

INSPECTION REPORT

OAKHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Oakham

LEA area: Rutland

Unique reference number: 120181

Headteacher: Joan Gibson

Reporting inspector: Mr Chris Warner
20935

Dates of inspection: 30 June – 3 July 2003

Inspection number: 248109

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 Years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Road Oakham Rutland
Postcode:	LE15 6EF
Telephone number:	01572 722404
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Steve Tummon
Date of previous inspection:	10 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20935	Chris Warner	Registered inspector	Mathematics Geography History Foundation stage	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) 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?
8420	Val Roberts	Team inspector	Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Equal opportunities English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupil?
30724	Delia Hiscock	Team inspector	English Physical education Special educational needs	
32168	Ann Keen	Team inspector	Religious education Music Art and design	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Oakham CE Primary School educates pupils between the ages of four and eleven. The school is about the average size, with a current roll of 247 pupils. The school's roll is higher than at the time of the last inspection. The attainment of children on entry is close to average, although there is a very wide spread of ability. There is also a significant difference in attainment on entry between year groups. The school serves pupils mainly from the town of Oakham, although a few live further away.

About 16 per cent of full-time pupils are entitled to a free school meal, which is close to the national average. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. 23 per cent of them are on the school's special needs register, which is broadly in line with the national average. These are for a wide range of learning difficulties. 24 pupils have a statement of Special Educational Needs. This is well above the national average. 20 of these pupils are in the school's special educational needs units (the 'special units'). This is a countywide provision housed in, and fully part of the school. For this reason, the school has a higher than usual number of support staff. One pupil speaks English as an additional language, but is not at an early stage of acquiring English.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Oakham CE Primary is a good school, which serves its pupils and community well. The headteacher provides very good leadership of a highly supportive team. There are very few significant weaknesses and many strengths. Standards are improving significantly as a result of recent improvements in the quality of education. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. Pupils in the 'special unit' make at least good progress throughout the school. By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average. Teaching is satisfactory in Reception and Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. When account is taken of pupils' attainment on entry to school and of the standards achieved in Year 6, this is an effective school, which gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher and key staff provide very good leadership and management
- By Year 6, standards are above average in English, mathematics and science
- Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 6 are good and often better
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; in the 'special units' it is very good
- The school promotes very good attitudes and behaviour, together with excellent relationships
- This is a very caring school; pupils of all backgrounds are fully included in all aspects of school life
- Parents are very supportive of what the school is doing for their children; they contribute well to their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve

- Further developing the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring, evaluating and promoting the quality of teaching and learning
- Developing a policy for teaching and learning
- Adopting a consistent approach to setting and reviewing individual targets in English, mathematics and science
- Improving the quality and range of learning opportunities in the Reception class, especially through developing the outside area.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in November 1997, the overall quality of education was judged to be 'sound'. The improvement since the last inspection has been good. Improvement since the new headteacher took up her post in September 2002 has been very good. The school has successfully built on its existing strengths, tackled previous shortcomings and made considerable headway in developing other important areas.

The key issues for improvement from the 1997 inspection are no longer cause for concern: where standards were too low, in geography and in design and technology, they have significantly improved. Revised schemes of work provide a secure framework for pupils' learning in all subjects of the National Curriculum and in religious education. The quality of teaching for children in the Reception class has improved. A comprehensive policy for assessment has been developed and is increasingly effective in informing teachers' planning. Health and safety standards are no longer a cause for concern. Co-ordinators have started to monitor, evaluate and promote the quality of teaching and learning in some subjects; the school recognises that this work needs to be extended in order to be fully effective in raising standards.

The school is strongly placed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	D	D	A	A
Mathematics	C	D	A	A
Science	B	D	B	B

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

When children enter the school, their attainment is broadly average. Standards achieved by the end of Year 6 have significantly improved since the last inspection. Pupils have made particularly good progress in the current school year. Standards are set to further improve because the right measures have been taken to improve the quality of education. The inspection findings reflect the school's unconfirmed results in the latest national tests.

The school's results for pupils in the Year 6 national tests in 2002 were far higher than in any earlier year. Previous results had fluctuated strongly; a feature significantly affected by the changing percentage of pupils with special needs. Taking this factor into account, the 2002 results were impressive because, overall, pupils made very good progress compared with their achievements in the Year 2 tests. The 2002 results compared favourably with the national average and the average for similar schools. The school's achievement in improving its results from 2001 to 2002 was recognised by a national award.

The 2002 results for pupils in Year 2 fell from the broadly average of previous years to below average in mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. Given the average prior attainment of pupils in the year group, it is evident that the results were not as high as they should have been.

The inspection found that standards in the current Year 6 are higher than those reached by pupils in the 2002 national tests in English, mathematics and science. Standards in these subjects are above the national expectations and pupils are achieving well. Many pupils achieve very high standards in their imaginative writing and in speaking for performance. The overall much-improved standards reflect improvements in the quality of education, particularly in the current school year. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well from Year 3 to Year 6.

In Year 2, current standards are significantly higher than achieved by pupils in the 2002 national tests. Standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are now broadly average. As in Year 6, the inspection findings tally with the unconfirmed results in the 2003 national tests and assessments.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily from Year 1 to Year 2. However, recent steps are making an impact and there are clear signs of improving standards. The school recognises the need to continue this work.

Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. In religious education, standards are in line with expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. By Year 6, standards are above those expected standards nationally in art and design, geography, history and aspects of music. In all other subjects, pupils are also achieving standards in line with those expected in Year 2 and Year 6 nationally. In all subjects, standards have improved in the current school year.

The inspection found that children in the Reception class make satisfactory progress. Most of them are likely to reach or nearly reach the expected levels for their age. The children could achieve more if there were improved opportunities for them to write freely in different situations. Learning is restricted because there are not enough activities that allow the children to explore, talk and think; most notably those offered in the outside area.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to do well. They work hard in lessons and in other activities.
Behaviour in and out of classrooms	Very good in lessons and at other times. No bullying, racist or sexist behaviour was evident. There have been no exclusions in the past twelve months.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Some scope for pupils to be more independent in their learning. They enjoy excellent relationships with each other and with adults.
Attendance	Attendance rates are good and improving. Pupils arrive on time because they are enthusiastic about school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 to 6
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching seen was consistently good and often better. In Reception and Years 1 and 2, teaching was satisfactory and sometimes good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. All of the lessons seen were at least satisfactory, and many more of them were good or better than in the last inspection. This leads to pupils achieving well and making good progress overall.

Throughout the school, basic skills are taught well. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good. National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy are used with good effect. In the best lessons, notably in Years 5 and 6, teaching is lively and pupils are keen to learn.

Where teaching is at its most effective, lessons are planned and managed well so that the teachers and their assistants know what to do to support and extend learning. Skilful questioning draws even hesitant pupils into the lesson and there is an encouraging spirit that gives them the confidence to 'have a go'. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to talk about their work, explain their ideas and develop their

thinking. They respond by working hard and wanting to get on. They find lessons interesting and challenging and they know that it is possible to learn from mistakes. Here, learning is effective because teaching is a two-way process between the teacher and pupils.

Although the quality of teaching is always at least satisfactory, there is scope, especially in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, for pupils to have more opportunities for independent learning. This includes opportunities for personal research and the chance to talk about, explain and demonstrate their ideas to others. Often, the teacher is overly eager to tell and explain things rather than helping the pupils do it. This has a lot to do with developing the quality of teachers' questioning skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good in Years 1 to 6; all requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Satisfactory in Reception; the curriculum here is limited by a lack of opportunities to learn through activity, especially outdoors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, good. Very good for pupils in the 'special unit'. There are effective procedures for identifying needs and for monitoring progress. Pupils are supported well in all situations.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for moral development is very good. The provision for spiritual, social and cultural development is good.
How the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school. Pupils' welfare is promoted very well. The good procedures for assessing pupils' progress have yet to be developed into more precise, short-term targets in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.

The school has very good links with parents. They are pleased with what the school is doing for their children. Their involvement in the day-to-day life of the school and in supporting learning at home makes a significant contribution to their children's attitudes and to how well they achieve.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership. She is supported well by the deputy head and other senior staff. The school is run well and there is a strong sense of shared purpose in its work.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors make a very good contribution to the management of the school. They have successfully developed their role in monitoring the work of the school and increasingly relate this to the standards achieved by pupils. The governing body meets all of the statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Priorities for improvement clearly centre on raising standards. The governors are very aware and supportive of the priorities in the school development plan.
The strategic use of resources	Available resources are used well, including the teaching assistants, funding for special needs and ICT. The school's efforts to seek the best value for money are good. They are related closely to the impact financial decisions have on standards achieved by pupils.

The school has a sufficient number of well-qualified teachers and other staff. They benefit from the high quality opportunities for professional development. Shortcomings in the outside area of the Reception class have been noted above.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What a significant minority of parents would like to see improved
<p><i>At least nine out of every ten parents who responded to the questionnaire felt that:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children like school and are making good progress, • behaviour is good, as is the teaching, • the school is well led and managed, • children are expected to work hard, do their best and be mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency in expectations for, and quality of, homework, • Information about how their child is getting on.

The inspection team agree with all of the positive comments made by parents. The arrangements for homework and for reporting to parents about how their children are getting on are better than in most schools. These arrangements are regularly reviewed to ensure quality and consistency.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Strengths

- By Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are above average; standards in speaking for performance are very high.
- Although broadly average, standards by the end of Year 2 are improving.
- Standards in those subjects judged 'unsatisfactory' in the last inspection have improved.

Areas for development

- To continue the improvement in standards in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.

1. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average. However, attainment on entry varies considerably between year groups. This is strongly affected by the number of pupils with statements of special educational need in any year group. Differences in pupils' prior attainment and the high turnover of pupils in Years 3 to 6 contribute to the school's fluctuating results in national tests.
2. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2. Their progress accelerates as they move from Year 3 to 6 and, overall achievement is good. The inspection found that standards are improving as a result of recent measures taken to improve the quality of education. A priority for the school is to raise standards achieved by the end of Year 2; recent action is proving very effective.
4. All pupils with special educational needs achieve well. In this school there is a significantly larger than average proportion of pupils with statement of additional or different learning needs. The majority of the pupils in the special units make very good progress. The very few pupils with English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils of the same age.
5. By the end of Reception, children are likely to achieve or nearly achieve the expectations of the Early Learning Goals¹ in all areas of learning. Children's creative development has improved compared with the unsatisfactory standards noted in the last inspection. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children of different backgrounds and abilities make sound progress.
6. The children's personal, social and emotional development is good. Staff's consistent and fair expectations encourage even reluctant children to grow in confidence and self-esteem. New children soon settle in and, by the end of the Reception year, there is a strong sense of belonging to a family and community.
7. The Reception children speak with growing confidence to one another and to adults and listen for reasonable lengths of time to a story being read. Even so, and as in all areas of learning, there is a wide difference in what children are achieving. A few are particularly attentive and articulate; others listen reasonably well, but need a lot of encouragement to respond.
8. Overall, the Reception children's literacy and numeracy skills are in line with those expected nationally. They learn sounds that letters make because these are taught well. Although most of them are starting to write letters with reasonable accuracy, they would benefit from more

¹ QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) has produced a set of 'Early Learning Goals' for children in this stage of education. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of six. There are six areas of learning: personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; physical and creative development.

opportunities to attempt their own writing in different situations. Most children can recognise and spell at least some simple words.

