

# INSPECTION REPORT

**THE SPALDING ST JOHN THE BAPTIST CE (VA)  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Spalding

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120613

Headteacher: Mr. K. Bush

Reporting inspector: Ms. B. Pollard  
OFSTED Inspector Number: 1838

Dates of inspection: 30 June – 03 July 2003

Inspection number: 248163  
Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	primary
School category:	voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	mixed
School address:	Hawthorn Bank SPALDING Lincolnshire
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Appropriate authority:	governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Reverend Peter Garland
Date of previous inspection:	October 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1838	Ms. B. Pollard	Registered inspector	Geography History	What sort of school is it? The pupils' results and achievements. What should the school do to improve further?
13895	Ms. A. Smith	Lay inspector	None	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
18344	Mr. D. Earley	Team inspector	English Art and design	How well is the school led and managed?
11848	Mr. J. Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Educational inclusion	How well are pupils taught?
11419	Mrs. J. Underwood	Team inspector	Science; Design and technology; Music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
30773	Mrs. J. Whitehead	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; The Foundation Stage; Special educational needs	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

St John the Baptist is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in the Lincolnshire market town of Spalding. It has 406 children on roll and is larger than most primary schools. Children enter the reception classes at age four and most transfer at age eleven to one of four secondary schools in the town. It is a popular school serving a part of town where houses vary in price but are mostly owner occupied. The school's population is mainly white British, with 18 children from other ethnic groups none of whom require additional help with learning English. Only three children have free meals, which is well below the national average. There are 64 children (16 per cent) identified as having special educational needs which is below the national average; seven of these (2 per cent) have statements and this is average. Assessments, carried out soon after children start school, show a wide range of abilities but, overall, they are average. The school is involved in the Healthy Schools Award, a Business Partnership and the Spalding Music Festival. There are close links with the adjacent church.

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

This is a successful school with many strengths. Standards are high; by the time they leave, children exceed well above the national average in English and above average in mathematics. Standards are also good in art, design and technology, geography, singing and games. In the reception classes children achieve well in reading and their personal, social and emotional development exceeds the national targets set for the age-group. The very good leadership and management, the high quality of teaching and the rich curriculum make significant contributions to the standards achieved by children. The provision made for children's personal development helps them to become mature, responsible individuals who are prepared well for their next stage of education. The school provides good value for money and regularly exceeds the challenging targets for improvement in standards it sets itself.

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

- By the end of Year 6, standards in literacy are well above average and in numeracy they are above average. Children also reach good standards in art, design and technology, geography, singing in music and games in physical education. By age five, children reach good standards in their personal, social and emotional development and reading.
- Teaching is very good, overall, across the school and makes a significant contribution to the high standards achieved by children. Teachers have high expectations and encourage children to do their best.
- Very good leadership and management provide clear direction for the school's development and appropriate action is taken to reach the goals for improvement identified in its comprehensive development plan.
- Every effort is made to provide interesting and relevant work and the rich curriculum broadens children's understanding helping them to make good progress. Links across subjects and extra-curricular activities are especially strong.
- The care and guidance shown to children helps them to become mature, hardworking individuals with a strong sense of worth and very positive attitudes to learning. Children display respect and concern for one another.

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

- More attention needs to be given to the development of investigative skills in science in the juniors to raise standards above the average.
- Subject leaders need opportunities to raise standards even higher by observing colleagues in classrooms and working alongside them to share expertise. The school is looking at ways of providing opportunities for this.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in October 1997 and has made good improvement in addressing the key issues identified. Assessment procedures are used very effectively to set targets for groups of children to raise their attainment and they are used to judge progress. Higher attaining children are consistently provided with extensions to work that make more demands of them and encourage more independence. Teachers have improved their evaluation of what leads to good learning and adjusted their methods. Although members of the senior management team are able to observe in classrooms, the leaders of subjects do not yet have the opportunity to work alongside colleagues in practical ways. Parents are provided with detailed reports on children's progress that enable them to compare how well their child is doing against national levels. Spiritual development is now good. Design and technology has improved considerably as it was below national standards at the last inspection and now exceeds them. Leadership and management have improved and all concerned are focussed clearly on raising standards even further.

