is above the national trend of improvement. Results in mathematics and science are rising more rapidly than those in English. There is no consistent trend of difference in the results of boys and girls. At the end of Year 2 in 2002, results were below average in writing and well below in reading and mathematics. Compared with schools with a similar proportion of free school meals, results were below average in writing and well below average in reading and mathematics. Results are generally static from year to year although there was some decline in 2002 except in mathematics where results are improving overall. Over the years there is very little difference in the performance of boys and girls, although in 2002 girls did better than boys in their tests. The school sets challenging targets for the end of Year 6. Targets were exceeded in 2002 but have revised down for 2003 in light of pupils' prior attainment. The school is on track to achieve its 2003 targets.

In the work seen during the inspection children in the Foundation Stage start off below average. They make good progress. Most are on target to achieve the early learning goals³. In Years 1 and 2 attainment is average in all subjects of the National Curriculum including the acquisition of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In Years 3 to 6 attainment is above average in English, mathematics, science, geography and history. Attainment is average in all other subjects of the curriculum. Attainment in religious education meets the expectation of the local syllabus across the school. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are improving rapidly because the computer suite is well used and pupils are developing good skills. An area for development is more use of these skills in some subjects of the curriculum. With attainment on entry to full time school below average and attainment above average by the end of Year 6, pupils make good progress and achieve well. Pupils with learning difficulties make very good progress because their support is so well targeted on identified needs. Higher attaining pupils make good progress because of effective strategies for identification and intervention, not only in literacy and numeracy but also in a range of subjects across the curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very positive about their school life and work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils live up to the school's high expectations. Some have not yet acquired the social skills that the school expects.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils have good independence skills when organising their work. They are very good at working in teams.
Attendance	Average. Punctuality has improved since the previous inspection.

³ Early learning goals: the targets set nationally for the learning of children in the Foundation Stage.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching in English and mathematics is good overall. The school has made a good response to national strategies for teaching basic skills and pupils' acquisition of literacy and numeracy is good. The strongest teaching was in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. Many lessons are brisk. Pupils are very clear about what has to be learned. Teachers' expectations and the methods they use are excellent in Years 3 to 6. Expectations are not high enough in Years 1 and 2 and teaching methods do not promote quick enough progress. In the school overall, pupils are well managed and waste no time in settling to work. Most concentrate well and persevere. Some lessons are less purposeful and learning objectives are not clear. Some teachers tell pupils too much. Long, whole class teaching sessions makes for restless pupils. The school does well to include all pupils in its teaching. Pupils with learning difficulties get good support in lessons and in small groups. The good identification of and provision for able pupils ensures they are challenged to do their best. Pupils with very specific physical needs are very well integrated into the life and work of the school. A particular strength of much of the learning is the way pupils develop independence, for example in organising their own work. Skilled learning support assistants make a good contribution to the quality of learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. Legal requirements are well covered. A very good range of features enriches pupils' learning opportunities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Thorough and precise mechanisms are used to identify needs. The school has very clear strategies for providing appropriate support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Only two pupils speak English as a new language. Neither is at an early stage of language development. They have no difficulty with the language of the classroom.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development very well. While cultural development is good, the promotion of understanding of life in a diverse and culturally rich society is not as strong.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school has all legally expected measures in place for the care and protection of pupils, including provision to prevent bullying and racism. The procedures for measuring attainment and progress are very good but more can be done to use this information to promote even higher progress.

The partnership with parents is very effective. Parent's views of the school are very positive. They get good information about the school and the progress of their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The school has made significant improvements in leadership and management since the previous inspection. The determined leadership of the headteacher is well complemented by the work of senior staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors know their school well. They are committed to its work and very involved in its strategic development. Their legal responsibilities are well covered.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school is good at working out how good it is and identifying what needs to be done. Strong action is taken to ensure improvements happen. Good use is made of the principles of best value in self-evaluation and taking effective action.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school's spending on resources is well planned and resources are well targeted on maintaining and improving standards.

The accommodation is very good and well used. Staffing levels are good and staff well deployed. Staffing is well complemented by the provision of skilled learning support assistants. Learning resources are sufficient for the needs of the curriculum.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a very small number of parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress; • Teaching and leadership and management are good; • The school has high expectations of their children and children are encouraged to become more mature and responsible; • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework; • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team is in strong agreement with the positive views expressed. Parents have a good understanding of the strengths of the school. The team disagrees with the small number of parents with negative views. Homework is set regularly and is an integral part of pupils' learning. The team believes the amount of homework is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 but increases in relevance and purpose in Years 3 to 6. The school provides a very good range of activities out of lessons. Every member of staff gives their free time to at least one activity out of hours. Most activities are for older pupils and this is usual in primary schools. Some activities take place at lunchtimes and some parents may not recognise this as 'out of hours' provision.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards of work seen in the inspection in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6. Achievement is good for all pupils. A great deal is expected of pupils and they live up to the school's expectations. Standards have been improved since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the standards achieved are:

- Above average standards in English, mathematics, science, history and geography by the end of Year 6;
- The ability of pupils in Years 3 to 6 in applying and using their skills in investigative and experimental science;
- The high order skills in writing and fluent and expressive reading in Years 3 to 6;
- The good progress made by children in the Foundation Stage;
- The good progress made by pupils in Years 3 to 6.

Areas for development are:

- The better progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2;
 - The handwriting of pupils in Years 1 and 2;
 - The ability of pupils in Years 1 and 2 to apply and use their skills in mathematics and in investigative and experimental science.
2. From a below average starting point, the children in the Foundation Stage make good progress to attain the expected standards across the areas of learning by the time they start the subjects of the National Curriculum in Year 1. However, while a few children will still be working towards achieving the skills in literacy and numeracy, some have already achieved the Early Learning Goals and are ready to start National Curriculum programmes of study. This progress is largely due to the well-planned and diverse activities that support the early learning goals.
 3. The results in the National Curriculum tests in Year 2 in 2002 show standards in mathematics to be well below average, in reading they were well below average and in writing they were below average when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards are well below in mathematics and reading but below in writing.
 4. In the National Curriculum tests in Year 6 for 2002 standards were above average in English, mathematics and science, when compared with all schools nationally. These results follow the trend shown in recent years as the school's results continue to rise above that of the national trend. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals the results were above for English and mathematics and well above average for science. The school sets challenging targets for pupils when they are eleven. Targets are consistently well met.
 5. Standards in the subjects of the curriculum seen in lessons and in the scrutiny of work pupils' are displayed in the following table.

	At the end of Year 2	At the end of Year 6
English	Average	Above average
Mathematics	Average	Above average
Science	Average	Above average
Art and design	Average	Average
Design and technology	Average	Average
Geography	Average	Above average
History	Average	Above average
ICT	Average	Average
Music	Average	Average
Physical education	Average	Average
Religious education	Average	Average

6. In the work seen during the inspection, as can be seen in the table, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, history and geography by the end of Year 6. Standards in all other subjects, both by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average. First-hand experiences and cross-curricular links planned for history and geography give pupils opportunities to develop environmental awareness and the skills for evaluating the impact of events. These activities interest and engage the pupils and ensure that progress is good particularly for pupils in Years 3 to 6. However there are occasions when pupils in Year 1 and 2 make only satisfactory progress. Overall, standards in literacy and numeracy are above those expected at the end of Year 6. Particularly in Years 3 to 6 the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are used well across the subjects of the curriculum.
7. The pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Some of those who enter school with levels of knowledge, skills and understanding below expectation for their age make sufficient progress to catch up with other pupils. The school does a great deal to ensure that all pupils are included and challenged in the work they have to do. This is particularly the case for pupils with physical conditions that are a barrier to learning. It is the case for those pupils identified as having the potential for higher attainment and those with special gifts and talents.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils' very good attitudes to their work and their willingness to learn continue to be a strength of the school. Pupils are keen to please their teachers, they contribute ideas and effort, enjoy finding things out and being successful. The pupils themselves say that behaviour is good and they speak with pride about '*their school*'. They are becoming increasingly independent and able to organise themselves and work co-operatively together, so that relationships at all levels are very good. In the questionnaires, parents also confirm that their children enjoy coming to school.

Strengths in this area are:

- The pupils' willingness to learn;
- Their ability to work hard and to concentrate;
- Their behaviour in the classroom and at playtimes;
- Their willingness to talk and express their ideas in class;
- The way pupils take on responsibilities around the school and work to raise funds for charities;
- The way the older pupils help the younger ones;
- The very positive relationships between pupils and all adults and the way they work together in groups and share ideas.

An area for development is: the less co-operative behaviour of a small minority.

9. In lessons, pupils are very keen to get on. They often express excitement when the teacher explains what they are to do. They are very keen to please teachers and work hard, particularly enjoying practical work or those activities where they work together with partners or in groups. Often, these groups are structured in such a way as to allow those pupils who learn more quickly, to help those who don't. They are pleased with their own successes as well as their classmates.
10. Behaviour in lessons and in the playground is good. Pupils know what is expected of them, they know the rules as well as the sanctions. They respond well to adults whether they are teachers, support assistants or lunchtime supervisors. Play is boisterous, but boys and girls play well together. There are few instances of unacceptable behaviour and there was one, brief, fixed-term exclusion during the last school year. There are a number of pupils who have behavioural difficulties and the potential to be disruptive, but this is managed very well and seldom disrupts lessons. Just very occasionally, standards in the classroom slip a little, but this is almost invariably when the lesson's activities lack challenge or interest. The atmosphere in the school is relaxed, friendly and welcoming and the school functions very well as a harmonious community. Again, parents express their approval of the standards of behaviour achieved.
11. Pupils' personal development is very good. They are increasingly articulate and confident to answer questions, or to talk about their work in front of the class. They speak respectfully to adults and happily engage in conversation. They organise resources and are helpful to teachers and support assistants. They are increasingly aware of the needs and feelings of others and the inclusiveness of the school ensures that all pupils work and share their experiences together. Older pupils organise charitable fund-raising. They enjoy helping the younger children at playtimes and with reading and other activities. Their knowledge of their own learning is increasing and they talk about the things they do well and the things they find difficult. They understand and talk about the various tests they take and what they need to do to succeed. Many of the older pupils have responsibilities around the school and they take these seriously. Members of the school council are pleased to contribute to the way the school is organised and represent their class. By the time they are ready to leave the school, they are articulate, sociable and very well prepared for secondary education.
12. Attendance is now just slightly above the national average. There is virtually no unauthorised absence. Pupils' punctuality has been improved since the previous inspection and is now no longer a cause for concern.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. It is strongest in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. It has improved since the previous inspection.

