

INSPECTION REPORT

KIRTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Kirton, Boston

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120415

Headteacher: Mrs S Knutton

Reporting inspector: Lynne Read
21199

Dates of inspection: 4-7 November 2002

Inspection number: 248121

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Station Road Kirton Boston Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE20 1HY
Telephone number:	01205 722236
Fax number:	01205 722108
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs V Hall
Date of previous inspection:	2 February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21199	Mrs L Read	Registered inspector	Special educational needs Foundation Stage (support) Religious education	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9132	Mrs J Godfrey	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Staffing and accommodation Finance
27545	Mr A Scott	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Design and technology Citizenship Information and communication technology History	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19897	Mr A Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Geography	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
19774	Mrs M Docherty	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Music	Staffing and accommodation Finance
31790	Mr M Jones	Team inspector	Assessment Physical education Science	
21552	Mr P B McAlpine	Team inspector	Foundation Stage	

The inspection contractor was:

PBM Inspection Services Ltd
PO Box 524
Cheadle
Staffordshire
ST10 4RN

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Page

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

6

Information about the school
How good the school is
What the school does well
What could be improved
How the school has improved since its last inspection
Standards
Pupils' attitudes and values
Teaching and learning
Other aspects of the school
How well the school is led and managed
Parents' and carers' views of the school

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

10

The school's results and pupils' achievements
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13

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

15

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

17

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

18

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

19

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

22

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

23

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

28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Kirton Primary School is situated in the semi-rural village of the same name, close to Boston in Lincolnshire. With 426 pupils currently attending, it is bigger than most primary schools. Several pupils travel some distance from surrounding areas to attend. Children entering the Reception year have a range of learning experiences that have been below average overall in past years but are average for this year. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average at 29 per cent, although not all families choose to claim their entitlement. Forty per cent of pupils are on the school's list of special educational needs and this figure is above average. Of these, 1.9 per cent of pupils have a statement of special educational needs, which is in line with the average. Most pupils have a white United Kingdom background. A few pupils come from black African, Asian and white European families. Almost one per cent of pupils speak English as an additional language and this is just above average. The main first languages that these pupils speak are Chinese and Farsi. The incidence of pupils entering and leaving the school part way through their education is high at 23 per cent. The headteacher has been in post for one year, during which time she has made significant changes in school, and to the roles and responsibilities of the senior and subject managers.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Kirton Primary has undergone many important developments over the last year. It is an effective school with many strengths and only a few aspects left to improve. Present standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Attainment in reading is good but there is a need to improve writing further. Even so, attainment is better than in schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Good teaching leads to pupils making good progress and to positive attitudes, behaviour and relationships. The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors are good and focused on driving the school forwards. The school currently provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science, and art and design. When the 2002 National Curriculum test results are compared with similar schools, standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science were above average by the end of Year 6.
- Teaching is good and underpins the good rate of learning.
- New systems for checking pupils' attainment in English and mathematics are good and provide teachers with useful information to set learning targets for pupils and to plan lessons.
- The headteacher, the managers of the Foundation Stage, infant and junior sections, and the governors provide strong leadership and management. They provide a clear educational direction for the school and maintain good teamwork among staff.
- There is very good provision for pupils' social education and moral development is good. The emphasis on pupils' personal development results in good relationships, good attitudes to learning and good behaviour.
- There are good links with the community that bring many benefits to pupils' learning and much improved links between home and school.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing and opportunities for pupils to write at length when recording their work in other subjects.
- Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 1 to 6 and opportunities for pupils to use their skills when studying other subjects.
- The timetabling and management of the group sessions provided for pupils in Years 3 to 6 who need extra help in English and mathematics so that they do not miss parts of other lessons.
- Provision to prepare pupils for life in a multi-cultural society.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1998 and has made good progress in addressing the six key issues identified in the report. The planning of the curriculum is satisfactory and covers all the programmes of study. Improvements to the gathering and use of assessment information are supporting better progress and attainment. Problems relating to pupils missing lessons because of travel arrangements and music tuition are solved and all statutory requirements are in place. Attainment in ICT remains below expectations but substantial improvements have been made in this subject over the last year. Other notable improvements include; the way that staff and governors now check and evaluate all aspects of the school's work, pupils' attainment and progress in classes from Year 1 to 6 and more fruitful links with parents. The governors are now actively involved in deciding how the school should move forwards.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Children in the nursery and Reception classes make good progress in all areas of learning and, often very good progress in communication and language, number work and personal development. The good progress is a result of good teaching. Results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 2 have been below the national average in the past and the rate of improvement has been below the national trend. Results in Year 2 in 2002 dipped to well below average, largely because there was a much higher-than-average number of pupils with special educational needs in the group. The school has introduced measures to improve learning in Years 1 and 2, including regular checks on progress, setting challenging targets for learning and a better emphasis on early reading and writing skills. Inspection findings are that attainment in the Year 2 classes is around the average mark in reading, writing, mathematics, and science. The results of the tests in Year 6 for 2002 showed a good improvement in mathematics and English. The school missed the 'C' or average grade in English by a tiny margin and this represents a very good improvement on the previous year but there is room to improve standards in writing further. The current Year 6 group are attaining standards in their English, mathematics and science lessons that are average overall but progress in reading is better than in writing. Trends in attainment over time for Year 6 show an improvement in 2002 for English and mathematics. The new assessment and target setting system has enabled teachers to focus their lessons more accurately on what pupils are expected to achieve and has led to better progress. Boys do slightly better than girls in tests; during lessons there was no difference in progress. Attainment in ICT is below expectations but there have been significant improvements to teaching and learning over the last year. For almost all other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, attainment matches expectations. In art and design throughout the school and physical education in Years 1 and 2, it is above expectations. No judgement was made for history. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics but sometimes miss parts of other lessons. This could affect their progress in subjects such as science. Pupils who speak English as an additional language do well and have the support they need. Although the numbers of pupils entering the school part way through their education is high, there is no discernible effect on the overall standards attained.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils enjoy coming to school and have good attitudes to learning. They are well motivated and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour throughout school is much improved and is now good, both in lessons and during leisure time. Pupils understand and follow the rules and show good consideration for each other.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development is good and results in positive relationships between all members of the school community. Most pupils demonstrate good self-discipline and confidence.
Attendance	Attendance rates were below average for last year but have improved during this term to an average pattern.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good and underpins the good progress made by pupils. An appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy starts early in the nursery and Reception classes and is continued effectively throughout school. Teaching in these two subjects is mostly good with some very good practice seen. This ensures that pupils acquire the basic skills well although there are not enough planned opportunities for them to practise and consolidate their writing. The teaching of ICT has improved and has led to improved pupil progress in the subject, although standards are still below expectations. Throughout the school, lessons have clear aims that the teachers share with the class. This sets a purpose for the work and presents pupils with goals to work towards. Staff who have expertise in specific subjects advise their colleagues effectively and pupils benefit from specialist teaching sessions, for example in physical education and music. Teaching in the nursery and Reception classes is enhanced by the links between the areas of learning that allow children to practise and consolidate their skills. Focused teaching support for pupils who have special educational needs is good and leads to good progress in meeting their individual targets. Teachers ensure that pupils who speak English as an additional language are fully involved in discussions and make the expected progress. Where some lessons were satisfactory rather than good, the learning was interrupted by groups of pupils returning from sessions or there were few opportunities for pupils to investigate and find out things for themselves.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory overall. Good in the nursery and Reception classes with lots of investigative and practical experiences. There is a satisfactory range of learning opportunities in Years 1 to 6 but not enough planned opportunities for pupils to use their writing and ICT skills when studying other subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Those pupils who receive additional support in the classroom, at lunchtimes and for behaviour management have very good provision. Some pupils have good support in focused teaching groups where they make good progress. The timetabling and management of this support is not satisfactory because pupils sometimes miss parts of other lessons and so lose continuity in learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory support takes account of pupils' needs and they make good progress, equal to that of their peers. They benefit from the good teaching of speaking and listening skills across the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall but there are some weaknesses. Pupils have a well-defined sense of right and wrong and of fair play. They are polite, friendly and helpful. Pupils develop a good understanding of local and national heritage but their understanding of the different cultures that make up our society is limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Adults in the school form good relationships with the pupils and care for their individual needs effectively. Positive strategies and reward systems underpin the promotion of good behaviour. In the nursery and Reception classes, children's development is constantly checked to make sure that they are on track to achieve what their teachers expect. Progress in English and mathematics in Years 1 to 6 is checked regularly and the information gathered is very effectively used to set targets for attainment and to plan the next steps in learning.

Links with parents have been much improved over the last year. The vast majority support their children effectively at home. They appreciate the school's emphasis on personal as well as academic development and have confidence in the new headteacher.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear educational direction. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and the managers of the combined Foundation Stage and infant department and the junior department. Their good management ensures strong team work amongst all staff. Subject managers have a satisfactory overview of teaching and learning in their subjects. They are successful in directing the planning for improvement through their annual reviews and reports.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors use their valuable range of expertise and experience to provide good leadership and management. Through the new link governor system, they are developing a good overview of the school's work. Their involvement in improvement planning ensures that they know the strengths of the school and are actively involved in shaping its future direction.
The school's evaluation of its performance	On the arrival of the new headteacher in 2001, a thorough evaluation of the school's performance was completed. In consultation with staff and governors, appropriate priorities were set to rectify the many issues identified. An annual cycle of evaluation is now in place and governors continually monitor the success of the school development plan by gathering evidence on how standards and provision are improving.
The strategic use of resources	The governors and headteacher manage all funds carefully, linking expenditure to agreed priorities within the school improvement plan.

A good quality of support for pupils is provided by some accomplished and experienced teaching assistants. Accommodation is satisfactory overall but two classes are housed in temporary, outside structures that have no toilet facilities. Resources are generally satisfactory for teaching and learning but there are some shortages for religious education. Day-to-day administration is very efficient.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in school is good and there is a good emphasis on pupils' personal development. • The teaching is good. • The school expects pupils to work hard. • The effectiveness of the new headteacher. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The consistency of homework arrangements. • Communications with parents, including information about the curriculum. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agrees with parents' positive views. Homework arrangements and the provision of activities outside lessons are both judged as satisfactory. There are good improvements to the links with parents, especially for the nursery and Reception age groups and for Years 1 and 2. Parents' evenings and curriculum meetings are increasingly well attended.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 at the school over the last few years has been lower than the national average and the rate of improvement has been slower than average. On her appointment in 2001, the headteacher introduced a rigorous system of assessment and developed measures to track pupils' progress and to set individual learning targets for every year group in English and mathematics. This has led to more focused teaching and better learning. The 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the end of Year 6 showed good improvements in standards. In mathematics and science, attainment matched the national average and was a tiny margin below average in English because writing skills were not as strong as those in reading. When compared to schools in similar circumstances, attainment in all three subjects was above average. Inspection findings indicate that the improvements have been sustained this year with broadly average levels of attainment seen in classes and when looking at pupils' work.
2. In the 2002 tests, the pupils in Year 2 attained standards that were below or well below average in all three of the core subjects. A much higher-than-average percentage of pupils had special educational needs. During their time at the school, these pupils had several changes of teacher, resulting in a lack of continuity in the teaching they received. The tracking system developed in 2001 clearly showed the problems in attainment and the school took steps to rectify them. Although some progress was made, the time scale was too short to make a major impact. In writing and mathematics, the attainment in the tests was well below average and very poor in reading. Attainment in the teacher assessments for science was well below average. One of the main factors for the disappointing performance in reading was due to the fact that pupils had underdeveloped skills in blending sounds to read and in segmenting them to spell. These issues are now being tackled through focused teaching groups and good progress is being made. The extra support now given in mathematics is also proving beneficial. The findings of the lesson observations show that the present Year 3 group is making good progress and pupils are catching up in areas that were weak. Inspection findings indicate that attainment for the current Year 2 group is average in all three core subjects and the school's accurate assessments verify this. When compared to attainment at the last inspection, standards are not quite as good at Year 2 and are around the same for Year 6. However, the school has made a good recovery from the dips in attainment in English and mathematics during 1999 to 2001 and has useful systems in place to maintain the better standards.
3. During lesson observations, the inspection team found no differences in the progress of boys and girls in relation to their prior learning; indeed teachers make a great effort to find books and topics that will be enjoyed by all. Pupils of all ethnic groups progress well but the school does not make a co-ordinated effort to ensure that cultures and heritage of all its pupils are valued and celebrated. Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in English and mathematics through the focused support programme they receive. The timetabling of support, however, sometimes leads to a loss of continuous learning in other subjects and this is not satisfactory. For example, some pupils missed the introduction to a series of art and design lessons. This was a thought-provoking session where pupils discussed materials, textures and designs through a valuable and interesting interchange of ideas. Although the teacher will repeat the introduction for the group, the quality of the class oral session cannot be recaptured. Pupils who speak English as a second language progress well and benefit from the school's emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills. In the past, the school has used specialist help for a pupil who was in the early stages of learning English but at present, all pupils are well supported through classroom teaching. There is a high pupil mobility rate at the school. New-comers quickly settle in to classes and teachers use the information gathered from the last school to set targets for learning and promote good progress. The mobility of pupils does not have a significant effect on attainment levels.
4. The school's statutory targets for attainment in English and mathematics in 2001 were set before the present headteacher took up her post. Once the new records of progress were in place, it became obvious that the targets were unrealistic. In co-operation with the local authority's adviser the school amended them at school level to new figures that were subsequently achieved. However, it was not possible to change the original, formal targets that were not met. Teachers and managers are confident that this year's agreed targets will be achieved and evidence from inspection findings support this judgement.
5. When children enter the nursery class, the teacher completes a profile showing the knowledge and skills that they have already learned. The profiles for the past years show that, when they entered the nursery class, a significant number of children had speech and language difficulties and very basic skills in social development. Progress is good and, by the time children enter the Reception classes, their attainment, over the last few

years, has been only slightly below average. For this year, attainment matches the average. Children continue to make good progress in all the six nationally agreed areas of learning. The majority reach the early learning targets set for them and are well prepared to start work on the National Curriculum programmes of study by the time they move into Year 1. There have been major improvements in the early reading and writing programme with the higher attaining Reception children able to make logical attempts at writing down their thoughts and recognising several words by sight or by splitting them into sounds. Skills in speaking and listening and in personal and social education are especially well developed and contribute to the enthusiastic response to teaching in later years.