## 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	A	A	B	C
mathematics	B	C	B	C
science	B	C	C	E

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

By the end of the reception year, children exceed the national goals in personal, social and emotional development and the reading aspect of communication, language and literacy. In the other areas of learning they reach the expected goals and their good progress means they begin the National Curriculum. Standards at age seven are above average in English, mathematics and science; they are also good in art, design and technology, singing and games. In other subjects, children reach the levels expected for their age. At age eleven, children's attainment is well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. This is similar to last year's results in National Curriculum tests except in English where standards have improved as a result of literacy being a focus for the work of the school. When compared with schools with similar characteristics (based on entitlement to free meals) the school performs as well as others in English and mathematics but is well below the average in science. This is because of a weakness in the aspect of science where children have insufficient opportunities to carry out investigations through planning, presenting and evaluating evidence.

Standards in Year 6, in other subjects such as art, design and technology, geography, singing and games are also better than those typically found in other schools. In the other National Curriculum subjects of history and information and communication technology, standards are in line with national expectations. Religious education was inspected separately and does not form part of this inspection. Children are especially skilled at using their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology knowledge in a range of subjects and these contribute to high attainment as children engage in debates, research information and present their findings in various forms using tables, charts and word-processing skills. Children, generally, make good progress whatever their abilities or backgrounds because of the close attention paid to their needs through very good assessment, support in classes and at home and the setting of targets to help them achieve their goals.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children work hard and are eager to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The majority of children behave very well in lessons and around school.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships and good personal development. Children are friendly, courteous and willing to help others. They are keen members of school clubs and respond well to opportunities to take initiative and responsibility.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is well above the national average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. It is very good overall throughout the school with many strengths and few weaknesses. In three quarters of lessons seen it was good, very good or excellent. The best teaching is characterised by high expectations and clear intentions about what children need to learn. Inclusion is very good and every effort is made to take account of the different needs of children whether this is learning difficulties, physical disabilities or where faster learners need more challenges. Teachers are very good at managing children, time and resources efficiently and children are encouraged to work hard and fast. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good and this is one reason why children achieve well in a range of subjects as teachers help them to apply these skills to enhance and enrich learning across the curriculum. In the less successful lessons, pace is slower and children are not given sufficient opportunities to work independently.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant; links between subjects and activities outside the normal classroom tasks are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Children make better than expected progress towards the individual targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are no children for whom English is not their mother language who require additional help.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There has been an improvement in spiritual development and there is time for reflection. The strong school ethos means that children appreciate and respect codes of behaviour and they show understanding of their own and different cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Care and guidance are strengths of the school. Staff know children very well and are very supportive. Assessment is very good and information is used very effectively to help children make good progress.

Parents make a very good contribution to the partnership between home and school and their involvement in the life of the school is much appreciated by staff.



## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and senior management team provide very strong leadership and have a very clear view of how to implement the plans for improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are very active and make a very effective contribution as they help to shape the direction of the school and act as critical friends
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Standards are analysed and monitored and appropriate action is taken to improve them through training and funding.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Grants are used for their intended purposes and the impact of spending on attainment is monitored. Resources are good and the principles of best value are understood and applied.

Accommodation is satisfactory. Recent improvements have enhanced the entrance to the school and the library. The new computer suite is helping to raise standards because of easier access for greater numbers of children. The school manages the problems sometimes encountered in the older buildings effectively to ensure that children in those classes are not disadvantaged. Resource provision is good.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations are high</li> <li>• Teaching is good</li> <li>• Children make good progress.</li> <li>• Parents feel comfortable approaching the school.</li> <li>• Children become more mature and responsible.</li> <li>• Children like school</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no statistically significant issues raised by parents.</li> </ul>