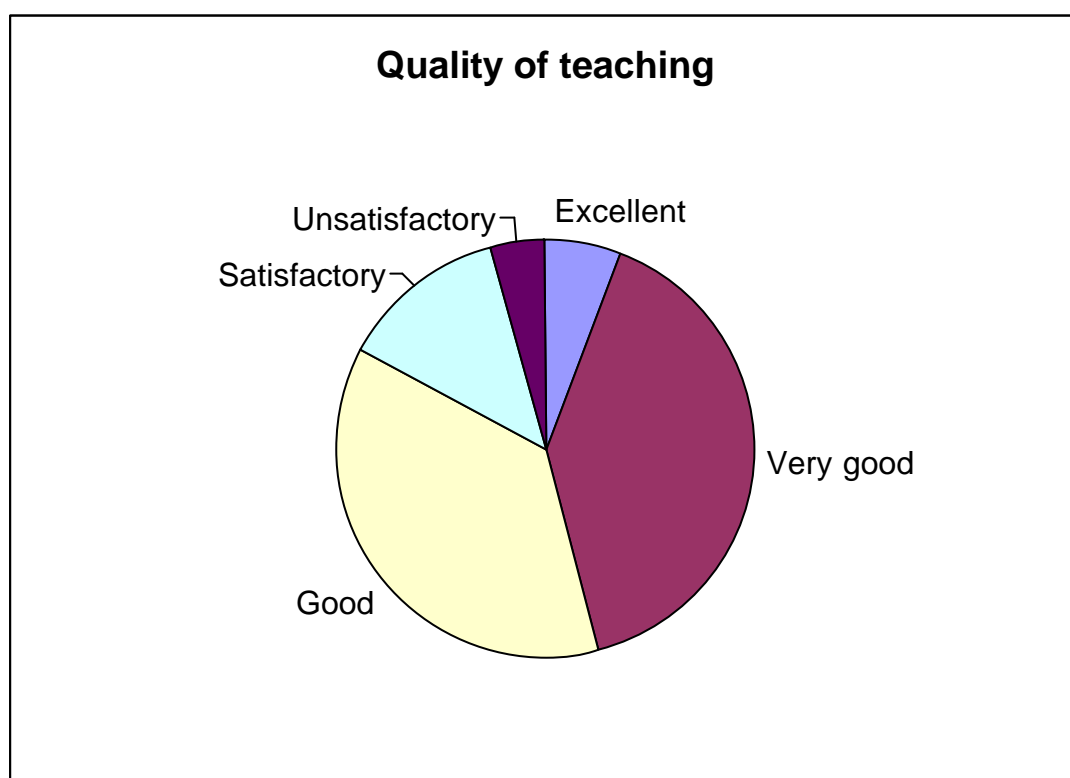
Strengths in teaching and learning are:

- The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, especially in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6;
- The effectiveness of teachers' planning;
- The quality and use of day-to-day measurements of progress;
- Teachers' management of pupils;
- The way resources, time and learning support assistants are used;

- The very high expectations teachers have of pupils in Years 3 to 6 and the effectiveness of their teaching methods;
- The use of homework in Years 3 to 6;
- The way pupils respond as learners to the good teaching they receive;
- The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties.

Areas for development are:

- Teachers' expectations and their use of teaching methods in Years 1 and 2;
- The development of pupils' skills and the use of skills in mathematics and science, especially in Years 1 and 2;
- The extension of teachers' confidence in the use of ICT to support learning in a wide range of subjects.



- The chart above shows clearly the proportion of teaching that was good or better. The quality of learning was equally as good. All lessons in the Foundation Stage were good or better. The vast majority of lessons in Years 3 to 6 were very good. Most lessons in Years 1 and 2 were satisfactory or good. Overall in the school, four lessons were judged to be of the highest order but three were less than satisfactory. This is better than at the previous inspection when one in five lessons were judged to be good or better and one in 12 were judged to be less than satisfactory.
- There are a number of general strengths in the teaching overall. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good throughout the school but especially good in the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6. The school makes effective use of the national strategies for teaching basic skills. As a result, by the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well and attainment in English and mathematics is above average. Teachers plan well. They identify clear objectives for pupils' learning, although the effective use of plans is better in some lessons than in others. Most teachers begin lessons by discussing objectives with pupils. Some have good ways of helping pupils remember what the objectives are, for example, the use of the acronym 'WILF' (What I

Am Looking For). Most teachers have good strategies for questioning pupils. They check up on what was learned in the previous lesson to establish the starting point for the current lesson. This is effective use of day-to-day measurements of progress. Teachers check up on what has been learned by getting pupils to explain their thinking. Frequently different questions are directed at pupils of differing abilities. This ensures that higher attaining pupils are kept thinking and pupils with learning difficulties are kept in touch with the learning. Some marking of pupils' work is very good. It challenges them to further thinking and supports them in what needs to be done to improve. However, not all marking is as helpful as this.

16. Teachers manage pupils well. They are consistent in their relationships with pupils, and pupils appreciate this. They are firm as necessary but also quick to praise where praise is due. This makes pupils want to do well and to persevere. It also makes them confident to explain and discuss their work. Learning resources are well planned and organised. As a result, no time is lost during lessons. Many lessons go briskly and engage pupils very well. There is often a helpful sense of humour that cements relationships. Learning support assistants make a good contribution to lessons and to the work of small groups. They are skilled, often sharing teachers' gifts of positive relationships, humour and firmness. This gives pupils a sense of security when getting additional support.

17. Especially in Years 3 to 6 teachers have very high expectations of themselves and of their pupils. They expect work to be completed and to a high standard. They expect pupils to organise themselves and their work. They expect pupils to work together in a spirit of co-operation and sharing tasks. They expect a good response to their questions and that pupils will settle quickly to their work. And pupils live up to these expectations well. Particularly in Years 1, 3, 5 and 6, teaching space lends itself to '*team teaching*', where sometimes one teacher takes the lead and at other times a different teacher does so. This works very well. The paired classes⁴ are also a good incentive for teachers to use their individual skills well. For example, one teacher will take all music lessons and another all lessons in religious education. This is very effectively done and means that pupils benefit from some degree of specialist teaching. The '*open plan*' nature of the teaching spaces has the potential for disruption because of noise from the adjoining classroom. To minimise this, teachers work very closely together, for example, lessons are planned to ensure that whole class teaching sessions happen together. Teachers recognise that discussion is essential to learning and pupils are encouraged to work and discuss using '*partner voices*' that do not disturb the adjoining class. This is good use of organisation, establishment of working routines and disciplines and very good use of teaching strategies. Although a small number of parents felt that there is insufficient homework and that it is set inconsistently, this is not the view of the inspection team. Especially in Years 3 to 6, homework is used very well as an integral part of lessons, both in preparation for the next lesson and in practising the skills taught in lessons. The level of classroom display is good. It celebrates and values pupils' efforts. It provides a strong stimulus for learning across the curriculum.

18. The pupils respond very well to the good teaching they receive. Good learning skills are developing as a result. They behave well and listen well, essential tools for good learning. They enjoy the briskness and challenge inherent in many lessons. They enjoy explaining their thinking. Positive relationships with those adults working in the classroom are relished. Pupils with whom discussions were held were quick to explain why they are reluctant to leave Swallowdale: '*the teachers are our friends*', '*we enjoy what we are asked to do*', '*work is interesting*'. Pupils try hard in the activities they have to do. Although some presentation of work is untidy, much of the work of older pupils is neat, careful and well organised. Pupils concentrate and settle quickly to tasks. Above all, in many lessons they enjoy thinking and being creative.

⁴ Paired classes: each year group is made up of two classes with a teacher each. Each pair of classes works very closely together: in planning, in sharing resources, in managing the curriculum and the timetable.

19. The quality of learning for pupils with different needs is good. The school identifies pupils with different gifts and talents and the quality of teaching sustains those gifts and talents well. It also provides a very good quality of learning for pupils with identified learning difficulties. Teachers know pupils' needs well. They give understanding and consistent support during class lessons. Much of the teaching in small groups is outstandingly good. It is perceptive, well informed, bright and enthusiastic. It is very strongly focused on pupils' learning targets in literacy and numeracy and often their behavioural targets, too. Both teachers and learning support assistants make a very strong contribution to this. It gives a level of support that helps some pupils who have fallen behind the attainment expected for their age to catch for lost time.
20. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can do independently are not as consistently high in Years 1 and 2. Although pupils make generally satisfactory progress, the level of progress does not match the potential of many pupils. Sometimes, identified learning objectives are not consistently addressed throughout the lesson and the lesson lacks a sharp focus as a result. Day-to-day measurements of progress through teachers' marking and questioning do insufficient to challenge pupils' levels of thinking. Sometimes the style of questioning is to do with recall of content, rather than to challenge thinking and explanation. Some lessons require pupils to spend too much time listening rather than doing. This makes pupils restless and at times some boredom sets in. Although pupils are building satisfactory skills in literacy and numeracy, not enough use is made of their skills as investigators and experimenters. This is particularly the case in the application and use of mathematical skills and in the development and use of scientific methods.
21. The school is making good use of its computer suite. An exemplary lesson was seen there with Year 6 and a visiting teacher from the local high school. This lesson was full of pupils' expressions of amazement and wonder as pupils learned how the computer could be used as a design tool. They were very surprised at the design techniques the teacher used and even more surprised at their own use of those techniques as the lesson progressed. Dedicated ICT lessons are now being well used to teach specific ICT skills and to encourage the use of ICT skills for English and mathematics. However, some teachers still lack the confidence to use the full range of school resources to support learning across the curriculum. For example, there are occasions when the data projector was used very effectively for whole class instruction. There were other occasions when teaching would have been much more effective if the projector had been used. There are other ways in which computer skills can be used to support learning. For example, in the work sample, there were few examples of pupils using computers to support the presentation of their work, support the collection and interpretation of data or as a medium in art. There were some very good examples of all these but not consistently across the school.