6. There have been several changes of staffing in the Years 1 and 2 department. A new senior manager is very focused on improving teaching, partnership with parents and pupils' attainment and has already made a good impact. The increased emphasis on teaching sounds in the English language is proving successful and is leading to better skills in reading and writing. The current Year 2 pupils have a useful range of reading strategies that they use effectively to help them tackle new books. Their comprehension is good and the higher attaining pupils talk about the characters in the story and predict what will happen next. Pupils' writing is sequenced and most know how to use capital letters and full stops. They spell words by splitting them into sounds and know many irregularly spelt key words from memory. Pupils make very good progress in their skills of speaking and listening. In mathematics, pupils compute accurately using pen and paper methods and mental strategies. They achieve satisfactory levels of knowledge and understanding in all areas of the science curriculum and use their observational skills effectively. In ICT, pupils' attainment is below average. They do not have sufficient opportunities to use ICT skills when studying other subjects. By the time pupils reach the end of Year 2, attainment in art and design and physical education is above what is expected and pupils have made very good progress. In all other subjects except history, skills knowledge and understanding match national expectations and pupils make good progress. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in history.
7. In Years 3 to 6, pupils continue to make good gains in their learning in the main. Pupils' reading becomes fluent and expressive. They investigate a range of story structures and give their own views about books. They examine non-fiction writing, analysing the structure and linguistic features effectively. Pupils learn the key skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation but do not have enough opportunities to practise these skills, apart from routine English exercises. As a result, their progress in writing is not as good as it could be. There are few examples of pupils using more sophisticated punctuation and grammar that would push their attainment towards the higher Level 5. In mathematics, pupils have a good understanding of number. Their skills of mental computation are good and they have a useful range of strategies to use when problem solving. In science, pupils' skills of scientific enquiry, investigation and fair testing are satisfactory but not well applied across the programme of study for the subject. Their knowledge and understanding of living things, materials and physical processes match expectations overall. Pupils demonstrate developing skills in all areas of ICT but attainment is below expectations. They use CD-ROMs and the Internet for research, develop multi-media presentations and know how to develop a spreadsheet. However, overall skills in this area are not as secure as they could be because of a lack of 'hands-on' time in the past that has restricted progress. Skills in ICT are not consistently applied to support study in different subjects and therefore pupils do not consolidate what they have learned. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in art and design is above expectations. There are also some strengths in singing. In all other subjects of the curriculum, except history where there was insufficient evidence to form any judgement, attainment meets national expectations and pupils have made at least satisfactory progress from this group's prior attainment at the end of Year 2.
8. The emphasis given to challenging the higher attaining pupils varies from satisfactory, for most of the time, and good in some mathematics lessons. There are no pupils formally identified in Years 1 to 6 as being gifted or talented but teachers do make extra classroom provision for a few pupils whose talents are recognised in specific areas of the curriculum, such as music. Gifted pupils are well provided for in the nursery and Reception classes.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave well. Personal development and relationships across the school are good. This has a good impact on pupils' learning. A total of 93 per cent of parents who completed the questionnaire agreed that their children like coming to school and 96 per cent agreed that behaviour is good. Attendance last year was below the national average but figures for the current term match the average. In the intervening years since the last inspection, records show that attitudes and behaviour had deteriorated but have improved over this last year. The current emphasis placed by teachers on promoting personal and social skills is helping to produce the good standards found.

10. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and know the routines well. They listen attentively to teachers, respond eagerly to questions and contribute readily to discussions. They are curious and ask sensible questions. Pupils show increasing levels of concentration and a willingness to persevere with challenging tasks as they get older. They take care in the presentation of their work and show pride in their achievements. For example, pupils in Year 1 were especially pleased with their paintings in the style of Lowry. Only a few pupils lack confidence or have difficulty in staying on task without the immediate direction of teachers. These difficulties are fully recognised and, with the support given, pupils manage well.
11. Behaviour in lessons and at play is good. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and nearly all respond well to teachers' high expectations. They are honest and trustworthy. At the beginning of each year pupils design their own classroom rules and make an agreement to follow them. Pupils of different ages socialise happily at lunchtimes, choosing the playground zone that meets their interests, whether that be boisterous activity or quiet games. When off the premises, they represent their school admirably. Pupils in Year 4 show very good conduct when on their weekly visits to the swimming baths. There is a good deal of mutual respect in the school. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and to adults. They respect their school environment, appreciate the quality and range of resources that they have and take good care of them. There are very few incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour and these are short lived because they are dealt with in a firm but understanding manner. Incidents of racism or bullying are rare and pupils know very well that such behaviour will not be tolerated.
12. There have been very good improvements in behaviour at the school since the new headteacher took up post. One finding of the whole-school evaluation that was conducted in 2001 highlighted some poor behaviour in school that was affecting learning. The headteacher and governors made it clear that they would not tolerate abusive or violent behaviour in school and, as a result, there were several fixed term and one permanent exclusion that involved one very small group of boys. The school took action to help pupils control their behaviour and emotions. The lunchtime Oasis Club has proved especially successful and provides pupils with an interesting selection of social and fun activities to keep them occupied. This is also a place where they can talk about issues informally and where staff help them to develop some useful calming techniques. The measures taken, together with the subsequent support programmes implemented, have been successful in creating a harmonious community and a pleasant place for learning. The introduction of zoned areas in the playground and the provision of a good variety of games and clubs have resulted in a good improvement in behaviour at break times, with a knock-on effect on classroom behaviour.
13. Relationships across the school are good and have a positive effect on personal development. Pupils develop respect for their teachers and constructive relationships with each other. Older pupils act as buddies to new pupils to help them settle in and this contributes to personal development well. Pupils of all ages collaborate well together in pairs and groups, for example on computers and in shared reading. From very early in the school, pupils learn to listen well to one another. They respect opposing views and are sensitive to the feelings of others. Most pupils have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and quickly apologise when necessary. In religious education, they are keen to learn about other faiths and beliefs, asking pertinent questions and showing good respect for views that are different from their own. Pupils readily acknowledge each others' strengths. Those in the choir rightly admired the solo performance of one boy who is developing his talent confidently as a result. Pupils of mixed ages and abilities work and play together very well in the Oasis Club. The good social atmosphere supports the development of self-esteem.
14. Pupils show initiative and enjoy the many opportunities they have to take responsibility. They are developing a good sense of citizenship through the school council. Pupils from each class in Year 3 upwards are elected democratically to the council, which meets regularly to organise charitable events and discuss improvements to the school. During the inspection, some members of the council sold poppies in aid of the Royal British Legion, showing an awareness of national events. Pupils give good support to a range of charities throughout the year, showing a willingness to help those less fortunate than themselves. For example they hold a 'Children in Need' week and collect for the Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire Air Ambulance charity. All pupils readily carry out routine duties such as taking important messages, tidying up at the end of lessons or clearing chairs away after assemblies. The 'box monitors' take their duties of organising and caring for the playtime equipment very seriously. Others care for the school guinea pigs, ensuring that they are well fed and have plenty of exercise. There is a good level of participation in extra-curricular activities such as the football, recorder, computer clubs and the choir. A good number of pupils in Year 6 enjoy a residential experience each year, while those remaining enjoy an activities week. Both experiences make a positive contribution to pupils' developing independence.
15. Attendance last year was just below the national average. So far this term, it is better and matches the national average. A thorough analysis shows that figures are adversely affected by a number of holidays taken

by families during term time and the poor attendance of a small group. Punctuality is satisfactory and those pupils who travel to school by bus arrive in good time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. During the inspection, 96 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and the majority of teaching was good. Across the school, one half of the teaching was good and in one in ten lessons, it was very good. The best teaching was seen in the nursery and Reception classes where teaching was always at least good and, in one third of lessons, it was very good. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school and is directly responsible for the good rate of learning. The same situation was reported at the time of the last inspection.
17. The Foundation Stage consists of the morning and afternoon nursery groups and the two Reception classes. As a result of the good teaching children progress well and the majority of them achieve the early learning goals set for them. A notable strength of teaching in this class is the range of interesting activities provided for pupils' development across all the recommended areas of learning. Lessons very cleverly consolidate and extend pupils' developing skills, knowledge and understanding, especially in language and literacy, personal development and mathematical work. For example, following the theme of autumn, children in the nursery examined vegetables and fruit, they made some pumpkin soup and listened to the story of the same name. In the Reception classes, the children talked about parts of the body and made some detailed clay figures. After examining a model skeleton, they learned a song about bones and used white straws to create skeleton pictures of their own, showing very good attention to detail. In this way, new learning is practised and enhanced. The teacher and adults work effectively together, paying great attention to establishing routines and to developing confidence and independence in their pupils. This sets a very firm foundation for later learning. The teaching assistants and parents often work with a specific group, having a clearly defined brief. One teaching assistant in the Reception classes works with the same group regularly to promote good pencil control and early writing skills. The same routine of tracing, copying and free writing provides a good structure to the lesson and allows the children to appraise the progress they are making. This, in turn, provides motivation and helps to develop skills of independent learning.
18. The majority of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good, with this standard seen in just over 50 per cent of lessons. One in ten lessons was very good. Teachers choose interesting books to share with the pupils that motivate them to learn. Good and improved teaching of reading strategies uses games and practical sessions to extend pupils' skills in blending sounds in the English language. Other reading strategies are taught as the whole class share a big book. For example, pupils are encouraged to identify a new word in the text by re-reading the sentence and using their knowledge of grammar. This explicit teaching leads to good progress. The teaching of mathematics is a strong feature, with group activities well designed to build on the mental mathematics starter session. Teachers use a good range of resources and teach different methods directly. For example, they teach pupils to add 10 by counting on, changing the tens digit or by using a number square. This means that pupils have a good range of different methods to use. In Year 1 teachers set work at different levels in English and mathematics in a way that builds successfully on pupils' prior learning. In Year 2 the pupils are set into groups according to attainment to ensure a good match of support or challenge. Both systems were introduced recently and are proving generally successful in ensuring that pupils remain on track to achieve their learning targets. The good balance of oral, practical and creative activities provides interesting experiences and maintains pupils' interests effectively. Encouraging feedback is often given orally during lessons so that pupils know how they are getting on.
19. In nearly one half of the lessons seen in Years 3 to 6, teaching was good. In one lesson in ten it was very good and one excellent lesson was seen. The basic skills in English are taught well; these include spelling, grammar and punctuation. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, the teacher encouraged pupils to try out different spelling strategies such as splitting the word into letter sounds or remembering the 'spelling family'; for example those containing the 'igh' string. Similarly, grammar and punctuation are taught explicitly and, as a result, pupils understand the principles. Teachers place a good emphasis on mental arithmetic in their numeracy lessons, using some interesting games and resources. Through open-ended questions they encourage pupils to investigate and work things out for themselves. Pupils make good progress in their use of mathematical vocabulary due to teachers' high expectations. They insist that correct terms are used from an early age. In science, teaching is satisfactory overall but there is scope to develop pupils' investigative and experimental skills by putting more emphasis on practical work into the termly planning. There are few planned opportunities for pupils to discover for themselves through trying out their ideas, making mistakes and finding ways to solve the problems encountered.

