

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THE MIDDLE RASEN PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Market Rasen

LEA area : Lincolnshire

Unique reference number : 120463

Headteacher : Mr. S. Graver

Reporting inspector : Elizabeth Camplin  
3586

Dates of inspection : 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Inspection number : 248132

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: North Street  
Middle Rasen  
Market Rasen

Postcode: LN8 3TS

Telephone number: 01673 843250

Fax number: 01673 844599

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of Chair of Governors: Dr. R. Weeks

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3586	E. Camplin	Registered inspector	Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage English History Information and communication technology (ICT) Music Religious education	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key Issues for action
8937	H. Allen	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Pupils' welfare, health and safety Partnership with parents and carers
29378	K. Watson	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Art and design Design and technology Geography Physical education Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The curriculum and other opportunities for learning

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International  
Upperton House  
The Avenue  
Eastbourne  
East Sussex  
BN21 3YB

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This small community school has 118 pupils on roll. They have a broad mix of backgrounds. No pupils are known to be entitled to free school meals. This is an underestimate of the degree of socio-economic disadvantage as there is recent census data to show that the area the school serves is only a little above the national average. On average, between 1998 and 2002, children's attainment on entry to Reception has been above the national expectation for the age group but this trend is changing. The current group of ten was average when they started school in September. No pupils have English as an additional language. However, the roll includes a small group from mixed-heritage backgrounds, five 'cared for' children and seventeen pupils with special educational needs. Seven pupils have Statements of Special Education Need that span moderate learning difficulties, emotional, behavioural and communication difficulties, autism and physical difficulties. They represent a high percentage of the roll compared with the number at the time of the previous inspection and with the present national average. The school has managed a higher than usual number of staff changes in the past two years.

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

This school is soundly led and managed by the headteacher and provides satisfactorily for its pupils. It is a warm, welcoming place, which is why pupils' enthusiasm for school is so good, attendance is high and pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Currently, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall because teaching is mainly at least satisfactory, though better for children up to Year 3 than in Years 4 to 6. The school aims to make improvements where there is underachievement so that all pupils can make even progress. The school is not expensive to run and provides sound value for money.

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

- Pupils form very caring relationships, behave well and are eager to attend school.
- The headteacher and the staff team work well together and foster a strong sense of community.
- Sensitive provision is made for pupils with learning difficulties, enabling their good progress.
- Pupils in Reception and Year 3 make good progress and achieve well in most of their work.
- The programme of activities outside of normal lessons is a stimulating addition to a sound curriculum. It adds significantly to pupils' interest in learning.

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

- Pupils in Years 4 to 6 do not make consistently good progress in science and religious education.
- Pupils have too few opportunities to use computers, exercise initiative, or take responsibility, to help them to learn.
- The school is not sufficiently rigorous in checking its performance, and makes inadequate use of new technology to assess and report on pupils' progress and plan for the future.
- The school could do more to help parents to contribute to their children's learning.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The last inspection was in 1997. Since then, standards have continued to improve in line with the national trend despite fluctuations in national test results that are common in schools with small numbers of pupils in Year 6. Overall, action to address the key issues from the last report has had a satisfactory impact although not all issues are completely resolved. The quality of teaching is still uneven but is improving because teachers agree relevant performance targets and are keen to improve their practice. There has been significant improvement in provision for pupils with learning difficulties but not enough for all groups of pupils. Every subject now has a co-ordinator and the school has started to use performance information to identify weaknesses and plan for improvement. Governors are better at strategic planning but are not yet fully effective as critical friends.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

In 2002, standards matched the national average in English and mathematics. They were low in science. Overall, pupils' test results did not compare well with similar schools, mainly because of the high percentage of boys with special educational needs. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, did better than forecast in English when the school set its targets for 2002. They did not meet the rigorous targets set for mathematics because too few reached a high standard. Pupils underachieved in science. Targets for literacy and numeracy in 2003 provide a sound degree of challenge and it is likely that pupils will attain them when results come through. Currently standards are average and achievement is sound in mathematics, science and writing at the end of Years 2 and 6. They are above average and pupils, including pupils with learning difficulties, achieve well in speaking, listening and reading. Pupils in Year 6 make inadequate use of writing in science and religious education. By the end of the Reception Year, children's attainment is above average in the foundations for English, mathematics and aspects of personal development. They reach the goals expected in other areas of learning. They achieve well overall. In Year 2, standards are above average and pupils achieve well in history, geography, music, games and religious education. They are satisfactory in art and design and technology. Where it was possible to judge standards in foundation subjects in Year 6, they were above average in music and games and average in the remainder. Standards are not as high as they could be in information and communication technology (ICT).



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are enthusiastic and keen to do their best when lessons are stimulating but not all take sufficient care when recording work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils look out for each other and there is no hostility towards any particular group of pupils. A pupil with learning difficulties was temporarily excluded last year in the child's best interest.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships between pupils are very good but they have too few opportunities to use initiative and take responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. The levels of authorised and unauthorised absence are much lower than average. Most pupils arrive very punctually.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

*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.*

Teachers and teaching assistants have very good relationships with pupils and earn their trust. Children make a happy start to school. The teacher does well to cater soundly for Reception children at the same time as teaching the group of youngest pupils from Year 1. The class gains socially and academically from working together, though adults do not always choose methods that fully suit all children's needs. Teaching in English and mathematics is sound throughout the school because teachers make constructive use of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy in both subjects. Teachers work well in partnership with teaching assistants to enable pupils with learning difficulties to gain confidence and make good progress in basic skills. Teaching is good in Years 1, 2 and 3 where the emphasis is on teaching reading, writing and knowledge of number through activities that capture pupils' interest and encourage them to work hard. Teachers in Years 4 to 6 have the same intentions. There is some good teaching in music and science for pupils in Years 5 and 6. However, teachers do not ensure that pupils do as well as they can in every lesson when writing or recording calculations. Some lessons lack pace; pupils then work slowly and write too little. One lesson in games was unsatisfactory. Teachers' marking is usually positive but not consistently rigorous. Opportunities are missed to foster older pupils' independence through a sufficient range of interesting homework tasks.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is soundly planned and it meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is enriched with a good number of extra-curricular activities. There are some effective links with the community but there is insufficient time for ICT and weaknesses in planning for religious, personal, social and health education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Links with the educational psychologist are excellent. Systems for assessment and providing individual help are effective and fairly applied in difficult circumstances.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There is a strong emphasis on community identity. Teachers encourage pupils to respect others' needs and feelings as well as their own. They help pupils to overcome painful experiences. They do not promote awareness of cultural diversity or enable older pupils to help younger ones as well as they might.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Sound. The school looks after pupils well, especially those who need special care. Governors' attention was brought to some aspects of assessment and welfare that require improvement.
Partnership with parents	Sound, but not as good as the last inspection. Most parents appreciate what teachers do for their children and to keep them informed about curriculum developments. The school does not do enough to fulfil all parents' aspirations for children to learn as well as they can.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The school's aims and values are well communicated. The headteacher encourages teachers to support each other in working to achieve them but systems for managing change lack rigour. Sound progress has been made since the previous inspection in managing curricular responsibilities but teachers have yet to establish fully effective ways of checking how well the curriculum is implemented to raise standards and report on pupils' progress.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors fulfil statutory requirements. Their strategic thinking and planning is secure and they are very supportive and proud of the school. They are not sufficiently aware of weaknesses in provision that lead to underachievement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The improvement priorities are appropriate, including aims to improve assessment, writing, ICT, awareness of Citizenship and provision in Reception. The school has made steady progress with most of these initiatives but procedures for checking the quality of teaching and pupils' work and progress are unsatisfactory.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. Since the headteacher was appointed the school has eliminated a deficit budget, enhanced staffing and made more effective use of funds for special educational needs. It has appropriate plans in hand to make further improvements in accommodation, resources and staff deployment.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate, except for ICT and outdoor play for children in Reception. Governors have a weak understanding of the principles of best

value and do not do enough to consult parents and pupils about how to improve the school.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Teachers are approachable and respond to concerns.</li><li>• Children like school and behave well.</li><li>• The school is well managed and led.</li><li>• Teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Homework, particularly in Year 6.</li><li>• Information about progress.</li><li>• The partnership with parents.</li><li>• Systems for checking that incentives for pupils to achieve well work fairly.</li></ul>

The inspection team found that the majority of parents have a balanced view of the school. They are right about its better features but suggestions for improvement are equally valid. Parents support the school well and want it to succeed.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Given the increasing percentage of pupils with special educational needs, the school has done well to sustain strengths in standards achieved in Reception in communication, language and literacy, and to improve standards in mathematics development. Standards are not as high as they were previously reported in physical and creative development. This, however, is almost an inevitable result of learning alongside pupils from Year 1 whose more formal curricular needs take up much of the teacher's time. Inadequate provision for outdoor learning is another obstacle that governors are actively trying to overcome.

2. Traditionally, progress during Reception has been sound, with girls making better progress than boys. During the inspection, no significant differences were observed between the standards achieved by girls and boys. Both are achieving well in core skills and pupils with special educational needs are making good progress.

3. The school has a sound record for enabling pupils to make satisfactory progress between Reception and the end of Year 2. Results at the end of Year 2 have been above or well above average in three out of four years in reading and mathematics and average in writing. They declined in 2002 because of poor results in mathematics. Girls significantly outperformed boys, but the percentage of boys with special educational needs was unusually high and accounted for boys' poor performance compared with boys in other schools. Nevertheless, most pupils met their targets that were realistically based on their prior performance.

4. Inspection findings are that standards have risen in Year 2 since last year and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards in English in the 2003 national tests for seven-year-olds are likely to be above average. There has been good improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching high standards in reading and writing. This reflects well on the school's action plan for literacy. Standards are also likely to be better in science and mathematics. They are within average levels rather than below and well below and overall achievement and use of numeracy is sound. The number reaching the high standard could be higher still, however, if even more challenging work involving solving problems was set.

5. Since the previous inspection, pupils in Year 2 have continued to attain an above average standard in history and geography whilst standards in religious education have improved to better than expected for their age. Pupils achieve well in these subjects because they make good use of reading for research and writing to record what they have learnt. Pupils also continue to progress well and exceed expectations in music and games.