The findings from the inspection endorse the views expressed by parents. Most parents and carers have very positive attitudes to the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Standards at age eleven are well above average in English, above average in mathematics and average in science. Although they have varied in the years since the last inspection in 1997 because of the differences in abilities among the Year 6 children, they usually remain above the national average and the current Year 6 maintain this trend. There is weakness in science in Key Stage 2 where children are not achieving as much as they could in the investigative element of the subject. In the foundation subjects of art, design technology, geography, singing in music and the games aspect of physical education, standards are better than those typically found in other schools. In all other subjects, standards are in line with those found in other schools. There has been a particularly significant improvement in design and technology where standards were below national expectations in the last inspection and in the provision for information and communication technology. Religious education is not included in this inspection as it was inspected separately.
2. In the Foundation Stage, children in the reception classes exceed the national goals for the age group in their personal, social and emotional development and in reading in communication, language and literacy. In the other areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum, children reach the expected goals and begin the National Curriculum by age five. Positive attitudes to school are established very quickly and the well-organised classroom routines and activities help children to work hard and enjoy learning. Secure foundations are laid for the next stage of learning.
3. Standards at age seven are above average in English, mathematics and science; there has been a consistent pattern in the years since the last inspection with Year 2 children always achieving well in the core subjects. Attainment is also good in art, design and technology, singing in music and the games aspect of physical education. In other foundation subjects, children reach the levels expected for their age. The links that teachers make in work across a range of subjects make a positive contribution to standards as children reinforce their skills and deepen their knowledge and understanding in a variety of situations.
4. The school's results in national tests at age eleven in 2002 show that attainment was above average in English and mathematics and average in science. The findings from this inspection are similar in mathematics and science but are higher in English as the impact of the school's strategies for improving reading and writing have raised the profile of literacy skills. When compared with similar schools, based on numbers with free meals, children in this school are achieving as well as those in other schools in English and mathematics but not as well in science. The reason for this is insufficient opportunities for children to carry out their own investigations and experiments in science which are an important element of the science curriculum. Trends over time show that this school is improving at the same rate as other schools with results that are often above average. It regularly exceeds the challenging targets it sets itself in literacy and numeracy. In the national tests it expects 89 per cent of Year 6 to reach levels 4 or 5 in English and 87 per cent in mathematics; this is a challenge as 30 per cent of children in Year 6 have special educational needs. At the time of the inspection national comparisons for 2003 were not available.

5. By the end of Year 6, children are very good at speaking and listening, reading and writing. These skills serve them well in other subjects and contribute to the good standards reached in many of the foundation subjects. They can carry out research for geography and history and extract relevant information from various sources as they make notes, consider the points of views of writers, and argue for and against issues. They also use their numeracy skills effectively to examine, analyse and present data on weather, transport and environmental issues. There has been a significant improvement in information and communication technology skills since the last inspection. Children are confident in using computers and other technology to support and enrich work in subjects such as literacy, science, music, geography and art. This means that work is presented very attractively and maintains the interest of the reader of booklets, pamphlets and topic folders.
6. In art, children use a wide range of tools, techniques and processes to produce well-finished pictures and artefacts. In geography, children are very competent readers of maps and the older children are well aware of environmental issues and their responsibility for preventing pollution. In design and technology, where improvement has been dramatic, children are very skilled at designing, making and evaluating products. They sing very tunefully in music lessons and this contributes to the quality of assemblies. The good personal, social and emotional development achieved in the reception classes is maintained in the rest of the school and helps team spirit in team sports as children appreciate that working together produces good results.
7. Children make, generally, good progress during their time in school because of a systematic approach to the structure of learning that ensures children build on previous experiences and consolidate new learning. The very effective systems for monitoring the rate of progress help to alert staff to any issues. This is the case for all children, whether they have special educational needs or are high attainers. In Year 6, children are grouped according to their abilities across the year for literacy and numeracy in sets so that more demands can be made of the faster learners and those with difficulties can work at a slower pace. In other classes, children are grouped by ability and those needing additional help are supported by very effective classroom assistants, in class, or in small groups withdrawn for special attention. The close attention paid to the needs of groups and individuals is illustrated by the swift way in which staff integrated a child new to the school in Year 1, ensuring that he was quickly introduced to the reading scheme and presenting him with a certificate to acknowledge the efforts he had made to learn the key words associated with the scheme, all within a week of transferring to the school. There are no significant differences in standards or progress achieved by children of different gender or ethnic backgrounds.
8. Children with special educational needs make good progress, achieving well in relation to their everyday targets, which are well defined. They are also given additional support and encouragement, which heightens their self-esteem. The actual standards reached by such pupils are sometimes below average although in Year 6 children achieve similar standards to those nationally in reading and some aspects of mathematics. They make good progress and achieve well over time in relation to their ability. Children with statements of educational needs are well targeted and records show that they make good progress set against their individual educational plans.