20. In Years 3 to 6 the quality of marking is sometimes good but is variable overall. Sometimes teachers include helpful comments that show the pupils how they can improve but this is not consistent across the classes. Too often there are general comments and little follow up where a pupil has encountered difficulty. The deputy headteacher, through her monitoring programme, has already begun to tackle this issue.
21. Teachers, throughout school, have consistent approaches that support learning very well. They routinely tell pupils what they are going to learn, thereby providing a clear focus for the lesson. Sessions are often concluded with a focused session to assess progress and tackle any misconceptions. Where this happens, it provides very useful information for the teacher that guides planning for the next lesson. Questioning techniques are generally good. Whole-class sessions create stimulating discussions when teachers encourage all pupils to be involved. Teachers' daily planning is detailed and effective and there is good class management. There are high expectations that encourage pupils to work hard and to do their best. Carefully chosen resources are organised and are readily available; pupils' books and other consumables are always to hand, and classroom routines are well established. As a result, no valuable learning time is lost.
22. Teachers throughout school have a good understanding of the most effective ways to teach literacy and numeracy and are successful in supporting pupils to develop skills in these areas. Opportunities to apply and consolidate mathematical and reading skills are good but not sufficiently planned for in writing and ICT. Teachers have undergone training in the use of ICT in the classroom and are confident in their approach. A greater emphasis on applying these skills across the curriculum is now needed in the planning for Years 1 to 6. In the nursery and Reception classes, children are constantly encouraged to apply their skills in communication, language, literacy and mathematical understanding in all their work and these cross-curricular themes form a major strength of the teaching programme. Between them, the teachers across the school have a wide ranging level of expertise and experience that they readily share with colleagues to support planning and lesson preparation. Some specialist teaching sessions make good use of expertise, for example in physical education or music. The deputy headteacher's role in raising achievement is having a positive effect in classes for the older pupils.
23. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good throughout the school and enables them to make good gains in learning. The requirements of individual education plans are built into daily activities. Designated support staff provide targeted support to meet individual and group needs. Where pupils are withdrawn from class for specific group work, usually in English and mathematics, the teaching and progress is good. The timetabling of the support, however, has weaknesses because the pupils often miss parts of other lessons, such as science or art and design. This causes gaps in the continuity of their learning and extra work for the teacher who often needs to repeat the start of the lesson so that pupils can access the remainder of it. In one art and design lesson, some pupils missed a very good introduction to the topic that they will study over the next few weeks. Where pupils are supported in class, they make good progress and have full access to the curriculum. The special educational needs co-ordinator, the class teacher and the teaching assistant discuss and develop each pupil's individual education plan. Short-term targets are shared with parents and this system is very successful in helping pupils to realise their goals. Teaching and specialist support assistants know their pupils very well and this allows them to anticipate problems and to have solutions at their finger tips, especially for those who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Teachers monitor the progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language. They are always careful to explain new technical vocabulary and insist that correct terminology is used from an early stage. These pupils make good progress.
24. The type and amount of homework set is satisfactory and teachers often ask pupils to find things out for themselves. Teachers make good use of the local environment and the very good community links, especially in the teaching of science, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Donations from businesses and visits by people, such as the local vicar underpin the good provision for personal development in the Oasis Club. Parents' returned questionnaires show that 94 per cent are of the opinion that 'teaching is good' and 95 per cent agreed that 'the school expects pupils to work hard'. The same opinions were repeated at the parents' meeting.

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

25. The school has a satisfactory curriculum and all statutory requirements are met. Sufficient time is allocated to the different subjects throughout the year and emphasis is rightly given to the teaching of English and mathematics. The curriculum for religious education follows closely the guidelines of the locally agreed syllabus. There are suitable schemes of work for each subject which represents a distinctly good improvement since the last inspection. The provision for the teaching and consolidation of reading, speaking and listening and mathematical skills is good but pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their writing or ICT skills when working on other subjects. Until recently, the school was not teaching all aspects of the curriculum for information and communication technology. This situation is now rectified and the school is trying hard to make good the gaps in pupils' learning. The overall time for teaching in Years 3 to 6 is slightly below the suggested minimum level because the school devotes a long time for assemblies each day.
26. The programme of learning for children in the nursery and Reception classes is varied, interesting and of good quality. Tasks are based on first-hand experience, investigation and play. Children have opportunities to choose from different activities and have timetabled sessions with their teachers when new work is often introduced. Skills in one area of learning are cleverly woven into other activities so that children explore an idea in many different contexts. For example, children in the nursery learned the 'p' sound and then listened for words containing that sound as their teacher read the story of Pumpkin Soup. What ever a child's capabilities or specific educational need, all have equality of access and are challenged appropriately.
27. The planning of the curriculum is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 but there are some issues to address. Teachers work well together to make sure that pupils in both classes of the same age receive the same curriculum. Teachers follow closely the guidelines of the schemes of work so that they can be sure of a natural progression in pupils' learning. Opportunities for applying skills when studying other subjects are not fully exploited in Years 1 to 6. Termly plans do not indicate opportunities to develop pupils' writing skills, for example, when recounting events in history or explaining geographical phenomena. They do not show how and where skills in ICT can be practised and consolidated. Planning does not routinely indicate to the teacher how learning in one subject can be extended through another. For example, how pupils' good artistic skills can be applied when creating ideas in design and technology or how their investigative skills can be as usefully extended through science topics as they are in mathematics lessons. As a result there are some missed opportunities to extend writing and ICT skills and to enhance learning generally. Curriculum planning makes good use of community links, visits and visiting speakers to promote active learning. These include visiting puppeteers, musicians and wildlife experts, together with visits to churches, seal sanctuaries and museums that put learning into context. Links with the local churches are good and promote personal and social education well.
28. The school provides focused group work for some pupils but this is not well timetabled and not all pupils have equal access to the full curriculum. Some pupils have extra group work for English and mathematics. The work done in these group sessions is effective in promoting the basic skills but disrupts pupils' learning because they miss parts of other lessons. Science lessons are interrupted, for example, by the coming and going of small groups and the teachers have difficulty in sustaining good teaching, because they often have to repeat the first part of the lesson. One half-hour computer lesson was seriously affected because, just when some pupils sat at the key board to start their work, they had to leave and were replaced by others who needed the teacher's help in order to access the lesson.
29. The school meets the differing learning needs of its pupils in English and mathematics by grouping those in Years 2 to 6 according to prior learning. This makes it easier for teachers to pitch the work at the right level of support or challenge. The needs of lower attaining pupils or those with special educational needs are met through simpler tasks and extra support by adults whilst those capable of higher attainment usually work at more advanced levels. This is not always the case in the other subjects of the curriculum where pupils capable of higher attainment do not consistently have the opportunity to learn at an extended pace, for example, through open-ended tasks or independent study. The school recognises the need for better practice in formally identifying gifted or talented pupils in Years 1 to 6 so that they can be suitably nurtured through planned activities and this is featured in the current school development plan. At present, pupils' talents are recognised and teachers often set additional challenges where appropriate but these are not part of a co-ordinated programme.
30. There are satisfactory arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education. Teachers plan opportunities when pupils can discuss personal issues, for example in religious education. In dedicated lessons, pupils learn about health issues, such as a good diet or the effects of smoking. During the inspection, there was a good emphasis on safety as teachers used lessons and assemblies to talk about the potential dangers of fireworks and bonfires. Advice about drugs and the subject of sex education are dealt with

adequately in the science curriculum at a level suitable for the age group concerned. The range of activities available out of school hours is satisfactory and there is good quality tuition. The recorder club is well attended and pupils conscientiously practise their new learning at home. When the playground was zoned, it was decided that ball games such as football, were inappropriate. In compensation, the school organises lunchtime and after-school football coaching sessions and games that are eagerly attended by both boys and girls. The table tennis club is very popular and pupils thoroughly enjoy the sessions. Other clubs held during the year include dance, drama, computer and needlecraft activities, providing for a broad spectrum of interests.

31. The school has very good links with the community. There is close contact with local churches and ministers visit the school regularly to conduct assemblies, help with religious education and take part in the Oasis Club. Community spirit is enhanced as the school holds its harvest festival and carol service in the parish church and the choir sings for local senior citizens at Christmas time. Pupils have been invited to cut the ribbon of the nearby refurbished supermarket and switch on the Christmas lights in the village. Pupils were invited to the adjacent building site to see some archaeological remains uncovered by the digging of foundations. They have also been asked to name a street in the development. Local businesses often support the school with resources and supply goods for fundraising. All these factors support pupils' sense of belonging and add an extra dimension to learning.
32. The school has positive links with the secondary schools in the area, particularly the school in the village. Year 6 pupils are able to go on 'taster visits' and secondary school staff sometimes carry out projects with the pupils. Pupils attend secondary school functions and use the sports facilities at times so that they become accustomed to the building and staff. This helps to ease the transition to the next stage of education at age 11. Secondary schools regularly send back information about how well pupils progress and this is used in curriculum reviews.
33. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good and the standard of moral education is good. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for the pupils' spiritual development. These judgements broadly reflect the findings of the last inspection. The promotion of pupils' cultural development is not as good as it was in 1998. Knowledge and understanding of local and national traditions are taught well but the school does not pay enough attention to studying the richness and diversity of other cultures.
34. Spiritual development is promoted through assemblies and during lessons. Staff succeed in encouraging the pupils to have tolerance of, and an interest in, the feelings and opinions of others. In a weekly 'smile file' assembly pupils' achievements in and out of school are celebrated and these include rewards for thoughtful or kind actions. The teachers provide time within lessons for the pupils to reflect on issues. For example, pupils in Year 1 think about special events in their lives, such as christenings and birthdays. In art and design, pupils in Year 3 illustrate their emotions and, in Year 5, they describe the feelings generated by their paintings. In geography, Year 4 pupils describe the effects of noise pollution, recognising that peace and quiet is good for people's well-being. Acts of collective worship, which are sometimes led by local ministers, make a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' spiritual development. In one junior assembly, the pupils reflected on the qualities of friendship and in a whole-school collective worship they expressed visible wonder at the lighting of some diva lamps.
35. There is good provision for the pupils' moral development. A clear behaviour policy emphasises self-control and consideration for others. The school's anti-bullying policy is embedded. The teachers provide opportunities for pupils to devise rules that will make their classrooms and the playgrounds happy places, where the pupils will do their best and relate well to others. These rules are clearly displayed and are consistently followed. One assembly for the younger pupils made very good use of a simple story to illustrate the place of rules in our society and made a good contribution to the pupils' moral development. The school has implemented some worthwhile initiatives to improve behaviour during breaks and lunchtimes. These include the Oasis Club, where the pupils can enjoy an exciting variety of activities; and zoned areas of the playground, which allow for different kinds of play or relaxation. This playground project has impacted well on outdoor behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes. As an added bonus, pupils are better prepared to start their lessons and there is a calm, orderly feel to the school. The teachers ensure that the pupils are well aware of the difference between right and wrong and they reward good behaviour and effort appropriately with house points, stickers and certificates. The individual education plans of some pupils with special educational needs include appropriate targets for improving their behaviour and provide strategies to help them manage difficult situations.
36. Provision for the pupils' social development is very good. Virtually all parents believe that the school helps their children to mature and to become responsible. All pupils are encouraged to help with everyday classroom tasks and older pupils have additional responsibilities. Many junior pupils help the younger ones at lunchtimes. Some older ones develop social skills and leadership through membership of the school council or by being

house captains. Many pupils participate in extra-curricular activities, school productions, class assemblies and school visits, all of which extend their horizons. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to develop social skills during a residential visit to Shropshire or during an activity week in school. The school prepares pupils for adult life through a range of projects. For example, Year 5 pupils develop road safety skills during a bikewise' training course. About twenty pupils take advantage of a school bank and learn about saving money. The pupils think about society in the wider sense as they support a number of charities, including Cancer Research and the poppy appeal. In geography, pupils learn about environmental issues, such as global warming and the destruction of the world's rain forests and this encourages them to consider the need for conservation and recycling. In many lessons, pupils work collaboratively, readily sharing ideas and resources.

37. The pupils are given good opportunities to appreciate local and national culture. In history, they learn about the legacy of the Romans and the Tudors. They make visits to museums and to Kirton Library. Authors, librarians and actors visited the school last year as part of a worthwhile 'writers week'. Members of the choir and drama group contribute to local culture by performing for senior citizens and taking part in productions at major venues such as the Sheffield Arena. In religious education, the pupils learn about some of the world's major religions and consider how people's beliefs influence their everyday life. During one assembly the pupils learned how Hindus celebrate the festival of Diwali. Nevertheless, provision for pupils' multi-cultural education is unsatisfactory and pupils are not adequately prepared for life in our diverse British society. Displays and books in the school do not adequately reflect the different religious beliefs and customs that they will encounter as they grow older. Art and music in the school do not make a sufficient contribution to an understanding of non-western cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Assessment procedures and practices have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. When children enter the nursery class the teachers check what they know and can do. The information is entered onto an individual profile and used to plan the next steps in learning. As they move into the Reception classes, the children undergo an assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers also collect records about each child's progress from the nursery class and use all of the information in an intelligent way to plan a learning programme that is rich in relevant experiences. Systems are thorough and effective in promoting good progress. The records are very detailed and allow teachers to monitor all aspects of children's development carefully. As they enter Year 1 the pupils have a further assessment to see if they have reached the targets set for them and to judge when they are ready to start on the National Curriculum programmes of study.
39. The school has introduced an effective assessment system that records and monitors each pupil's progress in English and mathematics from Years 1 to 6. The careful tracking of progress allows teachers to constantly check that pupils are on line to achieve their learning targets for each year and to intervene where they are not. Pupils who have special educational needs are identified early through the system and given the support that they need. At the start of Year 2, pupils are set into groups for English and mathematics so that the work can be tailored more accurately to their prior learning. Those who are capable of higher attainment in these two subjects are recognised and usually have extension tasks, although this is not always the case in writing. The effectiveness of the procedures in place for assessing and monitoring learning is seen in the improved National Curriculum test results for Year 6 in 2002. In English, however, the setting system prevents the good interchange of ideas between the more confident pupils and those who are less secure in speaking and listening skills.
40. Procedures for checking pupils' progress in other subjects are not as well established. Subject managers were not satisfied with the procedures in place because they were time consuming and not effective in providing the information needed to plan work at different levels. The staff members are currently trialling different ways of assessing and recording learning that are efficient and provide the necessary information. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent although there is a clear policy in school. The good practice tells pupils what is good and why but, often, marking consists of ticks or vague comments and does not help them to correct their mistakes or know what they did well. The deputy headteacher has already made some improvements through her monitoring programme but more work is needed here.
41. Thorough assessment and detailed record-keeping enable close monitoring of the progress of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are involved in the review process and in developing new targets for learning. The individual education plans are detailed and are regularly reviewed. At present, the pupils themselves do not contribute to the development of their targets or evaluate how well they are doing. The school enlists the services of a specialist teacher to help them assess and plan for the needs of pupils who have more complex learning difficulties and this represents good use of funds. Pupils who speak English as an

additional language are assessed through the school's system. All are fluent in English and do not require extra help in lessons but the school is committed to providing such support wherever it may be needed.