6. At the time of the last inspection standards in Year 2 were above average in science and art. Now they are within the average range in both subjects. Few pupils attain advanced levels in science, primarily because there has been too little emphasis until recently on practical investigation and recording. This situation is improving, as teachers have taken account of findings from last year to modify the science curriculum in infant classes. Encouragingly, pupils in Year 1 attain above average standards for their age because they are using number and literacy in stimulating practical activities. For example, they estimated, checked and recorded how many strides they took before they could no longer hear the sound of a drum or a triangle. Overall, pupils in Year 2 make at least satisfactory progress in science, art and design and technology and their achievement is sound. Their knowledge and understanding of ICT is also average. Pupils do not, however, reach standards of which they

are capable in ICT, due to lack of adequate opportunities.

7. In national tests in 2002, girls in Year 6 had a very good year in English and mathematics. They achieved well and outperformed girls in other schools by a considerable margin. Boys did not do as well in the tests, mainly because of the high percentage of boys with special educational needs. Pupils did well to exceed targets set for them in literacy, again a positive sign that the school development plan initiatives were working. Overall, pupils in Year 6 achieved satisfactory outcomes in mathematics and reading, having made at least sound progress since Year 2, despite the school's disappointment that pupils did not attain its demanding targets in mathematics. Their achievement in writing and science was unsatisfactory and not as good as teachers' expectations when they set the school targets, as the school itself acknowledged in the review of its own performance at the start of the autumn term 2002.

8. The findings of the inspection confirm that standards are above average in speaking and listening and reading. Pupils express themselves fluently in class discussions when the subject matter really interests them and they read very well. They are competent in interpreting many different kinds of texts because they use this skill frequently for research in other subjects. Their handwriting and writing is average, with about one in ten pupils reaching an above average standard. Pupils write for a variety of purposes, but more could do better in writing, mathematics and science, if they were encouraged to make more consistent effort in lessons. Pupils make good use of methods of writing to support a point of view, for example, in design and technology. Generally they are not in the habit of applying writing and numeracy skills well enough in foundation subjects. The school knows that standards could be higher, especially in science. There is evidence that some pupils of middle and above average capability underachieve in some of their work because expectations of them have not been high enough. There is, however, no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls during the period 2000 and 2002.

9. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in music and games. The school has sustained its good provision in both key stages since the last inspection due to teachers' expertise in these aspects of the curriculum. There was insufficient evidence to judge standard attained in geography and religious education, but they meet expectations in other foundation subjects. Pupils underachieve in ICT because there are too few computers to enable them to practice skills for an adequate amount of time each week. Pupils in Years 4 to 6 also underachieve in religious education. They sometimes write well about their feelings and issues of morality, but overall they record too little to demonstrate the progressive development of knowledge and understanding of world religions. They sometimes confuse religious education with personal and social education, or citizenship. This points to a lack of clarity about the organisation of both curricular aspects. This issue needs urgent resolution, a fact acknowledged in the school development plan.

10. The school places a high priority in its school aims on maintaining good provision in foundation subjects, but pupils do not excel in any except music. This may partly be due to the fact that there has been no formal consideration of whether the school has on roll pupils with gifts and talents in practical and creative subjects. In this respect, lack of rigorous assessment in foundation subjects prevents governors from evaluating how successful they are in meeting their aim for pupils to reach their full potential in the work that they do.

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

11. Pupils' behaviour, relationships and attendance are very good. Pupils have a positive attitude to school and their personal development is satisfactory. They take responsibility well when given the right kinds of opportunities, such as the chance to organise a fund-raising day

later in the summer term. This represents satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

*What the school does well*

12. Pupils' attitudes to school are good. They say they enjoy coming to school to be with their friends and they like their teachers. They get on very well with each other, their teachers, teaching assistants and all other adults in the school. Pupils are happy to talk about what they like most about school. In most cases, this is being with their friends but in many cases pupils also state that they like lessons! In particular, they like mathematics and literacy. All pupils begin lessons wanting to learn and determined to try to do well. They respond particularly well where teachers have high expectations of them and are usually eager to answer questions.

13. There are a few pupils with challenging behaviour. However, in discussions with pupils it is obvious most have a clear understanding of right from wrong and pupils are sympathetic towards the few who have particular problems and who sometimes misbehave. The behaviour of all pupils is usually very good, both in the classroom and also outside lessons during lunch and break-times. Incidents of poor behaviour are very rare and whereas there are some acts of mischief these do not escalate into bullying. Pupils' very good behaviour ensures an orderly school. They are usually able to sustain concentration even when they find lessons less interesting because the work they are asked to do is either too difficult or too easy for them.

14. Relationships between pupils are generally very good. A particular strength is the way pupils with medical and emotional problems are looked after by other members of their class. There is a true community spirit within the school and this is reflected in the excellent relationships between pupils and the adults who look after them.

15. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is reflected in the high level of attendance that is well above the national average for similar types of schools. Pupils generally arrive at school on time and lessons throughout the day start promptly.

*What could be improved*

16. Pupils lack sufficient experience of checking the quality of their work, taking initiative and making decisions about how the school can improve. The school has not done enough to ensure that pupils are able to work things out for themselves so that they are not so dependent on following instructions from teachers to make progress in their learning. More could be done to help those pupils who lack the confidence to take on responsibility.

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

17. During the inspection, half of the teaching observed was good. It was mainly due to good questioning and lively discussion and practical activity rather than rigorous attention to high quality recording. Almost all of the most effective lessons, including the two that were very good, were for the older Year 1's and pupils in Years 2 and 3. They took place in English, mathematics, science and physical education. There was also a good music lesson in the class for pupils in Years 5 and 6 and good provision for creative and physical development in Reception. Other lessons were satisfactory with the exception of one lesson for Years 4 and 5 which was unsatisfactory. There were, however, areas for development that fully justified some of the key priorities in the school development plan.

### *What the school does well*

18. Relationships are strong because lessons are usually managed in a relaxed and welcoming atmosphere that pupils of all ages find reassuring. It is why children in Reception make a happy start to school and why all pupils are keen to attend school regularly.

19. The teacher does well to teach Reception and Year 1 pupils equally well in literacy and numeracy lessons. Planning is also effective for aspects of creative and physical areas of learning including art, design and technology and games. The management of the teacher's time and that of teaching assistants is good so that both groups of pupils have opportunities to work as distinct year groups as well as in groups of mixed ages. Objectives for new learning are matched to the needs of individuals and groups within the class. For example, when the teacher wanted to extend pupils' knowledge of number, older pupils worked with the teacher in the classroom to sort and order practical apparatus and then formally add and record the results. At the same time, the group in Reception engaged in practical mathematical activities with teaching assistants in the small playground outside the classroom. This helped to increase their confidence and accuracy in counting on and back, and in use of the language of comparison.

20. As a result of the priority given to raising standards in writing, there has been more improvement in the past year in the teaching of English than in mathematics and science throughout the school. Teachers spend a lot of time from Reception to Year 3 helping pupils to recognise the sounds of letters and to sound out and spell unfamiliar words. Pupils have regular handwriting lessons, so that from Year 2 onwards few pupils struggle to get ideas down on paper. They write neatly at speed when motivated. This year's focus on writing is encouraging pupils to use their good knowledge of the way that books are organised. They undertake research in other subjects, such as history and geography. They sometimes write well in the style of different authors, dramatists, poets and newspaper reporters. Persuasive writing is a strength, and used well in design and technology and English. The best lessons in science, mathematics and music show that the school does take some account of the previous report's recommendation to provide more opportunities for investigation and experiments. These lessons were planned well to give pupils the chance to find things out for themselves and compose their own songs. They were exciting because pupils' curiosity was aroused. In science, one teacher challenged pupils to design a burglar alarm, for example, and led a lively discussion about their design ideas.

21. When pupils in Year 3 started the year their writing was not as good as their reading. Not one pupil was working beyond the level expected of pupils of their age. Pupils have moved on very well, often writing imaginatively or in a logical and organised way, such as when writing instructions. Work produced since September is of a good quality and range and consistently well presented. Both teachers who share the class show the same high expectations of pupils and this increases pupils' capacity to succeed. Their work shows balanced coverage of English, science and mathematics and good use of literacy and numeracy in foundation subjects. One good example was a well-planned topic about Middle Rasen in the past when pupils presented information in graphical form, bullet points and through drawings and diagrams.

22. Pupils with special educational needs have specific learning targets that focus on improving concentration, listening, literacy and numeracy skills. They are appropriate and communicated well to the pupils. They are usually at the right level of challenge and the school does all it can to make sure there is an adult or friend working with them to help them learn as well as they can. Teachers seek advice from professionals from specialist support agencies and teaching assistants have developed their understanding of how to support pupils by voluntarily attending special courses, such as one on autism. Routines for gaining

extra help from the headteacher are also well established. This means that when some pupils need a quiet moment to recover from feelings of stress they have the opportunity to share their problems with the headteacher. This helps to calm them down.

#### *What could be improved*

23. Lessons for children in Reception are occasionally too formal, children are expected to persevere with a learning task for too long, or there is too little attention given to teaching children to take turns. A lesson objective to find information from books and learn how to use labels, for example, was difficult for children to understand. They spent too long trying to write phrases to describe rabbits rather than simply matching key words to pictures to learn new vocabulary. An activity encouraging children to throw balls into buckets was not as effective as it might have been because girls in the group were reluctant to let boys take turns in the game.

24. Lessons in junior classes are very prescriptive at times and are not planned well for pupils of different age and capability. A games lesson, for example, failed to challenge pupils to improve their skills in using bats and balls. It is evident from pupils' exercise books that pupils have too few opportunities to devise their own ways of working or tackling a problem. Expectations are not always crystal clear of what Year 6 should be capable of achieving compared with Year 5, or Year 5 compared with Year 4. In both classes, learning targets are not shared well enough and, therefore, pupils do not always make sufficient effort to work at a good pace. Work in books reflects inconsistencies in presentation. Pupils have many folders and books for writing but these are not particularly well organised so that it is difficult to track progress, especially in religious education and ICT.

25. In the lessons observed, there were usually opportunities for two pupils to work at a computer, and occasionally pupils go to the computer suite for lessons in small groups. However, there are few lessons for the whole class in ICT and plans for teaching ICT skills are imprecise. This means that pupils have gaps in experience of using computers for work involving tables and data, particularly in mathematics and science.