9. The children's knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory. Their good access to resources for ICT shows in their growing confidence and skill in using the computer. They understand how plants grow because they have had opportunities to plant seeds and to look after the bean plants.
10. Children's learning in several areas, including science and aspects of physical development, is restricted in quality and range because of the inadequate size, use of and resources of the outdoor area. Their creative development is good and includes some imaginative work with paints. They express themselves, their feelings and ideas with growing confidence in a range of media, including dance and music.
11. The school's results in national tests at the end of Year 2 steadily improved from 1998 to be broadly in line with the national average in 2000 and 2001. The results in some years are higher than in others because of the significant difference in prior attainment between pupils of different year groups. The results fell in 2002 and were below average in science and mathematics and well below average in reading and writing. In all subjects, the results were well below the average achieved by similar schools.
12. The 2002 year group did not include an unduly high, or higher than usual proportion with special educational needs. Even so, a significant percentage of the group did not reach the expected Level 2. The results in writing were particularly disappointing, and far lower than in other subjects. The results were also brought down because fewer of the pupils than expected achieved the higher Level 3 in any subject. Samples of work and assessment records show that these pupils had not made enough progress since starting school. The same pupils are now in Year 3 and are making improved and at least good progress.
13. The inspection found that by the end of Year 2, standards are now in line with those expected nationally in all aspects of English, mathematics and science. Compared with the previous year, the group includes a similar proportion of pupils with special educational needs and of higher attainment. Pupils in the current Year 2 are likely to exceed the levels achieved by their counterparts in 2002. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, have made satisfactory progress since starting school.
14. The inspection also found that standards have improved and are continuing to do so. This reflects the school's unconfirmed results in the most recent national tests and assessments. It is apparent from a scrutiny of pupils' recent work that the quality of teaching has improved and this is promoting pupils' learning. Procedures for assessing what pupils know, understand and can do have also improved so that pupils' work is better matched to their needs.
15. Pupils in Year 2 are achieving the nationally expected standards in their reading. The much-improved approach to the teaching of reading is helping all pupils, but especially those with a limited knowledge of books. Most children benefit from the help they get with their reading from someone at home.
16. Overall, pupils make sound progress in their writing. Standards have improved in the past term because of the focus given to improving pupils' writing skills. The school rightly plans to continue to place a priority on developing pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting.
17. Most of the pupils in Year 2 speak clearly, with reasonable fluency and growing confidence in their use of language. They take account of what others have to say when making their own response.
18. Standards in mathematics are improving because of the improved monitoring and support of teaching and learning and of standards. The effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is contributing to this improvement. This is apparent in the accuracy and speed of pupils' mental calculation, especially among the more-able pupils.

19. Standards in science in Years 1 and 2 are improving. This is seen in pupils' interest in and approach to investigations. The increased emphasis on getting pupils to talk about their learning is starting to help pupils to communicate their ideas and develop their understanding.
20. Pupils in Year 2 achieve the expected standards in all aspects of information and communications technology (ICT). The use of nationally recommended guidance helps pupils to acquire skills in a structured way in all aspects of the subject.
21. By Year 2, pupils achieve the expected standards for their age in design and technology, geography, history and religious education. Geography has significantly improved on the unsatisfactory standards found in the last inspection. Standards in art and design are above average. Pupils, including those on the school's register for special needs, have made satisfactory progress in all subjects since starting school. However, in all subjects, their progress has gained momentum as the current school year has proceeded.
22. The last inspection found that, by Year 6, standards in mathematics and science were broadly average and that pupils made sound progress in Years 3 to 6. Standards in English were above average and pupils achieved well. The inspection findings reflected the school's results in national tests at the time. Apart from a dip in 2001, the school's results in mathematics and science significantly improved between 1998 and 2002. The results in English remained far lower than in mathematics and science mainly because of the inclusion of a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the tests. Here, pupils' writing had not progressed as well as had skills in other aspects of English. Improvements in all three subjects taken together from 2001 to 2002 were recognised with the presentation of a national achievement award.
23. In the 2002 national tests, the school's results were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The results were well above the average for similar schools in English and mathematics, and above average in science. Overall, the results in 2002 were the best the school had ever achieved. Pupils in Year 6 made a good improvement in relation to their results in Year 2. Particularly pleasing was the well above average percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 5 in each subject.
24. The inspection found that standards are rising throughout Year 3 to 6. This reflects the school's improving results in the national tests. Improvements in the quality of teaching and learning are leading to higher standards. Although this is most apparent in Years 5 and 6, it is also true in younger year groups. Furthermore, standards are set to continue to improve as the measures taken to strengthen the quality of education have time to make a greater impact. The school sets and meets its challenging targets for pupils in English and mathematics.
25. Standards achieved by pupils in the current Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics and science. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the very few who speak English as an additional language, are making good progress. A scrutiny of pupils' work shows that they have made particularly good progress over the past year.
26. By Year 6, standards in all aspects of English are above average. Pupils make substantial progress in Years 3 to 6 from average standards at the end of Year 2. By Year 6, pupils are enthusiastic readers and many of them enjoy reading at home and borrowing books from the local library. Most pupils display a good level of interest, fluency and understanding in their reading. Standards in writing are high and reflect the quality of literature pupils experience. Much of their writing is not only structured well, but also highly imaginative. Pupils take full advantage of the good opportunities to write in different subjects. They are very aware of writing for a range of purposes and to different audiences. Pupils make good progress in their speaking and listening skills in Years 3 to 6 and by Year 6 most are achieving particularly well. The quality of much of the pupils' performance work, including reading poems and taking roles in dramatic productions, is of a very high standard.
27. Nearly all pupils are achieving the expected standard in mathematics and about one in three exceed this. Most of them have a good grasp of place value and handle large numbers

confidently. The more-able pupils are particularly adept at working with numbers mentally and in applying known number facts to problem-solving situations.

28. In science, standards are currently above average. All pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of all aspects of the subject. They are increasingly confident in approaching and dealing with investigations and experiments because there are good opportunities throughout Years 3 to 6 for them to develop these skills. They record their work clearly and accurately, often using opportunities for ICT well in their final presentations.
29. By Year 6, standards in ICT are average. This is an achievement because national expectations in the subject have significantly increased. Standards have 'kept pace' because pupils have access to resources and teachers have grown in confidence in what to teach and how to achieve this.
30. By Year 6, pupils achieve the expected standards in design and technology and religious education. Standards in art and design, geography, history and aspects of music are above average. All pupils, including those on the school's register for special needs, are making good progress.

Pupils' attitudes and behaviour

Strengths

- Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent
- Pupils have an implicit understanding of the impact of their actions on others
- Pupils have a high level of respect for others feelings, values and beliefs.

Areas for development

- In lessons, pupils could be given more opportunity to exercise initiative and to learn more independently of the teacher.

31. Pupils display very good attitudes to school. They work extremely hard, display enthusiasm and enjoyment in coming to school and are keen and happy to take part in the many opportunities provided by the school for their education and leisure. During the inspection week, pupils related extremely well with the inspection team, who were greatly impressed by the friendliness, courtesy and enthusiasm shown to them. Pupils were very keen to speak of their achievements and to show visitors around the school. They displayed pride in their school and their work. In many lessons observed during the inspection week, pupils worked very hard and collaborated well. Where they were given the opportunity, they displayed initiative and maturity. However, in some lessons pupils were not given enough opportunities to develop their individual learning skills or work collaboratively together.
32. Pupils' behaviour at the school is never less than very good and, in many situations, is excellent. They have a very strong awareness of the effect of their behaviour on others and have a healthy respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of other people. It was particularly apparent that pupils of all abilities mixed extremely well, and that pupils with special educational needs were well supported and befriended by their peer groups, both at lunch time and at play. The views of the overwhelming majority of parents that behaviour of pupils is very good are fully endorsed by the inspection team. Pupils treat their own, school and other people's property with the greatest of care and there is no evidence of any vandalism and graffiti.
33. There have been no permanent or fixed term exclusions during the previous two years and pupils' behaviour is meticulously monitored and recorded. The school promotes pupils' personal development very well. Their behaviour in their daily life shows that pupils have a very good understanding of the school's strong ethos of caring for others. Relationships between pupils and staff (including teachers and non-teaching staff) are excellent. Pupils work well together and collaborate in shared tasks. For example, in a good Year 3 ICT lesson, pupils discussed the opportunities open to them by the e-mail system and worked well together to compose and send messages to another school.

34. Overall, pupils have good opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative. The school rules were compiled after consultation with pupils and, therefore, pupils understand, respect and obey them. They take on responsibility in their classes, such as being appointed monitors, and these increase as the pupils get older and move through the school. They answer the phone at lunchtime, raise funds for their own nominated charities, (such as the RSPCA, Blue Peter and the Rainbow Fund), operate an informal 'buddy' scheme, and provide harvest teas and arrange concerts for old age pensioners. A significant development is to encourage pupils to edit and produce their own newspaper, which is of high quality and is distributed regularly to parents. It was noted during the inspection that mainstream pupils offer a high level of support and care to pupils with special education needs, join in playground games with younger ones and help them with work. They are delighted to look after them.
35. Attitudes, values and personal development of pupils with special educational needs are good. They make substantial progress in their personal skills because communication is at the forefront of the work of the teachers and support staff both in the special units and in the classes that many of the pupils join. Relationships are a strong feature in the units as they are in main classes. Pupils gain much from the friendly supportive environment and the warm and caring climate that supports all pupils, regardless of their learning needs and level of attainment socially. This is represented by the success of the school in supporting and including pupils who have encountered difficulties and have been excluded from other schools. The flexible and thoughtful planning is informed and modified by pupils' achievements. Pupils' needs are at the heart of this work.
36. Attendance at the school at 94.9 per cent is good and above the national average. Lessons start on time, pupils are punctual at coming to school and when entering or leaving the classroom.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

Strengths

- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and often better
- Teaching has improved since the last inspection
- Lessons are managed well so that pupils can listen, concentrate and work hard
- In much of the teaching, pupils are involved in their learning and feel encouraged to talk about their work.

Areas for development

- There is scope to improve teaching and learning for children in Reception and in Years 1 and 2.
- In some lessons, pupils could be encouraged to use their initiative more and to be more independent in their learning.

37. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is good. In the lessons seen, all of the teaching was at least satisfactory. Much of the teaching in Years 3 to 6 was good or better; several lessons seen were very good or better. Teaching in Reception and in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and occasionally better.
38. The overall quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection when one in every eight of the lessons seen was unsatisfactory. The school has effectively remedied the lack of challenge that was noted as a particular feature of less effective teaching in the last report. Much of the teaching seen goes beyond being competent and gets pupils actively involved in their own learning. The school is well placed to build on its best practice and to develop approaches that get pupils to think and talk more about their work and to take more initiative in their learning.
39. There are three main reasons for the improved quality of teaching:
- The school is increasingly effective in monitoring and improving the quality of teaching
 - The staff have taken advantage of the very good opportunities to develop their teaching skills
 - The strong sense of team spirit among new and existing staff shows in their willingness to share ideas and to learn from each other.

40. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. It is very good in the separate units that cater for pupils in Years 1- 2, Years 3 - 6 and for the pupils with complex additional needs in learning (in the relatively new unit for Autistic spectrum disorders). This represents a significant improvement in teaching and learning since the previous inspection. All pupils are given individual attention and are encouraged to deal with new situations with increasing confidence. Staff have high expectations and strive to enable pupils to make sense of the world in the day to day learning that takes place. Individual learning plans are at the core of the work for all pupils and are founded on the early identification of their needs. Pupils benefit from individual support and from the small teaching groups that promote a range of social skills and assures that they achieve well in the small steps in their individual targets for learning. In the units that cater for pupils in Years 3 -6 and for those pupils with complex learning needs, specific targets are planned into literacy and numeracy lessons. Pupils learn very well from the hands-on activities. For example, pupils' skills in dealing with letter sounds are developed in line with pupils of other abilities in Years 1 and 2. They follow a similar pattern and aim to develop skills in tackling simple words. A variety of rich and stimulating approaches are used to entice pupils into communicating their ideas using puppets. They learn to deal with numbers in line with their attainment and record their work in simple sentences and pictures, by using computers and often in shared activities.
41. Pupils with special educational needs in mainstream classes learn well. Their personal needs are well managed and enable them to focus their attention on learning activities.
42. Teaching and learning in the Reception class is satisfactory and sometimes better. This is an improvement compared with the last inspection. All members of staff have consistent expectations based on a sound knowledge of the children's achievements and needs. There is scope for all the staff to become more confident in observing and talking to the children in order to assess how they are getting on. Where the adult is most effective, as seen in a mathematics session, assessments are used to assist them in determining when and how to intervene in the children's learning. The children enjoy very good relationships with the adults. They feel secure in trying out new things and in talking about their ideas. There is a satisfactory balance between activities that are initiated by the child and those that are led by an adult. However, more emphasis could be given to getting children to learn from each other and from a wider range of opportunities to talk and think through well-planned activity and play.
43. The most effective lessons are well structured and pupils are made aware of the learning intentions and of the amount of time they have to complete a task. The recent improvements made to subject planning helps each teacher to plan lessons that meet the often, wide range of needs of pupils in each class. Work set is challenging enough to get all pupils thinking, talking and engaged in their learning.
44. A further feature of the most effective teaching seen was the asking of probing questions that got pupils to think and talk. By asking 'Can you show us how you got that answer?' the teacher encouraged pupils in Year 2 to develop their mathematical language and understanding of the relationship between doubling and halving numbers. In a particularly successful English lesson for pupils in Year 6, the teacher listened carefully as a more-able pupil explained the meaning of similes, and responded in a way that took the learning forward for the whole class. A pupil with special educational needs was encouraged to get involved because the teacher targeted and adapted the questions. Repeating and rephrasing questions made them easily accessible for the more reluctant pupils who felt encouraged to 'have a go.'
45. In a Year 3 lesson and in others, pupils of all abilities were encouraged to explain and demonstrate their learning about units of time. This was a good way of getting them to communicate and re-enforce their learning. At the same time, the teacher assessed their skills and understanding and used the information to plan the next lesson. Here and in other effective lessons, teaching is a two-way process. Pupils are involved, responsive and willing to learn- even from their mistakes.
46. Teaching assistants work well with the teachers to extend pupils' learning and to help them overcome any difficulties. This is particularly effective when the assistant takes on a role in

assessing how the pupils are getting on as, for example, in a music lesson for pupils in the special unit.

47. The best lessons get off to a good start and proceed at a brisk pace. The crisp beginning of many lessons sets the tone for what is to follow. This was the case in the Year 1 class, where everyone knew where and how to sit, and listened carefully to the teacher as she told them 'we are thinking about how we could make symbols or signs of things that are special to us'. The children knew what to do and what was expected of them. Learning was made fun by being very 'hands on' and the children responded with enthusiasm and interest. Similarly, the teachers' crisp opening to a very good ICT lesson for pupils in Year 4 set the pace and tone for what was to follow.

48. At the heart of the effective teaching is the very good relationships fostered by the class teachers and their assistants. Pupils of all abilities and backgrounds work hard and try to overcome their difficulties. Good behaviour, achievement and effort are encouraged and praised fairly. This adds to pupils' sense of self-esteem and makes them feel that their efforts are worthwhile. In almost all lessons, little time is wasted on establishing or maintaining order because the pupils are interested in what they are learning.
49. Pupils make good progress in acquiring basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In most lessons they are encouraged to listen, not only to the teacher but also to each other. Teachers make good use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy to provide well-structured lessons. What makes some teaching stand out is that pupils know that their responses are valued even if they haven't given the 'right' answer. Here the teacher is interested in the pupils' ideas and how they can be used to help understanding and extend learning. Overall, teachers make good use of ICT in lessons to support learning.
50. Teaching could be improved and learning would be more effective in some lessons if pupils had more opportunities to show their initiative and to be more independent in their learning. Here, the teacher needs to seek opportunities for pupils to plan and evaluate their work and to explain and demonstrate their ideas and work in their own way.
51. Homework makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. At best, there is a clear purpose to the work set and it is understood by pupils and, where necessary, by their parents. A scrutiny of pupils' books shows a good overall quality of teachers' marking. At best, the marking gives the pupils a clear idea of their success as well as making learning points.

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

Strengths

- The provision for special educational needs and of literacy and numeracy
- The provision of extra curricular activities
- The promotion of personal, social and health education
- The links the school has with other schools and partner institutions
- The overall provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for development:

- The curriculum for children in Reception, particularly related to their outdoor education
 - The level of links with information and communications technology across the curriculum.
52. The school provides good, flexible learning opportunities for the majority of its pupils and nurtures their personal development very well. There has been good improvement in the curriculum since the last inspection. All subjects meet nationally recommended requirements and Religious Education meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Schemes of work for all subjects provide a secure basis for teachers' planning. As a result, team teaching in Year 2 is improving pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy and there is a sharper focus on raising standards in subjects, such as geography and design and technology.
53. The curriculum is well organised to include the use of skilled teaching assistants. For example, Year 1 pupils have small group input in literacy and numeracy in a rolling programme through the week, which supports less and more-able pupils alike. In Year 4, pupils had a lively and productive discussion via the interactive whiteboard on the writing of J.K.Rowling. The interaction between pupils and an adept teaching assistant achieved the planned learning objective very successfully.
54. Information and communication technology lessons are well planned. However, there is scope for teachers to seize the opportunities to use the technology to further enhance the independent learning of pupils. There is flexibility in planning, which provides for a wide variety of differing needs. This not only offers positive learning opportunities for all, but also contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. The inclusion and integration of pupils with special educational

- needs is impressive at a variety of levels. Equally, any pupil whose home language is not English has full access to all curriculum opportunities and consequently makes good progress.
55. In the Foundation Stage, the six recommended areas of learning are adequately planned so that children acquire the skills, knowledge and understanding for a satisfactory start to their education. There is appropriate emphasis upon personal, social and emotional development and on communication, language and literacy. Resources and facilities for the outdoor area need to be improved and activities planned around these to enrich all areas of learning.
 56. Provision for pupils with all kinds of special educational needs in mainstream classes is good. This is primarily because of the close and effective work of the learning assistants who are committed to pupils' achievement and effectively help to implement planned activities. In literacy and numeracy, provision reflects pupils' level of attainment and generally reflects good gains in learning when measured against the targets set for learning for each pupil. In the separate special units provision is very good. There is a rich and varied diet of activities carefully tailored to stimulate and promote new skills and knowledge. These are delivered in familiar and trusted situations with increasingly challenging moments planned into visits, exciting residential trips and additional experiences, such as horse riding. The new sensory room is an improved feature to the school's provision to benefit pupils. For all the pupils, the most recent national guidelines are followed with good effect.
 57. A wide range of out of school activities is very much a part of school life and is strongly supported by teaching staff. Young musicians and singers join the orchestra and choir to perform in school plays and assemblies. Their recent contribution to the weekly celebration assemblies added much to the spiritual and social aspects of the occasion. Sports clubs are closely connected with local rugby, cricket and hockey and it is usual for the school to be well represented in local athletics competitions. Clubs for French, science and drama meet regularly and are well attended.
 58. A good range of visits related to curriculum subjects further enriches provision. Photographic evidence shows enthusiastic Year 5 and 6 pupils rock climbing, abseiling and fencing. There are visits to heritage centres, such as the Jorvik experience, which tie in well with learning in history. Annual activity weeks, such as Science and Arts week, bring an extra dimension to pupils' learning across the curriculum and increase their appreciation of each others' skills and talents. A visiting artist and professor in design and technology shared their skills with all year groups producing fine examples of art and willow work. A visiting poet had a significant impact on the standards of boys' poetry, kindling an interest in one pupil where none had been seen before. The local church has strong connections with the school throughout the year, but particularly at festival times. The Canon is a regular visitor and often contributes to school assemblies.
 59. Aspects of citizenship, healthy living, sex and relationships education are effectively taught for children of different ages. School health services support the curriculum in personal health and the 'DARE' project strengthens pupils' understanding of the misuse of drugs and the dangers of hazardous substances. Initiatives for personal, social and health education are coordinated well by the deputy head and led to the raising of pupils' self esteem and ability to express their personal views. The good provision for personal, social and health education connects particularly well with aspects of spiritual, social and moral development of pupils. Consequently, respect, thoughtfulness and celebration are qualities that are seen across the school.
 60. The consideration displayed by pupils in all situations shows their understanding of the values and beliefs projected by the school. They respect the talents and skills of musicians and other performers in and out of school. Pupils are aware of the needs of others, including those with some difficulties; often seeking to support them. For example, pupils readily assisted those who might be wheel chair bound or took account of those with learning difficulties. There is the positive climate of respect for others, which further enhances the spiritual development of pupils. School assemblies are well planned and have a good balance of singing, prayer and reflection, which is emphasised by the lighting of the candle. This focus, towards which sensitively sung hymns and prayers were directed, proved to be very moving in the weekly 'celebration' assembly. The occasion brought together and celebrated some of the best qualities of worthwhile endeavour within the school.

61. Pupils' moral development is very good. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong and feel supported by the values and behaviour of the adults in the school. As a result, behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. There is clear guidance on expectations of positive behaviour across the school. Pupils understand that positive behaviour is about valuing others and they respond well to warning prompts from adults. Teachers' high expectation of pupils' behaviour encourages them to consider the consequences of their actions. They are keen to help others outside the school and often make suggestions for fundraising. During inspection, one pupil wished to set a quiz in aid of the RSPB. Pupils' enthusiasm was high. The idea was soon taken on board and lessons were adapted to make it happen. Socially, pupils play and work well together. They are good listeners and when encouraged to work in groups they join forces enthusiastically and readily delegate or accept their role in the group. The well-planned integration of pupils in the unit markedly contributes to all pupils' understanding of the feelings of others. The well-established, easy and respectful relationships in the playground sum up the positive atmosphere.
62. Teachers use a good range of opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and those of others. The Art week introduced pupils to art and craftwork that once was part of their cultural heritage. A good feature of cultural development was the recent day where pupils contrasted their own culture with that of Ghana. They experienced food, dance, music and football, the skills and traditions of people from Ghana. Exploring the major faiths of the world, such as Judaism, Islam and Sikhism, also makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural awareness. The school is acutely aware of the need to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their awareness of cultural diversity at first hand. Where this can be done it is planned well. A visit to Wales, the opportunity to learn to count in Japanese and an enlightening visit to a Sikh temple are examples of the school's growing efforts to broaden pupils' understanding and appreciation of life, language and beliefs found in their own country.
63. Pupils with special educational needs benefit a great deal from the clear expectations of behaviour, social conventions and courtesies. Staff and pupils alike treat pupils who learn in the special units with a warmth and affection that stems from a sense of responsibility and care within the school family and from the very positive role models they encounter.
64. Pupils who have encountered difficult circumstances outside school or who have complex behavioural difficulties are very well managed, often with the assistance of the special units. They sometimes shine in the work they do because of the flexibility and of provision that celebrates treasured moments of learning, no matter how small.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

Strengths

- Procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and for the monitoring and eliminating of oppressive behaviour are very good.
- Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good
- Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils is very good
- Pupils from the special units take a full and active part in assemblies and enjoy the visitors and productions as enthusiastically as others.