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

9. Children enjoy coming to school and have very positive attitudes to their learning. Most are keen to learn, work well and undertake tasks set for them by teachers with much interest. Most listen carefully and concentrate hard. A small minority of children find it difficult to become or

- stay interested in some lessons and activities. Teachers help these children very effectively and the disruption to classes is minimal. Children in the reception classes settle happily into the school routine and quickly adopt very good attitudes to school and learning.
10. Pupils with special educational needs have very good attitudes towards learning. They concentrate very well and sustain their attention well. For example, in a Year 6 group session children confidently use dictionaries and work very well as they look up different words. This is equally evident in a Year 2 literacy lesson when children are helped to use a dictionary and read the explanation.
  11. The majority of children behave very well in lessons and around the school. When standards of teaching are good or better this stimulates the interest of all children in the class and behaviour is then very good. All members of staff are consistent in their high expectations of behaviour and speak to children with respect and consideration. The school is inclusive, as children from a wide range of backgrounds are made very welcome. During inspection, no racist or sexist behaviour was seen, nor was any bullying observed. There have been two periods of exclusion for one child during the past year. The school is well cared for by children and there is evidence of trust and a willingness to share between children.
  12. Relationships in the school community are very good. Children are friendly, courteous and willing to help and talk to visitors to the school. Children are considerate, co-operate well with one another and show respect for one another's views, beliefs and culture. During lessons, relationships between teachers and children are frequently warm and supportive and as a result children are able to work well and settle quickly to their tasks. Children value each other's efforts and take many opportunities to discuss and reflect on the impact of their actions on others during class discussions and assemblies. During circle time (where children sit to hold confidential class discussion) and in personal, social and health lessons children can be seen growing in confidence; showing respect for one another's views and sharing ideas and concerns. Children are caring of those in their school who have disabilities. They are quick to make friends with them and to do what they can to help them join in with all activities.
  13. Personal development is good. Children respond well to the opportunities to take initiative and responsibility provided by the school, such as becoming monitors in Year 6, but these could be developed further to assist children; for example, there is no school council to represent children's views on school issues. Many of the oldest children help adults and the younger children in the school, especially during the lunch breaks. Some children in Year 5 help the midday supervisors at lunchtime. Many children are keen members of school clubs and those in the school choir represent the school at many informal concerts in the local community such as the Spalding Primary Schools' Music Festival. All children are engaged in raising money for charities such as Red Nose Day and Jeans for Genes.
  14. Attendance is very good and well above the national average for similar schools. The number of unauthorised absences is below the national average for similar schools. Most children arrive in time for the beginning of the school day and children settled down quickly and were ready to begin for lessons promptly. Registration is quickly and efficiently carried out at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

15. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is overall very good throughout the school. It has many strengths and few weaknesses. In three-quarters of the lessons seen,

teaching was good, very good or excellent.

16. Teachers have a very good understanding of subjects and are clear about what they want children to learn. They teach basic skills extremely well and use methods which interest and make sense to children; for instance during a Year 2 numeracy lesson when the teacher used facts the children knew, such as 3+3, 4+4 to enable them to understand the process of multiplication as a form of repeated addition. Similarly, the high level of teachers' knowledge and understanding of the writing style of the author Michael Murpurgo enabled Year 6 children make very good progress in comparing and contrasting different ways of describing incidents in stories. Methods are less effective and learning is limited, as seen in a Year 3 lesson, when the teacher did not insist upon all children being attentive when explaining what they had to do.
17. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives for what children are expected to learn. Plans take into account the differing needs of the children. This makes sure that all children are included in the learning opportunities. This is shown in the very good support given to a child with physical disabilities in a games lesson and the additional challenge for higher attaining children when using the Internet to find out more about Kenya. Occasionally, too close an adherence to schemes of work leads to planning which is not well matched to children's abilities as seen in a Year 6 lesson when a number task was too difficult for most of the children.
18. Teaching for children with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection. It is now very good. Planned activities ensure that pupils are very effectively included in all class activities. They receive very good planned support. In a Year 6 class they discuss aspects of the book *Kensuki's Kingdom* and successfully use dictionaries to find the meaning of words such as 'rudimentary, sparsely, immaculately'. Teachers use children's individual targets well in planning activities so that they are able to make good progress. Children's contributions to lessons are valued and their active involvement is carefully planned through appropriate questions and strategies, which engage their interest. For example, two Year 2 children are effectively supported as they work on a map of Africa.
19. Teachers use the discussion period at the end of each lesson effectively to check the improvement in learning, gaps in knowledge and areas of misunderstanding. This enables them to plan the next lesson so that new work is based securely on what children already know and understand. In a Year 1 science lesson the teacher was very skilled in encouraging children to talk and demonstrate what they had learned about hearing and reinforced this by a simple blindfolding activity. End of lesson periods are also used well to develop older children's knowledge of their own learning; for instance, through detailed discussions with children about the outcomes of regular tests in mathematics. This is also being promoted through the setting of individual targets for improvement in English and mathematics agreed between teachers and children.
20. Teachers have high expectations of all children, they challenge, inspire and expect the best from them. This is illustrated in the excellent lesson with a Year 4 class which resulted in them making exceptionally swift progress when extending their skills in multiplying and dividing numbers. The pace of the teaching meant children worked hard and fast; the manner in which the teacher kept the children focused on the purpose of the lesson developed positive attitudes towards the expectations; the increasing difficulty of the task challenged them and the high quality of the end of lesson questioning and discussion enabled them to take stock of what they had learned.