26. Throughout the school, teachers praise all pupils' good work verbally. They often write positively underneath work produced by higher-attaining pupils. However, written comments do not provide much incentive for lower-attaining pupils as they rarely explain what pupils could do to improve. A few parents worry that their children are occasionally upset because they do not receive many 'reward' stickers. Such perceptions require careful consideration.

27. Pupils are not very enthusiastic about homework. The school underestimates its value. It is not used sufficiently to encourage pupils to investigate or to be creative, by undertaking projects of their own choosing.

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

28. The curriculum is soundly planned and organised for children in Reception, infants and juniors, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. It is also soundly balanced, in that it gives pupils appropriate learning opportunities in every subject to help foster their academic and personal development. Collective Worship is also well organised. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in the provision for pupils with special educational needs, and the school's schemes of work match with nationally recommended guidelines.



### *What the school does well*

29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good overall, and excellent for those pupils requiring a statement. This is because its co-ordination is very well organised and the school works hard to ensure that everyone involved in the process is fully aware of each pupil's particular needs. Pupils giving cause for concern are identified early. Their progress is tracked through regular reviews involving teachers, teaching assistants, parents and when necessary, support agencies. The targets in individual education plans are invariably short-term and achievable, and are carefully matched to pupils' needs. Support in the classroom by teachers, and by some skilled teaching assistants is mostly of a very high quality, enabling pupils to participate as well as they are can, as observed when pupils in Years 5 and 6 were composing lyrics for their own songs.

30. Provision for music is good, as teachers use their expertise well to promote pupils' enthusiasm for this subject. Extra-curricular provision is another significant strength. Through after-school or lunch-time clubs the school provides opportunities for pupils to take part in activities, such as sport, chess, recorders and drama. The school is rightly proud of the success of its school teams in a variety of competitive sporting events with other schools.

31. Very effective use of visits and visitors make many cross-curricular topics interesting and rewarding for pupils, and there are good links with high schools and pre-school groups. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 pupils recently had the opportunity to go on a residential visit to London and have also stayed for a week at an outdoor activity centre. High school pupils work alongside pupils from Middle Rasen, sometimes sharing some of their research. Children in Reception and Year 1 learnt a lot about the custom of christening babies from visiting the local Anglican Church. These, and a variety of other activities, including raising money for charity, are successful in promoting self-reliance and appreciation of other people in the local and wider community.

### *What could be improved*

32. Areas appropriately identified by the school for further development include more involvement of pupils with special educational needs in setting their own targets and greater use of computer technology in record keeping. Furthermore, strategies to develop the key skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT through every subject are not always exploited as well as they should be. For example, writing skills are not given sufficient prominence in the work of some of the older pupils in subjects, such as science or religious education, and ICT skills are little used in design and technology or mathematics. The school provides for personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education, through subjects such as science or religious education. It acknowledges, however, that there is a need for every class to set aside designated curriculum time for this important area as distinct from the other two subjects. Opportunities for swimming are too restricted and do not enable pupils to reach their full potential in this aspect of physical education. Outdoor play facilities for children in Reception are also inadequate.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good with provision for cultural development satisfactory. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

### *What the school does well*

34. Good provision for spiritual, moral, and social development is an everyday feature of many lessons. For example, older pupils write thoughtfully about animal rights and the protection of the environment. Because of this, the school is successful in helping pupils to develop a set of values and principles that help them form their own outlook on life. Pupils are given worthwhile opportunities to reflect on social and moral issues, for example, during assemblies when time is given over to the 'quiet thought for the morning'.

35. Pupils of all ages are taught to distinguish right from wrong and to respect rules designed to protect them. This helps them to recognise behavioural and physical boundaries that should not be crossed. For example, one group of young pupils explained that they were not allowed to go past a line of cones placed at the edge of the playground because it was not safe. The cones were used to keep children away from the car park. At the same time pupils appreciate that some children do not understand as well as others and they need to be tolerant of this. This was demonstrated during the inspection when pupils in one class were thinking about who should be star of the week. They were very supportive of a fellow pupil who often found it difficult to contribute to lessons but everyone had noticed how well he had done in a physical education lesson that week.

36. Good provision for social development enables pupils to relate very well to others and to be sensitive to the difficulties other children might be experiencing. A group from the top class of pupils in Years 5 and 6 spoke very caringly about how their teacher had explained the specific problems of one pupil new to the class this year. They spoke very proudly about the progress the child concerned had made since arriving at school and how much they enjoyed being able to help. They are enthusiastic about the new Class Council because of the opportunities they now have to discuss what they can do to help the school. Other pupils explained how friends and adults in school were helping them to deal with personal tragedy. Pupils learn to co-operate and collaborate well through the variety of extra-curricular activities and the best organised practical lessons. They have a good understanding of their own culture and are able to experience the arts both through lessons and extra-curricular opportunities, such as 'Music for schools', theatre groups and visiting artists.

### *What could be improved*

37. The school does not do enough to compensate for the lack of cultural diversity represented within the school. Resources and displays do not adequately reflect the multi-cultural society we live in. Older pupils gain from the experience of a residential trip to London but, overall, pupils have too few opportunities to learn about the different foods, dress, art, books and religions of the world. Neither do older pupils have enough opportunities to work alongside and support younger ones.

38. The absence of a scheme of work for personal and social education also results in too few opportunities for pupils to discuss issues associated with racism. The school could do more to promote race equality.

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

39. There has been sound improvement in this aspect since the last inspection. The attention paid to the care of pupils with statements is excellent, which is why they are so well integrated into the school community. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in Reception, English and mathematics are satisfactory overall and good for other pupils with special educational needs. Support for pupils' personal development and the

school's provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety are also satisfactory. However, methods for checking pupils' progress in some foundation subjects are inadequate.

*What the school does well*

40. There is a very caring school ethos. Teachers and teaching assistants successfully ensure pupils feel secure. Teachers are well supported at lunch-time by the supervisors who are well liked by pupils, resulting in a pleasant family atmosphere. Pupils confirm they feel confident that they can approach any adult in the school if they are worried about anything. Inter-agency relationships are good, particularly to help support pupils with special educational needs.

41. Pupils are encouraged to come to school because they enjoy it so much. The school keeps track of attendance well, praises pupils for being punctual, and follows up the few concerns very appropriately.

42. Teachers and teaching assistants are good role models and pupils respond well to the encouragement they receive to behave well. Positive behaviour is encouraged and acknowledged by the award of 'smiley face' stickers, class 'star of the week' and presentations in family assemblies. Expectations about behaviour are consistent throughout the day and midday supervisors play an important role in supporting pupils during the lunch period.

43. The recent introduction of a class council in Class 1 is appreciated by the Year 5 and Year 6 pupils involved who now feel they contribute more to the running of the school. They are deservedly proud of the work they did recently on planning a shelter for the school playground and organising a fund-raising day during the early part of July.

44. The school provides well for the personal and academic development of pupils with special educational needs and pupils in care. This group of pupils makes good progress in both aspects of their development because of sensitive management of their needs and realistic targets in individual education plans.

45. Procedures are sound for assessing progress in English and mathematics. In addition to managing national tests without imposing undue stress on pupils, the school conducts voluntary assessment of progress in both subjects in Years 3, 4 and 5. It analyses results effectively to establish how well boys and girls make progress during their junior years and the impact of the quality of teaching they receive. The headteacher then takes steps to ensure that pupils whose progress is slow are selected for additional support with literacy and numeracy. The analysis of pupils' errors in national tests led to changes in the way that reading, spelling and writing are taught, with positive results, especially in Years 2, 3 and 6, where pupils have made up a lot of ground since last year. This is good use of assessment information.

*What could be improved*

46. All staff are concerned to ensure that pupils are safe at all times. However, not all procedures and policies are secure and although some risk assessments have been carried out, there are currently significant omissions. For example, there has been no formal risk assessment concerning swimming or individual pupils who may be at risk through their own medical condition or who present a potential risk to others. Additionally, current procedures relating to the storing of class registers do not fully take into account situations that can arise during emergency evacuation. The school does not ensure that all documents that might be considered confidential are kept in locked files. Overall, the school has not sought sufficient

advice from appropriate authorities experienced in all aspects of health, safety and pupil welfare.

47. Pupils rarely use their own initiative to resolve problems. Occasions, such as breaks and lunch-times, are currently very structured with pupils given few opportunities to take on responsibilities. Given the very good relationships that already exist across the school, older pupils could be encouraged to do much more to support and look out for others.

48. The school does not have a policy for setting individual targets for all pupils to ensure regular progress is made in their personal development. Some parents would like targets to be agreed and discussed with them and their children. Currently, the school's reward system fails to acknowledge the different stages some pupils are at in their development. Perhaps inadvertently, the level of rewards some pupils achieve lags behind others, with an adverse effect on their self-esteem.

49. Much of the assessment of pupils' work in foundation subjects is informal. Too little has been done to review how well assessment is used to inform teachers' planning in each class. This leads to inconsistencies in the quality of some learning activities and pupils' uneven progress, for example, in religious education and design and technology. These unsatisfactory features indicate that improvements are necessary in the way pupils' academic progress is monitored. This is acknowledged in the first priority in the school development plan.

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

50. Parents' views of the school are satisfactory overall. The links with parents, the impact of their involvement and the quality of information they receive are sound. The contribution made by parents to pupils' learning at school, and at home, is inadequate.

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

51. Because most parents live nearby, they have the opportunity to speak to teachers on a regular basis when they collect their children at the end of the day. Parents are clear that they can arrange to meet a member of staff if they have any particular concern. Liaison between the parents of pupils with statements of special educational needs and teachers is impressive and the Code of Practice is meticulously implemented.

52. The school recently conducted a survey of parents' views of the school, using a questionnaire similar to the one used prior to inspection. Dissatisfaction with information about progress was the only issue arising from the 27 per cent of returns that the school received. The school responded positively to requests for an additional consultation evening in the spring term and this was introduced in 2003.

53. Parents appreciate the opportunities they have to support the school, for example, during the Friday family assemblies, regular sports events and school visits. The parent and teachers association is very active and organises events that allow parents to meet socially as well as to raise funds for the school.