Areas for development

- Use of assessments to set targets for individual pupils in English, mathematics and science.

65. The school offers a very good standard of care for all its pupils. The school is a happy and safe environment where pupils are well cared for and supported by both teaching staff and learning support assistants.
66. The school has adopted the child protection policy of the local area Child Protection Committee, which is very thorough, detailed and comprehensive. Liaison with the statutory authorities is very good. The headteacher is the Child Protection Officer and has received recent, relevant up to date

- training. She has arranged for 'cascade' training for all other members of teaching and non-teaching staff; all of whom are fully aware of the relevant procedures. At the present time, the school does not have any pupils on the child protection register, or 'looked after' pupils, but does appropriately keep its own records of pupils causing concern, and their progress is properly monitored in accordance with the recommended guidance. A very high degree of care and concern shown for pupils by both teaching and non-teaching staff, ensures that pupils make very good progress in their daily life at school, and thrive in the strong and supportive atmosphere for learning.
67. The school's Site Manager carries out informal Health & Safety checks on a daily basis, and a full Health and Safety audit was carried out by the Local Authority Safety Team in 2000. The school has rectified any items identified as a health hazard; the Local Education Authority is to arrange more regular audits following the inspection. Fire alarms are regularly checked and good records are kept, and the school properly carries out fire drills. The school has an adequate number of suitably qualified first aiders. Excellent records are kept of both minor and more serious accidents to pupils.
 68. Procedures for the monitoring and improving of attendance are very good. The school secretary telephones parents on the first day of their absence, and letters are sent to parents who fail to provide explanatory notes on pupil's return to school. The school is shortly to install an electronic system of recording attendance. Registers are marked accurately and meet the legal requirements. The Education Welfare Officer liaises well with the school and visits on a regular basis. Absences are mainly due to illness or have been authorised by the school as being for an acceptable reason.
 69. Both teaching and non-teaching staff provide pupils with very good educational and personal support. All members of staff, who offer a high level of care and concern, relate very well to all pupils. Discussions with pupils during the inspection week confirmed that they know who to go to for support and advice and that they value the care they receive.
 70. Pupils with special education need are offered high levels of support. Pupils' progress and attainment is carefully monitored and the school works closely with appropriate outside agencies to promote this group of pupils' welfare. The school achieves great success with these pupils, who are integrated extremely well into the life of the school; and their positive self-esteem and the very good progress they make is a very good indication of the high quality of care that they receive. The school however, has not yet developed effective procedures for identifying gifted and talented pupils to enable their special abilities to flourish.
 71. The school has very good procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and the monitoring and eliminating of oppressive behaviour. The school's 'Mission Statement' includes a high expectation of excellence, while academic, social, spiritual and physical achievement is well embraced by the behaviour policy. The few school rules are fully understood by pupils, are clear and concise, and consistently applied by staff.
 72. Pupils are very keen to be awarded yellow 'spots' for demonstration of pleasing attitudes or behaviour, or red 'spots' for good work, and to receive a certificate awarded at assembly for a hundred yellow or red spots. They are proud of their certificate and are pleased to earn 'golden time' for good behaviour. Good behaviour is promoted well and in a positive way.
 73. Pupils know the high expectations that the school has of them, know how to behave and respond accordingly. Both teaching and non-teaching staff deal with any rare incidents of bullying or challenging behaviour efficiently and quickly. Pupils interviewed confirmed that they felt bullying at the school was rare and that all staff are extremely approachable and helpful.
 74. Staff supervise break and lunchtimes well with pupils from both mainstream and learning difficulties integrating very well indeed. All pupils receive a high level of support from learning support assistants and non-teaching staff.

75. The school has very good procedures for supporting and promoting pupils' personal development. All the teachers keep informal notes of pupils' pastoral progress and any important information is properly shared at weekly staff meetings. In addition, records of both achievement and concern are kept by the headteacher.

76. Pupils with any types of learning needs are identified early and a suitable programme quickly agreed. The school can take pride in the ways in which these pupils' needs are managed in the light of regular observations and reviews of pupils' progress towards learning targets. Learning assistants play a significant part in assuring that different approaches stimulate learning. Pupils' records are comprehensive, detailed and thorough in supporting achievement.

77. There are good assessment procedures in place for English, mathematics and science. ICT and the Foundation subjects are suitably assessed against the key skills in individual units of work in the National Curriculum. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, take part in the required and optional Standardised Assessment Tasks and the information is usefully entered into a computerised assessment system. This is used to predict attainment for future years and to plan how best to meet pupils' needs. The improved assessment procedures are having a positive impact on the planning of the curriculum and the support given to individual pupils.
78. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the 'tracking' of progress made by individual pupils helps them to achieve their targets for attainment. In some classes, notably for older pupils, the teachers have developed very useful short-term and specific targets for each pupil. This approach is not yet consistently adopted throughout the school in order to make it fully effective. The school recognises the importance of pupils being aware of their targets, of playing a part in setting and reviewing the targets and of parents being involved in the process.
79. Overall, there is an effective whole school marking system. This contributes to an increasingly consistent approach to the marking and correcting of pupils' work. Any specific shortcomings relating to a subject are referred to in the respective paragraph.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Strengths

- The school has very effective links with parents
- Parents make a significant contribution to their children's learning at school and at home
- Parents have a very positive impact on the work of the school.

Areas for development

- None

80. Over one in three parents or carers responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The overwhelming majority thought that their children like school and make good progress (97 per cent), behaviour in the school is good (88 percent) and teaching is good (90 percent). Almost all who responded felt comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem (99 per cent). The inspection findings confirm all the positive views. A significant minority felt that they were not kept well informed about how their children were getting on (23 per cent) and that the quality of homework was inconsistent (28 per cent). The inspection findings do not support these concerns.
81. The school has excellent links with parents. They are warmly welcomed into school and a large number of parents and even some grandparents come into school to help in a variety of ways. The many examples of their much valued and effective contribution includes making costumes for school productions, working with pupils in design and technology and physical education, helping with the 'partnership in maths project', accompanying special needs pupils on horse riding expeditions and helping in the history project. They also help in the library, hear pupils read and with school productions.
82. The school provides good quality information to parents about their children's progress. The brochure is very well presented, parent friendly and gives a good deal of information about the aims of the school, different policies and how parents can work in partnership with the school. The headteacher provides weekly newsletters giving useful information about events and activities and, in addition, the pupils themselves produce a regular newsletter for parents. The Governors' annual report to parents is clear and concise, well written and gives all the statutory information they require including a clear and accurate account of the school's financial position.
83. The school consults parents widely on a variety of issues and their views are fully taken into account in any consideration of policies and school improvements. The format of annual reports on pupils' progress has been reviewed and a new version will be issued at the end of the current term.

It includes details of what pupils have covered, their progress in each subject, any targets and a space for parents and pupils to comment. Parents are invited to make an appointment to see their child's teacher, firstly at the start of the autumn term, and again in the following February. Parents may also arrange to discuss their child's reports at the end of the summer term. The headteacher and staff are available to see parents at any convenient time by appointment. Parents are contacted by phone if the school has any points they wish to talk over.

84. There are excellent procedures for the induction of new pupils into the school. The headteacher and Reception staff, visit every home prior to pupils' admission, to talk about starting school and to exchange information. The children and their parents are invited to visit the school prior to their admission to build up everyone's confidence.
85. The inspection found that, overall, information for parents about the curriculum and what children are studying is good. However, the quality, although always at least satisfactory, is higher in some classes than in others.
86. There are good arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education. The school liaises well with the receiving secondary schools and pupils visit them for a taster day prior to their admission. Parents receive useful information about the receiving schools and the various opportunities open to them.
87. The school fully involves parents of pupils with special educational needs in the education of their children. These parents have many opportunities to support the work of the school and the special units. Some of them are able to provide good support in reading and other learning at home. Parents conveyed their confidence in the provision.
88. The school has a very active and effective Parent Teachers Association to which all parents are automatically made members. The Association has arranged many successful events, including a Christmas and summer fair, plant sales, barn dance, children's fashion show and clothes sale, quiz night, beetle drive, table top sale, children's discos and art exhibition, uniform sales, leavers' party and barbecue. Last year, the Association raised almost £9,000 and provided a lot of equipment, including a smart board and projector, overhead projector trolleys, play equipment, transport for the infant summer outing and a smart new piano. Their work is greatly valued for this financial assistance and for the way their efforts enrich the life of the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Strengths

- The headteacher and key staff provide very good leadership of a rapidly improving school
- The staff work together very well as a team
- The governors have a very good awareness of how well the school is doing and make a very good contribution to building on its strengths and further raising standards.

Areas for further development

- The co-ordinators' role in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and relating this closely to standards achieved by pupils.

89. The headteacher provides very good leadership of a rapidly improving school. She is strongly supported in the management of the school by the deputy headteacher and other members of the school management team. Together they provide a clear lead for the educational direction of the school and are fully supported in their efforts by all the staff and governors. All members of the school's community agree that a great deal has been achieved in the short time since the headteacher took up her post.
90. The inspection found that standards are rising rapidly because of recent improvements in the quality of education. There are no significant weaknesses and the school is very well placed for continued improvement.

91. The new headteacher soon gained the support of staff and governors even though several of them were also new to the school. Working closely together, they are a strong team that wants to build on the school's acknowledged strengths and provide the best deal for the children. Parents, governors, staff and pupils talk about the encouraging ethos and the impact this has on all of them. A special feature is the way that all pupils, including the many with particular special education needs, feel part of the school and are fully involved in its life and work. The inspection confirms the view of parents, that the school's aims and values are reflected in its work.
92. The headteacher, governors and staff work closely together to identify and monitor the right issues for improvement. The first thing the new head did on taking up her appointment was to bring staff and governors together to listen to their views on the school's strengths and needs. This strengthened relationships, got everyone 'singing from the same hymn sheet' and gave the headteacher an excellent starting point in drawing up priorities for the school's development.
93. The last inspection report noted that the role of staff with management responsibilities needed to be developed. The preparation of job descriptions has enabled the staff to focus on their tasks. Audits have been undertaken leading to clear plans of action to improve standards. Areas of responsibility, including those for subjects and special educational needs, are now managed effectively.
94. A good start has been made by the headteacher and subject co-ordinators to regularly visit the classrooms and check the quality of teaching and learning. This is proving increasingly effective in developing the skills of individual teachers and in promoting good practice. The time is ripe for a clearly planned programme to extend the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. This is especially relevant in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Priority should also be given to working with staff in Reception and Years 1 and 2 to ensure that the recent improvement in standards is maintained. The school rightly intends to develop a policy for teaching and learning that embraces and builds on existing good practice.
95. Leadership and management of special educational needs in the school are good. This includes the SENCO and the manager of the special units, who are supported well by the new headteacher. They form an energetic and dynamic team with a thoughtful and practical agenda for the future. The needs of pupils in mainstream classes and those in the special units benefit from highly professional staff that keep abreast of developments in special educational needs and have the pupils at the very heart of their work. The calm and embracing climate for learning in the school is a key value shared and fostered by management. Resources, including a sensory room, are good overall.
96. The governors fulfil all their statutory obligations. They are highly supportive of the work of the school and many of them are actively involved in efforts to improve the provision. Governors receive accurate and relevant information from the headteacher and other senior staff, including important news of the standards achieved by pupils. There is regular and useful communication between the headteacher and the very effective chair of governors.
97. Governors gain a good insight into the work of the school through regular visits, discussions with staff, and reports from co-ordinators, They play an effective role in the performance management and, throughout the school, this process is contributing well to school as well as individual development.
98. The governors are increasingly aware of how well pupils are getting on and what the school is doing to improve the standards they achieve. This has been possible because governors had a say in the format and content of the revised school development plan. Many governors have been helped to understand what is involved and how to make a positive contribution by making effective use of training provided by the Local Education Authority. They have a very good grasp of the school priorities and are clear about their role in monitoring and supporting them.