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

22. The curriculum is very good. It is broad in content and enriched with a very wide range of educational activities outside the normal classroom timetable. It complies fully with the statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. Improvement since the previous inspection is very good as all the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been addressed; there are now schemes of work to support pupils' learning in all subjects and every aspect of ICT is taught to a high standard. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good overall and there has been a significant improvement in cultural development since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the curriculum are:

- Pupils enjoy a very full and enriched curriculum;
 - Links between subjects are used very effectively to reinforce learning and make work relevant;
 - There is a very good range of activities outside normal classroom timetables;
 - There are effective strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy;
 - Pupils, whether they are slow, average or fast learners, are provided with equal opportunities to access learning appropriate to their needs;
 - Provision for personal, social and health education is very good;
 - There are mutually supportive links with partner schools and the wider community;
 - Provision for personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good overall.
- As there are no significant weaknesses in the curriculum provided for pupils there are no areas identified for development.
23. The school's curriculum is rich, balanced and relevant. It promotes high standards at the age of eleven in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and meets statutory requirements. Policies for subjects give effective guidance to teachers and the planning of lessons is detailed, with clearly identified objectives for learning that help pupils to understand what they need to learn and the progress they must make to achieve success. The school has adopted national schemes of work for different subjects and adds to these, where appropriate, according to the interests of pupils and local facilities. Teachers have great strengths in linking work across subjects to make it interesting and to reinforce learning. Pupils in Year 3, studying the Ancient Egyptians, have carried out research into the search for the tomb of King Tutankhamen; made Egyptian necklaces and then written instructions to help others make them; learned about hieroglyphics; drawn artefacts and painted pictures of people in period dress.
24. A very wide range of out-of-school activities helps to reinforce work in classes. There are many visits to places of educational interest and visitors to school help to make work interesting and relevant; for example, Year 5 have visited an exhibition in London to help them understand the Aztec civilisation and a visitor brought a baby to show the younger children as part of their topic on growth. Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity for residential visits to engage in outdoor pursuits and improve their ICT skills. Every teacher runs a school club and pupils have many opportunities to participate in sporting activities, music-making and activities such as computing, gardening, stamp collecting and chess. There is also a homework club.
25. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very effectively as shown by the good standards reached by Year 6 pupils. This is due to the successful implementation of the national strategies for these subjects. Pupils are placed in various working groups, according to their capabilities, and given tasks that match their needs. Skilled and dedicated classroom support assistants help slower learners to make very good progress and more demands are made of the faster learners in terms of independence and challenge. In addition to identifying pupils with learning difficulties at an early stage, those with particular gifts and talents are also identified so that their learning can be extended. This ensures that all pupils are able to access learning at an appropriate level and all are included in the full range of activities on offer. Homework is used very effectively to prepare pupils for lessons or to reinforce the work in classrooms. Every effort is made to make sure that no pupil is excluded on the grounds of gender, disability, race, language or religion. There are excellent examples of the trouble staff take to help a disabled child take a full part in lessons from participating in physical education, magnifying reading materials to taking a wheelchair on a geography field trip.

26. The school is working towards a healthy schools award and the programme includes important issues such as sex and relationships, healthy eating and drugs education. The good speaking and listening skills of pupils mean they make valuable and sensible contributions to debates and discussions on moral dilemmas and current affairs. Minutes from the school council meetings show how mature the level of discussion is. Older pupils help to take responsibility for the day-to-day smooth running of the school and they are especially good at organising themselves and their work in classes. In history, pupils display empathy with people in the past as they write about chimney sweeps and evacuees and Year 6 pupils were seen analysing imaginary newspaper reports in order to identify bias as part of their work on persuasive writing. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good.
27. Pupils benefit from the close links with other schools. Year 6 had access to technical equipment at a local technology school that greatly enhanced their study of a local river. This has contributed to high standards in geography. Science and mathematics days at another secondary school have extended the range of work in these subjects. The school's community centre provides many opportunities for close co-operation with the church and pupils can study French. Parents play their part in supporting their children with homework, helping in classes and raising funds.

Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

28. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal development. Throughout the curriculum and throughout school life, pupils are given very good opportunities to develop in spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions. This confirms that views of parents in their pre-inspection questionnaire and meeting. They believe the school promotes strong values that help pupils grow in maturity and sense of personal responsibility.

Strengths in this provision are that:

- A strong moral code is positively encouraged throughout the school and this has a very good impact on pupils' behaviour;
- Pupils are given many opportunities to work in pairs and groups and this develops their independence;
- Pupils have high self esteem and feel valued as a result of the praise which is given whenever it is well deserved;
- Pupils are given genuine responsibility for a range of activities and they make a real contribution to school life.

An area for development is:

- Enhancing pupils' awareness of life in a culturally rich and diverse society.
29. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development and pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Pupils know how to achieve rewards, which promotes fairness and consistency. They select their own charities and raise substantial sums of money through organised events. There is a sense of teamwork throughout the school where all staff and pupils share a sense of responsibility for those in the local community and for others still further afield. Pupils demonstrate their respect for the local environment, for example, in geography and science, where they consider the importance of protecting eco-systems. Younger pupils discuss what it means to "*Do the right thing*" and their thoughtful responses include "*Keeping my promise*" and "*Telling the truth*". Pupils write sensitively about precious memories and this illustrates how they are developing their own personal beliefs and values. Staff provide very good opportunities in which pupils' social skills and attitudes develop. The oldest pupils apply for roles as monitors around the school and they are given a very wide range

of tasks. They, and members of the school council, take these responsibilities seriously and pupils suggest improvements that are implemented. The school is very successful in promoting extra curricular activities and residential visits which provide many opportunities for further team building. When working together in the classroom, pupils learn to negotiate and to share good ideas. There is a very strong policy for all pupils to be included in all aspects of school life. Boys and girls with a high level of special needs are fully integrated into the school.

30. Provision for spiritual development is very good. Acts of collective worship are well planned, and offer occasions for spiritual and moral reflections. The involvement of visitors enriches the opportunities for pupils to consider a range of views and they are encouraged to be reflective through the use of drama, music and artefacts. The high quality of the curriculum gives pupils the opportunity to develop a sense of awe. For example, they are taken out to places of outstanding natural beauty and this causes them to fully appreciate the environment. Sometimes pupils are so excited by their own learning that their sense of wonder is exceptional. This occurred in two lessons where pupils were thrilled and amazed with the effects of technology. The school makes good provision for cultural development including the multi-cultural dimension that has improved since the previous inspection. Efforts are made to ensure that an understanding of the beliefs and traditions of others is nurtured. In one classroom a range of sacred texts is displayed alongside posters that highlight the cruelty of bullying. There are opportunities, at present not taken, to further enhance pupils' understanding of life in a culturally diverse society. Pupils' awareness of their own culture is extended through a varied programme, such as the study of Melton. Pupils gather data to illustrate how they spend their time in England compared to children in an Indian village. Local theatre groups, musicians and artists visit the school to promote traditional English culture. This contrasts to the abundant displays of pupils' paintings in the school in the style of Monet, Van Gogh and Mondrian, as well as in the style of ancient Egyptians and Greeks.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

31. The quality of relationships between adults and pupils is the foundation of the school's very high standard of care and welfare. The pupils speak highly of their teachers, and adults in general, and know that they are there to help them. Although it is a large school, staff have a very good knowledge of each pupil, which helps them to respond promptly to their needs. Each pupil is valued as an individual. The school is determined to ensure that every pupil has a full and equal opportunity to develop to their full potential, regardless of their academic or physical ability, age, sex or background.

Particular strengths are:

- Arrangements for health and safety and child protection;
 - Promotion of good behaviour to prevent bullying and other anti-social attitudes;
 - Recording and monitoring of attendance, punctuality and behaviour;
 - Very good support for children with particular learning difficulties, as well as those who are gifted or have a particular talent;
 - The school has very good ways of keeping track of pupils' progress and uses this information well.
32. The headteacher, supported by the special needs co-ordinator, ensures that procedures for child protection are thorough and that staff are vigilant. All adults are properly concerned for the well-being of pupils and any concerns are dealt with effectively. The health and safety policy is comprehensive. Individual responsibilities within the school are properly defined and all the

routines of classroom safety, fire drills, first aid, medicines and general welfare are dealt with consistently. There are regular site inspections.

33. The systems for the monitoring and management of behaviour are particularly effective. The rules are straightforward and the high expectations are clearly understood by pupils. All staff apply them consistently so that pupils know exactly what is expected. Teachers manage their classes very well and pupils enjoy the rewards that are given for good behaviour and effort. When it is necessary to work with individual pupils to improve their behaviour, this is done with the full involvement of parents. The personal, social and health education curriculum also contributes very effectively to the welfare of the pupils. It deals with sex education, drugs awareness, good health and the environment. The school is working towards the *Healthy School* award. Parents are very pleased with the standards of behaviour achieved and the level of care provided.
34. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Parents know they must advise the school promptly, otherwise there is a follow-up procedure that begins on the first morning of absence. Registers are properly completed and absence patterns are analysed.
35. The ways used to keep track of pupils' academic progress and personal development are very good. There has been very good improvement since the previous inspection to provide a policy and a range of procedures that will provide a clear view of school performance, provide the right information for setting targets and help teachers to know what works well and why. Now that procedures are being implemented they are working very well at the Foundation Stage and Years 3 to 6 but are just satisfactory at Years 1 to 2 because there is less rigour. In most classes there are regular checks on progress, good marking of work to know what pupils understand and checks to decide what to teach next. Problems are identified very quickly starting at the Foundation Stage and the regular checks on each child's progress helps teachers provide the right sort of work. Consequently, whatever their ability, pupils are given tasks suitable for each child's needs and teachers quickly spot those in difficulty and provide encouragement. Tasks that can be done in different ways and targets that help pupils progress in small steps are effective ways of supporting those with learning difficulties.
36. All of these monitoring procedures ensure that pupils receive very effective support for their learning. They are strongest and best used in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6. They are used less incisively to promote progress in Years 1 and 2. The provision for pupils with special needs is very good and consequently they make very good progress. In addition, the school identifies and gives very good support to those pupils who are gifted and talented, so that they too benefit. Where necessary, additional support is given in literacy and mathematics in various years at various times. Pupils with physical difficulties are also very well supported by trained and caring staff. The school works very hard to ensure that every pupil has an opportunity to achieve their best.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Parents have very positive views about how the school works and the quality of education it provides. The questionnaires show that they are very happy with most aspects of school. There are very strong links between school, home and the wider community. This exemplifies the head teacher's view that the school should be the focus for learning for the whole of the community it serves, not solely its children. There is a good range of information provided to parents and the community and this encourages parents to become involved in school life and support their own children well. The school has dealt successfully with the omissions from the prospectus and the governors' annual report, identified by the previous inspection.

Particular strengths now are:

- Regular newsletters about the work of the school to all parents and households in the community;
- A very good quality information pack for parents whose children are about to start at the school;
- The good range of information about the curriculum and day-to-day matters;
- The consultation which the school carries out with parents, as well as other 'stakeholders' in the school and Community Centre;
- The work of the '*Swallowdale Friends*'; parents who help directly in the school; the many community groups who are involved in the school and make use of the school premises;
- The good support that parents give to homework and the wide range of activities, all of which helps their children to succeed.

An area for development is:

- To make the pupils' annual reports more detailed, particularly in foundation subjects, so that parents have a wider understanding of their children's achievements.