54. Sound opportunities exist for parents to contribute to their children's learning by helping them to read and learn spellings and tables at home. The school also holds information evenings on topics, such as literacy and numeracy, though these have been poorly attended. There is effective induction for parents of children in Reception prior to their children starting school.

### *What could be improved*

55. The school has not yet done enough to incorporate parents' views in the school's development plan. For example, parents rightly value the opportunity to send their children to a community school and are very concerned that standards and values at the school are maintained. Parents would like to see far more done to ensure other parents are encouraged to send their children to the school.

56. Parents want to support their children's learning and feel disadvantaged because too little curriculum information has been sent out this year. As a result some parents are understandably frustrated that they do not know what their children are doing in school.

57. The first parents' consultation evening is held late in the autumn term and this means parents do not have an opportunity to discuss how their children are settling into new classes.

58. The standard of annual reports for parents, though generally satisfactory, are not designed well, as they currently have no space either for parents or children to make comments. This hinders their understanding of the things families could be doing at home to help children make progress. Expectations regarding homework are also unclear. The school could do more to set worthwhile tasks and explain to parents how they can best help their children to complete them.

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

#### *What the school does well*

59. Leadership is satisfactory. Its strengths are that the headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together and their colleagues are comfortable to approach them for professional guidance and support. The school's core aims and values are well conceived and are clearly communicated in the prospectus for parents. Under the calm and steady leadership of the headteacher the school is successful in meeting its aim to provide pupils with a secure and happy environment. It enables children to develop self-discipline and a sense of responsibility for themselves, each other, their environment and the wider community. The staff team is indeed a friendly and supportive group, with shared commitment to improving the school and a good understanding of their roles as curriculum leaders. Their commitment and care is reflected in the particularly good support for pupils who have complex learning needs that require very special planning and sensitive management. These pupils flourish because provision for pupils with special educational needs is well co-ordinated. There is very close and effective liaison with the local education authority's educational psychologist and strict compliance with the new Code of Practice.

60. Management is sound overall. Some features of strategic thinking and planning are good, for example, financial management. Since his appointment nearly four years ago, the headteacher and governors have overhauled the management of the budget so that from being in deficit in 1999 the school now has a healthy surplus. Raising the admission level from 17 to 20 enabled the school to add to its income. Combined with prudent management of extra funds from national government initiatives, governors have recruited an additional teacher to create a fifth class and released the headteacher from part-time class teaching so that he has more time to concentrate on steering the school's direction. They have improved the number of teaching assistants who play a key part in helping to integrate a much higher number of pupils with special educational needs, and who provide additional support for pupils who occasionally need a boost to help them make faster progress. The addition of a small computer suite has made a positive difference to pupils' access to new technology and

has helped to raise standards.

61. The allocation of staff responsibilities is sound. Teachers have a positive attitude towards improving their performance through following a programme of professional development that meets their own needs and the needs of the school. The induction of a newly qualified teacher is a strength. There is a good balance between informal mentoring by the deputy headteacher and formal review of performance by the headteacher. The previous report highlighted inefficiencies in taking advantage of teachers' subject expertise and potential management skills. Now, management responsibilities are fairly delegated and action plans to address key priorities in the school improvement plan have begun to have a positive impact on standards in English and mathematics. Good use of teachers' expertise has helped the school sustain high standards in music. All subject managers have revised and up-dated policies and schemes of work and willingly provide guidance to colleagues about how to implement them, when asked. They have conducted a thorough audit of resources and addressed gaps in provision, such as additional books, maps and picture packs for geography. Very recently, they have begun to collect in samples of pupils' work to obtain an overview of how well the schemes of work are being taught. These are positive measures.

62. Governors have sustained strengths in fulfilling their statutory duties. They have also made good progress with two key recommendations from the previous inspection report. They now ensure that staff and governors are more involved in review and target-setting. They have worked with the staff to draw up a sound school development plan. Its priorities are well conceived, including those for improving accommodation and resources. The costs and time-scales necessary to support all the priorities are identified satisfactorily.

63. The teacher:pupil ratio is good and classes are small. This enables teachers to get to know all pupils well and make sound use of space and resources. There is a reasonable balance of subject expertise, though teachers require more support with science and ICT to improve their effectiveness. Teaching assistants provide a good level of support in classrooms. They have been particularly well trained to understand and meet the needs of three pupils with autism and two with physical impairment. Office management is efficient and has improved since ICT systems have been updated. The new computer suite and library have improved provision for ICT and literacy across the curriculum.

64. The 'best value' framework is partially understood and managed by governors. Systems for competitive tendering work well. Governors do a good job in securing services from external providers for supporting pupils with special educational needs. They are right to continue to exert pressure to improve the number of support hours available for pupils with special educational needs.

#### *What could be improved*

65. Some features of leadership are weak. The vision for managing change so as to achieve high academic standards is not sufficiently focused. Consequently, some core aims, such as to set a climate of high expectations so that children develop to their full potential and achieve high academic standards, are met better in some classes and key stages than in others. The programme of classroom monitoring is ineffective in influencing staff to improve weaker features of teaching. Therefore, this aspect of leadership and management is a key issue.

66. Subject management is unsatisfactory in some respects. Teachers are not yet in the habit of moderating samples of work to identify pupils' underachievement. Plans are in hand to provide training in using ICT to help with the analysis of assessment data arising from

national tests for seven and 11-year-olds, and from other voluntary tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. Through no fault of the school this has been delayed and is due to take place next term. Teachers do not look at medium-term plans to check how well the needs of different groups are being met. This perpetuates weaknesses in teachers' planning and prevents them, and teaching assistants, from sharing the school's best practice.

67. The governors' contribution to improving the school still has some shortcomings. Their understanding of the reasons for the school's weaknesses is unsatisfactory. Governors have not done enough to challenge assumptions about the school's success in meeting all its aims and addressing all the key issues in the previous inspection report. They accept the headteacher's termly report without taking stock of its usefulness in helping them to understand what the school is doing each term to improve educational provision and raise standards. Criteria for measuring the success of the school's development plan are still imprecise.

68. Parents were right to draw the inspection team's attention to the slow progress in improving outdoor provision for children in Reception. The plans that governors have submitted to the local authority for quite major alterations to the school's premises are imaginative. They have the potential to make a positive difference to classroom accommodation and to car parking as well as to facilities for the youngest children. The drawback is that, even if the plans are approved, it could take a couple of years to achieve them. Meanwhile, more could be done to improve the existing playground space outside the Reception classroom. The school's stock of computers is also too small. The current supply does not match the nationally recommended ratio. The school does not yet have other modern devices that make teaching more effective. Inadequate resources for ICT disadvantage pupils. The ICT development plan 2002-2006 usefully sets out how governors intend to manage further essential improvement to enable pupils to achieve as well as they can in this key curriculum area. The implementation of this plan is a key issue for action.

69. In certain respects governors have a weak understanding of the principles of best value. They are not strong at comparing the school's performance with similar schools or at evaluating the progress pupils make between Year 2 and Year 6. Governors meet the requirement to set targets for end of key stage results in Year 6. They do not publish expectations for the percentage to achieve higher than the expected standards in the school development plan or the prospectus for parents. The governing body wants teachers to be successful in monitoring how well pupils learn but have not consulted staff to identify the problems in their way. They have not reviewed how well the headteacher and deputy headteacher use their time to ensure it is used to maximum efficiency. The deputy headteacher, in particular, is overstretched. This reduces her effectiveness. Lack of time out of the classroom for subject managers also hinders their effectiveness even though they have a good capacity to manage change.

70. Consultation with parents and pupils is not good enough. A small minority of parents feels strongly that their concerns are ignored. This was not substantiated, but there clearly are misunderstandings that should be resolved. The school has also been slow to find ways to consult pupils about their views of the school and what they think could be better. Overall, the school does not do enough to compete with the country's best schools.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. The school should now:-

1. Enable pupils in Years 4 to 6 to make consistently good progress in science and religious education by:

- a. *Making sure that expectations of pupils are high enough and translated into learning objectives that pupils find easy to understand;*
- b. *Making sure that the curriculum for religious education and personal, social and health education are planned separately with an appropriate amount of time for each.*  
(Paragraphs 9, 32, 38, 107, 127)

2. Enable pupils to learn more effectively by providing a good range of opportunities for them to use computers, exercise initiative and take responsibility, by:-

- a. *Implementing, as a matter of urgency, plans to improve the number of computers in school;*
- b. *Making sure that lesson plans always show how ICT will be used in other subjects;*
- c. *Making sure that when pupils work in groups, activities are consistently well planned and stimulating so that they have sufficient opportunities to take initiative.*  
(Paragraphs 9, 25, 68, 92, 101, 102, 125, 134-135)

3. Make sure that procedures for checking the school's performance are rigorous, and help to raise standards by:

- a. *Training teachers to make better use of new technology to assess and report on pupils' progress, and to plan for future improvement in teaching and learning;*
- b. *Making sure that criteria for measuring success in new initiatives are easy to understand;*
- c. *Making sure that teachers have adequate time for keeping track of pupils' progress;*
- d. *Making sure that it is clear who will take responsibility for keeping track of improvements and reporting on them regularly at governing body meetings;*
- e. *Making sure that governors take a more proactive role in accounting for the school's performance and ensuring that the assessment of risk is as stringent as possible.*  
(Paragraphs 10, 46, 49, 65-69, 108, 113, 148)

4. Enable parents to contribute more fully to their children's learning by:-

- a. *Taking their views into account when planning the future improvement of the school;*
- b. *Improving opportunities for homework;*
- c. *Making sure that all reports to parents cover progress in ICT and include targets for pupils' next steps in learning.*  
(Paragraphs 26, 27, 56-58, 70, 147)

Minor issues

When producing their action plan governors may wish to incorporate:-

- a. *Plans for consulting pupils about the things they would like to see improved;*
- b. *Its plans to improve outdoor provision for children in Reception.*  
(Paragraphs 47, 67, 82)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	28
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	2	12	13	1	0	0
Percentage	0	7	43	46	4	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	118
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.4

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

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

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	14	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (82)	88 (91)	75 (91)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	14	15	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (82)	94 (91)	88 (91)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Numbers of boys and girls are excluded because there are fewer than ten boys.