21. Teachers are very good at managing children and using time and resources efficiently so that children work productively and at a good pace. They also provide appropriate occasions in lessons when time is needed for reflection and consolidation. In a Year 1 geography lesson the careful preparation and use of resources helped children to learn more about life in France. Also, the fact that paints and materials were readily to hand contributed significantly to the success of a Year 6 art lesson. A very good feature of a Year 5 history lesson, in which children were researching and making notes about Ancient Egypt, was the manner in which the teacher sets time targets for the completion of various tasks.
22. Classroom support assistants contribute significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. They are well informed by teachers about lesson plans and know how to use their time to give the best possible support to children's learning. During a Year 4 science lesson the use of a small step-by-step approach by a support assistant gave a group children with learning difficulties more confidence in thinking for themselves about the creatures likely to be found in a local soil sample. Similarly, the progress of higher attaining children in Year 2 in learning spelling strategies was increased by the high quality of questioning and discussion initiated by a classroom assistant.
23. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is very good. The high quality teaching of speaking and listening, reading and writing means children are excited about language and the power of story. This was demonstrated when older children learned how to write a persuasive letter to fulfil a particular ambition and responded to an extract of emotional text from the book *Kensuke's Kingdom*. The very good teaching helps younger children to use independent literacy skills when using dictionaries and phonetic knowledge to define nonsense and real words. However, the teaching of literacy was not as good in a Year 3 lesson when children of all abilities were given the same work to do and there was no insistence that they concentrate and complete it. Most numeracy lessons engage children by opening with quick-fire questions, which promote rapid recall skills. They are given opportunities to explain how they have worked out an answer and develop methodical ways of tackling mathematical problems. This was evident in a very good Year 3 lesson which opened with a brisk oral and mental session, used a quick written test to confirm what children knew and led on to better understanding of division. High attainment in Year 5 in work on the symmetry of shapes is the outcome of the very effective way the teacher explains, demonstrates and illustrates the mathematics being taught. Teachers are also successful at helping children to learn information and communication technology skills and they provide many opportunities for children to use these skills to support their work in other subjects.
24. The above average levels children attain in most subjects of the National Curriculum by Year 6 indicate how well they are taught. The teaching of investigative skills in science needs improving to raise standards in this subject to the levels of English and mathematics.

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

25. The school provides children with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, through a very good range of learning experiences. All statutory requirements are met. The curriculum has been reviewed to take account of recent changes and policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. Although based on published guidelines the school has adapted them to ensure the needs of all children are met. The shortcomings in design and technology highlighted in the previous report have been addressed very successfully.