38. Parents are given a very good range of information about the school. Day-to-day matters are dealt with by individual letters. There are regular newsletters to parents and the wider community. Information about forthcoming topics is also provided. It is particularly noticeable that parents come freely into school at the start of the day and talk to staff informally. The questionnaires confirm that they are confident to approach the school at any time. More formal meetings with class teachers take place during the autumn and spring terms parents attend these very well. The pupils' annual reports are broadly satisfactory. They give a reasonable picture of progress, but could be more detailed. Parents of children with learning difficulties are kept fully informed about progress and involved in discussing their targets.
39. Parents make a very good contribution to the life of the school. Through annual questionnaires, the school consults parents and actively seeks ways to take their views into account. This process also takes into account the views of the users of the community centre, all of which contributes to the development of the school's management plan. The very effective links between the school, home and community contributes to the high regard in which parents hold the school.
40. There is always very good support for school events and a good number of parents work as voluntary helpers in the school. A number of the current learning support assistants began in this way and have since become trained, qualified and employed. The Swallowdale Friends organise social and fund-raising events and their efforts make a welcome addition to the school's resources and benefit the pupils directly.
41. Parents also make a good contribution to their children's successes. Homework is supported well by most parents; they give good support to the school's standards of behaviour; almost all parents are keen to attend and discuss progress at consultation evenings, particularly where their children have special needs. The great majority of parents ensure their children come to school regularly and punctuality is now much improved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The school has very good leadership and management at all levels. As a result, the school has made very good progress in dealing with the issues of the previous inspection and is now providing a very high quality of education for its pupils. Standards are above average. There is

a very broad and rich curriculum. The school has been awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark; it has won school achievement awards in the last two years; it has been recognised with an 'Investors in People' award and is currently working towards the 'Healthy Schools' award. All of these achievements identify the school as being very effective.

Particular strengths are:

- The clear vision for the school, providing for pupils of all abilities and backgrounds and at the centre of the community;
- The very strong leadership of the head teacher;
- The very effective management team;
- The very well-organised governing body, which is now playing its full role in strategic management;
- The monitoring and evaluation of how the school works;
- The planning process for the future development of the school;
- The management and use of its money.

An area for further development is:

- To give subject leaders more time to monitor lessons to ensure consistency in all classes and year groups.

43. The school has a clear view of its role to create a caring environment in which pupils thrive. It is successfully extending this role into the wider community. There is a proper emphasis on standards and this is reflected in the good progress made in recent years.
44. All share this vision. The work on the 'Investors in People' award has helped the school to understand and communicate its goals and to create a management structure that works very effectively. The headteacher is now supported by a deputy headteacher, an assistant headteacher and by leaders for each year group. This team is enthusiastic and well-organised. Subject leadership is good; the support for pupils of all abilities or with learning and physical difficulties is very good. The school runs very smoothly, day-to-day.
45. The governing body carries out its work very well through an effective committee structure and by the appointment of individual governors to oversee key aspects of the school, such as literacy and numeracy. Governors regularly visit the school and have a good understanding of the pupils' work and the curriculum. They are well informed and consequently, the governing body makes an effective contribution to the leadership and direction of the school and the priorities that the school has set are appropriate. There is a shared and very strong commitment to move the school forward.
46. The policy for monitoring and evaluation is particularly wide in its scope. The governing body is responsible for monitoring many aspects of the work of the school. Through the committee structure, governors look at the community role, the buildings, the curriculum, analyse test results, compare themselves with other schools nationally and within the authority. They know the school's strengths and they understand where there is still room to improve. Senior staff monitor the teaching, particularly in the core subjects of English, science and mathematics. Considerable efforts have also been made to assess the progress every individual pupil makes, so that teaching and support can be structured accordingly. Subject leaders have some time to monitor lessons in their subjects, but there is still more that could be done to ensure subjects are taught consistently well across all classes and that progress is assessed in a consistent way by all teachers.

47. The school development plan is extremely comprehensive. Its particular strength is its involvement of all parties – governors, parents, staff, and community groups. The process begins by a review of the long-term vision, by the school’s strategic planning group. As the process develops, the wider ‘stakeholders’ make their contribution to the plan. The success of the previous year’s plan is reviewed across the whole school, so that new targets for development are agreed. Financial implications are considered and balanced. This approach ensures that short-term targets are always considered within the long-term context and are always therefore relevant to the school’s vision for the future. The development plan provides good detail of actions for the coming year, responsibilities, costs and resources. The management team and the governing body regularly monitor the progress and ultimate success of the plan.
48. The administration team is very effective. Daily routines are very well organised and this helps teachers and managers to do their jobs successfully. The bursar ensures that all aspects of budgetary control are carried out to a high standard. Financial planning supports the school’s priorities well and expenditure is monitored regularly. Computers and other information technology are used very well to support administration, management, teaching and learning.
49. The school makes very good use of specific funds within its budget. For example, funds for learning difficulties support ensures that pupils who learn slowly, as well as those who have particular skills are given extra support and opportunities. As a result these pupils make good and often very good progress. The funds for the running of the community centre are used very well to provide many opportunities for parents, pupils and the community to benefit. These activities bring a wide variety of people into the school. The activities enhance its reputation. All other elements of the school’s budget are fully and effectively used. The governors have a good understanding of the need to ensure ‘best value’ in all its work. The school compares its results with others in the authority and nationally; it evaluates the consequences of its plans; it seeks ways to spend more effectively; it consults with parents and wider community interests.
50. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall. Although the school has some large classes, there are sufficient skilled and experienced teachers. They are well complemented by learning support assistants who do a good job, particularly, but not only, helping pupils with learning difficulties. The accommodation is good. It benefits from a good field, two halls, one of them very spacious, and numerous smaller rooms where pupils receive individual and smaller group teaching. Recently the accommodation has been supplemented by the development of a computer suite and new library. Learning resources are adequate for the needs of the pupils and to cover the curriculum. Procedures for staff development are good and the quality of teaching and the work of learning support staff have benefited from this. The procedures for induction meet the needs of newly qualified teachers.
51. Taking into account:
- the attainment of pupils at the time they enter the school;
 - the good results they achieve by the time they leave;
 - the extent to which pupils of all abilities are included and make progress;
 - the school’s work within the community; and,
 - the overall quality of education provided,

the school gives very good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. The headteacher, governors and staff of the school should:

Improve progress and raise achievement, especially in Years 1 and 2, by:

- a. Ensuring that teachers make better use of the skills pupils acquire, especially in
 - Mathematics investigations and investigative and practical science;
 - Handwriting and presentation of work;
 - Information and communication technology.
- b. Devising tasks and activities that challenge pupils' ability to think and to organise themselves and
- c. The greater use of measurements of pupils' progress to plan for higher attainment, especially in recording the progressive development of skills and their application.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

72

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

31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	28	28	9	3	0	0
Percentage	6	39	39	13	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	419
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	41

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	99

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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	2002	30	21	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	21	23	24
	Girls	17	18	18
	Total	38	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	75 (84)	80 (85)	82 (94)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	24	19
	Girls	17	17	16
	Total	36	41	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	71 (85)	80 (93)	69 (88)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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	2002	34	39	73

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	29	30
	Girls	34	34	36
	Total	62	63	66
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (80)	86 (78)	90 (85)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	29	31
	Girls	35	36	36
	Total	63	65	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (72)	89 (71)	92 (84)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	254	1	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	128	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.9
Average class size	29.9

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	17
Total aggregate hours worked per week	349

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
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.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	942,583
Total expenditure	941,117
Expenditure per pupil	2,149
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,994
Balance carried forward to next year	11,460

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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 = 16%

Number of questionnaires sent out	419
Number of questionnaires returned	69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	32	9	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	39	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	55	4	4	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	52	9	1	3
The teaching is good.	59	38	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	42	9	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65	33	0	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	33	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	42	6	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	58	36	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	33	3	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	38	16	1	7

Other issues raised by parents:

Other than expressing their confidence in the work of the school, parents had no other issues to raise.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

53. This is a significant strength of the school. When children start school attainment on entry is a little below that expected for their age, particularly speaking and listening skills. However, they make a good start and by the end of the Foundation Stage (Reception class) most children will have reached the expected standards for all six areas of learning. A few slower learners will still be acquiring skills in literacy and numeracy. Some faster learners will already have laid the foundation for the National Curriculum and started the early programmes of study of English and mathematics within the National Curriculum. All children achieve well and the effective support provided for those children with learning difficulties ensure they achieve success so all groups make good progress. Foundation Stage provision and the quality of teaching have improved since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the Foundation Stage:

- The provision is very good and children get off to a good start;
- The range of well planned activities that ensure most children will reach expected standards;
- The very good teaching of basic skills;
- The very good relationships that help children feel secure and happy;
- The attractive and well organised classes that create a stimulating place for children to learn;
- The good knowledge and understanding that teachers have of the areas of learning;
- The very good teamwork of the teachers and their assistants that ensure a consistent approach to all they do;
- The very good quality and use of on-going measurements of progress.

Areas for further development are:

- Improving the outdoor area to make better provision for children's physical development as already planned.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. Children generally make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Although many have short concentration spans when they start school they soon learn to sit quietly when appropriate, listen to the teacher and because they find the tasks interesting they make good efforts. Some are now at the point where they concentrate well and maintain attention for considerable periods of time. The majority adapt their behaviour to different situations such as register time and purposeful play, they work successfully as part of a group or class, taking turns and sharing and relate well to one another. There are a few children who challenge the authority of the teacher and are reluctant to follow instructions but such incidents are handled well and children are learning to work together harmoniously. They know that some behaviour is right and wrong and are beginning to understand why this is so. They are learning to look after their personal needs and belongings.
55. The teaching of personal and social development is good because effective use is made of the teachers' knowledge and they plan for development as part of the range of activities provided. Teachers know their children and their families well and work closely with parents when planning work to help children become more mature and responsible. Both the teachers and assistants have a consistent approach so children know what an adult's response is likely to be.

Adults are vigilant and quickly notice if any child is the cause of unhappiness in others. Such incidents are handled well by adults and help children have a sense of what is fair. Teachers are particularly good at creating a feeling of openness so that children learn from one another and each other's family experiences. They try to strengthen the impressions that children have of their own cultures and faiths and there is a growing understanding that people have different views, cultures and beliefs that need to be treated with respect.

Communication, language and literacy.

56. Although children's speaking and listening skills were not too well developed when they started school they now readily talk to one another and most are prepared to take turns in conversation. The importance of writing for communication starts at the beginning of each day when they sign in or register their attendance by using the keyboard and computer. They use both written and spoken language in their play in the '*baby clinic*' or '*garden centre*'. Many show an awareness of the listener, for example, greeting visitors, using "*please*" and "*thank you*" and responding to registration politely. The majority are learning to read and use their knowledge of alphabet letter sounds when trying to read unfamiliar words. They show an interest in books and enjoy stories. They make good use of picture clues and some familiar words to understand a story. They know how to find the title and author. They enjoy listening to and using language.
57. The teaching of communication, language and literacy is very good. Most children are becoming familiar with the routines of literacy and numeracy sessions and will be ready to participate fully in these when they enter Year 1. The teaching of basic skills is very good. Every day teachers make time to extend children's knowledge and skills in learning letter sounds and how to blend these together to read unfamiliar words. In one session the teacher had devised her own game of '*sound buttons*' in which children identified how many sounds they heard in each word and backed this up in demonstration on the board. They were confident at '*having a go*' and most made good attempts. Progress in this aspect of literacy is very good. Teachers make very good links between literacy activities and other areas of learning. For example, in one lesson literacy work was linked to that of knowledge and understanding of the world area of learning. A visitor brought her nine-week-old baby into class and discussed with children the similarities and differences between the baby and themselves and the changes that had taken place in their bodies. This enabled children to make good progress in their speaking and listening skills but also in the scientific aspect of exploration and investigation. Teachers and their assistants make time to listen to children and talk with them. This gives opportunities for children to respond and demonstrate what they can do which raises their self-esteem. Teachers create an interesting and stimulating '*print rich*' place for children to learn. A comfortable cosy book corner encourages an interest in books and children were role-playing at mother and reading to a doll in the '*baby clinic*'.