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002			23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	18	18	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (88)	78 (69)	87 (94)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	15	19	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	65 (69)	83 (75)	87 (75)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Numbers of boys and girls are excluded because there are fewer than ten girls.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British – Indian
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
115	1	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

### **Teachers and classes**

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.67
Average class size	23.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	125

FTE means full-time equivalent.

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2002
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	£
Total income	285930
Total expenditure	278637
Expenditure per pupil	2160
Balance brought forward from previous year	7920
Balance carried forward to next year	15213

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5
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
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	118
Number of questionnaires returned	86

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	40	3	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	42	46	6	5	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	48	43	3	6	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	47	19	10	1
The teaching is good.	50	40	6	3	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	29	50	14	6	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	24	2	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	56	38	2	3	1
The school works closely with parents.	31	49	10	9	1
The school is well led and managed.	56	29	7	7	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	42	49	1	8	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	42	44	10	2	2

### Other issues raised by parents

Six parents wrote to the registered inspector and spoke with the lay inspector about various aspects of the school's provision that they felt needed improvement. These were considered thoroughly by the inspection team and judgements arising are reflected throughout the report. Some things parents raised were personal and outside the remit of the inspection.

## **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**

72. The group of ten children in Reception includes a small minority that is 'cared for' and has a statement of special educational needs. When they entered school they had many different starting points, ranging from well below to well above average. Each child has benefited from teaching that is consistently sound or better. The teacher made sure that he knew what children were capable of prior to admission by visiting two pre-schools that children previously attended and by talking to parents. He and the teaching assistants who work with him have continued to track children's progress systematically and use the information to plan next steps in learning. They make many constructive links between all the foundation areas of learning. This has helped children to gain confidence and become increasingly independent. Consequently, they have mostly made good progress, especially in the way they concentrate and express themselves, improve hand control and develop early skills in writing and mathematics. Children achieve well overall. As a group they will exceed the learning goals expected of an average five-year-old by the end of the summer term in the core areas of literacy, numeracy and aspects of personal development. Children make at least sound progress in other areas of learning. Standards attained are at least average, and sometimes higher.

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

73. Teaching and learning are mainly good in this area. Children attain the goals expected and a small number exceed them. They make good progress in maintaining attention, and the ability to get on with their work without interrupting the teacher when he is working with pupils from Year 1. Teaching is patient, good-humoured, and based on genuine concern for children's happiness and well being. It is, therefore, effective and results in children feeling secure. They talk naturally to their teacher whenever a spontaneous moment occurs, such as conveying excitement at a first experience of going swimming. They are comfortable to ask and answer questions in lessons. Parents feel the same way. They find the teacher approachable and a good listener. Children learn to express feelings and the teacher helps them to deal with setbacks bravely. For example, one child got upset when looking at pictures of a rabbit because the family's pet rabbit had died recently. A sympathetic gesture and few quiet words soon brought a smile back to the child's face.

74. Adults make sure that children have time every day to engage in creative and practical activities. This means that children soon learn to co-operate sensibly and enthusiastically. They were not once observed to squabble. However, at times, some children dominate others, such as when a couple of girls barely allowed two boys to touch the ball when they were practising throwing a ball into a bucket! The teaching assistant dealt with this and made sure that the information was passed on to the classteacher. This was good child management and assessment practice. A downside of working with a mixed age class is that teachers are not able to organise a generous amount of time for free choice of activities. They teach children to be aware they should not disturb older pupils. This sometimes prevents children from persevering with an activity for as long as they would wish.

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

75. Teaching and learning are consistently sound and often good in this area. Displays in the classroom soundly promote a love of books and an awareness of language. The teacher puts up captions that children try to read about their work. One small boy, for example, proudly showed an inspector his name on his drawing of a flower.

76. Children are encouraged to listen well so that they recall what is expected of them when they settle to work. Their speech develops well. They talk confidently to adults when in small groups and readily respond to questions from visitors. Books are selected that capture children's imagination. They discuss pictures and predict what words say about them. They absorbed, for example, new vocabulary to describe rabbits from reading a big book about pets. Later, they made good efforts to name parts of a rabbit's body, though the task did not help them extend their understanding of labelling because they were writing on lines rather than writing the words close to the long ears, furry coat, or sharp teeth. Children all attempt to sound out words in unfamiliar texts and the most able already read short stories with a good level of understanding.

77. Children who could not do more than make marks on a page in September have made steady progress with writing. They attempt to spell phonetically and are now writing a few lines of news or information independently. For example, one small boy did well towards the end of May to describe two stages in playing a game with a bat and ball. Similarly, children of average and high ability write for a variety of purposes and are beginning to use capital letters and full stops in some of their news and stories. Some work from a very able child is of a particularly high standard. Letters are neat and formed well. Sentences contain interesting vocabulary and ideas flow logically, for example, in a story about a mermaid called Flora. The standard of writing, overall, is above average and children's effort is good.

### **Mathematical development**

78. This area is taught well. Children, therefore, learn the language of mathematics quickly. They are eager to sort and organise objects into different shapes and sizes. They enjoy counting, thinking about similarities and differences, such as the colour of their eyes, and learning how to add up and take away. The most capable children are very competent and have made rapid progress. Having started the year recognising numbers to five, for example, it was evident from one child's work that simple problems involving addition and subtraction using numbers up to 20 are manageable. There is sufficient evidence in all children's books of their sound ability to compare things, make repeating patterns and name flat and three-dimensional shapes.

79. Lessons outside are fun and soundly foster children's thirst for learning more about mathematics. Children found ways to extend their own learning, for example, when they increased the length of a number ladder by writing the numbers 10 to 15 on the playground. A teaching assistant's quick thinking in fetching a piece of chalk improved this opportunity to count forwards and backwards as children hopped, stepped or jumped along the line. The activity gave children considerable satisfaction. Some activities were not planned as well and did not provide as much challenge. For example, a tray of threading beads was limited to cubes of different colours but of mainly the same size. This restricted opportunities for children to find different ways of making repeating patterns.

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

80. No lessons were seen in this area and it was not possible to make a firm judgement about teaching or the overall standard achieved by children of different capability. Work on display indicates that children have broad experience of developing appropriate foundations for science, technology, religious education, history and geography. In addition to children's detailed drawings of plants, there is an interesting display of drawings of closely observed old and new cameras. Children were proud of these and had clearly appreciated examining several cameras that the teacher had borrowed from his father. This was very good use of first-hand sources of evidence to extend children's knowledge of how everyday objects have



changed over time. There are delightful photographs of children visiting a local church to find out about a christening ceremony. Teachers have an exciting visit planned to the seaside later in the term and are already preparing children well for this day out. Teachers' plans show that work with computers and construction toys takes place regularly but these areas of learning lack prominence in the classroom. Design and technology and ICT are under-emphasised in current displays of work.

### **Physical development**

81. Children's physical development is soundly taught and children make satisfactory progress. They are above average in ball skills, having had plenty of good opportunities for using small apparatus, such as bats and balls. Teachers encourage them to watch the ball and concentrate and children show good control as they roll, throw, strike and pass a ball to a partner. They co-operate sensibly in pairs and they respond just as enthusiastically in indoor activities involving construction, climbing, crawling and balancing equipment. This equipment is fairly new and now that children have access to it frequently they are gradually gaining confidence to find different ways of moving under, over, through and around obstacles. They show satisfactory skills in using space and keeping their balance. Adults work alongside children, providing lots of support and advice for children whose physical development is delayed and this helps such children to participate soundly. Adults set out the equipment in the hall and outside which helps make full use of lesson time for activities, but closes down opportunities for children to develop independence in preparing activities and clearing up afterwards.

82. The school has partly addressed the need to improve access to outdoor play as advocated in the previous report. The play area outside the classroom is safer, as steps have been removed. It is still a restricted and shadeless place, however, and not one that is used as often as is desirable.

### **Creative development**

83. Teaching and learning are at least sound in this area. One good lesson was observed where teaching assistants worked alongside children as they experimented with play-dough, construction kits and paint. These adults constantly talked to children about their ideas and how to improve their work, such as persevering with mixing paint colours to make the effect they wanted. They demonstrated safe use of tools and encouraged children to wear protective clothing. This was good practice and meant that children were all happily engaged, working well together and achieving a good level of skill.

84. Good links are made between music making and thinking about how sounds are created and described. A simple but effective three-dimensional display in two hoops of instruments, one a set for shaking and another for striking, consolidated children's understanding of one way of distinguishing between different kinds of instruments. One small girl, for example, could name them all and tell an inspector why they were in the hoops and why another instrument lying alongside the hoops did not 'fit' into either set.

85. Drama activities were not observed with this age group, though they were with Year 1's, because they are rotated from day-to-day. This kind of planning and organisation is sound. It means that, despite a lack of space in the classroom for dressing up and acting out stories, adults do what they can to make sure that all children in the class have equal access to imaginative play opportunities.

86. The deputy headteacher provides good leadership for the Foundation Stage and has done much to help the new classteacher during the course of his first year in the profession.

The management of provision is satisfactory. Young children's needs are fully acknowledged in the school development plan and governors have ambitious ideas for future development of outdoor facilities. They are awaiting confirmation of planning permission before they can translate plans into action. Meanwhile, they have not thought carefully enough, or consulted parents, about how to make better use of existing space.

## ENGLISH

87. Standards in English have improved satisfactorily since the previous inspection. However, as in many schools with small numbers of pupils in Years 2 and 6, there have been good and poor years between 1998 and 2002 compared with schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. There is a close correlation between how well pupils have performed and the number of pupils with learning difficulties in the two year groups. Boys have been the lower attainers. Two out of six seven-year-old boys in 2002, for example, had statements for autism and did well to exceed the targets set for them in reading and to meet them in writing.

88. Three out of fifteen boys in Year 6 were also on the school list for additional support and several lower-attaining pupils had joined the school from other schools. Two of the three attained better results than the teacher expected of them. Indeed, so did the girls, including one with a statement of special educational needs who obtained a Level 5 - a high standard. Girls attained better results than the average attained by girls nationally. They strongly outperformed the boys, especially at higher levels. Differences between boys and girls, however, are not a prevailing trend in the school. There is, however, a difference between pupils' results in reading and writing. Whereas most pupils have reached or exceeded expectations based on their previous performance in reading, they have not achieved the standards forecast in writing. Results deteriorated from 2000 to 2002 in Year 2 and Year 6. There was evidence that some pupils in the higher-attaining groups underachieved because in Year 2 they made too many errors in spelling and punctuation and they did not write in a joined script. In Year 6, boys were weak at planning and organising their writing.