99. The school development plan is a very effective tool for school improvement, especially in relation to raising standards. The plan identifies the right issues for improvement. Many of the initiatives of the past year have brought significant benefits to the pupils. Other developments have tackled more structural and procedural issues, such as approaches to assessment and management responsibilities. The inspection judges that such important measures have been effectively improved and are very likely to lead to longer-term benefits for pupils. The staff are clear about the part they can play in the school's improvement because they are sufficiently involved and understand the part they are expected to play in bringing the school development plan to life.
100. Financial planning is very effective because it is closely linked to the educational goals. The headteacher works closely with the finance committee and finance officer to ensure a high standard of checks and balances on the school's financial position. The more structured approach to monitoring the school's educational priorities is proving increasingly effective in allowing governors to assess the effectiveness of important spending decisions in a more precise and useful way.
101. The very effective day-to-day administration ensures the smooth running of the school, and allows the headteacher to focus her attention on the needs of the pupils and staff. Good use is made of new technologies to support the monitoring of pupils' educational progress and attendance. ICT is used increasingly to present information on pupils' performance to governors and parents.
102. The school has made a good start in seeking best value through audits of resources and their usefulness. The headteacher and finance officer ensure that enough quotations are obtained before any major purchase is made.
103. There are enough suitably qualified staff to meet the needs of the curriculum and the pupils, and a good blend of experienced and less experienced teachers. Teachers and teaching assistants benefit from very good opportunities for their professional development. Newly qualified and appointed teachers are highly positive about the level of support and guidance they receive. The willingness of all staff to learn and to share ideas reflects the particularly strong team spirit. The high level of commitment of the school's support staff contributes well to the effective running of the school and the positive relationships that prevail.
104. The accommodation is satisfactory for the school's current needs. However, the area for outside learning for the Reception class is unsatisfactory and does not meet the needs of young children's development and learning. Resources in all subject areas are adequate and are being improved in the light of recent audits by co-ordinators.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

105. In order to further improve the quality of pupils' learning and the standards they achieve, especially in Reception and in Years 1 and 2, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) Further develop the role of the subject co-ordinators by:**
- extending the programme of monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning and the standards achieved by pupils (paragraphs 95,142,151,159)
 - developing a clear and practical policy for teaching and learning (51, 95)
 - adopting a consistent approach to setting precise individual targets for improvement in English, mathematics and science (79,144,151,152)
- (2) Improve the quality and range of learning opportunities in the Reception class, especially through developing the outside area**
(9,43,56,110)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

43

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

45

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	8	22	12	0	0	0
Percentage	2	19	51	28	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR–Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)

247

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

33

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

YR–Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

24

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

56

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

1

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

28

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

13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.6
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	18	16	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	9	12
	Girls	13	11	14
	Total	23	20	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (82)	59 (79)	76 (88)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	12	13
	Girls	13	14	12
	Total	23	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (88)	76 (91)	74 (82)
	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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	12	17	29

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	7	10
	Girls	13	14	16
	Total	21	21	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (71)	68 (61)	84 (86)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	6	9
	Girls	13	13	15
	Total	20	19	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (71)	61 (75)	77 (89)
	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	231	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	5	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	2	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)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	628

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002/03
	£
Total income	744,083
Total expenditure	714,436
Expenditure per pupil	2,892
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,594
Balance carried forward to next year	42,242

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
<hr/>	
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	232
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.	57	40	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	40	51	4	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	54	4	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	44	16	12	0
The teaching is good.	49	41	6	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	47	22	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	37	1	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	43	3	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	29	51	13	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	53	35	3	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	53	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	40	4	0	9

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

106. Children enter the Reception class in the September of the school year in which they reach their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection, all of the twenty-eight children were attending full-time.
107. Since the last inspection, the provision for children in the Reception class (Foundation Stage) has improved. From being unsatisfactory last time, provision is now satisfactory. Results of baseline assessments show that children's attainment on entry varies considerably between year groups. Overall, the attainment is broadly average. The children make sound progress because the teaching is consistently satisfactory and occasionally better. This is an improvement on the last inspection when teaching was unsatisfactory. Most of the children, including those with special educational needs, are likely to achieve, or nearly achieve, the Early Learning Goals.
108. Overall, the curriculum is sound and has been reviewed so as to take account of the national requirements for children in the Foundation Stage. There is a satisfactory range of suitably structured activities across all six areas of learning. However, there remains scope to strengthen the curriculum by providing more quality opportunities for well-structured play and learning through activity.
109. The outside area for the Reception offers only limited opportunities to extend children's learning and development. It is too small and is not well planned or resourced. The children need regular opportunities to learn through resources, such as climbing apparatus, and by working on a larger, 'messy' and more active scale than is possible indoors.
110. The Reception class is very much part of the school and the children confidently move into Year 1. The Reception staff work together well as a team and foster good relationships with the children. Planning has been improved since the last inspection so that all areas of learning are now adequately covered. An agreed approach to assessing how well children are getting on is beginning to make planning for the next stage in their learning more effective. All staff need to develop their role in intervening in the children's learning by taking full account of earlier assessments. This is particularly so when they are looking to support and extend the children's learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

111. The class provides well for this area of learning, both in planned activities and in daily routines. Teaching is effective and most of the children achieve the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Foundation Stage. All members of staff have consistent and fair expectations of good behaviour and of what the children can achieve. The children learn to take turns, recognise right from wrong and behave very well in all situations. They are becoming more confident and are prepared to 'have a go' at new things.
112. The adults are good role models in the way they conduct themselves and relate to the children. Children of all backgrounds get on together well with each other, older children and with adults. They have a genuine sense of belonging to a family and a school community. They were proud to take their places with older children at the assembly for parents and sang with confidence and delight. Those with special educational needs feel very much part of the class and are fully included in all the activities.
113. The adults know the children well. Their observations of, and conversations with the children are proving increasingly effective in giving them an insight into individual achievements and needs. Any minor mishaps or unwanted behaviour is dealt with in a positive way that encourages the child to take responsibility for their action.

114. Children new to the class settle in quickly; even the less confident ones soon learn to join in and feel 'at home'. The induction programme helps children and their parents to feel more confident about starting school. The children respond well and want to learn because staff encourage them through good example and fair praise. The children look after their belongings, change on their own for games and willingly help to 'tidy up' after activities.

Communication, language and literacy

115. Most of the children are likely to reach or nearly reach the Early Learning Goals for reading, writing, and speaking and listening. Those who are at an earlier stage of development make as steady progress as others because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. However, opportunities to develop all these skills could be further developed, especially at times outside of the daily literacy session.
116. The children listen attentively, and some join in enthusiastically with stories and rhymes. They are encouraged to speak and listen to adults and to each other, in groups or as a whole class. They listen well as adults give explanations and instructions, and most of them take account of what others have to say and join in simple conversation. Although the adults know how and when to stimulate talk, there is scope for previous assessments to be used more effectively to guide the staff. In their imaginative play, some of the children are starting to take on the role of a character, such as a doctor in a surgery.
117. The children's literacy skills are promoted through an adapted version of the literacy session. This is at its most effective when there is time for different well-planned and supported group activities. The children enjoy looking at books in the class and in the nearby library. They talk about the pictures and follow the plot. They regularly take books home to share with their families. The 'reading sacks' scheme is not only popular, but also an effective way of encouraging even reluctant readers to enjoy stories. The children learn the sounds that letters make and many of them can think of words that start with the same sound. Teaching in this area is good.
118. Nearly all of the children recognise at least some letter shapes and form letters correctly. However, there is scope to provide more opportunities for children to write as part of the range of activities throughout the day so that they extend their understanding of writing as a means of communication. For example, there could be more opportunities for the children to send messages to each other, label a painting or write about what they see, feel and do.

Mathematical development

119. Most of the children are likely to reach or nearly reach the Early Learning goals. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are good opportunities to develop a mathematical understanding from planned situations, such as the adapted numeracy session. Satisfactory use is made of resources, including sand and water play, board games and bright displays, to foster an interest and understanding of number.
120. Opportunities for the children to develop their mathematical language and understanding at times outside of the daily planned session are often missed. At best, the children use their skills in everyday and practical ways, such as making, counting and sharing 'sausages' out of play dough.
121. The children are learning to count and recognise numbers at least up to ten. Many of them can count out the correct number of cubes to match a given number. They are encouraged to read and write numbers in the same way as letters. Adults make good use of mathematical language, and encourage the children to take part in counting games and songs, such as 'one, two buckle my shoe'. The children are increasingly confident in using and understanding simple terms, such as 'altogether' and 'share equally'. They enjoyed doubling numbers and were encouraged to look for patterns and to work things out in their own way. Several of them can identify odd and even numbers. As in other areas of learning, staff are not fully confident in assessing how the children are getting on during the lesson and using this to guide their approach.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

122. Teaching in this area of learning is sound. Although the children are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals in most aspects, their scientific understanding is restricted by a lack of opportunities for outdoor learning. More could be achieved if the children had more frequent access to the outside area, if it was bigger and if it included better opportunities to explore and investigate. For example, there are no trees, shrubs, hollows, shady places and tree trunks.
123. The children have satisfactory opportunities to develop their early geographical and historical knowledge and understanding. They handle computers well because they now have good access to resources. The improved resources for ICT are helping the children to develop their keyboard and other skills. The children use terms, such as 'mouse' and 'keyboard'. They confidently use the arrow keys to move the cursor. They are developing their early control skills by giving instructions to a simple floor 'robot'
124. Although there are opportunities to learn from playing with sand, water and construction kits, the children need more time to think and try ideas out for themselves. At their most effective, adults ask questions that get the children to talk and think. 'What do you think will happen if we put one more brick on here?' led a group of children to think, predict and experiment with a tower of wooden blocks. The children talk in simple terms about their home, school and locality. They are aware of features, such as the local shops and library. Some have a go at describing their route from home to school, using such language as 'round the corner' and 'up the hill'.