Mathematical development

58. Most children are now at the stage where their counting is more reliable and they count backwards and forwards from any starting point. Children recognise and read numerals, know the days of the week, recognise and name two- and three-dimensional shapes. They talk about and recognise patterns in the environment of the school. For example, when asked to be pattern detectives they use a clipboard to record what they see and explain to others "*there were pyramid shapes on the roof*" and that they see rectangles and squares in a pattern on a jacket. Children are extending their use of mathematical words, for example, when expressing wonder at the patterns on shells and learning words such as *spiral* to explain what they see. Some children have a good knowledge of shape and effectively use three-dimensional shapes to make a three-part pattern.

59. The teaching of the mathematical area of learning is very good. Teachers have a good knowledge of this area and use their skills very effectively to support learning, which enables children to make at least good progress and sometimes it is very good. The basic skills are taught very well and there is a focus on achievement through practical activities and on using and understanding language in the development of simple, mathematical ideas. The teaching is effective because there are clear explanations, effective questioning and practical investigations. All adults work well as a team and they sensitively support, reinforce and extend children's responses. The support assistants are well briefed and during lessons make notes about children's progress, which are then used by the teachers to change lesson planning the next day or meet specific needs of individual children. This gives children confidence when they achieve success. Observations of what children know, understand and do are a regular part of the Reception class day.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

60. Children have many opportunities to develop knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They learn about other people and features of the natural and man-made world. They readily talk about where they live and about their families. They find out about past and present events in their own lives and those of their families and through activities such as dressing up and acting out. They build and construct successfully with a good range of materials such as wooden bricks and blocks. They shape dough and join materials like paper and textiles to make models or cards such as those celebrating Mothering Sunday. They know how to use the computer mouse to control icons on the screen and are becoming more familiar with the keyboard to type their name or write a simple sentence. In the ICT aspects of work children are doing particularly well and standards are higher than is expected for their age. They used tools to draw night time pictures on the screen then wrote about it as in "*I lk lkig at the sts*" (I like looking at the stars) and now know how to use a website to find out about spring and summer. Some children have computers at home and access the websites for information, which they bring back to school. They are becoming very skilled at using ICT to support so much of their work and the use of the new computer suite has been instrumental in this. Children talk about events and beliefs in their own culture such as Christmas, Easter and harvest and are familiar with some from other cultures such as Divali.
61. The teaching of this area of learning is good overall and sometimes very good. Teachers have high expectations of what children can achieve and use their knowledge and understanding effectively when working with small groups. Teaching assistants understand what they have to do and in addition there is often support from parent helpers. This means that most small groups have an adult working with them. Skills are used very effectively to support learning, keep children interested, encourage, praise and extend vocabulary. When there are additional adults teachers plan activities to visit places of interest. For example, on a visit to a garden centre children looked at a wide variety of plants, learned that some start life in a warm tunnel and found out how to plant seeds. They planted seeds and learned that they needed both water and a light place to grow. They drew pictures of pots and compared shape and size. They recorded the event in pictures and made attempts to write while faster learners used the computer to record their visit. There is always a focus on safety so that children learn to handle equipment with care. Teachers are very aware that not all work at the same pace and tasks are modified or extended, as need demands. In this way the slower learners achieve success but faster learners get more work done than others.

Physical development

62. Every day children use a range of small equipment. They handle tools, objects, construction and malleable materials safely and with increasing control. They cut, stick, make models, use

writing tools, construct with small bricks and in so doing children extend their co-ordination and control. The small hall is used effectively to extend children's skills in dance. They move around confidently without bumping into one another, follow the teacher's directions and use their imagination to move to the sound of percussion as an introduction to a simple dance. They express wonder at the sound of the rainmaker instruments and this stimulates movement as raindrops. They are becoming more co-ordinated and practise skills to improve. There is no specially designated outdoor area for this age group as recommended in the Foundation Stage curriculum and since the hall is small and without climbing apparatus the facilities needed are not met fully. However, this need has already been identified and planned for in the school's own development plan.

63. The teaching of physical development is good. Teachers plan carefully for this area of learning. They include all aspects, although there are fewer activities for gymnastics outdoors. Self-expression through physical activity is encouraged. The very good relationships that exist between teachers and children result in their good efforts. Children trust teachers and are eager to try new tasks. There is considerable encouragement and praise for effort. There is often great concentration as children painstakingly put adhesive on small areas of paper or gain greater control of pencils to improve their writing.

Creative development

64. Overall, children are involved in purposeful play that enables them to explore materials and media, take part in music, use their imagination effectively and respond to experiences and communicate ideas. Children paint, draw, make patterns, use play dough and clay to model and create, make and experiment with musical instruments, sing and play percussion instruments. They like to choose from a range of resources such as colour of paint, size of brush or whether to put sequins on a card decoration. They explore colour and texture as they paint a picture of the baby who visited the class or when working out a sequence for a butterfly pattern. They take pleasure in making plants for the garden centre from a range of resources and use their imagination in role-play, stories and art and design.
65. The teaching of this area of learning is good. Planning builds carefully on previous work and teachers use their knowledge effectively to provide clear explanations of tasks. Teachers move from group to group talking about tasks and moving them on to the next stage. The deployment of assistants was particularly good and learning would not have progressed as well without such support. Children were never left to their own devices but there was always a concern for them to extend skills and knowledge. For example, a new activity of *'the clothes shop'* was introduced for role-play and extending imagination and to build on mathematical experiences introduced with the garden centre. Children were required to tidy clothes, sort money, serve customers, put clothes in size order, take orders on the telephone, make lists of what new clothes were needed and who had to be telephoned. This was a very challenging activity but with adult support children used their imagination well in role-play and extended literacy and numeracy skills. Teaching skills and methods are well developed, particularly listening carefully to children, developing conversation, asking questions that probe their understanding and increase their powers of expression.

ENGLISH

66. At the end of Year 2, standards in reading and writing are average; in speaking and listening they are above average. At the end of Year 6, standards in all the aspects of English are above average. Given their attainment on entry to school, pupils achieve very well at age eleven. Progress is sound in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6 where pupils' rate of learning

accelerates because of the higher expectations of teachers in terms of standards and work rate. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection in Years 3 to 6 as attainment at Year 6 is higher, especially in reading. Provision for pupils who need more help with their learning and for those who learn at a faster rate is very good. The slower learners receive very effective support from classroom assistants who sometimes withdraw pupils for work in small groups specific to their needs and at other times support them in class alongside other pupils. Pupils who are gifted and talented are given many opportunities to work with others of a similar ability and they are encouraged to show initiative and work independently on demanding tasks.

Strengths in the subjects are:

- The many opportunities provided to develop good speaking and listening skills;
- The systematic teaching of reading;
- The wide range of writing for different purposes and audiences;
- The rigorous teaching with high expectations in Years 3 to 6;
- The very effective use of literacy skills in other subjects.

Areas for development are:

- The improvement of handwriting in Years 1 and 2;
- An improvement in the consistency in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2.

67. Attainment is above average in speaking and listening at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is because there are many opportunities for pupils to work together on projects to encourage discussion; they read aloud in class, take part in role-play and drama sessions and engage in question and answer sessions with staff. In Years 1 and 2 pupils play at being travel agents, retell traditional stories and are encouraged to listen carefully and attentively to teachers and the views of their classmates. In Years 3 to 6, pupils often work in pairs as they make suggestions about how to improve a piece of writing or follow instructions from one another. The level of debate in Year 6 is high. Pupils show empathy with characters in books or from the past and the contributions they make to discussions are mature and thoughtful as seen in lessons about persuasive writing and balanced arguments.
68. Attainment in reading is average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught to decipher unfamiliar words by using their knowledge of sounds and by using the illustrations and context of the book they are reading. They are enthusiastic about reading and are motivated well. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 develop good fluency and expression and they use punctuation accurately to give meaning to the text. They are knowledgeable about a wide range of authors and their good reading skills help them to understand the meaning of pieces of writing beyond the literal translation. They skim and scan non-fiction writing to extract relevant information for their project work and successfully use the school's library and the Internet to carry out research.
69. Attainment in writing is average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to express themselves in simple sentences sometimes using capitals and full stops. Their printing is an area for development as letters are often incorrectly formed and uneven in size resulting in untidy and sometimes illegible work. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to improve printing through a more systematic approach to teaching handwriting. By the end of Year 6, pupils write in a neat, fluent, cursive style using appropriate punctuation. There are many opportunities for pupils to write for a wide variety of purposes and audiences as they produce interesting newspaper reports, well-developed and descriptive stories from their own imaginations, sensitive poetry, clear instructions and well-organised reports of events. They use ICT skills effectively to enhance the presentation of their work often illustrating project books

with computer-generated charts, graphs, art and word-processing. Spelling skills develop well as Years 1 and 2 learn words in common use and Years 3 to 6 use dictionaries and their knowledge of spelling patterns.

70. Teaching is good overall. It is sound in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 6. There was one lesson in Year 1 where teaching was unsatisfactory. The inconsistency in the quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 needs to be addressed. Excellent teaching was seen in Years 3, 5 and 6. Planning of lessons is thorough and activities are organised well. Teachers make good provision for pupils of differing abilities and classroom support assistants make a valuable contribution to the very good progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations and they are determined to ensure pupils work hard and fast. Activities are planned with rigour and teachers are clear about what pupils need to learn and the standards they need to reach to achieve success in the National Curriculum. Marking and homework are used very effectively to guide pupils towards their targets. Literacy skills are taught systematically so that pupils build on previous work and their learning is secure as seen in Year 5 where the taking of notes was being developed and Year 3 where standards in handwriting were targeted. Introductions to tasks are interesting and motivating as seen in a Year 6 lesson on balanced arguments where pupils first acted out scenarios in the school's hall before their classroom work. Reinforcing the learning at the end of lessons helps teachers to assess what pupils can do and pupils to appreciate what they have gained from the activities. In the lesson where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher did not give pupils the opportunity to make their own contributions to learning and the resources were inappropriate. Opportunities were missed to correct work such as the sequencing of the story in pictures. Staff go to great lengths to ensure all pupils have access to all aspects of English and an example was seen of the use of technology to magnify text for a child who has difficulty reading normal print.
71. Literacy skills are developed very effectively in other subjects and contribute to the high standards achieved as pupils use their good reading and writing skills to produce attractive individual and class project booklets. Pupils write, and act, from the point of view of a Viking raider, a monk under attack, an explorer meeting an Aztec ruler or an observer of the Great Fire of London. They use their computer skills to present information in various ways and their art to illustrate pieces of writing. Speaking and listening skills improve as pupils engage in debates in religious education and history lessons. Their ability to access and organise information quickly from many sources helps them to reach good standards in subjects such as geography and history.
72. Co-ordination of the subject is shared between two knowledgeable, dynamic, focussed and determined leaders who are making every effort to improve standards even further through an action plan that identifies what needs to be done to develop the teaching and learning in English.