### *What the school does well*

89. Currently, standards are above average and pupils achieve well in Year 2. They are average in Year 6 and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Inspection findings confirm that many of the differences in the attainment of boys and girls are as a result of the disproportionate number of boys with special educational needs compared with girls. For example, there are obvious differences in Year 3, though boys, it was found, have made good progress and are closing the gap with the girls. This is due to teachers' close attention to planning specifically for boys' needs in reading and writing tasks. There are more signs of rising standards by the end of Year 2 than Year 6. An analysis of pupils' work since September 2002 suggests that pupils in Years 1 to 3 make better progress over time, irrespective of their prior levels of attainment, than pupils in Years 4 to 6. Interestingly, unvalidated results for Year 2 indicate a far higher percentage of pupils have reached an above average standard than in the previous year. Pupils have achieved results of well over 40 per cent at Level 3 in reading, and 22 per cent at Level 3 in writing. On the whole, in older junior year groups, more able pupils' work is good and above average. Pupils who receive additional support for special educational needs also make good progress. Provisional results for 2003 indicate that both groups have improved their performance in writing compared with results in 2002.

90. Standards in speaking and listening are above average in Year 2 and pupils make good progress from the time they enter Year 1. These skills are also relatively strong in Years 3 to 6. Achievement is at least satisfactory and sometimes good because teachers manage

dialogue effectively, being careful to involve all pupils. In a very good lesson in Year 3 pupils generated an extraordinary number of synonyms for the word 'said' for example, using them to make their descriptive writing of a conversation interesting. Adults use speech effectively, being careful to use relevant and accurate vocabulary that pupils try to copy. They emphasise the need to project the voice, and make what they say interesting. Pupils are deservedly praised when they provide good explanations and speak out well. One boy from a minority ethnic background, for example, explained what a barrage balloon was, adding, when invited to expand on his answer, that it explodes when struck because of the inflammable gas inside it. Drama opportunities are stimulating and fun. The school production just before Christmas enabled pupils to perform well before a large audience. Overall, they learn to speak out clearly and their expression is good.

91. Given the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs for difficulties with language development and concentration, pupils do well to attain the high standards achieved in reading at the end of both key stages. National initiatives to train teachers and teaching assistants to teach letter sounds and spelling more effectively have made a positive difference to pupils' grasp of letter sounds and blends. There has also been a concerted effort to expand the resources for reading and to focus more in lessons on interpreting and evaluating writers' intentions and styles. The choice of fiction now appeals as much to boys as to girls. There is also more imaginative use of non-fiction texts in literacy and lessons in other subjects, and of information from the Internet, particularly for work in history and geography. Pupils are clearly prepared to 'have a go' when they meet unfamiliar words rather than wait for adults to tell them. One girl of average ability from Year 3, for example, deduced the meaning of the word 'discreetly' by scanning and reflecting on the content of a passage in the story 'The Dare Game' by J. Wilson. Two boys with autism worked hard to read and explain a book called 'Danger', carefully describing what made the book funny, and the part that they liked best. All three pupils had clearly considerably improved on the 2002 national test results. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were challenged by a thought-provoking extract from an Anne Fine junior novel. The teacher worked with a group of above average boys to make sure that they found and explained key phrases that gave clues about the main character's feelings.

92. In Year 2, writing is consistently sound and sometimes very good, signifying good achievement for the most able writers, average and lower attainers. The standard of spelling has improved since last year, and pupils are more careful in their use of punctuation and tense. The most able seven-year-olds write very well. Handwriting is well proportioned, the choice of vocabulary is imaginative and sentences are structured for special effect, with good use of speech and exclamation marks, such as in one little girl's recent story entitled *Sammy Seagull and the Mystery Party*.

93. In Year 6, there is evidence of teachers responding to weaknesses identified in last year's results. They set a wider range of writing tasks and some of these obviously capture pupils' imagination. The standard attained is high. Some of the best writing seen during the inspection were letters composed to parents, governors, visitors to the school and to imaginary representatives of animal rights organisations. These were written effectively in a persuasive style, and contained convincing reasons for the ideas expressed. Some were carefully finished off on the computer, so that the word-processed effect was pleasing. Such tasks make pupils think seriously about moral and cultural issues and contribute well to pupils' personal development.

94. The subject is soundly managed and led. The curriculum leader has set the right objectives for raising standards and these are, appropriately, given high priority in the school development plan. The impact has been fruitful in Years 1 to 3, partly because the co-ordinator teaches Years 1 and 2 and sets a good example to the other teacher in Year 1.

Samples of work are being gathered in a portfolio from every class so that the co-ordinator now has a sound overview of what pupils can and cannot do. There is a firm commitment to moderating these samples at a training day in September to establish how well the action plan has begun to impact on standards.

*What could be improved*

95. Some aspects of teaching and learning are ineffective. There are times when teachers do too much of the talking and pupils are passive. Though pupils are quiet and attentive, the class of oldest pupils, for example, is sometimes reluctant to answer or ask questions of their own. In Years 1 and 2, the use of ICT is not given sufficient prominence. Therefore, pupils are missing opportunities to practise spelling and creative writing on computers. From Year 4 onwards, there are shortcomings in the way that writing tasks are organised, which leads to uneven progress, especially amongst pupils grouped in the average to lower-attaining bands. When teachers do not make expectations of what pupils should achieve clear, their attitudes can be too casual. Pupils try to get away with the bare minimum and teachers frequently let them. Standards of handwriting, for example, are good in handwriting books and for work displayed in the classroom. However, teachers do not insist on the same good standard in literacy books or workbooks in other subjects. Work often contains trivial spelling or punctuation errors that pupils are well capable of spotting and correcting independently.

96. Weaker aspects of teaching reflect a lack of rigour in day-to-day assessment and inadequate use of incentives to encourage pupils to improve. Except for pupils with special educational needs, most pupils do not have targets for reading or speaking and listening and do not know or check their own progress with writing targets. The quality of dialogue between parents and teachers about homework is unsatisfactory. Parents are not sure how they should be helping at home. This is not always the fault of the school as only a small percentage of parents have attended special literacy evenings that the school has organised in the past. Nevertheless, there is a gulf to bridge in giving parents the information they need. Direct evaluation of teaching and learning by observing and giving feedback on lessons is also currently an unsatisfactory aspect of management. This is because it is failing to focus on very specific criteria for measuring the impact of teaching on the quality of learning for all pupils.

## **MATHEMATICS**

97. At the time of the last inspection, standards in mathematics were judged to be broadly in line with national averages at the end of Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Work seen during this inspection suggests that this is still the case, and that the school has matched the gradual improvement in national standards over the last five years. The results of the national test taken by Year 2 pupils in 2002 were well below average, mainly because of the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs and the small number of pupils reaching the higher Level 3. These pupils are now achieving broadly average standards. Pupils in Year 6 compare soundly with similar schools. Overall, teaching and learning are sound. Nevertheless, there is room for improvement in the way pupils build on the skills and knowledge acquired by the end of Year 3. Progress after that time is not as consistent as it should be. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### *What the school does well*

98. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 4 to 6, and good in Years 1 to 3, where challenging tasks are set and teachers succeed in motivating pupils to give of their best. All teachers manage their classes well and the behaviour of most of the pupils is good. This means that most lessons are conducted in a calm and orderly atmosphere in which all pupils feel included and sound learning can take place. This is particularly important for those pupils with special educational needs who make good progress because of the help and support they receive from both teaching and non-teaching staff, and often the encouragement of their classmates.

99. The curriculum is well organised so that all the different aspects of mathematics are thoroughly covered. Throughout the school the National Numeracy Strategy is used well to ensure that the basic skills of number and shape and measure are introduced and practised at an appropriate level. By the end of Year 2, most pupils are able to use numbers up to 100, or, in the case of more able pupils, to 1000 with confidence. They recognise simple number sequences, such as odd and even. Most know by heart addition and subtraction facts to at least 10 and understand that different approaches are needed in order to do mental calculations more quickly. They estimate and compare lengths, and use the correct names for common two and three-dimensional shapes, as well as describing some of their properties. In lessons observed during this inspection, pupils up to the end of Year 3 showed a good level of concentration and were well motivated to try hard and learn at a good pace. This was because teachers made lesson objectives clear and pupils enjoyed tackling the challenging tasks set for them.

100. By the end of Year 6 pupils are confident in solving problems using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. The most advanced pupils solve division problems involving large numbers and most pupils quickly recall number facts up to  $10 \times 10$ . Pupils are familiar with more complex number patterns and understand terms, such as multiple, factor and square. They recognise proportions of a whole and can use simple fractions and percentages to describe these. They recognise and describe the properties of a wide variety of mathematical shapes, measure angles and understand that the angles of a triangle add up to 180 degrees. They construct bar charts and line graphs, and some of the more able are beginning to collect their own data and interpret information presented in graphical form.

### *What could be improved*

101. Older pupils respond well in the mental and oral periods, but they were often not motivated by the tasks planned for them in the main part of the lesson. These tended to be dominated by the need to complete many practise examples, and there were few opportunities for pupils to exercise initiative or use the skills they had learned in a more creative way. Although the school is conscious of the need to improve problem-solving skills, there are too few occasions when the problems are practical or relevant to real life situations. For example, pupils in Year 6 are very unsure about how to tackle a simple task like finding the area of the school hall. The plenary session at the end of lessons is not well used to celebrate what has been learned or to decide what needs to be done next, so that pupils are excited by the challenges to come.

102. The co-ordinator has shown sound leadership overall, but has not looked closely enough at the way pupils organise and present their work in order to be satisfied that all groups show increasing levels of independence and confidence. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are not good at recording, using a wide variety of skills, including ICT, and not sufficiently adept at evaluating their own work. There is a lack of rigorous review of progress in knowledge, skills and concepts as pupils move through the school.