42. The school takes good care of pupils' welfare and maintains a safe environment for learning. This has a positive impact on achievement and personal development. Systems for promoting good attendance are satisfactory but could be further improved by actively discouraging parents from taking pupils out of school for holidays during term time.
43. An electronic system is used efficiently to register pupils and to monitor attendance and punctuality. A weekly analysis allows class teachers to target problems and to engage support from the Educational Welfare Service. Good attendance is congratulated and rewarded. Parents are expected to report all absence promptly and most of them do so. However, more attention could be given to raising parents' awareness of the serious effects of non-attendance and to discouraging them from taking their children out of school during term time.
44. The school has effective procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Staff have high expectations and reward good behaviour and effort consistently. Pupils actively participate in deciding their own classroom rules and believe that discipline is used fairly. Incidents of poor behaviour are properly recorded. The headteacher keeps a record of those pupils who visit her with good work and those who are registered on the 'Smile File'. The introduction of well-organised playtime activities, zoned play areas and the Oasis Club have greatly improved behaviour at break times and cut down the number of arguments. Good practice in behaviour management is disseminated well to all staff and results in a consistent approach.
45. Teachers monitor personal development well and pupils receive satisfactory guidance through the programme of personal and social education. This contributes positively to their developing independence and confidence. The school promotes the need for good relationships and tolerance effectively. All allegations of bullying or racism are investigated quickly and to the satisfaction of pupils and parents. Appropriate information about new pupils is gathered from previous schools and entered into the records so that they have suitable work from the start. New pupils are given a buddy to guide them and they settle well in school.
46. The school takes good care of pupils' welfare, health and safety. Child protection procedures are satisfactory and the governors have endorsed the school's policy. Designated teachers receive appropriate training that is disseminated to the rest of staff annually. There are good relationships with appropriate support agencies. First aid procedures and health and safety procedures are effective. All staff have had basic first aid training. Accidents are properly recorded except for the location of the incident. Staff inform parents about accidents so that they can keep a watchful eye at home. The governing body takes an active interest in health and safety; regular checks are made and risk assessments routinely updated. Staff take good care of pupils' safety, for example in physical education lessons and when handling tools in design and technology. Pupils are aware of routine health and safety precautions such as washing hands and wearing aprons when working with food. Good care is taken to ensure that younger pupils go home with a nominated adult and the 'handover' session at the end of the day serves as a useful time when parents and staff share information.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Most of the views expressed by parents are positive. The vast majority agree their children like school and make good progress both academically, and in becoming mature and responsible citizens. They like the way that the school expects their children to work hard and think teaching is good. They are pleased with the leadership of the new headteacher and find the staff increasingly approachable. Inspectors agree with these positive aspects. Some parents expressed concern about the amount of homework, the range of activities outside of lessons and the information received about how their children are getting on. Inspectors judged these to be satisfactory but think that written reports could contain more detail about actual attainment as well as the progress made. Concerns were expressed about communication with parents, including information about the curriculum and new approaches to teaching. Inspectors have evidence that many of these issues have already been addressed, for example there have been meetings about reading, mathematics and ICT. Teachers are readily available after school and the headteacher welcomes parents at any time.
48. The school's good links with parents have a positive impact on pupils' academic progress and on their personal development. Links have improved since the previous inspection, largely through the work of the new headteacher. There is a good amount of information and useful pre-school meetings for the parents of children starting in the nursery and Reception classes. The nursery teacher's home visits forge good relationships with families right from the start. The amount of general information that parents receive has improved through the distribution of informative and interesting newsletters. Curriculum evenings are held to inform parents about

what is being taught and of the teaching strategies used in school. The prospectus contains useful information for parents, but the governing body annual report has some minor omissions have been brought to their attention. The school has increased the number of consultation evenings for parents to three per year and parents can make additional appointments to suit their commitments.

49. Annual reports to parents comply with statutory requirements, although the content varies in quality. Comments sometimes focus more on effort and attitudes than actual standards of achievement in the different subjects.
50. Parents and carers make a good contribution to pupils' learning in school and at home. A good number of parents regularly help in each class with a variety of activities such as listening to readers, helping with art and design, ICT or cooking. Some provide a valuable service in escorting pupils to the swimming baths. Most parents monitor the work their children do at home and ensure that homework is completed. Members of the 'Friends of the School Association' are very active and make a very good contribution to the social life of the school as well as raising funds. They donated over £5,000 last year that was used to buy the high quality playground furniture and equipment.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher provides very good leadership and good management, striving for improvement and driving the school forward. She has been in post for just over one year during which time there have been major changes. Management systems have been thoroughly reviewed and updated. There is good teamwork among staff who now pull together in a concerted and efficient way. They are supportive of the developments recently put into place. Adults in school are very successful in promoting an environment where pupils work hard, have good relationships, and show respect for others. Teachers and governors are firmly committed to the school's aims, which include a strong emphasis on personal as well as academic development. There have been good improvements in the quality of leadership and management over the last year. There is a refreshed, positive feel to this school that has seen deterioration in standards over recent times. The headteacher, staff and governors are now clearly focused on improving attainment and have seen some success in the better results for the eleven year olds in the 2002 National Curriculum tests. In the returned questionnaires, 93 per cent of parents agreed that the school is well led and managed. When the parents at the meeting were asked what had improved at the school, they highlighted the effectiveness of the new headteacher and the changes that she has made.
52. The governors are very supportive of the school and their leadership and management have improved over the last year. They have been fully involved, alongside the headteacher, in conducting a whole-school self evaluation. Many areas for improvement were identified and, in consultation with staff, these were arranged according to priority into a comprehensive school development plan covering three years. The governors have embarked on relevant training programmes and taken an active part in developing a corporate management approach. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear vision for future developments. Between them they have a valuable range of expertise and are committed to ensuring the highest quality of education for all pupils. Governors know and understand their roles clearly and maintain a successful approach to meeting their statutory responsibilities. The proceedings of the governing body are efficiently conducted and committees are well organised. There is a productive relationship between the governing body, the headteacher and the staff. An established system of linking governors to specific year groups provides a good overview of the school's work and keeps the governing body well informed about day-to-day issues. The governors are more effective than at the time of the last inspection because they now ask searching questions and have a greater role in shaping the development of the school.
53. The school development plan is thorough and illustrates clear educational purpose. Funding is linked to priorities, with implementation strategies, timescales and criteria for success specified. Governors have been actively involved in the planning process and are kept informed of progress by the headteacher, subject managers and the link governor system.
54. The school's finances are carefully monitored and controlled by members of the finance committee. Spending is closely linked to the stated priorities. The governors' policy is to keep a reserve of around five per cent in order to ensure that they can fund two classes per year group even if roll numbers fall. Last year's carry forward was slightly above this percentage purely because there were some late accounting adjustments that they could not predict. Best value principles are very well applied to all purchases and contracts. The school has systematic procedures in place for the ordering, receipt and payment of goods and services. Procedures for dealing with cash and private funds are safe and effective. Money provided for special needs pupils is effectively

used. The school provides a good quality of teaching and pupils progress well. Attainment by the end of Year 6 improved in 2002. Inspection findings show that attainment in English, mathematics and science matches the national average and test results are above the average for schools in similar circumstances. Leadership and management are good and costs are around the average mark. Taking all these factors into consideration, value for money is good.

55. The deputy headteacher and the senior manager for classes up to Year 2 make a good contribution to the management of the school. The deputy headteacher shares responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school and, through a well developed monitoring system, has a thorough overview of classroom practice. She uses the information gathered to check that school policies are implemented consistently, to intervene where this is not happening and to arrange support or training for teachers where relevant. The manager for classes up to Year 2 has made a positive impact on teaching and learning and has been instrumental in improving links with parents. The role of the subject managers has been developed so that they have an input into school development planning. They are conscientious in their approach and have a monitoring focus for each term. They keep themselves informed about teaching and learning in their subjects through monitoring planning, scrutinising pupils' work and talking to colleagues. The results of a major programme of lesson observations that were carried out last year also constitute a useful source of information. They still have work to do in refining planning to ensure that writing is effectively extended through other subjects. The co-ordinator for special educational needs is knowledgeable and makes a useful contribution to the review of individual education plans. She is not sufficiently active in monitoring and co-ordinating the support programme to ensure that all pupils have their full entitlement to the curriculum. This is a key issue for the school to address.
56. The school is staffed by an adequate number of suitably qualified and experienced teachers. The deployment of staff is very well thought out to make the best use of their expertise and to ensure that there is a good balance of experience in each year group. Procedures for performance management have been successfully implemented. Experienced teaching assistants provide good support for those who have behavioural and emotional difficulties or other special educational needs. Between them, they have wide-ranging expertise that allows for effective group and individual support in all classes from the nursery to Year 6. There are established arrangements for staff development, guided by the agreed priorities of the school and the outcomes of school monitoring. The newly qualified teacher feels that she is well supported through a programme of induction into the teaching profession and by the help and advice that is freely offered by colleagues. Kirton is well served by appropriately skilled non-teaching staff, all of whom are committed to its aims and policies. Staff provide a high standard of care at midday, both in the classrooms where pupils eat, and on the playground. They take the time and effort to get to know pupils well and to forge good relationships. The caretaker is very conscientious in ensuring that the buildings, grounds and resources are well maintained. He also ensures a very high standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times and keeps a watchful eye on safety issues. Administrative support is effective and efficient, making very good use of ICT. The administrator is very efficient in providing management information for the headteacher and governors. This frees the headteacher's time for educational matters. The office staff make a significant contribution to the smooth running of the school, discharging a wide and diverse range of responsibilities.
57. Resources are satisfactory overall but there are variations between subjects. Those for science, music and physical education are good but there are not enough artefacts, books and good quality videos for religious education. Resources are generally well organised, labelled and stored and are used efficiently. The school libraries, however, are not effectively organised and the books are not catalogued properly.
58. There is adequate accommodation to meet the needs of the curriculum and it is well maintained. The school is situated within pleasant grounds that provide good facilities for games, pupils' leisure time and include a wildlife area for scientific work. Classrooms are well organised into year group areas with useful resource space for private or group study. The bright, cheerful décor and displays in classrooms help to provide a stimulating environment for learning. Nursery accommodation is good and nursery children have their own outdoor play area with a safety surface for climbing equipment. Pupils in Reception also have their own outdoor area, but this is poorly designed for outdoor play and has hazardous jutting concrete corners. The school is planning to improve this area and has draft proposals to redesign it. The hall is well used for assemblies and sporting activities, but along with the computer suite, is used as a thoroughfare which distracts pupils from their learning when they work in these areas. Year 6 pupils are taught in mobile units and access to these classrooms would prove either difficult or, in some cases, impossible for pupils with a mobility impediment.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The school has made good improvements in the last year. The quality of the school's recent self evaluation is reflected in the fact that some of the key issues below have already been identified as areas for development. These are marked with a star.
60. In order to improve attainment further and to promote pupils' cultural development, the headteacher, governors and teachers should:
- (1) raise standards in writing by:
 - ❑ including opportunities within the termly plans for pupils to write at length in both their English lessons and when recording work in other subjects;
 - ❑ providing more opportunities for pupils to review, edit and re-draft their writing;
(Discussed in paragraphs 1-8 and 74-84)
 - (2) *improve attainment in ICT in Years 1 to 6, by:
 - ❑ ensuring that the curriculum provides enough time for pupils to catch up on specific elements of the subject, including control technology, the use of electronic sensing equipment and of e-mailing facilities;
 - ❑ including opportunities in the termly and weekly plans for pupils to use their ICT skills to support learning in other subjects and in the literacy and numeracy hours;
 - ❑ reviewing timetabling arrangements to ensure that pupils have enough time at the computers;
(Discussed in paragraphs 1-8 and 118-122)
 - (3) ensure that all pupils have their full entitlement to the curriculum and maintain continuity in their learning in all subjects, by reviewing the timetabling and arrangements for the group work in English and mathematics in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils do not miss parts of other lessons.
(Discussed in paragraphs 25-29)
 - (4) prepare pupils for life in our diverse British society more adequately by developing the termly and weekly plans to include specific opportunities for pupils in Years 1 to 6 to learn about different cultures in their lessons.
(Discussed in paragraph 37)
61. In addition when drawing up their action plan, the governors should give consideration to the following issues:
- *improving the outdoor area for children in the Reception class so that they can develop their physical skills more effectively (discussed in paragraph 58);
 - *developing a formal method of identifying gifted and talented pupils and ensuring that they have suitable challenges in their lessons (discussed in paragraph 8, 29 and 86).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

96

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

33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	11	48	36	0	0	0
Percentage	1	11	50	38	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.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	374
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	110

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	149

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	57
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.3
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	26	27	53

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	19	20
	Girls	21	22	22
	Total	33	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	62 (85)	77 (91)	79 (92)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	20	16
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	35	42	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (91)	79 (89)	70 (92)
	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	34	32	66

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	23	31
	Girls	26	26	29
	Total	49	49	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (59)	74 (52)	91 (87)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	19	23	28
	Girls	26	23	29
	Total	45	46	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (62)	70 (68)	86 (87)
	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	358	7	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	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	2	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	4	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	7	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.4
Average class size	26.7

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	239.5

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45
Number of pupils per FTE adult	17.7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	9

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	829787
Total expenditure	825768
Expenditure per pupil (based on 407 pupils)	2028
Balance brought forward from previous year	55000
Balance carried forward to next year	59019

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	427
Number of questionnaires returned	148

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	30	6	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	46	6	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	55	1	2	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	48	12	2	8
The teaching is good.	51	43	3	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	33	47	13	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	34	1	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	39	3	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	49	13	3	2
The school is well led and managed.	42	51	2	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43	54	1	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	32	17	1	15

At the meeting, parents praised the effectiveness of the new headteacher. They expressed some concern about the attainment of pupils who are capable of higher attainment.