26. The curriculum is planned carefully with teachers working together in teams, based on two-year groups, to produce medium term plans. These are based on the long-term plan showing a range of topics in each subject area to be covered, with Years 3 to 6 planning a two-year cycle. Teachers meet on a fortnightly basis to discuss the lessons for the following fortnight. Planning is shared between the teams so those with expertise or interest devise plans for the others to use. This ensures similar coverage across each year group. Planning was criticised in the previous report because lesson objectives were not always identified and plans had no standard format. All plans now have clear relevant objectives shared with the children and teachers share an agreed format for short term planning. Themes are planned to provide as many cross-curricular links as possible. For example, design and technology includes mathematics through measuring, information communication and technology as children record data, science as children use their knowledge and understanding of electric circuits to make torches and lights.
27. The numeracy and literacy strategies have been implemented effectively and adapted to take into account the needs of the children, for example, to improve reading. There is much evidence of these skills being used across the curriculum. For example, literacy skills are used in history and geography and numeracy skills are developed through science, design and technology as children measure and draw their designs.
28. The curriculum for children with special educational needs is very good. They have good access to the curriculum. Children are effectively supported to ensure they experience all areas of the curriculum. Specific support groups are closely linked to the work in the classroom and take place alongside others in the class. They are confident learners and have a secure sense of their place as valued members of the school community. This helps them to work hard and achieve well in relation to their abilities.
29. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a wide range that includes a number of sports clubs, a young citizens club, drama club, music, recorders, choir and band. These clubs are well supported and children are enthusiastic about participating and representing the school through matches or singing within the community. There are opportunities in Year 6 for children to take part in a residential experience. The school's links with the local community provide a very good enrichment to the curriculum. These include very close links with the church and vicar, business links and old people's homes. There are visits to museums, the Cathedral, music festival and the local environment. All these opportunities help to enhance the children's curriculum by giving them a wide range of experiences.
30. Provision for the children's personal, social and health education is very good. Lessons are well planned based on an appropriate scheme of work. Policies for sex and drugs are in place. Sex education and drugs misuse is taught, throughout the school, as part of science. The school nurse assists with this aspect, particularly for Year 6, when necessary.
31. Liaison with local playgroups, nurseries and secondary schools is good. Specific transition work is provided for all Year 6 children just before they leave primary school. The headteacher regularly meets colleagues from the other local primary schools.

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

32. The provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in all areas. This is a more positive judgement than that made in the last inspection report when consistent opportunities for children to reflect on spiritual issues across the curriculum were reported as under-developed. The school is guided by its Church ethos and this is made visible through the

caring relationships between all adults and children. These are helping the school to develop successfully a range of beliefs and values, particularly those of care and respect. Children are given a firm understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

33. The provision for spiritual development is good and the school provides many good opportunities for spiritual awareness across the curriculum. Children are given knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and these enable them to reflect on their own and others' experiences through assemblies, religious education lessons, visits and services in the adjoining church. The school provides a culture within which children can grow and develop feelings of self-worth, compassion and empathy towards others. Lessons in religious education give children good opportunities to reflect on both the beliefs and practices of their own religion and those of other world faiths. Spirituality is fostered in many lessons; for example, children in Year 2 were surprised to discover that a small fruit like a lychee has a large stone in the middle, whereas a large fruit like a grapefruit only has little pips. Equally, children in a Key Stage 1 assembly were amazed to hear that the small potted oak tree they were looking at is already 18 years old. Children are inspired to write imaginatively and to create colourful paintings. Many children enjoy singing and are keen to make music and the school provides many opportunities to develop musical appreciation.
34. Provision for the children's moral development is good. There is a strong whole-school ethos and expectation for high standards of behaviour is promoted consistently throughout the school by all members of the staff. They provide good role-models and demonstrate and encourage, through the quality of their relationships, the principles of fairness, respect for others, concern for children's welfare and the sensible resolution of conflict. All these aspects are promoted well as a matter of common rules and courtesies but also as part of a planned programme of personal development that includes a number of diverse strands such as behaviour management, anti-bullying and assembly themes. This provision encourages sensitive exploration of issues and allows children time to reflect and consider their behaviour. Each class is encouraged to think through and follow a set of mutually agreed class rules. Overall, the school provides an open and safe learning environment in which children can express views and begin to learn about moral decision-making.
35. Provision for social development is good. The school is successful in fostering the social development of its children, and teachers work hard at promoting a sense of community with common and inclusive values. From the time they enter the school, children are encouraged to work co-operatively, take responsibility for their work and for others and to be as independent as possible. They experience a wide range of positive corporate experiences such as assemblies, residential experiences and school productions. Children are encouraged to relate well to one another in different contexts around the school, for example the oldest children befriend and care for younger ones especially during lunch breaks. There are opportunities for older children to use their initiative and to take on responsibilities through becoming buddies and monitors. The school is currently in the process of training some pupils in Year 5 to become peer mediators next year and is also planning improvements to the playground that will benefit the children when they are not engaged in lessons indoors. The school supports a range of charities such as collecting at Christmas concerts for a cancer fund for children and a children's society.
36. The provision for the children's cultural development is good. Children are taught to appreciate their own cultural and religious traditions, taking part in local events and visiting local historical and cultural sites. They are provided with regular opportunities to develop an understanding of the diversity of other cultures through studies of art from other cultures, history and music