MATHEMATICS

73. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and above average at the end of Year 6. All pupils make good progress during Years 3 to 6 due to the very good teaching that they are receiving. This is good improvement for older pupils as standards have risen since the previous inspection. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make satisfactory progress and have maintained standards. There has also been improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, when a few lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. The school was criticised for its out of date policy and scheme of work that was in need of reviewing because insufficient attention was given to progression in the learning of skills. These have been addressed by the recent policy and through the implementation of National Numeracy Strategy. Mathematics makes a suitable contribution to pupils' learning in other subjects, especially in science and geography.

Strengths in the subject:

In Years 1 and 2

- Pupils' interest;
- Good use learning support staff;
- Relationships within the classes.

In Years 3 to 6

- Standards at the end of Year 6;
- The quality of teaching;
- Teachers' knowledge and interest;
- Planning based on prior attainment;
- Well organised and paced lessons;
- Effective use of questioning and the plenary at the end of each lesson;
- Very good use of learning support staff;
- Work well matched to the needs of all pupils;
- Pupils' enjoyment, interest and sustained concentration.

Areas for development are:

In Years 1 and 2

- The raising standards of attainment so more pupils attain the higher than expected level for their age;
- Improving the presentation and standard of written recording;
- Pupils' abilities in applying and using their mathematical knowledge;
- Furthering their understanding of shape.

In Years 3 to 6

- More opportunity for pupils to apply and use their mathematical knowledge.

Throughout the school

- The more frequent use of ICT;
- Consistency in marking.

74. The teachers, particularly of pupils in Years 3 to 6, are very good at encouraging them to think for themselves. The pupils are expected not only to explain in some detail their strategies for solving problems but also why they used that method. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher asked the pupils to put their thinking into words when cracking an algebraic code. Tables were written using letters rather than numbers, for example, $w \times v = tv$. Pupils solved the problem effectively by recognising features of each table including square numbers ($b \times b = h$ becomes $3 \times 3 = 9$) and number patterns in the products. The ability pupils gain from being required to think, enables them to apply readily the knowledge that they have to new problems. However, in Years 1 and 2 more emphasis needs to be given to pupils acquiring these skills and developing a better understanding of problem solving.
75. The quality of teaching overall is good with very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory teaching in Years 1 and 2. Where the teaching is very good lessons are well planned and build on previous learning. Work is very well matched to the needs of all pupils' and provides good challenge for the higher attaining pupils. The pupils enjoy the quick fire mental questions at the beginning of each session and the brisk pace of each lesson helps to motivate the pupils to achieve. Teachers use questioning effectively to extend and reinforce pupils' knowledge. For example, in lessons in Year 4 teachers' questioning helped to reinforce and extend pupils' knowledge of fractions and their connection with decimals. Then, pupils recorded their answers relating tenths to decimals accurately. Very good relationships give pupils the confidence to explain how they found their answers and to say when they do not understand. For example, a

pupil was heard telling their teacher that they did not understand something and the teacher gave more help. At the end of each lesson the plenary is used effectively to either recap or provide an extension to the learning. Support staff are used well across the school and this has a positive effect on the learning of pupils' with learning difficulties. Booster classes in Year 6 provide additional support for these pupils. Good use is made of ICT as a teaching resource in lessons in the computer suite but there is limited evidence of pupils using the computer on a regular basis to support their mathematics. This is an area for further development.

76. Where lessons are satisfactory a lack of balance between listening and doing leads to a lack of pace. There is less emphasis on applying and using mathematical skills to solve problems. This is an area for development, particularly for pupils in Years 1 and 2. Work scrutiny reveals poor presentation, limited written recording and little information about shape. These are all areas for further development.
77. Since the previous inspection the national numeracy strategy has been implemented and this has given teachers greater understanding and guidance about the progression of relevant skills.
78. All pupils, but particularly those in Years 3 to 6, are well motivated to achieve because teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, providing a range of experiences for them to enjoy. They respond with interest to the teachers' questions and listen carefully. As relationships are very good pupils are confident to share how they arrived at their answers. Since work is usually very well matched to pupils' needs the majority remain focused on their tasks and concentrate. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work together and collaborate, sharing ideas and resources.
79. There are two leaders for the subject. The Year 1 and 2 subject leader is recently appointed to the role and has limited opportunity to look at plans or observe lessons. The Year 3 to 6 leader has developed the role and has played a large part in ensuring the numeracy strategy was firmly embedded as the school's maths provision. Strong cross-curricular links are found in geography, science and technology.

SCIENCE

80. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is in line with the national average and achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 6 standards are above average and pupils achieve well. Similar progress is made by pupils with learning difficulties because good provision is made throughout the school to ensure that plans and teaching methods are adapted to suit all pupils. The quality of teaching is good overall. The improvement the school has made since the previous inspection is good because work it has undertaken to improve the way older pupils carry out investigations has been successful.

Strengths in the subject are:

- teachers plan very practical activities and enable pupils sufficient time to develop their investigative skills well;
- there are very good links made to other subjects;
- teachers have good questioning skills and ask probing questions to assess pupils' understanding;
- Teachers in Years 3 to 6 mark pupils' work very thoroughly and write useful comments.

Areas for development are:

- To improve the opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to develop investigative skills;

- To develop a systematic and comprehensive approach to assessing and recording pupils' investigative work.
81. A scrutiny of work indicates that pupils cover the full range of statutory requirements, studying living things, materials and physical processes. In Years 3 to 6 pupils are systematically taught the necessary enquiry skills. Consequently, they know how to pose questions that can be investigated, choose suitable equipment and check the accuracy of results by repeating them. The volume and quality of work completed by pupils in Years 5 and 6 is impressive. Younger pupils are highly motivated when engaged in practical work. During the inspection pupils in Year 1 explored which circumstances impeded good listening. They worked eagerly in small groups, covering their ears with a variety of hats and earmuffs. They experimented with cones as ear trumpets and described how these affected their hearing. The relevance of these issues to road safety concluded a good lesson.
 82. The quality of teachers' planning, particularly in Years 3 to 6 is very good. Teachers make sensible links between different subjects so that pupils build real expertise in a topic. Thus, during an extended river study, pupils used a range of scientific, geographical and mathematical skills and achieved interesting outcomes. In this example, when looking at how plants are suited to different habitats, pupils worked enthusiastically making excellent observational drawings before preparing their hypothesis. Pupils were fascinated when using a digital microscope to look at cross sections of plants. In Year 3, useful links were made by pupils investigating the strength of rocks during a general study of the Greeks and Egyptians.
 83. The quality of teachers' questioning is good throughout the school. Thoughtful questioning in Year 4 enabled teachers to judge how much pupils remembered about a topic and also to move from the general vocabulary of bulb and electricity to the specific idea of switches being used to break a circuit. Good teaching and practical tasks made it possible for pupils to gain real understanding about the nature of an electrical circuit using scientific vocabulary such as current and terminal. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their practical work. Marking in Years 3 to 6 is good because teachers write well focused comments, enabling pupils to clarify their thinking. Where marking is less well used, it does not indicate how pupils might re-consider their results or encourage them to think more deeply about outcomes.
 84. Inconsistencies in teaching occur at Years 1 and 2 because there is sometimes an over reliance on teaching pupils facts without providing sufficient opportunities to develop their enquiry skills. Whilst pupils in Year 2 make predictions and consider fair testing, they have little understanding of how to use a scientific method. Systems to assess and record pupils' development in gaining enquiry skills are not yet in place. The new but very effective subject leader is making a positive contribution to improving standards. Her high level of expertise supports colleagues well. The organisation and purchase of high quality resources is one of the many improvements made recently. ICT makes a significant contribution to learning in science, in the collection and interpretation of data and in using technology to sense and monitor external events.

ART AND DESIGN

85. Standards in art and design are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. All pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection particularly in Years 3 to 6. As no teaching was observed except in a Year 2 lesson no judgements are made as whether or not teaching has improved. There are good examples of ICT being used to support learning in art and design.

Areas of strength are:

- The range of cross curricular links especially with history;
- The variety of experiences afforded to pupils to experiment with different media;
- Opportunities to paint in the style of famous artists, such as Monet.

Areas for development are:

- Three-dimensional art work;
 - Use of textiles.
86. There were no lessons timetabled during the inspection period, except in Year 2 so no judgement could be made from observations of the quality of teaching. However, from the work displayed teaching is at least satisfactory as pupils are provided with a range of media in which to express themselves. In Years 1 and 2 pupils experiment with colour mixing, wax resist painting, using natural materials for collage, clay and paper folding. Examples of rainbow pictures show good use of a colour shading exercise. Links are made with literacy when pupils study a ‘*big book*’ about Henry Moore. Similar links are made with history when bonfire pictures were drawn.
87. As pupils move through the school, so skills are developed as they use additional media for their artwork. For example, pupils in Year 4 used a camera to take photographs of scenes for different viewpoints exploring the idea of perspective. Pupils in Year 6 used a computer program – ‘*Fresco*’ - to produce some very attractive landscapes. From Years 4 to 6 pupils investigate the styles of different artists. Year 4 looked at Chagal and drew sketches of ‘*A Dream*’ where everything was unreal. Some very good painting in the style of the Monet, Matisse and Van Gogh displayed around the school. However there is insufficient evidence of three-dimensional work or the opportunities to use textiles. These are areas for further development.
88. Sketchbooks are used across the school and provide a record of how each pupil’s skills are developing and the progress made. Evidence from these shows pencil drawings where pupils explore the use of shading, using different types of pencil and still life.
89. Pupils have the opportunity to visit art galleries. For example, Year 5 visited the Royal Academy’s Aztec Exhibition and sketched a variety of artefacts. Recently a sculptor organised a workshop for Year 2. These visits and visitors enhance the pupils’ understanding and appreciation of art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils make satisfactory progress and their achievement is satisfactory. This is the case for pupils with learning difficulties and for those with particular gifts and talents. Too few lessons were seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching. One lesson seen in the computer suite was excellent. Other lessons had good features. Discussions with pupils and the work seen show that learning is at least satisfactory. Standards in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject:

- Pupils’ knowledge of a design and make process;
- The use of a visiting teacher.

Areas for development:

- The consistent use of sketch books for designing and planning;
- The role of the subject manager.