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

62. Children enter the nursery on a part-time basis after their third birthday and progress to the full-time Reception classes in the autumn term before they are five. These classes form the Foundation Stage at Kirton. Children's experience of starting school is a positive one and they settle quickly to the daily routines. This is largely because the nursery teacher makes home visits to meet the children and parents and to establish good relationships. Parents are also invited to a meeting before their children begin in the nursery and, again, before the start of the Reception year where they are provided with useful information about the work that their children will do. The nursery class makes a very positive contribution to the overall provision by developing essential skills from a very young age. When they enter this class, a significant proportion of children have speech and language difficulties and poor personal and social skills. Careful planning and checking of children's learning ensure that they make good progress and are well prepared for the Reception classes. Additional or specialist help and support is secured for those who have special educational needs. The results of the assessments completed on entry to full-time education show that children's prior learning is variable. In the past, attainment on entry to the Reception classes has been below average but for this year it is average. Most children reach the expected learning targets by the end of their Reception year.
63. Throughout the Foundation Stage teaching is good in all areas of learning and there are particular strengths in the teaching of speaking and listening skills and in personal and social development. Teachers are very knowledgeable about how young children learn. There is a strong emphasis on the teaching of basic skills, such as reading, writing and mathematical understanding. Classrooms and resources are organised effectively according to the learning programme of the day so that children have a stimulating range of activities; most of them based on the same theme. Teachers constantly observe and check children's progress and monitor how well they are doing over time. They use the information gathered to plan future work. This ensures that tasks are closely matched to children's learning needs and that they have suitable challenges. The support for children who have special educational needs is good. They have special programmes of work and adults provide unobtrusive help where it is needed. All children are fully involved in all activities.
64. Classrooms for this age group are inviting and caring places where children feel safe and secure. Sessions are effectively organised to provide areas for free choice and for focused work with the teacher. Displays of work are attractively arranged and well labelled, showing that children's efforts are valued. Teachers create cosy reading areas where children choose from an interesting range of books or listen to taped stories. They are well used and children love to revisit stories that their teachers have read to them previously. Resources are well labelled to encourage children to find them and tidy away for themselves. This has a positive impact on the development of children's independence and their developing sense of responsibility. The outdoor play area in the nursery is adequately equipped. However, outdoor facilities for the children in the Reception classes are under-developed. Because most of the surface is grassed, this outdoor area can only be used fully in the summer months. In addition, obstacles, such as the concrete steps, further restrict the space available. The teachers and governors have recognised this issue and are awaiting some quotations to develop the space creatively.
65. The managers for this age group provide strong leadership, and have ensured that the good provision has been maintained since the last inspection. They provide good support for other staff and generate a good team spirit that results in a consistent approach to teaching and learning. There are improved links with parents and a stronger emphasis on the teaching of early reading and writing skills.
66. Parents are actively encouraged to support their children's learning. There is a very good partnership between the nursery staff and parents. The teacher bids farewell to each child and chats informally with parents as they leave. This is a very effective way of keeping parents up-to-date about children's progress, engaging their help where small problems occur and of informing them about what the children will learn next. Good relationships between home and school are maintained in the Reception classes. Parents receive regular information about the topics covered and about the progress that children are making. There is good informal contact at the end of the school day when children are 'handed over'. Some parents regularly help in all three classrooms, and on school visits. They make a good contribution to learning by talking to children about their work and by helping with reading at home.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. Children make good, and sometimes very good, progress in this area of their work because they receive patient, caring, supportive teaching and know exactly what is expected of them. From the first days in the nursery, children try hard to follow the class routines, listening carefully to the teachers and to one another. When the inspection took place the nursery children had been in school for just one half term and the vast majority were three years old. All of them were already showing that they could select an activity that interested them and were able to sustain concentration on their chosen task. Relationships are good throughout the Foundation Stage and teachers' expectations are high. All staff place a strong emphasis on promoting social skills. As a result, children share readily, take turns fairly and are polite. The children are encouraged to take care of resources and are gently reminded of this expectation. They tidy away well, considering their age, and replace equipment sensibly. Children work well on their own or in small groups, showing a good sense of purpose. For example, in the nursery children collaborate as they work on the computer, suggesting ways of solving the challenges presented to them. They collaborate effectively in the roles of cook or waitress in the 'café' and mimic adult actions and language as they serve their customers in the 'Kirton Co-op'. Children care for themselves well, for example, dressing for physical activity and organising their belongings efficiently. Adults encourage children to help themselves and only intervene when absolutely necessary. Children negotiate effectively with each other when they want to take their turn on a chosen task. Good, secure routines are set up in the Reception classes and these prepare the children well for their work in Years 1 and 2. The children walk to the hall for physical education lessons or school assemblies in a very calm and sensible manner. This shows good levels of self-discipline at this tender age.

Communication, language and literacy

68. Children's progress in this area of learning is good and there are examples of very good progress. Most children reach the expected targets in speaking, listening, reading, and writing by the end of their Reception year. Children make good progress because activities build accurately on previous experiences. In the nursery, children listen attentively as the teacher reads the story of 'Pumpkin Soup'. One or two shout out comments but these are mostly as a result of genuine pleasure and enthusiasm. They then practise saying the 'p' sound that they heard in 'pumpkin' and 'pepper'. In the Reception classes, children respond confidently to their teacher's questions and sustain their listening for longer periods. They benefit from focused literacy sessions with their teachers. The programme of learning places great emphasis on teaching the sounds that letters make and how to write them. In one session, children were making up rhymes using the model of 'Five Fat Fingers'. Some made good attempts by writing the first or main sounds of the word, for example, one boy wrote 'fngws' for fingers. All children made up the first line for themselves, showing some original thoughts. In the Reception classes, children practise tracing, copying and writing their names accurately and the higher attaining pupils have a go at writing simple words. Children take their books home regularly to share with their parents and family. This is a well-established routine that helps them to gain confidence and enjoyment in reading.
69. The teaching of language and literacy is good. Staff work hard to improve the fluency of all the children by constant discussion and conversation. This has a very high priority in all classes. The teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of the children and work hard to develop and increase their vocabulary.

Mathematical development

70. Children achieve well in this area of learning and some do very well. Most reach the expected goals by the end of their Reception year. A variety of interesting activities invite children to solve problems and to explore the world of mathematics. Most children in the nursery count to 4 and a few higher attainers count to 5 and above. In the Reception classes children recognise numerals to ten and match sets of objects with the correct number. They know 'one more than' and 'one less than' which is well above the learning expected for this age group. Creative and physical activities are used well to support children's mathematical knowledge and understanding. For example, they develop an understanding of shape and pattern through printing activities, jigsaws and matching patterns. One group threaded some 3 dimensional shapes, naming most of them accurately. Children discriminate between shapes as they work on jigsaw puzzles, estimating whether the piece will fit the space. Some constructed model houses by fitting squares and triangles together into cubes, pyramids and triangular prisms. They use the terms 'corners' and 'faces' accurately. One group used star prints in their firework pictures. When playing with sand and water they learn about capacity. Some children talked about the concept of 'full' with one child quite adamant that the container could not be full until the water had over-flowed.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

71. Teachers plan a very good range of topics to interest children in learning about the world around them, and most reach the expected goals of this area of learning by the end of their Reception year. The investigational work planned for the children is very good in promoting skills of enquiry and exploration. As a result, they ask relevant questions and become increasingly curious about how things work. Children use their senses to observe natural objects. In the nursery, they investigate orange-coloured vegetables and fruits and are particularly interested in the large pumpkin. They develop an understanding of how things change over time when they look at pictures of themselves as babies, talk about what they could do as toddlers and evaluate their present skills. Children make models of humans from clay, taking care to include the main body features. Their drawings of plants demonstrate good attention to detail and show petals, leaves and colours clearly. Children use a range of construction materials to create models for their play. They name accurately the animals on their 'safari park', in the zoo and on the farm. Children are learning to use the computer. They enjoy this work and most accurately control the mouse to select items from the screen. They drag shapes of different sizes to match them up, operating the equipment effectively. Most have good levels of confidence and experiment by pressing the icons that appear on the screen to see what will happen. Children find out about the cultures and beliefs of other people. In the nursery the children had been learning about the Hindu festival of Divali. They had examined some diva pots and then made and decorated some of their own that were on display, together with books and other relevant artefacts. This work provided a valuable foundation for their cultural development.

Physical development

72. Overall, children have satisfactory control over their bodies and show a developing awareness of space and each other. They work hard during their physical development sessions as a result of the teacher's lively approach. All the staff encourage children to improve their work by pointing out or demonstrating good techniques. They use a range of small and large equipment to develop co-ordination skills both indoors and outdoors but opportunities for the Reception children to develop skills are limited because the outside play area is not sufficiently developed. The paved area is narrow and there are obstacles such as large steps. As a result, children are restricted as they pedal and steer their wheeled toys and have a very limited space for running, dodging and playing ball games. There is no large activity equipment to extend skills of climbing, balancing, jumping and landing or to experiment with different ways of moving. The teachers are mindful of this and work hard to compensate for the shortcomings during the physical education lessons in the hall. In one very good lesson, the children travelled under, over and through obstacles. They experimented with sliding, turning, hopping and rolling, showing satisfactory control and coordination. In the classroom, they roll out play dough and use a range of tools to make patterns and images on the flat dough. They enjoy using different media, such as pencils, chalks and felt pens as they draw and make marks on paper. Children develop appropriate levels of dexterity; for example, when they create models and structures using construction kits and a selection of materials. In the nursery, they were closely supervised as they made structures using wood and nails. There was very good progress here as the children concentrated on the task and developed the coordination needed to hammer and join successfully.

Creative development

73. Children achieve well in this area of learning because activities are planned that allow them to communicate their feelings and use their imagination. Most achieve the targets set for them. Adults are skilled at using open-ended questions to encourage children to talk about what they can see, feel and think. Children explore shape, texture and form. They paint, print and handle moulding materials confidently. They take great care when they paint their pictures and enjoy experimenting with colour and texture. In the nursery, they created a collage, choosing from an interesting range of materials that included rice, pasta, foam and shiny card. Children in the Reception classes created explosions of colour in their firework pictures. They used a combination of techniques, such as printing, blowing paint and spreading. They enjoy combining colours and one child was astonished to discover the range of shades that she could create by mixing colours on her hands. Children sing a range of songs and rhymes from memory and join in the hymns confidently during whole-school assembly. They are able to copy clapped rhythms, and alter the volume and length of the sounds they make with their voices. They explore how instruments can be played, and use them to make sound patterns. In the nursery, children have a music-making area where they try out different instruments and combine loud and quiet sounds. When playing in the class café or shop, children experiment with the language and actions that they have seen adults use.