## SCIENCE

103. At the time of the last inspection standards in science were judged to be above average overall, although the results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 1998 were well below average. Since that time, test results at Year 6, and teacher assessments at Year 2, have fluctuated. For example, pupils attained above average results in 2001 and below average in 2002. The 2002 result was mainly because, although the number reaching average levels was in line with national expectations, fewer pupils than expected reached the higher levels. This can partly be explained by the number of pupils with special educational needs, but even taking this into account some pupils could make more progress between Year 2 and Year 6. Overall, work seen during this inspection shows that standards are now broadly average across the school, but with some variations in different classes. Overall, standards of teaching and learning are good in Years 1 to 3 and mainly satisfactory in Years 4 to 6. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### *What the school does well*

104. Pupils' behaviour during science lessons is almost always good. They share and co-operate well which means that teachers can plan practical activities and investigations knowing that pupils will use resources with care and respect each others' contributions. Skilled support given by teachers and teaching assistants in the classroom enable pupils with special educational needs to be fully involved and make good progress. Teachers are very conscious of the need to give pupils the opportunity to develop their investigative skills, and are successful in getting pupils to discuss and explore ideas in an open and positive way. This means the subject is making a good contribution to personal development.

105. Standards are good in Year 1, where pupils' understanding of the basic principles of science is being developed through good teaching. For example, in a Year 1 lesson about how far sound travels, the teacher led a good dialogue about how to make the test fairer and the results more reliable. His demonstration to show that the length of pupils' strides could not be compared with his own, was successful in showing how important it is in a test to keep as many factors as possible the same.

106. In a lesson on electrical circuits, pupils in Year 2 used wires, batteries and bulbs to make circuits. When presented with a single bulb not in a bulb holder, some discovered for themselves that to make the bulb light the wires had to be touched onto the side and the bottom. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher had gone to great trouble to prepare apparatus that would enable pupils to find how far a toy car would travel according to how far an elastic band was stretched. The pupils all thoroughly enjoyed this activity, and a particularly good feature of the lesson was the way they had to decide on their own method of recording the results. In another lesson the oldest pupils were challenged to use their knowledge about electrical circuits to devise different types of burglar alarm. In all these lessons pupils were actively involved and learning well.

### *What could be improved*

107. Pupils from Year 4 onwards are not given enough opportunities to exercise initiative and take responsibility for their own learning. By Year 6, many should be capable of organising their own investigations identifying key factors to be considered, including, where appropriate, the factors necessary to make a test fair. Too often they are recording the results of their investigations on prepared sheets, and the quality of presentation is quite often poor. Scrutiny of science books and folders makes it clear that the older pupils are not making good use of their writing skills, and do not take pride in presenting their results in a

clear and organised way. Basic skills, such as drawing and labelling diagrams are not given enough attention, and not enough use is made of computer technology, for instance in representing findings in graphs or tables.

108. The co-ordinator has shown sound leadership in developing the curriculum and ensuring adequate resources, but has not had time to check pupils' books closely to ensure that there is a steady progression of skills as well as knowledge throughout the school. There is a lack of systematic monitoring of teaching and learning which hinders pupils from reaching the higher standards of which they are capable.

## **ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

109. Standards in art and design and technology have been sustained since the time of the last inspection, and are average at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Teaching and learning are sound throughout the school. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

### *What the school does well*

110. The curriculum is well organised and appropriate time is given to these subjects. Teachers plan effectively to meet the needs of their pupils. A good feature of the work in both subjects is the way cross-curricular links are exploited to make the work more relevant to other areas of learning. For example, learning in history is enhanced through the good quality drawings of old buildings in Year 3, or the investigation, planning and making of different shelters in Years 5 and 6. The latter also provides a good example of a literacy link with letters being written by the pupils explaining why a new shelter is needed on the playing field. Pupils often study themes, such as fruit, through art, design and technology and science.

111. The school participates in many art competitions and capitalises on opportunities for artists to visit. For instance, an artist from Wales visited recently as part of a regeneration project in Market Rasen. A printer and a sculptor have also visited to work with pupils to enhance skills in working with different materials. Some good quality work is on display around the school, for example, some lovely finger puppets made by Year 2 and some high quality aboriginal style pattern paintings in the top class. Sound use is made of computer technology to research the work of different artists and study specific skills. The policies in place for both subjects make clear the high value the school places on the development of creative skills.

### *What could be improved*

112. Although the school is proud of its commitment to creative subjects, it could do more to ensure that pupils' skills and knowledge develop across the year groups. This is particularly so in design and technology where it is not clear how the sound skills being taught in the early years are being systematically built upon. Making skills are good, as evidenced by the high quality of the 'shelter' models in the top class, but not so evident are such things as taking users' views into account, clearly labelled step-by-step plans, or evaluations to identify specific improvements that could be made. The older pupils have a book for sketching and design and technology, but it is sometimes not clear which is which and the work in these books is often of poor quality with many wasted pages. Most pupils have an art portfolio, but the work in it is not dated and fails to give a flavour of the range and quality of what is being experienced. Art work is attractively displayed but there are no comments by the pupils about what they like best and why, and little sign at the time of the inspection of the kind of large, colourful, collaborative work that can so excite and inspire.

113. The co-ordinators in both subjects have shown sound leadership in planning the curriculum and producing appropriate action plans for development. However, they have not looked carefully enough at the work being produced in each class in order to ensure that the skills learned in one year are being systematically built on in the next. They do not ensure that the range and quality of experiences is such that more pupils are inspired to enthuse more about their own and others' work. Both art and design and technology are being soundly taught, but until learning is more rigorously evaluated, the school will not be able to achieve the higher standards to which it aspires.

## **GEOGRAPHY, HISTORY and RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

114. In Year 2, attainment in religious education, history and geography is above average. Pupils aged seven achieve well in all three subjects. Pupils in Year 3 also make good progress in these subjects and achieve well. Strengths have been sustained since the previous inspection. Teaching in Years 1 to 2 is still good, has improved in Year 3 and is satisfactory overall in Years 4 to 6.

115. In Year 6, standards in history are average. There was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements about standards in geography and religious education. There was sufficient evidence to judge that, overall, relative strengths in teaching and learning in all three subjects have been sustained since the previous report. Weaknesses in teaching specifically identified in geography and religious education in Years 4 to 6, have been partially, but not fully, addressed. Though no unsatisfactory teaching was seen, work in exercise books and folders shows that pupils' progress, irrespective of their prior ability, remains sound overall, but uneven.

116. By the end of Year 6, pupils have satisfactory knowledge and understanding of topics they have covered in each subject, such as studies of India and the Vikings, and they make sense of links between them. When motivated, they apply basic skills in each subject competently. Overall, pupils' achievement is sound, except in religious education where pupils record very little of their work. This means that the quality of provision in geography and history has been sustained, but has not improved sufficiently in religious education in Years 4 to 6.

### *What the school does well*

117. Standards are good between Years 1 and 3 because teaching is well organised, with clear objectives. Teachers make interesting links between subjects and manage time and resources well. They help pupils to understand that some things, such as religious customs and traditional festivals, endure over time and are special to people with a religious belief or a strong cultural identity. They encourage pupils to consider moral issues, such as fair treatment in work and educational opportunities. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and adults have consistent expectations for pupils to help each other and maintain a friendly working atmosphere. The impact is good. Pupils get along well together. They are tolerant of each other's different personalities and needs.

118. Teachers enable pupils of different prior attainment to communicate what they know in the best ways possible for them. Most expect good habits of presentation, in Year 3 in particular. As a result, most pupils date their work regularly, and head it with titles or lesson objectives. The most advanced pupils write in reasonable detail. For example, they convey a sense of empathy and understanding of why Remembrance Day is still significant to many people in Britain today. Middle-attaining pupils write less, but make sensible use of bullet points and short descriptive sentences to describe the same, or similar, celebration. Pupils with special educational needs record through diagrams and pictures, but are encouraged to



label these or to put captions alongside. Teaching assistants are well briefed about what is expected of the pupils they support and provide good levels of help so that they usually achieve what is realistically expected of them.

119. Work on the current topic about the seaside is enabling pupils in Years 1 and 2 to understand more about places further afield from Middle Rasen and Lincolnshire. They offer simple explanations of how regions differ in their landscapes and that people are attracted to the coast for holidays and leisure. Pupils in Year 3 have absorbed a great deal of information about the Viking period of history and Britain since Victorian times. For example, pupils with special educational needs and lower-attaining pupils, in their work on the Vikings, sequenced points about key events in clear chronological order.

120. Stimulated by stories and research about famous people and events, pupils have developed a good understanding of old and new, past and present, and are beginning to put events into a chronological time frame. Pupils in Year 2, for instance, have compared the life of the first Queen Elizabeth with that of the present queen. Visits to museums have helped pupils to draw conclusions about how, as some things have changed, they have changed lives for the better. They spoke eloquently, for example, about a Victorian schoolroom and the life of a scullery maid or chimney sweep, expressing relief that they were not subject to the harsh conditions some children experienced at the beginning of the 1900's.

121. Pupils compare similarities between Christianity and Judaism. They are beginning to know that people from all around the world celebrate special days, such as Palm Sunday and The Passover. In discussions with inspectors, pupils from Year 2 clearly felt that people learn from the past, quoting as an example that war makes people suffer and should be avoided. All three subjects contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

122. In Years 4 to 6, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best features are teachers' rapport with pupils and their patience when working with pupils with special educational needs. They deploy teaching assistants effectively to help pupils with learning difficulties. Over time, pupils, therefore, come to a sound understanding of cause and effect, the difference between reliable evidence and opinions, and the global effect of world events in the past and present. Pupils describe the difference between geographical features in different countries, and explain some ethical points about environmental changes. Pupils enjoy discussions and practical work, such as field studies and benefit from educational outings. For example, the residential visit to London in the week prior to the inspection did much to extend pupils' knowledge of the history of this country, of the history of art, science and technology. In religious education they spend valuable time considering similarities and differences between world religions and are able, in discussions, to express feelings about how a faith is a source of hope and comfort to believers.

123. Planning is often imaginative for units of work in history and geography. Effective cross-curricular links exist with literacy and numeracy and aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Discussion is often purposeful and pupils listen well, giving sensible answers to the teacher's questions. For example, in their studies of the Second World War, pupils in Years 4 and 5 pupils demonstrated a perceptive awareness of the realities of war and its effect on people's lifestyles and morale. They devised questions about the dates and location of significant events, making effective use of the library and ICT for research. They then recorded what they discovered. The most able pupils wrote at length, using language and structure very effectively. Average and lower-attaining groups organised information logically, noting key facts, and then adding their own thoughts, for example, about what it must have been like to be an evacuee during the Second World War.