91. Discussion with pupils reveals that they understand that an article has to be designed before it is made. Their understanding of this process is clearer in the older year groups of the school than in the younger year groups. For example, pupils in Year 2 are quick to talk about things they have made, but less spontaneous about the preparation before the making stage. The design stage is much clearer in some past work of Year 5 pupils. These pupils have clearly worked in groups and teams discussing a design proposal (a moving toy using a cam mechanism) identifying a range of strategies for making, the materials required and tools to be used. After making it is also clear that some evaluation has taken place, although this is largely a teacher directed and consisting of a tick list for pupils to complete. Good preparatory teamwork was seen in Year 3 where teachers expected pupils to work together identifying tasks that needed to be done, materials to be used and different components planned for. Some pupils found the concept of teamwork difficult but most worked together effectively and willingly. Pupils in Year 6 were eager to discuss the process they had gone through in designing and making slippers. They examined a range of slippers, identifying good features that they could use but also working out that some real life processes they could not use. They made good sketches for their own designs, carefully identifying how the product would be fit for its purpose, what materials would be used and how the end product would be finished off. Finished products were available in the sample of work seen. The skills evident were typical of pupils of this age. Many pupils particularly enjoyed the finishing-off process, using creativity for a quality finish as well as fit for purpose within the article overall.
92. An excellent lesson was seen with Year 6 pupils and a visiting teacher from a local high school. The teacher's use of his subject knowledge enthralled the pupils. The topic was 'shelters' following a link with geography. The teacher's demonstrations on the data projector drew gasps of amazement from the pupils, as he assembled, manipulated and added different qualities of finish to his design. Although a large number of pupils were crammed into the computer suite, their behaviour was very good as they focused acutely on what they had to do. By the time the lesson was over, they had made very good progress in acquiring a new range of ICT skills supporting their design and technology capability. They used the CAD (computer aided design) facility to create a shelter according to their design proposal and used the program to add a finish of their choice. This was a very good piece of experience for the pupils, raising their understanding of the potential of computers when used to aid the design process and also raising pupils' expectations of the work they are likely to do when they move on to the next stage of their education.
93. Sketchbooks are available for teachers' and pupils' use across the school. They are more commonly used for art and design than for design and technology. In some year groups, while it is possible to track what pupils have made, it is not so easy to track the designing process that is vital in this subject area. In some year groups, the design process is collaborative. In other year groups, sketchbooks are sometimes used. Sometimes there is no record of the process pupils have gone through. It is important that pupils are increasingly clear about the processes of planning, designing, refining, identification of tools and materials before they go on to make. There is also an important stage of evaluation that is not always recorded. The school misses some opportunities for assessing the progress pupils make.
94. The subject leader has a broad understanding of the standards pupils attain. She sees medium term plans and checks them to ensure that the necessary resources are available. She has an action plan for the subject and has plans for her own personal development through in service training. Discussions with pupils reveal that they use a relatively limited range of materials and tools. For example, Year 6 pupils were unable to discuss the use of any of the more resistive materials except for some limited experience using wood. They have no knowledge of cutting and shaping construction plastics, for example. They were very hesitant about discussing how structures could be strengthened and stabilised using cross members and triangular corners.

The subject leader needs more time to check what skills pupils are developing and how good the range of tools and materials is for them to use. Although there have been some opportunities to see colleagues at work, this practice is a continuing need to ensure development of the work in the subject area.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

95. In both geography and history, by the end of Year 2, standards are typical of those found in other schools. At the end of Year 6, standards are above those typically found in other schools. Progress is sound in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. This is because teachers are skilled at motivating pupils through interesting activities. The very good link made between a wide range of subjects reinforces learning in geography and history. As a result, pupils develop a good range of appropriate skills. Since the previous inspection, standards have improved in Years 3 to 6 in history. No judgement was made on standards in geography in the previous inspection report. The weakness identified in the role of the co-ordination of both subjects has been successfully addressed.

Strengths in these subjects are:

- A rich curriculum that makes very effective use of the school environment, the locality and a wide range of visits out of school and visitors into school;
 - The links made between a variety of subjects that help pupils reinforce their knowledge and understanding of geography and history;
 - Pupils' knowledge of environmental issues in geography;
 - Pupils' ability to interpret historical evidence and evaluate the impact of significant events;
 - Good teaching in Years 3 to 6.
- As there are no significant weaknesses in geography and history, no areas for development are identified.
96. Every opportunity is taken to use local amenities so that work is practical, interesting and relevant. Pupils visit museums and historical houses to take part in role-play, they attend exhibitions and enjoy performances in school of, for example, Greek theatre. Year 6 carry out a study of a local river to high standards as they investigate water flow, pollution, its influence on the landscape and farming methods through the use of sophisticated technical equipment using the eco laboratory at a nearby technical school. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make simple maps to plot their journey from home to school and older pupils study their hometown. Years 5 and 6 have opportunities to attend residential courses that include orienteering.
97. Very effective use is made of a range of subjects, especially literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, to enhance geographical and historical projects and the good standards achieved in these basic skills make a significant contribution to the good standards in geography and history at age eleven. Pupils can write from the perspective of historical figures as they keep diaries like Samuel Pepys or pretend to be a reporter describing the plight of Victorian chimney sweeps. They produce project books of life in an Indian village illustrated by drawings, computer generated graphs and digital photographs. Their good reading skills help them when researching topics such as the Aztecs as they make notes of relevant information to use for further work on life in times past. They often use their word-processing knowledge when writing. Art and music help them to appreciate the culture of the society they are studying and provide a broader perspective of, for example, the life of a Viking. Science activities enhanced the work of the river study.
98. In geography, pupils develop a particularly good awareness of environmental issues. Year 6 pupils can debate an imaginary scenario such as selling the school's playing field for new

housing in a balanced, coherent way that shows they can see all sides of the dilemma. They can discuss the industrial revolution in terms of its effect on people's lives and its impact on the landscape. They argue the case for recycling with passion and are well aware of their responsibilities for stewardship of the environment as shown by their responses to an imaginary newspaper article about banning cars from city centres.

99. Pupils' good literacy skills help them to 'read between the lines' when examining historical documents and they are very aware of bias in writing. They discuss the effect of Henry VIII's divorce of his first wife and know it changed the religious nature of the country. In Year 4, pupils were seen explaining the reasons for the Vikings raiding monasteries and their writing showed empathy with people in the past. Year 6 can explain the events surrounding the Second World War and its impact on the present. This ability to analyse and evaluate written reports is helping them to form their own opinions of current events such as the war in Iraq.
100. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching in geography and history in Years 1 and 2 as too few lessons were seen. Teaching is very good overall, in history in Years 3 to 6 and in geography, the teaching in the one lesson seen in Year 6 was also very good. The strengths of the teaching are careful structuring of work so that new learning builds on previous work. Homework is used effectively; to prepare pupils for the next day's lessons; carry out personal research or follow up classwork. Teachers do their best to make activities interesting and stimulating and this motivates pupils to produce high quality work. The pace of lessons is brisk and business-like, with timed tasks, and pupils work hard. High expectations are a strong feature of the best teaching and work is geared to the needs of a wide range of abilities. Slower learners are supported by effective classroom support assistants and carefully structured tasks, while higher achievers are given more demanding work and are expected to show initiative and be more independent. Teachers are especially good at providing for the needs of individuals and a lot of effort goes into ensuring that all pupils have access to all aspects of the curriculum.
101. There was one geography lesson, in a Year 1 class, where teaching was unsatisfactory. Although the tasks were appropriate for the age of the pupils, insufficient attention was paid to the specific geography skills to be developed and plans were unclear about what pupils were required to learn. Expectations were too low and pupils became bored and restless.
102. The subject leaders for geography and history are both new to their roles and they have not yet had time to make a significant impact. They have, however, already carried out an audit of resources, examined teachers' plans and prepared action plans for the development of the subjects. They are keen and active.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

103. Attainment is average at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Pupils achieve well overall, making good progress as they acquire a broad range of skills using a computer. Progress is good for pupils at all levels of attainment, both those who find learning difficult and who are slower learners, and, also, those who find learning rather easier and are quicker finishers. Teaching is good overall, although the lessons seen ranged from excellent to satisfactory. Attainment and provision in ICT was a key issue of the previous inspection. This key issue has been well addressed, although the school is aware that there is further developmental work to do.

Strengths in the subject are:

- The good teaching and learning;
- Very good use of the computer suite;

- The range of ICT opportunities available to pupils;
- The enthusiasm of the subject leader;
- Pupils' interest in lessons and their appreciation of their quality.

Areas for development are:

- The further use of ICT as a support and tool for learning across the curriculum;
 - The full use of all the potential of available ICT resources.
104. Teaching and learning is good overall. Since the previous inspection, teachers have benefited from a good deal of training. This has given them confidence to tackle lessons on computers with interest and enthusiasm. These qualities have rubbed off on pupils and they are equally enthusiastic. Teachers' knowledge is well used to take brisk and informative lessons in the computer suite. Because they have good subject knowledge, teachers lead and organise pupils well. Despite the difficulties sometimes caused by the typist's chairs (too high for the legs of some pupils and too close together) pupils are well managed and behave well. Teachers use the data projector and the master console well to demonstrate and keep an eye on what pupils are doing. Pupils get the right messages and respond quickly on their own keyboards. They get plenty of time to practise and consolidate new skills. Teachers are very clear about learning objectives and discuss these with pupils so that they know what they are expected to learn.
 105. The school is proud of its computer suite and it is right to feel this way. It is short on space for a full class but it is possible to take full class dedicated ICT lessons, even with the very large classes in some year groups. Lessons are good because teachers are skilled and pupils are enthusiastic. Many lessons are timetabled into the suite. Some of these are to extend pupils' basic ICT skills. Others are to confirm and extend learning in other subjects. For example, during the inspection, literacy and design and technology lessons were seen. All these lessons were at least good and were frequently better than that. The school provides a good range of experience across the programme of study in ICT. Pupils get good opportunities to learn word-processing, graphics, the use of spreadsheets to collect, present and interpret data. They use computers to research, both on CD-ROMs and through the Internet. Opportunities are provided to monitor and control external events and to program a series of instructions to make a planned event happen. To this should be added an element of use of the suite by the community that helps make the considerable investment in machinery worthwhile.
 106. The subject leader is new to the role. She has made an enthusiastic start to her responsibilities, picking up the reins of a very competent and knowledgeable predecessor. The policy is up to date and the scheme of work is clear. It builds well for the continuous progression of skills and the range of experience necessary. The subject leader is collecting together a portfolio of pupils' work on disc, a sensible medium for this subject. The portfolio is not yet complete or levelled against the expectations of the National Curriculum but a good start has been made. With her enthusiasm and understanding of the requirements of the subject and the needs of the pupils, the school is well placed to make further improvements.
 107. Pupils are very interested in lessons. They appreciate the learning opportunities offered to them. The opportunities are taken with great enthusiasm. This was the case in a Year 1 lesson that drew to a close with sighs of disappointment from the pupils. They were very engrossed and did not want the lesson to end. The teacher was right to take this response from the pupils as a mark of successful teaching and learning. The lesson with the visiting teacher was met with similar enthusiasm. All the adults present at that lesson were impressed by the pupils' gasps of amazement as he demonstrated the different tricks of the computer aided design program. Again, in a lesson with Year 4, pupils thoroughly enjoyed programming steps into the computer to make the logo bee draw a wide range of different patterns as pupils experimented with different distances and angles. Year 6 pupils explained with relish how they had used light

sensors to switch on and off the roundabouts made using their science and design and technology skills. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm contribute a great deal to the quality of their learning.