Physical development

125. With the help of sound teaching, the children make satisfactory progress and are likely to reach the Early Learning Goals. However, the outside area does not offer quality opportunities for regular, adventurous physical activity. This is in spite of the fact that staff make good use of other resources and space in and around the school. As a result of frequent use of the school hall and, if fine, the playground and adjoining field, most children develop good skills in dancing, jumping and balancing.
126. The children run, skip, and hop with increasingly good control. They move well to music and many of them are aware of their own space. Some are aware of others when moving around the hall. Adults encourage the children to explore and develop their skills so that they try new ideas out and improve their movements. They have reasonable skills in controlling wheeled vehicles, although it is difficult for them to develop their skills of control and negotiation because of the limited space and layout provided.
127. The children have a suitable range of opportunities and resources to develop their fine motor skills. In painting, drawing and writing, provision of small tools, such as brushes and pencils, helps the children to become more controlled. They show reasonable skill and determination in putting pieces of a construction set together.

Creative development

128. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and there is an adequate range of opportunities for the children to express themselves creatively. Nearly all the children are on course to reach or nearly reach the expected levels.
129. Adults encourage the children to use their imagination through role-play and stories. The children create imaginary environments and act out scenes in them, exploring ideas and feelings.
130. The children experiment with colours, materials and a variety of media to draw, paint, print, and make models. They used a 'bubble' technique to produce some colourful and imaginative paintings. They thoughtfully used crayons and pencils and paints in their own self-portraits. They enjoy listening to and making music, and have a good understanding of different sounds.

ENGLISH

Provision for English is good.

Strengths

- Good leadership and management
- The high standards in reading and writing in Year 6
- The very good standard of speaking in performance work in Year 6
- Pupils' use of imaginative writing in their stories and poems
- Pupils' very positive attitudes to literature and to writing
- The support and confidence that pupils give to each other as they work together, especially for pupils with special educational needs
- The good quality of the plan to develop English.

Areas for development

- To raise and secure standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2
- To set targets for learning with pupils that help them to grasp what they need to do to get there.

131. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average. By the end of Year 2 they are close to those seen nationally. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well overall. There has been good improvement in Years 3 to 6 since the previous inspection.
132. By the end of Year 2, standards in speaking and listening are broadly average. Pupils use a good range of vocabulary. They use language well and speak with growing confidence. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make steady progress, achieving more in lessons when there is a good balance of discussion between pupils and the teacher.
133. Standards in speaking and listening are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 speak with self-assurance, use a wide and expressive vocabulary, and explain their views clearly. The opportunity to speak in verse in front of an audience lifts the quality of performance work to well above that typically seen of pupils this age. In a performance of the narrative poem 'Hiawatha,' Years 5 and 6 pupils captured the rhythm and cadence of the lines and demonstrated a pleasing clarity of tone and control in their voice work. They listen to their teachers and to each other in their lessons with sustained concentration and interest. These prime features for learning are not built on evenly in each year group throughout the school to maximise learning. This is because teachers are often too eager to explain and direct the lessons and this inadvertently limits learning through talking. On these occasions, there is not enough time for pupils to respond in depth, so less is achieved than was intended.
134. Standards in reading are above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils make substantial progress in Years 3 to 6 from standards that are close to average at the end of Year 2. The school has set clear priorities for improvements in Years 1 and 2, and action taken is starting to make a difference. There is a refreshing approach to the teaching and learning of vital basic reading skills. Using letter sounds and word parts have helped pupils in Years 1 and 2 to tackle unfamiliar reading material. These methods support lower attaining pupils particularly well. In addition, the 'small steps' and 'hands-on' approach make reading activities very productive for pupils with special educational needs.
135. Often, teachers' careful choice of extracts from literature and their skilful guided discussions give pupils a deep knowledge of different kinds of text and their features. In Year 6, a focused discussion of the poem entitled 'Elegy' enabled all pupils to identify effects intended by the author. Lower attaining pupils could identify and name 'simile' and 'metaphor'. Provision is best where teachers provide a good level of challenge for different levels of ability in their class. For example,

- in Year 3, lower and average attaining pupils quickly make progress because teaching deals effectively with the gaps in their reading and writing skills. In addition, the school makes good use of a range of additional catch-up activities to improve the limited literacy skills of some pupils at the start of Year 3. These measures support those pupils who have gaps in their knowledge of letter sounds and understanding of books.
136. Pupils are enthusiastic about the stories they encounter. Many visit Oakham library with their parents and carers. They take books home and parents and members of the family give good support to pupils' reading. The positive attitude that pupils have towards books is consistent in all the classes. This is the case, even though the quality and range of books in the school's libraries and in some of the teaching resources have yet to be updated and broadened. The school has rightly given priority to this shortcoming. Most pupils are aware of how to use the library classification system to find information in non-fiction books. They know how to use the index and contents page to track information. They use dictionaries, glossaries and a thesaurus to aid their understanding and develop their language.
137. Standards in writing are close to average by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. The quality of pupils' writing in Years 5 and 6 is largely the result of the outstanding teaching knowledge of the subject leader. She uses key features of rich extracts from literature and non-fiction to teach pupils to write imaginatively and to organise information. Her contribution enables pupils in Years 5 and 6 to use words and phrases to create the effects they see in the work of poets and authors. They do so with flair and precision in their use of language. Visiting poets add zest to the power of words that pupils' use and an understanding of the devices that writers' use. For example, they write: "The hat loved the head." "The bin bag was sad because he was rubbish." "The tape was jealous of the CD."
138. Pupils write in the different forms of information and show this in the reports, explanations and stories. They write in subjects such as science and history, where particularly good writing is sensitive to the plight of people in the past. Where pupils write at length or use computers to enhance their writing, they learn to manipulate text well. Recent improvements in the quality of teaching in Year 2 have accelerated pupils' reading and writing skills to build on the very effective work in Year 1. Other factors that are lifting pupils' attainment in Year 2 include improved expectations of pupils' spelling, handwriting, punctuation and standards of presentation.
139. Adults are clear about what pupils are to learn and provide very good support for those with special educational needs. Those pupils who have a statement of their additional or different learning needs make good progress in their lessons with their classmates because activities are linked well to the targets in their individual learning plans. In afternoon sessions, when a small number of pupils from the special unit join their year group classes, the quality of care and support from staff and other pupils is evident in pupils' positive behaviour. However, more monitoring checks are needed to ensure that pupils' achieve well in these lessons.
140. The quality of teaching is good. This judgement takes into account the very good teaching in Years 5 and 6, and satisfactory lessons in Years 1 and 2. Lessons are based well on the literacy hour format. Teachers' weekly teaching plans vary in quality. Where plans are good, they promote learning for pupils of all abilities and this generates a good momentum to learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge and work well as a team, including their assistants. They plan interesting activities and make efforts to inspire pupils. They use technology well to enhance the quality of teaching and learning, including overhead projectors, videos and web-based resources for learning.
141. There is some way to go to ensure an even approach to the teaching of literacy skills so that pupils' achievements are built on year by year. For example, the quality of marking ranges from being incisive with opportune comments for pupils in Years 5 and 6, to that which does little to help pupils to know what they need to do to improve. Classroom assistants contribute well to lessons, especially when they are fully briefed. Where teaching is less effective, work set does not fully challenge the more-able pupils. Although important features of teaching, such as the setting of targets for learning, are not in place, the school has developed a refreshing climate of

professional self-reflection. Given the eagerness of staff and the plans to develop systematic checks on the quality of teaching for learning, a strong professional team is emerging.

142. Pupils learn well overall. They listen carefully, are conscientious learners and respond well to their teachers and the adults they work with. Relationships amongst pupils and between pupils, teachers and support staff are mutually supportive. Pupils are confident to take part even if mistakes are made because they know that this is part of learning. They develop good skills of independence when they are taught strategies to enable them to learn how to improve their work. They learn important skills, such as how to annotate text to grasp key information and how to learn from spelling errors. In Years 1 and 2, and in spite of steady and improving progress, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to learn for themselves and to fully achieve their potential. Even so, recent improvements bode well for the future.
143. Leadership is good. The subject leader has helped to set the priorities and much of her work has levered up pupils' achievement, notably in Years 3 to 6. Her significant qualities have set very high expectations of those pupils with a talent for the subject. As a result, the more-able pupils attain the higher levels in their national tests. With the support and determination of the headteacher and the Year 1 and 2 co-ordinator the school is in a strong position to ensure that all pupils benefit in this open and shared climate for learning.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject
- The above average standards achieved by pupils in Year 6.

Area for development

- Involving pupils in setting and reviewing individual targets for improvements
- Opportunities to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Years 1 and 2.

144. By the end of Year 2, standards in mathematics are average and by the end of Year 6 they are above average. Currently pupils, including those with special needs, are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and well in Years 3 to 6. This is an improvement compared with the last inspection report. This is mainly because the subject has been managed well, teaching has improved and there is an increasing sense of urgency in the pursuit for higher standards.
145. The inspection findings reflect the school's steadily improving results in national tests since 1999. The unconfirmed results for Year 6 pupils in 2003 are similar to those achieved in 2002, which were well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The inspection found nearly all pupils currently in Year 6 to be working at least to the expected Level 4 and about one in every three of them exceed this level.

The improving and above average standards achieved by Year 6 reflect the effective management of the subject and improving quality of teaching. The school has taken account of the recommendations of the last inspection and teaching has improved from satisfactory to good. Standards of work in investigative and problem-solving aspects of mathematics are now good because pupils have better opportunities to discuss and try out their ideas. Planning for individual lessons is effective and pupils as well as staff know what they are hoping to learn from the lesson. Although more needs to be done to use and apply ICT to support and extend learning, a good start has been made to improve the quality and understanding of data presentation and handling.

146. Pupils in Year 2 achieve broadly average standards in all aspects of mathematics. This reflects the pupils' unconfirmed results in the latest national tests and is a significant improvement on 2002. Pupils in Year 2 have a reasonable command of mathematical terms, such as 'lowest' and

'highest' and use signs and symbols correctly. Teaching seen was good because it encouraged pupils to work things out for themselves and to share their ideas. Pupils solve simple problems, find patterns in numbers and make sensible suggestions for the next number in a sequence. Nearly all of them can point to patterns of odd and even numbers in a hundred square. The more-able pupils can pick out the mathematical operation needed to solve a problem. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher knew just how to extend their thinking by getting them to make up questions about halving and doubling numbers for each other. Most Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of shape, space and measurement. They describe two and three-dimensional shapes using terms such as 'angle', 'solid' and 'face'.

147. By Year 6, pupils solve real life problems associated with money or measurements. Work on the calendar shows pupils looking carefully at numbers in order to find out patterns. They measure angles accurately and most of them can draw to scale. All of the teaching seen was at least good and some was better. Taken together with teaching in Years 1 and 2, teaching has improved and so too has pupils' learning. Throughout the school, the National Numeracy Strategy has been used well to lift standards in number. Pupils in Year 2 order numbers to 100, with almost one in three of them able to order to 1000. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is particularly good, with most Year 6 pupils ordering fractions and decimals. They understand multiples, square numbers and factors and have carried out good work on negative numbers. They use simple algebra to calculate longer mathematical statements. Teaching in some of the numeracy sessions was particularly effective in getting pupils to explain and demonstrate their ideas and workings. This helped pupils to express themselves and to develop their understanding.
148. Useful links are increasingly being made between mathematics and other areas of the curriculum. For example, graphs, bar charts and Venn diagrams were used to record the results of investigations in science and geography. Literacy links are evident in the recording of explanations to accompany investigations. However, there is scope to develop opportunities for using ICT to support both teaching and learning.
149. The good management and leadership of the subject contribute to the improving standards. The action plan for the subject's development is clear and identifies effective strategies for raising standards of attainment. Effective assessment procedures are turned into useful, individual targets in some, but not all classes. Involving pupils in the setting and review of their targets needs to become a consistent feature. Recent monitoring by the co-ordinator provides an increasingly accurate and useful overview of the quality of teaching and learning. The school plans for this to become a regular feature in order to maintain standards and support needs. This is especially relevant in Years 1 and 2, where standards slipped in 2002 and, although improving, require continued careful monitoring. The improving results for the current Year 2 pupils can be related to effective intervention to support the quality of education. This was made possible by the improved monitoring of what was happening in the classroom and its impact on standards.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is good.