ENGLISH

74. Currently standards in English lessons are generally in line with those expected nationally at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, though standards are good in speaking and listening and in reading. This represents an improvement in pupils' skills of speaking and listening and reading in Year 6 since the last inspection. The school has made good gains in the older pupils' attainment this year from the lower levels recorded in 2000 and 2001. Since pupils' language development is relatively weak on entry to nursery school, progress is very good in speaking and listening and in reading, and good in writing. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress. The progress of higher attaining pupils in writing, however, is unsatisfactory as they do not achieve the standards of which they are capable. This is because currently they do not have the opportunity to write more extensively and creatively to practise the skills they learn in English lessons, either through extended writing in English or in other subjects.
75. In Year 2, results of the 2002 National Curriculum tests were well below average in writing and very poor in reading. There was a high percentage of pupils who had special educational needs in the year group and they were not expected to achieve the average Level 2 although they achieved what their teachers expected. Results in reading were adversely affected by pupils' lack of skills of blending sounds within words in order to read new text. Results for pupils in Year 6 showed that they attained average standards in reading when compared with the national picture, and expected or better progress from prior attainment at seven. In writing, however, standards achieved at eleven were below the national expectation. Only half of the group made the expected progress when compared to the standards they achieved at seven. This shows that not enough effective support was provided over the four years, although there have been improvements in the last year. The number of pupils who gained the higher Level 5 was below average.
76. The school is aware of the need to intervene more effectively to ensure that pupils make at least the expected progress. They are doing this by close analysis of pupils' writing and the setting of improvement targets for individuals. This is being supplemented by group activities with trained teaching assistants who work very effectively to achieve learning objectives. Scrutiny of pupils' written work in English books and across the curriculum shows that pupils capable of higher attainment are not achieving as well as they could. Pupils are not practising their writing skills sufficiently and there are not enough opportunities for them to explore ideas, reflect upon their own experiences or respond personally to local and world events. For example, in the week of inspection they spoke with feeling about their own experience of being without electricity during recent gales in the Boston area and about the night the school roof blew off; but such events were not used as the inspiration for any personal writing.
77. Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well. By the time they are seven pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are good. Teachers encourage pupils to speak with fluency and to listen carefully to contributions made in discussions. Pupils listen attentively when books are read to them, and express opinions about the stories they are hearing. For example, they are suitably indignant when the friends of the Little Red Hen refuse to help her make the bread. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils apply their speaking and listening skills effectively. For example in a debate on the destruction of the rain-forests of Brazil they argue from a range of perspectives, including the views of the British and Brazilian governments. They realise that arguments in any debate are not always clear-cut. Their discussion indicates a confidence in challenging an opposing view with courtesy. They summarise their feelings about the destruction of the forest in eye-catching posters which illustrate the range of their arguments.
78. In Year 2 pupils read well with good expression, delving into the meaning of the story. For example one pupil recognised the irony at the heart of the story 'Nobody Got Wet', where a family stayed dry in a river adventure, only to get soaked on the way home. Pupils make good progress in reading. There is an appropriate focus in the class on the teaching of key skills and pupils are coming to understand the sound system of English and the grammar of a sentence. They are able to identify missing words in particular texts, demonstrating from the appropriate choices they make that they know which parts of speech will fit. They understand that a careful choice of vocabulary is important to maintain the reader's interest, and that clues in the sentence can help them predict the ending. This work helps them make a good attempt at unfamiliar words in their own reading. Pupils in Year 2 understand the characteristics of instructional texts. They know that instructions are devoid of unnecessary words and that they need to be in a particular order. Pupils make sure that the stages in making a pizza or the Little Red Hen's loaf of bread are sequenced appropriately. They read with fluency and accuracy, using all available clues. They are alert to meaning, so are able to challenge a pupil's misreading from an enlarge text of "Little Red Hen". One pupil read 'Mother Hen made a hole in the ground', others recognised the error, insisting she read "pecked a hole" because it began with 'p' instead of 'm'.

79. By eleven pupils read with fluency, using punctuation to bring additional expression to their texts. For example one pupil brought drama to the sentence "It was all over in a second!" The pupils distinguish between direct speech and narrative by changing the tone of their voices to indicate the words actually spoken. In Year 5 pupils are learning to read and write complicated instructional texts. They study the imperative form of the verb and delete any superfluous detail in this kind of writing. Pupils effectively review what they include in the instructions. For example, on re-reading their work pupils realised that the instruction to fill the kettle was followed by pouring the water into the mug, but there was no mention of boiling it. This task brought together reading and writing skills effectively and showed how well pupils can evaluate and edit their writing, given the opportunity. Most pupils are able to identify meaning beyond the literal. By the time they are in Year 6 pupils are able to understand the characteristics of journalistic writing, recognising the power and deep meaning of a single-word headline such as 'INNOCENT!' in a recent high-profile court case. They discussed the way journalistic writing is very distinctive, with techniques to engage the newspaper reader. They recognise that the opening sentence needs to capture the prospective reader's interest immediately and create their own headlines, using humour, word-play and alliteration.
80. The school's library has a satisfactory range of books overall, but in some subjects, such as religious education, they are limited. As a result, pupils are not getting enough experience of library skills. The organisation and classification of the libraries in school do not support effectively the development of independent study skills.
81. In English lessons, there is a high focus on developing key literacy skills, for example in spelling and punctuation. Pupils achieve the learning objectives in the lesson plan but are not securing their skills through extended pieces of writing. The writing in Year 2 books shows that pupils are able to write single syllable words well, and their ideas are developed in a sequence. Most use capital letters and full-stops appropriately, and a few are using more sophisticated punctuation such as speech-marks and apostrophes. In Years 3 to 6 much of the pupils' writing is focused on English language exercises. Occasionally they are given the opportunity to write about other subjects, for example, on the exploits of Christopher Columbus but this kind of work is limited and not extended sufficiently to take account of higher attaining pupils who are ready to use their writing to explore ideas. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write stories when they can experiment with techniques that they have learnt from reading works by different authors and poets. They are not bringing the humour, drama, and the authorial techniques that they recognise in their reading into their own writing. A scrutiny of work shows a few examples of pupils revising their ideas or proof-reading but indicates that teachers are not giving sufficient attention to editing and redrafting. Pupils develop a suitably joined-up style of writing by the time they are eleven. In an excellent Year 5 handwriting lesson the teacher gave clear instructions on letter formation, on holding the pencil appropriately and on posture.
82. Teaching and learning in English are good overall, with no unsatisfactory lessons seen. The majority of lessons are good, and teachers have successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy guidance. There is a highly focused approach to teaching specific language skills in all lessons. Teachers use enlarged texts and their whiteboards effectively to draw children's attention to the lay-out of the texts and the characteristics of the type of writing they are studying. Collaboration and group work are encouraged, and pupils respond well to questions. Teachers are aware when to intervene to help pupils and do this sensitively. Support for pupils with different learning abilities is provided by setting them into groups. This generally works well but not always in whole class oral sessions. For example, in a lower attaining set children are hard pressed to identify rhyming words in a poem. They do not benefit from the comments that experienced and more confident pupils in a mixed-ability class can provide. Teachers do not always use the correct terminology and this can hinder progress. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher adopted a very simplistic approach in describing verbs as "doing words" and imperatives as 'bossy words' rather than explaining their functions properly.
83. The quality of the guided reading session that takes place before the main English lesson every morning is not consistently exploited to allow children to achieve the benefits of this powerful teaching method. In one good Year 2 session, the teaching assistant used the approach to its full potential and pupils made good progress. In several of the guided reading sessions pupils were only basically challenged and the practice of 'reading round the group' does not lead to sufficient progress.
84. Subject leadership is satisfactory. In the short time in which the headteacher has been in post the literacy team have worked hard to improve standards. They have contributed to the school improvement plan and overseen a good improvement in the teaching of early reading and writing skills. The new systems for checking pupils' attainment, analysing what they can and cannot do and of setting appropriate targets for learning are all having a good impact on standards. There are some outstanding issues that need to be addressed by the subject managers including better planning for extended writing opportunities and more planned opportunities

for pupils to write at length when studying other subjects. The good practice seen in the Year 2 guided reading session is not disseminated to all classes and the library requires further development.

MATHEMATICS

85. In Years 2 and Year 6, standards are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. In the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 2, standards were well below average but that particular group included a high proportion of pupils who had special educational needs. Standards in the tests for Year 6 were average compared with schools nationally and above average compared with schools in similar circumstances. This represents good progress from the previous year. The present Year 3 pupils are making good progress and have good quality learning programmes that are proving successful in raising their attainment.
86. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs are given good support and they make good progress. The few pupils for whom English is an additional language are also achieving well. Whilst there are undoubtedly some pupils who are very able in mathematics, the school has not yet identified any pupils who might be considered gifted or talented. In Years 1 and 2 the girls have outperformed boys slightly in national tests. In Years 3 to 6 slightly more boys than girls have achieved the higher National Curriculum Level 5. There is no significant gender difference in attainment during lessons. Throughout the school, most of the pupils have positive attitudes to work. They behave well in lessons and they are keen to learn and to do their best. Relationships between the pupils and with the teachers are good. Most pupils present their work neatly and take a pride in their achievements.
87. By the end of Year 2, pupils order numbers to 100. They investigate mathematical patterns, including those made by odd and even numbers. They have a sound understanding of addition and subtraction facts to 20 and use different coins to make up totals. Some pupils find it difficult to count on in tens and are still reversing certain numerals. Pupils recognise and name common two and three-dimensional shapes and they are beginning to use centimetres when measuring objects. The pupils make sound use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. In science, for example, pupils in Year 1 collaborate to produce accurate bar charts and pictograms of their eye colours and of their favourite fruits.
88. By the end of Year 6, most of the pupils can apply their knowledge to solving number problems. However, lower attainers find it difficult when the problem involves more than one computation. Likewise, these pupils find it difficult to multiply and divide numbers by 10, 100 or 1000. Many pupils have a satisfactory understanding of fractions. They recognise equivalent fractions, improper fractions and mixed numbers. Some are beginning to work with percentages. The most able pupils can solve problems involving ratio and negative numbers. Most pupils calculate the perimeter and area of irregular shapes and know the formulae involved. Good use is made of mathematical skills in other subjects. In geography, for example, Year 5 pupils represent the results of a local traffic survey graphically and Year 6 pupils draw pie charts to represent the extent of rain forest destruction. In design and technology, pupils in Year 5 draw accurate bar graphs of their family's favourite biscuits.
89. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. The teachers place great emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to execute quick mental calculations. In a lesson for pupils in Year 2, the teacher helped the pupils to count on or back from any given number up to 100. She made effective use of a string of beads coloured in blocks of ten and this helped the pupils to see how counting in tens often speeds up addition. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher used a number sheet and cubes to illustrate and consolidate the learning of multiplication tables. Pupils were asked to explain different methods for adding three numbers and this helped to extend the range of strategies that each was using. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher made effective use of a bingo game to enhance the learning of doubles and to speed up calculation. The teachers consistently encourage the pupils to use correct mathematical terms. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teachers emphasised the terms parallel, adjacent, intersect, obtuse and acute and this helped the pupils to learn more about the properties of various quadrilaterals. In one of these lessons, the teacher made useful links with the pupils' work in science, as she asked them to create a 'tree diagram' in order to classify different quadrilaterals.
90. Introductory sessions move smoothly into the main activity of the lesson. The teachers make good use of resources, including ICT in order to enhance learning. This was apparent in a Year 3 lesson, where the computers were used effectively to support learning about simple coordinates. Explanations are usually clear and teachers check understanding by directing questions to specific pupils. The teachers organise group work well, usually deploying classroom assistants to maximum effect. The use of setting in Years 2 to 6 allows different levels of work to be given depending on prior attainment.

91. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively, but the quality of the marking varies from good to barely adequate. Whilst there are examples of comments such as 'keep checking your work', there is sometimes insufficient guidance as to how the pupils might improve. The teachers set regular, worthwhile homework tasks to extend and consolidate learning and most pupils respond well to this.
92. The subject is satisfactorily managed. There is a clear policy, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is appropriately based on guidance in the National Numeracy Strategy. The manager checks planning and samples of pupils' work and leads training for colleagues. She has a good overview of the quality of teaching and learning in the subject and has clear priorities for further development. There are effective systems for tracking pupils' progress and the teachers make good use of information from assessments to plan subsequent work and to target those pupils who need extra support. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' social development. The teachers encourage them to work collaboratively when appropriate and to share resources sensibly.

SCIENCE

93. In Year 2 and Year 6 standards are average; they have been sustained since the last inspection. Most of the pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards achieved in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for the Year 6 pupils were average and just over one third of them attained the higher Level 5. In Year 2 the teacher assessments were well below average, largely because there was an above-average number of pupils who had special educational needs in this group. Predictions for the attainment of the current Year 2 pupils are much better and are average.
94. In Year 2 pupils make simple electrical circuits and know that they need to be complete in order to work. They are beginning to know the requirements of a healthy diet, or what is 'good for you', and to recognise the importance of exercise. They are developing good observational skills. For example, when looking at different fruits they observe detail and carefully record their findings. Younger pupils recognise and name a range of sounds and are beginning to understand that sounds come from different sources and how they can be made louder or quieter.
95. In Year 3 pupils sort materials by their properties and know why they are used for different purposes, for example, plastic is used in the building trade because it is strong and waterproof. Year 4 pupils are making good progress in their study of forces and are beginning to understand the need for a fair test when investigating or experimenting if they want an accurate result. Older pupils know that light travels in straight lines and can explain how shadows are formed and how they can be changed. They appreciate that changing the position of the light source can affect the shape and size of the shadow. Year 6 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the relationship between the earth, the moon and the sun and clearly explain the cause of night and day. In work on creatures and their habitat, pupils make simple connections between the features of the animal and its environmental conditions. They have a good understanding of the 'food chain' and use the correct terminology, such as consumer, predator and prey, correctly. Pupils classify different categories of animals, developing and using a key to help with recording. They have a satisfactory understanding of the function of different parts of the human body and appreciate the harmful effects of smoking, alcohol and some drugs on the body. They are secure in their knowledge of plants and understand the functions of roots, leaves, seeds and flowers.
96. Progress throughout school is satisfactory, but opportunities for pupils to predict, hypothesise and test their own ideas are sometimes missed. As such, pupils' investigative and experimental skills could be extended further. Pupils who have special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make equally satisfactory progress. Some pupils who have group work sometimes miss parts of lessons and the continuity of their learning is adversely affected. If not rectified, this could well lead to gaps in attainment in the future.
97. Pupils show good levels of concentration and their attitudes are good. They listen well to teachers and show interest and enjoyment in the subject, especially when given the opportunity for practical work or to find things out for themselves.
98. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. There is a good focus on developing key vocabulary. For example, when questioned, Year 6 pupils explained scientific or natural phenomena using the correct terminology. From Year 1 pupils are encouraged to use the appropriate words. Teachers use open questions to

develop pupils' thinking and understanding and they have good relationships with their pupils. Tasks are sometimes too directed and provide few opportunities for pupils to show any initiative in their learning.