108. The school makes sure that pupils understand how computers can be useful across a wide range of everyday applications. Much of the work the pupils do is in the suite in dedicated ICT lessons. Very little incidental use of ICT was seen during the inspection. For example, it was rare that one or two pupils could be allowed to work on the class computer to support their learning. This is sometimes because the computers in the suite and their programs are very up to date. Many classroom computers are elderly and some of the available programs are not compatible. It is clear that computers are being used to present pupils' work and good examples of this were seen displayed around the school, for example, some very fine computer generated landscapes using '*Fresco*' and newspapers using '*Publisher*'. However, given pupils' existing skills and the confidence many teachers show in using computers, more can be made of pupils' ICT capability.
109. Occasionally, the hardware available to the school is not used to its full extent. For example, one lesson made good use of the data projector to ensure that all pupils had a very good view of the program facilities being demonstrated. The teacher could sit comfortably with the laptop computer on her knee behind the pupils so as to keep an eye on them and see the effect on the screen at the same time. The outcomes of this lesson were very successful and pupils were able to contribute a great deal to the demonstration. The lesson with the other class in the same year group did not make use of the data projector. Instead, the whole class sat around one computer. It was difficult for the teacher to position herself well enough to watch the pupils, enter data on the keyboard and see the screen effect. Few pupils could get a good view of what was being demonstrated. This led to some restlessness that needed to be controlled and this took up some lesson time. Pupils got much less out of this lesson.

MUSIC

110. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. All pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. Pupils with learning difficulties make the progress expected, given their prior attainment. However those who play instruments often make very good progress, reading standard notation and playing with confidence and skill. Standards and progress have been maintained since the previous inspection.

Strengths in the subject are:

- Teachers' enthusiasm and confidence;
- Very good relationships;
- The variety of practical experiences offered to the pupils;
- Opportunities and range of instrumental tuition.

Areas for development:

- Listening to non-western music;
 - Consistency in allowing pupils to appraise each others' work;
 - The use of ICT.
111. There was limited opportunity to observe music lessons in Years 1 and 2 so it is not possible to judge the quality of teaching but in Years 3 to 6 the quality of teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and confident. They provide the pupils with a range of practical activities to

develop the relevant musical skills. These motivate the pupils to succeed with their compositions. Very good relationships encourage and give confidence to pupils to perform their efforts for their peers. Lessons are well planned and although the scheme of work uses taped material teachers adapt and add to these to meet the needs of their pupils. For example, Year 6 pupils, having listened to a tape, then learn a Jewish song to develop the idea of increasing and decreasing tempo. The appropriate vocabulary is taught: *accelerando* and *ritardando*. There are often links to other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 5 pupils studying “*sounds around*” in science used various types of paper to produce a “*composition*” based on a “*sound card*”. This is a small card with various symbols that pupils interpret. The end result was very effective, especially as each group had different ideas of what the symbols meant. The theme of Year 4 pupils, a Viking journey, was closely linked to their history topic. Although some pupils are encouraged to appraise each other’s work, opportunities are not consistently provided across the school. This is an area for further development. Pupils listen to music on many occasions especially entering or leaving the hall for assembly. However opportunities are sometimes missed to talk about the music playing or for pupils to experience non-western music. There is limited evidence of the use of ICT. Where evidence does exist, pupils have good experiences. Areas for further development are the use of ICT and listening to non-western.

112. A wide range of instrumental tuition is available for the pupils: strings, woodwind, brass, guitars and recorder. Although the subject leader is currently absent from school, other very able musicians provide the support for extra-curricular activities and whole-school singing. The orchestra of competent players performs for assembly and often accompanies the singing. Each year pupils perform in school productions and the choir sings in the community. All these opportunities enhance the pupils’ musical experiences.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

113. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average overall. Some aspects of attainment, for example in swimming and in the application and understanding of rules in team games, are above average. Pupils make good progress in lessons in Years 1 and 2 and achieve very well in Years 3 to 6 especially in games and swimming lessons. Pupils with learning difficulties make similar progress because teachers ensure that there are appropriate activities for all pupils. Boys and girls have very good opportunities for participating in a range of sports and out of school activities. The quality of teaching is very good overall and is enhanced by the work of specialist coaches. The improvement since the previous inspection is good because the quality of teaching has improved and because pupils now achieve more in lessons.

Strengths in this subject are:

- Pupils enjoy their lessons and are very enthusiastic about a range of games activities;
- Teaching is good and the school is very well supported by coaches whose specialist knowledge has a positive effect on pupils’ performance in rugby and swimming;
- Pupils develop very good social skills during their PE lessons and activities.

An area for development is:

- To ensure that skills in dance and gymnastics are taught and assessed progressively in each year group.
114. Many games lessons were available for inspection during the week and Year 3 pupils were seen swimming at the local pool. Two gymnastics and dance lessons were observed. The very good range of sporting activities which take place out of class throughout the year encourage greater

participation by all pupils and the take up is excellent. Activities include short tennis, cricket, basketball, athletics, netball, football, rugby and cross-country. This rich choice is made available by the efforts of staff, coaches and parents. Very good use is made of local coaches to help set appropriate standards in a sport and give pupils opportunities to learn from professional players. These activities make a very good contribution to standards in physical education and a significant contribution to pupils' moral, social, and cultural development. The school Tag rugby team have been county champions for four years and have been unbeaten in every game.

115. Teaching is good overall although it is stronger in Years 3 to 6. Staff are competent across all areas of activity with a particular emphasis on developing co-operation amongst pupils. In Year 2, pupils improved their skills when throwing and catching a ball and aiming it accurately. When playing a game, pupils were taught how to cope with the disappointment of losing and the teacher gave clear and supportive advice before moving sensibly on. In the best lessons the teachers' subject knowledge is very good. Teachers and coaches have the expertise to demonstrate, challenge and give detailed feedback about specific aspects of the skills that pupils are trying to develop. The leadership and management of the subject are very good and the outstanding commitment shown by the subject leader is demonstrated in the pupils' enthusiasm for sports activities and their understanding of being a 'good sport'.
116. In the best lessons pupils listen well and improve rapidly because they know what it is they have to do. All teachers are very positive in the praise and encouragement they give to pupils, and as a result they work very hard. In two very good football lessons, the teacher urged the pupils to increase their own level of challenge as a consequence of the new skills they had acquired. Pupils dribble the ball without touching the marker discs and then to do this with the alternate foot. All pupils are equally involved and enthusiastic. Pupils understand the need for a warm up and cool down and talk about the effect of exercise on their heart rate. Year 5 pupils enjoyed rehearsing a dance describing the human sacrifice from an Aztec drama and co-operated well sharing ideas and hall space. However, in the gymnastics and dance lessons observed whilst pupils discuss how movements can be improved or modified, they have insufficient skills in using a variety of movements to create the desired effects.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

117. Overall, by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain standards in religious education that are typical for their age and in line with the expectations of the Leicestershire Agreed Syllabus. However, standards are improving at Years 3 to 6 because pupils are taught very well and consequently learning is very effective. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactorily at Years 1 and 2 and make satisfactory progress. At Years 3 to 6 they achieve well and make good progress. Those with learning difficulties are well supported in lessons and achieve well.

Strengths in the subject:

- The very good relationships which encourage openness during discussions;
- The ways that teachers of Years 3 to 6 challenge and inspire pupils resulting in good efforts and achievement;
- The improvements to pupils' knowledge of world faiths, particularly at Years 3 to 6;
- The very good contributions to pupils' personal development;
- Pupils' reflective and personal response as they listen to the views of others.

Areas for further development:

- The organisation, planning and pace of some teaching at Years 1 and 2.
118. Only two lessons were seen at Years 1 and 2 so no overall judgement is made about the teaching of Years 1 and 2 but in one lesson teaching was good and in the other it was satisfactory. In Years 3 to 6 teaching was consistently very good and this is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when it was judged as barely satisfactory. Teachers now feel more secure about teaching this subject and because their knowledge has improved and they have some staff with specialist skills to advise them.
119. In all classes teachers plan for part of the lesson to include opportunities for discussion that will extend pupils' understanding. Teachers have built up very good relationships with pupils in order to foster an openness that will enable everyone to contribute. In Year 2, pupils held a discussion about events in their lives that were either right or wrong. This led to some understanding of what is meant by '*forgiveness*' and what action may be taken to avoid the wrong choice. The effective use of drama had everyone participating and extended understanding of what it means to live harmoniously in both the school community and in that of the wider world. In Year 6, pupils were considering some difficult issues relating to their study of The Ten Commandments. Much discussion had been undertaken as a whole class and in pairs and the pupils had eventually chosen the two commandments most relevant to their lives. As groups shared their findings and opinions, backing this up with reasons it was not surprising that almost all wanted to discuss '*You shall not commit murder*' and in relation to the war in Iraq. The very good relationships that existed gave pupils confidence to give views and opinions that sometimes were not well received by all. However, they had learned from their studies of world faiths that life presents difficult questions for everyone, including, for some, those about God and there will be different responses to those questions, especially religious responses. There was a highly developed sense of the need to tolerate other views even if you cannot agree with them.
120. In some lessons teachers challenged and inspired pupils to make better efforts than might be expected. The two classes of Year 3 that have 36 per cent of pupils with learning difficulties combined as a team to learn about what Jesus was like from the Gospels in the Bible. By working as a team the teachers were able to use a range of methods that kept pupils interested, keen and on their toes. From the beginning they knew that they had to find out more about what Jesus was like by reading stories from the Bible, which was a particularly challenging task for this year group. The first Gospel reading by one of the teachers was readily understandable and pupils listened attentively but just when they began to shuffle around and become a little distracted the other teacher entered dramatically, in costume, as a character from the story and used her skills so effectively that only a few pupils realised immediately who it was. She talked excitedly of seeing Jesus and what he was like and what she thought about Zacchaeus the tax collector, using the dramatisation to write a postcard to her mother about this event. Pupils watched in rapt admiration and despite the classes having several pupils who challenge the authority of the teachers there was no disruption and the lesson proceeded to the writing task. Now it was their turn to read a text, find out about Jesus and write a postcard as they had seen happen. Four statements were constantly in use, *imagine you were there, what did you see? what did you find out about Jesus? and how did Jesus make you feel?* The teachers had very good support from assistants to extend the learning and pupils made good efforts. Although not all completed the task they achieved well.
121. A few weaknesses in the teaching of younger pupils related to them being unaware of what they had to do because it was not made clear to them at the beginning, the pace was very slow so some lost interest and all were given the same task which was too easy for the higher attaining pupils and faster learners finished quickly and had nothing else to do.