Strengths

- Above average standards by Year 6 and improving standards by Year 2
- Shared practice between staff and support staff
- Relationship between staff and pupils.

Area for development

- Monitoring of teaching and learning and linking this to standards
- Opportunities for pupils to learn independently
- Further improvement of standards in Years 1 and 2.
- Teachers' questioning skills, to extend pupils' thinking
- Marking, to increase pupils' knowledge of their performance
- Involving pupils in setting and reviewing individual targets for improvements.

150. By the end of Year 2, standards are average and by the end of Year 6 they are above average. Currently pupils, including those with special needs, are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and well in Years 3 to 6. This builds on the strengths noted in the last inspection. The increasingly incisive analysis of strengths and weaknesses in national test and other assessments provides a valuable starting point for developing good practice and targeting resources. A system for 'tracking' pupils' progress has been developed and is proving increasingly effective. The school rightly intends to take full advantage of available assessment information to refine individual targets for improvement and to involve pupils and their parents in the process.
151. By the end of Year 2 pupils understand how a simple electrical circuit works, talk with reasonable confidence about the effects of exercise on the body and have investigated simple forces with model cars. In recent investigations they carefully observed, recorded and drew conclusions about how bean seeds grow in different conditions. They have developed their scientific vocabulary and use words such as '*observations*' and '*nutrients*' when answering their teacher's questions. They know that plants need light, water and soil for healthy growth. As they examine the different stages of a plant's growth they compare and describe the results of their findings with well-phrased responses. They talk about the plants they keep at home; for example, how one plant prefers rain to tap water. One pupil, seeking to explain the effect of light deprivation, says, "It looks old and tired, like someone who is fifty".
152. Pupils in Year 3 make a good start in their next phase of scientific investigation. At home they keep a plant diary of their seed and compare their result with those of plants growing in different conditions. They enthusiastically measure plant growth in teams and discuss and attempt to explain their conclusions on "what makes the difference?"
153. Pupils' progress accelerates in Years 3 to 6 so that by the end of Year 6 they have investigated solids and liquids and how they change under certain conditions. They build on their knowledge of electricity and forces by considering the light around them and testing the effect of the size of a model parachute on the aerodynamics of its descent. During inspection, pupils added to their knowledge of root growth and soil conditions by making careful observations under magnification. Pupils discuss with each other their plan for the investigations, the questions they will ask, the prediction they will make and how they will ensure a fair test.
154. Pupils are keen to participate in scientific investigations and have high levels of curiosity about what might be the outcome of their activities. Overall, they record their work clearly. This was particularly evident in some of the clearly structured bean diaries completed at home by pupils in Year 3. Relationships between all staff and pupils are very good and pupils behave well. Pupils' enthusiasm and positive response were apparent in the science club, run by the new co-ordinator, where pupils thoughtfully designed and planned their miniature gardens.
155. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. As a result of teachers' good subject knowledge and well-organised lessons, pupils make increasingly good gains in their scientific knowledge and notably increase their vocabulary. Teachers plan well with their teaching assistants and support teachers. Pupils are clear about what is expected of them and know they will get a high quality of support from well-trained teaching assistants. Time at the beginning of lessons is usefully spent in refreshing and reinforcing pupils' knowledge. While teachers' questioning assesses pupils' prior knowledge, it is less common for them to really extend their thinking. Opportunities are sometimes missed for the more able or imaginative pupils to develop and share ideas and express opinions. However, it is clear that teachers are working hard to encourage pupils to be "scientists". This was particularly apparent in a Year 3 lesson, where the teacher gave pupils time to reflect upon their answer and consider if it would give them enough information to understand what had taken place in the growth of their plant. Equally in Year 6, the teacher encouraged pupils to take their rather vague descriptions of their observations and make them more accurate and 'scientific'.

156. Teachers successfully encourage and sometimes inspire pupils with learning difficulties to make their contribution to the lesson. In most situations, teachers ensure that pupils know how to record scientific investigations; the ground for this is laid particularly well in Year 3 and 4. By Year 6, pupils have developed good recording skills. Whilst there is good analysis of pupils' performance over time, day to day marking is inconsistent. Some teachers make informative comments, others offer little that will help pupils to improve their work.
157. The subject leader is very new to the post and is being effectively introduced to the role by a senior colleague. There is a well-founded and very clear plan for the subject's future development. The right priorities have been identified and realistically costed. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has begun, but is not yet developed into a clear and robust programme linked closely to standards pupils' achieve. Overall, learning resources are adequate, although a shortage of microscopes limited the opportunities for older pupils to make careful observations. Assessment procedures are secure and contribute to the improved planning. In some year groups the information leads to individual targets for improvement and this is proving effective in raising expectations and standards. Pupils are not fully involved in setting and reviewing their own, short-term targets throughout the school. With the planned improved monitoring and a careful eye on standards in Years 1 and 2, the subject is well placed for further improvement.

ART AND DESIGN

Strengths

- Above average standards by Year 6
- The use of outside expertise
- The wide range and breadth of experience.

Areas for development

- The use of sketch books
- Teaching drawing skills throughout the whole school.

158. A scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and sketchbooks and discussions with the co-ordinator show that standards in art and design are above average by the end of Year 2 and 6. The high standards reported in the last inspection have been maintained.
159. By the end of Year 2, the pupils have experienced both two and three-dimensional work. Some pupils have produced good quality paintings of sunflowers and they have been taught to mix colours for skin colours. During Arts' Week they have had the opportunity to increase their knowledge and understanding of materials and processes, such as weaving with pieces of willow.
160. By the end of Year 6, pupils have experienced a wide range of techniques. A strength of this area of the curriculum is the use of clay modelling. The school has a kiln, which is used regularly and pupils produce interesting pieces of work using the locality for inspiration. Year 5 and 6 made horseshoes based on those at Oakham Castle, which are particularly effective. A co-operative piece of work inspired by Rutland Water also made good use of clay work. Pupils are learning to paint in the style of various artists, such as Monet and David Hockney.
161. Pupils with special educational needs are given a wide range of experiences and their work is valued. They use colour and texture to create their designs. Art is used to complement other subjects, such as science. Pupils skilfully recorded sources of light using paint and crayons.
162. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on teaching as no lessons were seen during the inspection. However, as the standard of work seen was good, it would seem likely that teaching is at least satisfactory. Pupils use sketchbooks, although there is scope to use them more to practise and refine skills, such as drawing. Pupils achieve some high standard work during specific events, such as 'Ghana Day'.

163. Teachers usefully record pupils' attainment against national guidelines each term. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator is keen to ensure that progression is clearly monitored throughout the subject. The work is planned following national guidelines so it provides a broad and balanced framework. The co-ordinator monitors planning to ensure that appropriate work is being covered and has begun to monitor the work in the school through lesson observations. Although art has not been the specific focus in school development, nevertheless, the high standards have been maintained.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Strengths

- Teachers' planning and the links across the curriculum
- The management of pupils
- Support for special educational needs
- Good leadership.

Areas for development

- Teachers' subject knowledge
- Challenge for older pupils
- Recording.

164. Since the last inspection, provision for the subject has improved considerably mainly through effective leadership, better time allocation and a sharper focus on the design process. As a result standards for pupils at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected for their age. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
165. Year 2 pupils investigate materials, such as fabrics for *Joseph's coat*. They select different colours and types of fabric that will match the design they made on computer. They use simple tools and sewing techniques to join the pieces of fabric. The finished product is of good quality for most pupils. When talking about their product, pupils can explain why colours and fabrics were a personal choice, although they are not always sure of the strengths and weaknesses of their finished product. With prompts, however, most pupils are able to say how they would like to make their coat better.
166. Pupils in Year 6 are clearly focused on the importance of their ideas suiting a purpose and of selecting and using appropriate resources, for example to create a moving object. In Year 3, pupils worked well as a team to design a monster, using a pump syringe to control its movement. Lots of good ideas were generated and pupils with special educational needs took a full part in the lesson. Pupils also evaluate their work more precisely. In Year 4 and 5, pupils carefully checked whether their lighting circuit met the original specification and progressed well despite their limited literacy skills. Year 6 pupils use more advanced knowledge when exploring structures, such as shelters and footwear. With good support from the country rangers they test the structure of their shelter to see how stable and weatherproof it is. They thoughtfully construct patterns and templates to make a durable moccasin. In discussion, sewing was felt to be the most difficult task, but pupils felt their designs held up well and they were keen to personalise these with a good quality of finish.
167. Teaching is satisfactory and includes several good features. Work sampling suggests that teachers' subject knowledge is consistent across the school and standards have improved as a result of improved planning and support. Teachers make good links with information technology, art and mathematics. However, these connections tend to enhance those subjects more than focus on the learning points directly connected with design and technology. Generally there is low volume in recording for older pupils and opportunities are lost for more-able pupils to use their design plan more independently. However, teachers plan lessons which interest and stimulate pupils. During the Design and Technology week tasks from across the school were designed and made to a good standard. Teachers include those with special educational needs purposefully in all learning. Pupils are managed well and, as a result, try hard to give of their best.

168. The subject is led well by the deputy who gives good quality support to teachers. He organises subject events, which further the skills of both teachers and pupils. Opportunities to observe lessons is a developing feature and one that the school intends to extend in the future.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

Strengths

- Above average standards by Year 6
- Opportunities to learn through first-hand experience.

Areas for development

- Opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor standards
- Further opportunities for pupils to engage in personal research.

169. Geography and history alternate each half term throughout the school. At the time of the inspection, geography was not being taught and so no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. Evidence based on lesson observations for history, together with a review of pupils' work, photographic evidence and teachers' learning in both subjects, confirms that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress throughout the school. By Year 2, standards are in line with the national expectations, with the more-able pupils now making better gains in knowledge, skills and understanding. By Year 6, standards are above the national expectations in both subjects. Overall, standards have improved since the last inspection. Raising standards in geography in Years 1 and 2 was a key issue for improvement in the last inspection. This has been effectively addressed through the introduction of a well-structured scheme of work. Work set is now better matched to pupils' needs and skills are built-up in a systematic way.
170. By the end of Year 2, pupils know the countries of the United Kingdom. They follow the different journeys of Barnaby Bear with interest and a growing awareness of different places and their characteristics. They are learning about similarities and differences between places. They show their developing map skills by drawing a plan of the classroom. They have a good understanding of their locality through studies and observations of the school and its immediate area. They include local features, such as the park and parish church on their maps. More-able pupils describe the route from home to school using geographical terms, such as 'main road', 'nearby' and 'neighbourhood'. They know that Oakham is a town in Rutland and that it is smaller and has fewer facilities than Leicester. Some of them know the four points of the compass, and use their numeracy skills when noting and charting simple weather conditions. Their considerable curiosity in the subject is encouraged by the way geography is brought to life and made to be relevant through first-hand experiences and stories.
171. By Year 2, pupils have a sound understanding of historical investigation. A good deal of emphasis is placed on visits and visitors, in order to improve pupils' practical experiences and investigative skills. They become history 'detectives' as they search the school for clues of change. They eagerly recall their visit to a Victorian House as part of their residential trip. They have a clear understanding of chronology through creating personal timelines and are starting to relate this to events over longer periods of time. They are all familiar with terms, such as 'long ago' and the more able ones used 'pre-historic' in reference to dinosaurs 'because there were no people around then to see what it was like'. They recall famous events and people from previous studies, including Florence Nightingale and the Crimean War. Teaching in the one lesson seen was good. When studying The Great Fire of London, more-able pupils suggested why Samuel Peps' own house did not burn down. The lesson gave pupils a lot of well-presented information so that that they all knew what had happened and how London was changed as a result of the fire. Pupils' understanding of different sources of evidence and its significance was encouraged and developed well. Some understand that historical information can vary according to the view of the writer.