99. The quality of leadership for the subject is satisfactory with some good aspects. The manager scrutinises teachers' planning and pupils' completed work to check that all the programmes of study are covered and to tackle problems where they occur. Computers are used sometimes, for example to research topics but the use of ICT could be exploited far more in studies. Resources are good and the school's wild life area provides valuable teaching and learning opportunities.

ART AND DESIGN

100. Attainment in art and design is above expectations in Years 2 and Year 6 which is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. This is the result of teaching which is consistently good and sometimes very good. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, are making good progress. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils behave well in lessons, share resources sensibly and are keen to learn. The pupils enjoy their art lessons and it is a pity that some of them are withdrawn at times from this creative subject, for extra support in mathematics or English.
101. By the end Year 2, the pupils know about the works of some famous artists. They draw some effective still-life pictures in the style of Cezanne and Renoir and urban scenes in the style of Lowry. They create some effective self portraits, involving paint and collage. In work linked to geography, the pupils draw some good pictures of island scenes and they contribute to some effective collage work. As part of a science topic on healthy eating, the pupils create good prints of fruits and some very effective, painted models of a well balanced meal. They can mould materials into small pots, which they decorate effectively. The pupils use their ICT skills well to generate good quality self-portraits on the computers.
102. In Year 6, the pupils produce good quality observational drawings of items such as pot plants. They are familiar with the work of some famous artists, such as Arcimboldo, Munch, Leman and Van Gogh. Their reproductions in pastels of Munch's picture 'The Scream' are particularly effective. They illustrate some of their work in history with good pictures of the wives of Henry V111. They have a good understanding of how paintings can be given visual effects for different purposes. For example, they look at the techniques used to represent the 'powerful king' or 'beautiful lady'. In work related to literacy, the pupils produce good illustrations from the story of James and the Giant Peach. The pupils make some very effective prints of autumn leaves and they are able to use ICT graphics to create some very colourful images. They use paints and salt effectively to produce good paintings of the signs of the zodiac, as part of a project on 'thanking our lucky stars'.
103. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching is good and sometimes very good. The teachers introduce the pupils to the work of a number of famous artists and this helps the pupils to appreciate the different ways in which landscapes and people are depicted. Lessons are well planned and resourced. The teachers ensure that there are plenty of visual stimuli, such as a rocking chair or pictures by Lowry, to help the pupils develop ideas and skills of their own. The teachers use questioning well, in order to make the pupils think and to recall what they have already learnt. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher asked 'What sorts of things did Lowry like to put in his pictures?' and this helped the pupils to draw effective scenes of a town, complete with the characteristic people, dogs and cats. In this lesson, the teacher showed some pupils' work as good examples and this helped others to improve their drawings. The teachers emphasise the need to make careful observational drawings, paying close attention to detail. In a Year 3 lesson, this helped the pupils to develop good sketches of a rocking chair from different angles. 'Draw only what you can see' the teacher told the pupils. The teachers use art well to enhance learning in other subjects, such as history and geography. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher used the pupils' ICT skills well as they used the computers to generate very effective pictures in the style of Mondrian. There is good teaching of specific art and design skills, such as colour mixing, brush control and shading. The teachers develop the pupils' confidence in using a variety of techniques and media, encouraging them to experiment freely with their own ideas. They encourage the pupils to evaluate their work. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher asked some pupils 'If you were going to do this again, what would you change?' and this made them think of how their work might be improved. The teachers make good use of classroom assistants and parent helpers to work with different groups and this impacts well on the pupils' learning.
104. The coordinator provides satisfactory management for art and design. She is reviewing the subject policy, in order to bring planning into line with the national guidelines. She checks on colleagues' planning but has not yet had the opportunity to check the quality of teaching at first hand. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development. For example, they create some effective posters, highlighting the problems of global warming and deforestation. Last term, many parents came to school and took part in a 'Jubilee art and quiz trail', which involved each class. However, the subject does not contribute enough to an appreciation of non-Western art and design.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

105. Pupils' attainment meets expectations throughout the school. Progress throughout the age groups for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and who speak English as an additional language, is never less than satisfactory. Pupils know how to design and make simple objects using a range of materials. This is similar to the findings of the last inspection for pupils up to Year 2, although they do not achieve quite so well by the end of Year 6 in planning and modification of designs.
106. By the end of Year 2, pupils can plan and build simple models. They draw basic plans of lorries to guide their thinking about design and to consider what materials they will need. They then proceed to making vehicles from cardboard boxes, with wooden wheels and axles. Some pupils use commercial kits to construct cranes, whilst other pupils produce wooden frames with axles and wheels on which to build a stronger vehicle. Higher attaining pupils build frames of good quality, showing good skills in measuring, cutting and attaching lengths of wood.
107. By the end of Year 6, pupils know how to produce more complex objects. The machines that pupils in Year 6 build have to lift and shift material, and so require more working parts. Pupils have satisfactory skills in planning their work. They draw their ideas in detail, list key parts and materials and give a brief order of construction. Pupils in Year 3 planned their ideas for a flower design around their photograph frames, although only higher attaining pupils showed real accuracy in drawing parallel lines and mitred corners. Pupils use tools satisfactorily and safely. They handle saws and drills sensibly and know the benefits of a vice to hold items securely. Pupils experiment to discover how structures can be made stronger. For example, pupils in Year 3 investigated the strength of different papers when rolled up and the benefits of using triangular pieces to strengthen joints. Pupils in Year 4 combine towers with wheels and pulleys to produce working cranes. However, few pupils show good enough skills in evaluating their work so as to make useful modifications or to learn from their first attempts.
108. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The good relationships between teachers and pupils result in a fruitful working atmosphere in classrooms. Pupils work sensibly on their own, without the need for constant supervision. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject so that they can give valuable advice to pupils, such as how to make the flap on the back of a photograph frame to help it stand up. There is little use of ICT in this subject to generate designs or find information on products. Teachers check how well pupils are doing in lessons and guide their ideas. They are less effective, however, in ensuring that pupils acquire skills progressively. For example, pupils in Year 4 make exactly the same wooden vehicular frame as pupils in Year 2. Teachers are keen for pupils to assess their own progress, as in checking whether a swinging crane can swivel properly on a triangular base. They are less insistent that pupils make a formal review of their work to help with future learning. The subject is soundly managed but there is not enough monitoring of the specific skills taught in each year group.

GEOGRAPHY

109. Standards in geography are average in both Years 2 and 6. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are making sound progress, equal to that of their peers. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls. Most of the pupils have positive attitudes to work. They behave well in class, listen attentively and settle down to work quickly.
110. In Year 2, the pupils know a little about some of the places visited by Barnaby Bear. They know what an island is and, in work related to the Katie Morag stories, the pupils are able to compare life in Kirton with that on a Scottish island. They talk about things which they would like or dislike about life on a small island. They have a satisfactory understanding of some of the differences between town and countryside. The pupils observe and describe daily weather in simple terms and they contribute to class weather charts, using appropriate symbols. They are beginning to study mapping skills and draw simple pictorial maps to show routes. In both year groups they use relevant terms, such as through, across, around, over.

111. In Year 6, the pupils know some basic geographical facts about South America. They are able to research information about the flora and fauna of the tropical rain forests from reference books and the Internet. They are aware of the implications of global warming and the 'greenhouse effect'. In one lesson, pupils in Year 6 showed considerable maturity in debating arguments for and against lumbering in the Amazon Basin. They know about different climates in the world and they make good use of their ICT skills to find out from the Internet the weather conditions in selected world sites at the same time on the same day. They use their literacy skills effectively to write postcards home from holiday destinations, describing the weather there. The pupils investigate local environmental issues, such as traffic problems in Station Road. They use their mathematical skills to conduct a traffic survey in the road and to record their findings graphically. They have a satisfactory understanding of the different forms of land use in Kirton and recognise the changes being made, including increased noise pollution.
112. The quality of teaching throughout the school is satisfactory. Lessons are generally well planned, though there are few opportunities for more able pupils to write or record in different ways. The teachers place an appropriate emphasis on developing mapping and research skills. They use questioning soundly, in order to make the pupils think carefully. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher asked 'Why would it be quiet on the island?' and this helped the pupils to appreciate the lack of roads and traffic. The teachers encourage the use of correct geographical terms. In another lesson for pupils in Year 2, the teacher emphasised words such as island, mainland, jetty, ferry, tourist, and this had a positive impact on the pupils' learning about island life. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to use terms such as landfill site, bottle bank, compost and this helped in the learning of how the local council recycles rubbish. The teachers frequently make useful links with other subjects, in order to make geography more real for the pupils. In a Year 5 lesson, for example, the teacher made the pupils think about fractions and percentages as the class collated the results of a questionnaire about safety along Station Road. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively, but there is often insufficient guidance given as to how the pupils might improve.
113. The coordinator provides satisfactory management for the subject. He has recently reviewed the subject policy, in order to take account of guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Planning is appropriately based on this guidance, adapted to meet the needs of the school and available resources. The coordinator checks colleagues' planning and samples of pupils' work, but he has not had the opportunity to check the quality of teaching himself although there is information in the school file that was gathered last year. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning, though some reference books in the school library are not particularly suited to the age range. Learning is enriched by local fieldwork. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The pupils learn about a variety of local and global environmental issues. For example, the Borough Council's recycling officer recently spoke to pupils in Year 4 and this led on to the pupils designing eye-catching posters that encourage people to recycle waste.

HISTORY

114. During the inspection, there was only one lesson of history and little evidence of pupils' work due to the way that the school allocates blocks of time for the subject to be taught. It is not possible therefore to make a judgement about pupils' attainment.
115. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn to appreciate the passage of time by looking at how babies grow into adults. They learn key facts about the Great Fire of London and study the influence of famous people, such as Florence Nightingale, upon our modern day lives. Pupils become aware of the differences between holidays in the past and now. They know, for example, that Victorians might bring home souvenir candle holders and not sticks of rock and that they would be entertained by concerts in the park.
116. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 cover an appropriate curriculum. They learn important aspects of the Tudor period, the Victorian times and World War 2. Pupils in Year 4 compare and contrast Tudor houses with modern ones and quickly recognise the differences in the materials used, such as thatch for the roof. They learn about the social structure and are surprised to find that only the wealthy were able to sleep in feather beds. Older pupils understand the child's perspective of life in the nineteenth century. They know that few pupils went to school, and, if they did, they might well have been beaten with the cane. They know that children often worked in factories or farms and that living conditions were not very healthy. Similarly, pupils appreciate the dangers of the blitz in World War 2, and how difficult rationing made life. It is not possible to judge how well pupils present their knowledge through their writing or illustration, nor how well they find out facts for themselves through simple research.