124. Teachers draw creatively on first-hand sources of evidence. In Years 5 and 6, for

example, an article in the Observer newspaper from May 1966, helped pupils pick out key information about the football World Cup. They drew logical conclusions about why the final between England and Germany caused such national fervour and has remained in people's memories.

#### *What could be improved*

125. The quality of marking, the use of homework, and clear reference to success with learning objectives, are not so consistently good in the lower two year groups. There are pupils from the middle and lower-attaining groups in Year 2 who have their work ticked but have few words of encouragement to spur them on to future improvement. For example, over the year, one pupil has made good progress from writing just a few lines under the teacher's writing in September to managing more than a page in religious education about 'My Special Things'. Presentation and spelling were immature but the ideas and content were good for this pupil. There was nothing in *writing* to acknowledge the effort made to achieve the lesson objective or an indication that the work deserved a 'reward' sticker. The use of ICT to support pupils' learning is also difficult to track through pupils' previous work and the lesson plans seen in these subjects did not show specific objectives for its application.

126. In both junior classes, pupils' work is not consistently well organised or presented. This indicates a lack of clarity about teachers' expectations and inadequate attention to teaching good working habits. There is not the same insistence, for example, that each piece of work is prefaced with a date and a title. Much of it is done on sheets of paper that get out of order because they are not stored well enough. Therefore, it is not clear to the reader what the main purpose of some tasks was. It also makes it difficult for pupils to take a pride in their work and keep track of their own progress.

127. The pace of some lessons is too slow and tasks for pupils of different capability are inadequately planned or supported during group-work time. For example, in the history lessons some lower-attaining pupils spent too long copying whole sentences from extracts about the Second World War and the football World Cup. They made inadequate use of short, sharp statements or bullet points. At other times pupils have too few opportunities to make choices about the best way to work together and record new learning. Very little evidence emerged of pupils producing collaborative writing or making effective use of multi-media presentations. Planning for religious education is too interwoven with lessons for personal and social development for pupils to be clear of the difference between them.

128. The school development plan contains relevant objectives for pupils to improve their use of writing and ICT through foundation subjects, but systems for monitoring standards are weak. The subject co-ordinators, though relatively new to their posts, have plans for assessing progress and pinpointing gaps in pupils' knowledge. These plans lack small and measurable objectives.

### **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

129. As at the time of the previous inspection, pupils' knowledge and skills are still broadly in line with expectations at the end of Years 2 and 6. They receive sound teaching from classteachers who are further supported in junior year groups by the headteacher in a good proportion of lessons, as was observed during the inspection when a group from Year 4 discovered information about The Second World War.

#### *What the school does well*

130. Most pupils are interested in ICT and enjoy working at computers. They use them

sensibly and are aware of school expectations for safe practice.

131. By the end of Year 2, pupils explain that they use a computer to check spelling, create pictures, enter the Internet to carry out research for topics, such as Victorian England, and occasionally to operate a robot toy. They do not have much saved work to illustrate sustained progress in ICT. Pupils in Year 6 are very comfortable to 'log on', enter websites, download and print off information, for example, about where Florence Nightingale lived, worked and died. They sometimes write the final drafts of stories or reports. Higher-attaining pupils produce lengthy pieces of research. Lower-attaining pupils with hand-control difficulties, or those who lack the patience to write neatly, organise and present work from a computer to a sound standard.

132. Since the previous inspection governors have improved accommodation as much as there was potential to manage in the original building. The new computer suite has made a positive difference to the frequency with which pupils can work on a computer, particularly pupils from junior classes. The school has extended its range of resources to include a digital camera, and pupils also benefit from using electronic keyboards and tape-recorders to aid composition in music. The digital camera has opened up opportunities for pupils to incorporate photographs into some of their published work and for teachers to make visual aids in the classroom. For example, older pupils used the camera on a recent residential visit to London, whilst teachers have displayed large photographs of children in Reception using their new equipment for physical development.

#### *What could be improved*

133. Occasionally, pupils have produced work involving entering columns and data for a particular purpose. However, they are vague about times when they have made or interpreted charts in mathematics, science and design and technology lessons. They did not use a computer, for example, when they drew designs and worked out plans for shelters in the playground.

134. From the evidence seen, no pupils attain above average standards in this subject. Overall, they make slower progress than they are capable of making and, therefore, do not achieve as well as they should. This is because pupils have inadequate access to computers and a wider range of devices, such as an electronic whiteboard. There is an urgent need to purchase more hardware as the school lacks a ratio of computers to pupils to match national recommendations. This situation is unsatisfactory and this is acknowledged in the ICT development plan for 2002 to 2006.

135. The effective organisation and management of ICT has always been an issue in this small school. The school is aware that there is still much to be done to improve opportunities for regular and constructive use of new technology in all subjects. The ICT development plan contains lots of good ideas for improving the way pupils' progress is assessed and maximising the potential of ICT. It reflects sound leadership and management. Most initiatives are accurately costed, such as the planned purchase of laptop computers, but other ideas, such as the installation of Broadband, have not yet been specifically investigated. Few are linked to success criteria that would enable governors to measure the value added in terms of higher standards. Some reports to parents do not meet statutory requirements to report specifically about ICT as opposed to design and technology.

## **MUSIC**

136. At the time of the previous inspection, attainment in music was high. It is still above average by the end of Years 2 and 6 because a good quality of provision has been sustained.

### *What the school does well*

137. By the age of seven and eleven, pupils have achieved well. Pupils in Year 2 read simple notation, use instruments to make up specific sound effects, such as a door slamming or a shower of rain. They play these to each other, and make suggestions for improvements. They sing melodiously, and control volume and tone appropriately to convey a spiritual mood, when singing hymns.

138. In Year 6, pupils listen to different kinds of music, and share feelings about it. They compose their own increasingly sophisticated songs and sound effects. They perform confidently in front of an audience and have a good reputation for the quality of their contribution in inter-school music festivals.

139. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and communicate their enthusiasm for the subject well. Consequently, boys and girls of all ages have very positive attitudes to music making. They look forward to lessons and to playing percussion instruments and recorders at Friday assemblies. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 worked sensibly when practising listening skills and co-operated in pairs when composing sound patterns. They sustained concentration, though some became a little restless at the end of the lesson when they were discussing what they found hard and what to try out next.

140. There was good variety and pace to a lesson for Years 5 and 6. The teacher planned effectively, including opportunities for links with ICT. She drew well on her own musical knowledge to stress musical terms and tease out differences in the structure of several tape recordings. As they listened, pupils began to make their own decisions about the kind of musical structure and rhythm that they wanted to create. They applied their knowledge of *rap*, *rock* and *folk* music to draft their own lyrics for several verses and a chorus. A few boys made effective use of electric keyboards as they improvised to compose a rhythmic tune. Pupils achieve well, including pupils with special educational needs, because they are encouraged to co-operate in small groups, take initiative and support each other. Teaching assistants help pupils to build on prior experience. They reassure pupils when they start to worry that they have not thought of many rhyming words for their songs. For example, two pupils were encouraged to look at words from a favourite story to make up a song about its central character, which was a cat. There were times when some pupils found the task hard. Opportunities were missed to get them to work with a partner to discuss how to resolve their difficulties.

141. This subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, cultural and personal development. For example, pupils created a sense of calm and unity as they sang the Hebrew spiritual *Shalom* at assembly. Many develop special talents, such as the ability to perform in front of an audience. For example, junior pupils successfully combined composition, drama, dance and singing in an ambitious production of *The Rocky Monster Show* in December 2002. They displayed considerable effort as well as enjoyment in this hour-long production. It was a lot of work, but an event that did much to promote pupils' self-esteem and pleasure in working together.

142. The subject is soundly led and managed. The co-ordinator finds practical ways of keeping abreast of how well pupils are performing, such as collecting tape recordings and videos. Apt areas for development have been identified. Discussions with pupils in Year 6 confirmed the co-ordinator's judgement that pupils' knowledge and understanding of music from different parts of the world and different periods of time had scope to improve.

### **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

143. At the time of the last inspection, standards were above expectations at the end of Year 2 and average at the end of Year 6. Only games lessons were seen during this inspection, and, in this aspect, pupils are now above average throughout the school. However, less evidence was available to assess standards in the other aspects of physical education. Overall, standards are broadly average at both key stages. The maintenance of standards since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

*What the school does well*

144. The teaching of games is strong throughout the school, and this is reinforced by a good number of well-attended clubs, such as football, netball or cricket. The school also has a good record in sporting fixtures with local schools and over the years has won a number of trophies. In lessons observed, pupils showed a good level of skill and good appreciation of playing together as a team. For example, in a lesson with Years 5 and 6, pupils showed a good understanding of the importance of finding space during a team activity to practice defence and attack in football. Year 1 pupils were already displaying an awareness of tactics when deciding the best place to field during a game of rounders.

145. These games lessons make a good contribution to pupils' personal development. Boys and girls play well together, and all are fully involved and enjoy the activities. During one lesson it was particularly noticeable how one pupil with quite severe difficulties was helped and encouraged by the other pupils. Good use is made of the spacious playing field and the good resources available.

146. The curriculum is soundly organised to cover all aspects of physical education, including outdoor and adventurous activities, which are experienced by the older pupils in one of the regular residential visits to an activity centre. All classes make good use of the school hall, which has a reasonable range of gymnastic equipment.

*What could be improved*

147. There are weaknesses in some lesson plans and teaching methods. For example, in two lessons teachers and classroom assistants were not alert to the fact that some pupils were not actively involved in the activity for quite long periods, despite being keen to join in. Most pupils do not talk as knowledgeably about dance and gymnastics as they do about games and sports, and dance in particular does not feature strongly in the curriculum for the older pupils. All pupils achieve the minimum statutory standards for swimming, but because of limitations of time and space, those with the ability to progress further are not able to do so. This concerns a minority of parents.

148. The new co-ordinator has a sound plan for development that includes such things as identifying staff training needs and exploring alternative arrangements for swimming. Simple and manageable ways of assessing attainment in physical education are acknowledged as necessary in order to ensure progression of skills and knowledge across all areas of the subject.