172. By the end of Year 6, pupils' geographical studies of erosion, the course of a river and the seashore, help them to gain a good understanding of the influence of physical conditions in shaping the landscape. They use Ordnance Survey maps and apply their numeracy skills to understand symbols, distances, co-ordinates and scales. Books created during and after residential visits to such places as Wales, are very well presented and show how much pupils have learned. They compare lives, landscapes and living conditions of Oakham with the Rainforests of Brazil. Such studies help them to challenge stereotypes and contribute well to their social, moral and cultural development. As in Years 1 and 2, the emphasis on enquiry and discussion encouraged in lessons is helping to develop pupils' understanding, interest and ability to use geographical language. More able pupils confidently draw on terms, such as 'landscape' and 'settlement' and 'erosion' when talking about their learning.
173. Learning in history in Years 3 to 6 is enhanced by many visits to museums and the excellent residential opportunities. Pupils in Year 4 prepared for their visit to the Yorvik Centre with a recapping of some of the main features of Viking life. They used their knowledge of Viking place names to identify possible early settlements. The more-able pupils speculated why some settlements were clustered in certain areas. They are increasingly aware of looking at evidence from different standpoints. They balanced the pluses of the Dane law against minuses of the Danes' reputation for plunder and pillage. The teacher made good use of technology to present information and to encourage research from the BBC website. Pupils in Year 6 have developed a good grasp of chronology placing the Egyptians, Romans and Normans in correct historical order and noting outstanding events of the periods. Teaching seen was good and often better. Teachers use good questioning skills to promote pupils' learning and understanding, and provide the chance for pupils to work together in pairs or small groups. Lively teaching and the on-going dialogue between pupils and adults generate much of the pupils' interest in the subject. This gives scope for greater understanding through discussion and the development of key skills, such as 'sifting' evidence. Pupils have a good knowledge of their current topic of the Egyptians and a well-developed idea of the significance of different forms of evidence. Excellent links were made with other subjects when the teacher got pupils to discuss 'advertisements' for products associated with different Gods. They applied their knowledge of persuasive texts to make up their own 'snappy slogans' and 'tempting descriptions' to sell statues and amulets. At the same time, pupils were able to consider aspects of the beliefs and traditions of other cultures, including the Egyptians' belief in the afterlife.
174. Leadership and management of the subjects are good. Standards, especially in geography in Years 1 and 2, have improved since the last inspection. There is a useful range of documentation in place to support teachers in their planning. The very good opportunities for pupils to take part in a number of field trips and residential holidays make a particularly strong contribution to learning in both history and geography.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Strengths

- Planning and links across the curriculum
- Support for all pupils
- Good subject leadership
- The contribution of teaching assistants.

Areas for development

- The integration of ICT in all subjects
- The level of resources to increase expertise.

175. Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are at expected levels. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whose home language is not English, achieve well. Pupils entering Year 1 do so well prepared in mouse control and are confident with computer use. In Year 1 they use a word processor to write simple sentences and 'paint' programmes to create designs for Joseph's coat of many colours. With support, they input data they have gathered on

simple surveys of favourite colours, fruits and pets. Pupils understand how word processors can be used for story writing, helping them to correct mistakes and provide punctuation for them. They enjoy using the computer to find places on a world map and to play educational games.

176. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 get a good start using functions of communication technology. Year 3 pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of e-mail. By the end of a lesson they had memorised the necessary operations. Pupils in Year 4 increased their knowledge of using the computer to control things by creating a "Funky Flower" using simple formulae. By the end of Year 6, pupils are more creative and confidently use fonts, colour and size to edit and improve text. They import graphics to enhance their presentations. Year 6 pupils have greatly enjoyed their connections with the secondary school where they found out how to present their "Flashdance" multimedia presentations. In other subjects, such as mathematics and science, they use more complex programs to illustrate the data they collect and spreadsheets to present results. These are displayed attractively in bar charts, graphs and pie charts. Although pupils do not have individual e-mail addresses they confidently use an e-mail facility and access the Internet to research topics in history, geography and English. Good quality websites are used to support or boost children's learning in core subjects.
177. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Whilst opportunities during the inspection to see teaching in Years 1 and 2 classes were limited, it is clear from discussion with pupils and their work that the subject is well delivered and that pupils are making good progress. They are supported well and teachers are increasingly linking the subject across the curriculum purposefully. Links with secondary pupils support young keyboard learners with their work. A significant element is the contribution support staff make to the quality of learning. This was highlighted in Year 4 where the teaching assistant followed up good preparation on the interactive whiteboard, using Harry Potter websites for biographical detail on J.K.Rowling. Teachers manage their pupils well and plan lessons well. Whilst the content is useful, care should be taken that it does not become a replacement for regular 'hands-on' experiences.
178. The co-ordinator makes a substantial contribution to the improvement of the subject. Provision for information and communication technology has greatly improved since the last inspection. The quality of resources is much improved and new hard and software is available to classes and high quality training and support has been provided to raise standards. There is a comprehensive action plan, which includes further net working across the school and a review of the school website. The plan is well under way and will contribute to the raising of standards in the near future. The number of computers per classroom, whilst adequate, does not quite match up to the potential pupils have and this does present some constraints upon their learning.

MUSIC

Strengths

- The range of opportunities to sing, perform and experience music from other countries
- The contribution of specialist teaching
- Pupils' enjoyment of music.

Areas for development

- Monitoring standards and the quality of teaching and learning.

179. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards in music are at least in line with national expectations. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained in the areas of music which were previously commented on. It was not possible to make an overall judgement on the teaching and learning of music because insufficient evidence was seen during the inspection.
180. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a wide range of experiences including composing and singing. A lesson and an assembly seen showed that the younger pupils are maintaining a satisfactory quality of singing. In a Year 1 lesson, the pupils had good opportunities to record their own

compositions. They are learning to follow ways that music is written down. Pupils are good at following the 'conductor' and are developing the idea of organising musical sounds.

181. Pupils in Year 6 have good opportunities to perform in front of an audience. Pupils from the special unit are included in the work in the school and enjoy and benefit from the experience. The school is fortunate to have specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6; the result can be seen in performances and assemblies. Pupils learn to use musical terms naturally and accurately. They have good opportunities to use percussion instruments during lessons.
182. There are opportunities for pupils to learn musical instruments, such as woodwind and string instruments. Outside tuition from peripatetic music teachers further enhances the curriculum. The school has a good orchestra, allowing pupils to extend and develop their talents. Pupils' experience of multi-cultural music is developed through occasions, such as 'Ghana Day' when they had the chance to play traditional drums.
183. It is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching throughout the school because only one lesson was seen during the inspection. However, pupils do achieve a satisfactory standard of work in singing and performance, therefore it is reasonable to assume that the standard of teaching in those areas must be at least satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only been in place since the beginning of the school year. Therefore she has had little time to support the non-specialist staff. Teaching is not monitored yet. Teachers assess pupils each term so that pupils' achievement is identified and staff can help the children progress. Resources are adequate although there is scope in some classes for information and communication technology to be used more frequently.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Strengths

- Opportunities for and achievements in competitive sports and swimming
- Standards of dance.

Areas for development

- Appointment of a permanent co-ordinator.

184. Only one lesson was seen during the inspection. It is, therefore, not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching or standards attained in the subject at the end of Years 2 and 6. However, pupils' performance in dance does suggest that their skills and control by the end of Year 6 are above average. All pupils attend swimming classes and most of them meet national expectations by the end of Year 6. Achievements in competitive sports are a strong feature in the school.
185. Pupils in Year 3 move with confidence and demonstrate growing skills of catching and throwing. Pupils work well with a partner. They negotiate space rapidly and respond well to instructions. Pupils with special needs are supported well by other pupils and their confidence and agility allow them to fully participate. Progress is similar to that of other pupils, given the different starting points.
186. Pupils use the skills they gain very well in competitive sports and extra-curricular activities, where many of the pupils excel. The school has a wide range of trophies and awards for success in competitive netball, tag rugby and football and is rightly proud of these achievements. Those with a talent in sport are encouraged. Horse riding is available as an additional provision for those pupils with special educational needs in Years 3 -6. The breadth of activities adds opportunities that are relevant and stimulating for pupils and demonstrates the school's efforts to meet pupils' needs and challenge their physical skills.
187. It would be unfair to make a judgement on the quality of the subject leadership because there was limited evidence during the week of inspection. Two teachers have responsibility as an interim measure until a subject leader is appointed. This arrangement is effective in maintaining standards. Improvements since the previous inspection include clear planning for the subject in each year group. Pupils, including those with special needs, benefit from residential experiences with a strong activity and outward-bound bias. This provides a unique opportunity for them to engage in rigorous and adventurous physical activity in an often- stimulating setting. Resources and their management are adequate, but are topped up by the rotation of resources specific to the games and skills planned for the term.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, provision for religious education is satisfactory.

Strengths

- A range of faiths is studied
- The Christian ethos existing throughout the school
- Specialist knowledge.

Areas for development

- Monitoring of teaching and learning
- Marking could be more effective in helping pupils to know how they can improve.

188. Standards are line with those expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. A judgement has been made by observing lessons, analysing pupils' work, talking to children, looking at resources and displays of work around the school. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

189. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a sound knowledge of Bible stories. They are introduced to different religions, such as Judaism. They learn about special clothes used in religions and the school has access to sufficient resources, including books and religious artefacts. They explore their feelings and experiences and relate them to their own lives, such as their 'special place'.
190. The school has a strong sense of moral values and the pupils know the Reverend Canon well as he takes lessons and assemblies regularly. Consequently, pupils relate religious education to community values. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught about a good range of faiths and beliefs. Pupils in Year 6 were particularly enthusiastic about their visit to a Sikh Temple and understood the community values associated with Sikhism. The same pupils held a Harvest Festival tea for the local elderly citizens; again relating religion to their own lives. Such events contribute to the development of the strong moral and social values being taught in the school.
191. There is sufficient coverage of this area of the curriculum, but the co-ordinator rightly intends to monitor the provision and standards so that she is aware of any improvements that should take place. Pupils are usefully assessed each term on the level they attain. Resources for this subject are adequate and the school borrows a range of resources from a local centre.
192. Overall, the quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Pupils follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus. They have good opportunities to relate Christianity to their own lives, making the subject relevant and meaningful to them. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and all are fully included in the lessons. A new co-ordinator is now in post and in a good position to raise standards within the school. A clear agenda for the subject's development has been prepared. Marking in the pupils' books could be more effective to show the pupils' how they can improve.