117. There is a satisfactory framework to the curriculum. However, history is only taught at intervals throughout the year, which is not ideal for continuous learning and for pupils to build progressively on their skills. Planning does not make the most of history to promote other skills, such as writing or provide specific opportunities for pupils to use their ICT skills for research or to record their work. Teachers make good use of the locality to strengthen pupils' awareness of history. Most of the older pupils have made visits to museums and places of historical interest. The adjacent building site provided good opportunities for pupils to see archaeological remains at first hand.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

118. Pupils' attainment in Years 2 and Year 6 is below average. This represents a drop in attainment for Year 2 pupils since the last inspection. For the Year 6 pupils the below-average attainment reported in 1998 has remained at the same level. Pupils lack experience in handling computers. Although their skills have been improving in recent months, pupils have not had enough direct experience over time, especially in control technology and applications such as electronic testing.
119. By the end of Year 2, pupils know how to operate a computer. Many know how to access a paint program, for example, although an equal number rely heavily on adult help. Pupils show satisfactory control of the mouse to negotiate around the screen and access parts of the program. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, could draw reasonably straight lines and fill in colour to produce pictures in the style of Mondrian. Word-processing skills, however, are not so effective. Pupils are not familiar with opening a document and they tend to 'hunt' for letters when typing a simple sentence. They know some keys, like space bar and delete, but are not clear about the function of the return key. Pupils know how to print their work but are unsure about saving it. Occasionally, pupils play games to support learning in English and mathematics. During Year 2, pupils have the opportunity to programme a floor robot as part of their work on control.
120. By the age of eleven, pupils are increasingly confident on computers but lack vital experience. Most pupils are comfortable opening a word document and typing in text. They can edit successfully by enlarging fonts or checking spelling and can download pictures to embellish the text. Lower attaining pupils are not so competent. They are less familiar with the key board and so their speed of typing is much slower. Pupils know how to access the Internet and gather useful information for their personal projects about, for example, frogs, toads and Liverpool Football Club. They also use Internet facilities to support their work in other subjects. In geography and history, Year 6 pupils have discovered interesting facts about rainforests and World War 2. Year 5 pupils are beginning to use spreadsheets to display their findings, as in their design and technology lessons. They use a simulation programme to 'order' things online and make effective use of the digital camera to produce a multi-media presentation. Pupils have not yet used e-mail communication at school due to cabling problems in the past. All pupils understand the principles and practices involved in using the Internet. They have not, as yet, had the chance to explore more advanced control technology as, for example, in the sequencing of flashing lights. Pupils do not use computers regularly to support work in science, for example, using sensors to record temperatures. Higher attaining pupils do not learn as well as they should, because teachers do not provide enough opportunities for them to work at their own pace through independent learning.
121. The quality of teaching is satisfactory and planning has improved over the last year due to the training that teachers have received and the support of the deputy headteacher. Teachers have a good rapport with their pupils. As a result, pupils listen intently to the guidance at the start of the lesson and are responsible when working at a computer. Teachers have recently developed their own skills so that they are now much more confident when presenting new learning. For example, teachers make good use of the projector to demonstrate computer operation to the whole class. This means that pupils readily understand how to access and use programs, and can start their individual work quickly. Teachers are very active in the classroom, checking pupils' progress and giving advice when necessary. Support staff are similarly effective, guiding pupils, rather than doing too much for them. Consequently, pupils learn how to improve for themselves. However, teachers do not always plan lessons carefully enough to take into account what pupils can actually do. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils struggled to edit text to produce a newspaper format, because they did not have good enough keyboard skills. Sometimes teachers pitch the level of challenge just right. Pupils in Year 2 had to concentrate hard to produce their Mondrian designs but succeeded. Teachers ensure that lower attaining pupils benefit from extra adult support or help from their friends. Unfortunately, teachers do not give the same consideration to higher attaining pupils, by allowing them to work at a faster pace with more demanding work.
122. Over recent years, the school has been sluggish in its development of information and communication technology. Only in the past year or so has the school been positive about upgrading its computer facilities and the skills of staff. The school did not have all the resources necessary to teach the whole curriculum until

now. Teachers are beginning to use computers to support other subjects but this is also quite recent. Planning for other subjects does not pay enough attention to utilising ICT either for study purposes, for gathering and sorting information or for recording. The computer suite allows for more 'hands on' time but the teething problems have not been fully resolved. Some computers are out of action, the room is used as a thoroughfare and the timetabling of half hour sessions does not encourage effective learning, because of the time lost at the start and end of lessons. All this explains why the attainment of the pupils is patchy and below expectations. However, the subject now is in much better shape and the prospects for future success are good.

MUSIC

123. Pupils in the present Years 2 and 6 reach standards that are in line with those expected nationally, which reflects the situation at the time of the last inspection. Good standards are achieved in singing across the whole school in class-work, hymn practice and particularly in the choir.
124. The school has a strong musical tradition, with pupils involved in national and local musical events and performances. Currently they are preparing to join other schools in a "Young Voices" performance at the Sheffield Arena. They will also take part in a national fund-raising event for charity when they will join other pupils across Britain in an attempt to gain a place in the Guinness Book of Records. A large number of pupils are involved in musical tuition on instruments such as the flute, guitar and recorder. The school is rightly proud of its choir, which is open to all and, under the direction of a very effective teacher, is producing work of the highest standard. The school nurtures solo performers and encourages all pupils to respond to choral music with great expression and feeling. Such opportunities are helping the school to boost musical talent and pupils' self-esteem. The musical choices are varied and allow every pupil the opportunity to develop a singing repertoire.
125. In Years 1 and 2 attainment in lessons is sometimes good. Younger pupils sing well, showing good control of musical elements. For example in playing a call-and-response game they control pulse and rhythm and sing with appropriate pitch and cadences. In this work they accompany each other with chime-bars and drums. They beat out the rhythms well to get a crisp sound. Pupils demonstrate good listening skills and produce musical accompaniment on untuned instruments while they sing. In one lesson pupils used the instruments to provide sound effects for the story 'Peace at Last', carefully choosing an appropriate instrument. They cleverly contrasted the ticking of a clock with the dripping of a tap. One pupil, wishing to make the sound of bat wings, produced a gentle sweeping sound using a drum brush creatively. Singing in hymn practice is good. Pupils demonstrate very good aural memory by picking up a song introduced last term and join in a new one after hearing it just once. A rendition of 'Skin and Bones' demonstrated enthusiasm, a good sense of changing tempo, and a real joy in the music.
126. Older pupils sing with expression. The songs chosen in hymn practice offer a challenge and some have a difficult melody. The pupils listen attentively, and by the end of the session sing tunefully, changing the timbre of their voices with great skill. During the assembly pupils have the opportunity to listen to the piano accompaniment and to some taped music, which helps them bring good timing to their work. Lessons in the Years 3 to 6 classes offer pupils the opportunity to learn the meaning of musical terms such as duration, pitch and tempo and to bring these elements into their performances. Their skills of appraisal are progressively developed and they explain how a piece of music makes them feel. Pupils use their own voices as well as instruments to create musical sounds which match moods and situations. In a very good Year 5 lesson pupils composed music for the planet Pluto. They used their imagination to produce sounds which might be found on the planet. As an extension activity, the teacher introduced pupils to musical notation and the differing values of notes so they could improve their work further. The final compositions were taped so that they could be fully appraised and evaluated.
127. The teaching of music is good overall and the school benefits from the significant number of staff who have a keen interest in the subject. Teachers give pupils a wide range of opportunities to perform individually and in groups. They encourage pupils to communicate feelings through their music which adds a spiritual element to lessons. They manage pupils' behaviour well in class, even when a change of tempo brings great excitement to the music. Plans do not always indicate how multi-cultural aspects of the music can be emphasised. For example children sang 'Kye Kye Kula' with great enthusiasm but were not given the opportunity to learn about its African roots. Sometimes, opportunities to promote non-Western music are lost. In an assembly on the Hindu festival of Diwali, celebratory Indian music could have been introduced rather than a piece of Mozart. The teaching effectively develops the learning of boys and girls equally, and all are encouraged to join the choir and recorder classes. Pupils who have special educational needs do well in this creative subject. The small number who are learning English as an additional language are well supported by the whole class group. The staff that

attend hymn practice do not always give active support to the lead teacher and pupils' singing could be improved sometimes by feedback from other adults around the room.

128. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. Behaviour is appropriate at all times and pupils demonstrate high levels of self-discipline when holding and playing instruments. In class, the teachers' comments are sensitive and encouraging, giving pupils the confidence to rise to the many challenges in each lesson.
129. The school follows the national guidance for music, but the subject manager is re-writing the scheme of work, which she hopes will be more helpful for non-specialists. The school intends to trial three or four musical objectives across the school to help plan a more useful assessment programme and provide a detailed analysis of pupils' achievement. The time allocated to music is a little below the national average, but teachers add to this routinely at quiet times, during hymn practice and in assemblies. Teachers make frequent use of ICT in lessons, especially to record and appraise music but there is less emphasis on using the computers to compose music. The school has just invested in a multi-media resource which will support all teachers, particularly those who are less confident. The subject manager is enthusiastic and provides good support for all the staff. She co-ordinates the musical events well and finds worthwhile opportunities for pupils to perform in the community.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

130. As at the previous inspection, the levels of attainment of pupils in Year 6 are in line with national expectations. In Year 2, attainment is above the expected level and has improved since the last inspection. The full range of physical education activities, including games, gymnastics and dance, is undertaken throughout each year. The school makes good provision for swimming and almost all pupils achieve a 25 metre certificate.
131. Pupils, throughout school, understand the need for warm up exercises and are aware of the effect that exercise has on the body. They appreciate the need for safety rules and are mindful of each others' space. They lift, carry, place and use apparatus safely.
132. In Year 1 pupils show good, and sometimes very good, body control when jumping, landing, stretching, rolling and turning, both on the floor and on the apparatus. They change direction and speed effectively in response to instruction. When jumping from different heights, pupils show confidence, control and balance. They are beginning to evaluate their own and each other's performances, providing suitable praise and constructive criticism.
133. In Years 3 to 6 pupils show that they can hold a range of balanced shapes and positions using different parts of the body. They refine the ways in which they perform gymnastics. For example, pupils understand how to combine a set of movements and develop them into a controlled sequence. Year 6 pupils attempted to create a symmetric, balanced shape in pairs and then move into an asymmetrical shape. They completed the exercise successfully but some groups lacked poise, smoothness and control.
134. Extra-curricular activities help boost pupils' skills in different sports. For example the co-ordination between hand and eye is greatly improved during table-tennis coaching periods, as is pupils' sense of timing. They appreciate and accept the importance of rules in games, and show a well-developed sense of fair play. The school regularly engages in a number of sporting activities locally and equal opportunities are provided for both sexes to participate.
135. Pupils enjoy all the activities, sustain effort and are willing to practise and demonstrate skills and techniques. They work hard to improve their performance and appreciate one another's efforts. Behaviour in most lessons is good and pupils work hard to follow commands and instructions.
136. The quality of teaching is generally good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The good teaching is characterised by a strong focus on teaching specific skills, a good range of activities provided for pupils to practise them and opportunities to evaluate performances.
137. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory direction for the subject but, at present, has insecure knowledge of the standards achieved across the school in all aspects of the subject because he does not regularly observe lessons. The facilities and resources for physical education are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Pupils' attainment in Year 2 and Year 6 is in line with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has maintained the quality of teaching and learning seen at the last inspection. Progress is satisfactory and pupils who have special educational needs or who are learning English as an additional language participate fully during class discussions.
139. During Years 1 and 2 pupils learn about Bible stories and the main Christian festivals such as Christmas. In a good Year 1 lesson, they discussed the parable of the Good Samaritan, examining the characters' actions. Pupils explored the meaning of the story and linked it to their own lives. They talked about how they would help an injured person by 'calling an ambulance' or 'giving him a plaster'. Pupils discussed some difficult concepts and tried to make sense of them. For example, they explained the term 'wicked' as 'not nice at all'. By the end of Year 2 pupils have studied different faiths and know that peoples' beliefs influence their everyday lives, through the clothes they wear or the food they eat.
140. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 extend their knowledge and understanding. They grasp the notion of such complicated ideas as symbolism, prayer and worship. They study these in the context of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. In one very good lesson in Year 3, the pupils discussed the meaning of the Lord's Prayer. They split it into the sections relating to praise, asking for help and saying sorry. This was very effective in helping them to understand the significance of the words for Christians and inspired the writing of their own prayers. These showed that pupils have a good grasp of the importance of non-tangible gifts in the world. One pupil thanked God for the 'beautiful world' and another for our 'lovely pets'. Pupils learn about the books of the Bible and explore the different types of writing, such as Paul's letters. They explore the use of symbols in religion through the story of Noah's Ark. They know that the rainbow represents God's promise and that the dove is a symbol of peace. Pupils in Year 4 study the Hindu religion, learning about worship in the temple and at home. In Year 6, pupils talk about the life of Mohammed and explore the significance of fasting for Muslims during the month of Ramadan. The study of different religions is playing an important part in developing pupils' basic awareness of our multi-faith society. It encourages them to be sensitive to the feelings of other people and to show respect for beliefs and traditions that are different from their own. Through their work in raising funds for charity, pupils come to appreciate the plight of those less fortunate than themselves and show a keen desire to help.
141. The daily acts of worship supplement learning and provide some opportunities for reflection. There is good participation by the pupils themselves. In one assembly for the younger age groups, some pupils improvised the story read by the teacher. The drama helped pupils to identify the moral of the tale. The festival of Divali was a focus for another assembly, which was topical for the time of year, and also consolidated the work on Hinduism.
142. In the lessons seen, teaching was mainly satisfactory. Some teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject and bring their lessons to life through clear explanations and skilled handling of class discussions. In these lessons, teaching is good or very good on occasions. All teachers plan their lessons thoroughly using the guidelines of the locally agreed syllabus but the very basic range of resources is insufficient. There are too few books for pupils to engage in research, especially about world religions. The resource boxes are limited in both the quantity and range of artefacts that they contain and there are not enough videos of good quality. The shortage of resources was a factor in some lessons that were graded as satisfactory rather than good. For example, in one lesson, the teacher had only a small book to illustrate her talk on Hindu worship and the pictures were too small for pupils at the back of the classroom to see clearly. Teachers maintain a useful balance between written and oral work in religious education. This allows for interesting discussions and provides good opportunities for pupils to express their views and opinions. Information and communication technology is barely used in this subject and there is little exploration of web-sites as a source of information. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural education and to skills of speaking and listening.
143. The subject manager is new in post and is developing an overview of teaching and learning in the subject through looking at pupils' books, checking the teachers' planning and observing lessons. Over the last few years there has been very little development or improvement planning in the subject. There are few displays around school and only a basic selection of books in the library. Overall, the subject has a relatively low profile within the curriculum although all statutory requirements are met. The planning guidelines clearly identify opportunities for checking pupils' learning but the subject manager has yet to devise systems for gathering the information in order to check the effectiveness of planning.