lessons and from the study of other religions in religious education lessons. For example, at the beginning and end of assemblies during inspection week children listened to excerpts of Russian folk music. During the school year a good range of visitors talk to, perform for, and work with the children, extending their knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language well.

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

37. The care of children is very good overall. This judgement is more positive than that made at the time of the last inspection. The school has a caring ethos and provides a well-organised environment in which children can learn effectively and in which parents are made welcome. All members of staff are supportive of both the academic and pastoral needs of children, including those with learning and other difficulties. Children are offered help and support for personal difficulties and teachers know the children very well. Members of staff work hard to develop and maintain the very good relationships observed among all members of the school community. The school is inclusive and has facilities for children with disabilities. The school enables all children to take part fully in school life and activities.
38. Child protection procedures are good and the headteacher is the designated person. The use of classroom assistants greatly contributes to the welfare and progress of all children. The arrangements and provision for dealing with first aid, child sickness, accidents and emergencies are good and well understood by children and all members of staff. There is a very good programme for personal, social and health education and an appropriate health and safety policy. The school has appropriate procedures for ensuring safe access to the Internet.
39. The school has a very good whole school policy for monitoring and promoting good behaviour that is linked to the provision for personal, social and health education and assemblies. Teachers follow a consistent approach to behaviour management and have high expectations for good standards in behaviour. The expectation that children will behave well is reinforced during lessons, break times and assemblies by the example of all the adults working in the school. Each class has developed their own class rules. When examples of poor behaviour take place teachers take immediate and firm action and when necessary, talk through difficulties with children and consult with parents.
40. Procedures for monitoring and supporting children's personal development are good. Teachers provide opportunities for children to discuss and share opinions on a range of personal, social moral and health issues, through discrete lessons, circle time (confidential class discussions) and assemblies. Many of the oldest children are encouraged to take responsibility for others, but there are few opportunities across the school for children to air their opinions about matters concerning their school. At present there are no procedures for formal monitoring of children's personal development, although high-quality celebration of the children's achievements and personal development takes place during assemblies.
41. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. The educational welfare officer visits the school by request and makes home visits to those families who have problems with attendance. Children's absence and punctuality is monitored by the secretary and class teachers who inform the headteacher when children have difficulties with attendance and punctuality. There are secure procedures to ensure that reasons for absence are received and recorded. Registers are stored in accordance with statutory regulations and procedures to account securely for all children during the course of the school day are in place. The school has a policy to contact parents if they fail to inform the school early on the first morning when

children are absent. During inspection, lessons observed started on time and the majority of children arrive punctually at the beginning of each school day.

42. The overall quality of educational support and guidance is also very good. Children with learning or behavioural difficulties are fully included in all aspects of lessons. Children with special educational needs have good support. The school's very clear procedures ensure that individual children are carefully monitored and individual learning programmes set where appropriate.
43. Procedures for assessing children's learning are very good. Assessment covers every subject in the curriculum. The school makes good use of the information from national tests to make sure that all children are helped to make good progress. In mathematics and English children's skills and understanding are very thoroughly assessed throughout the year and the information used to alter planning for individuals' learning to meet their particular needs. Their progress is tracked and all available information is used to agree targets which are monitored and adjusted through the year.
44. The school has responded well to the issue of setting more precise targets for raising attainment and ensuring better consistency in challenging the higher attaining children from the last inspection. It has successfully identified more precise targets for raising attainment and inspection evidence shows a greater consistency in setting challenging learning targets for higher attaining children.

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

45. Parents and carers have a very good view of the school overall. The school enjoys a good partnership with parents and the community and has forged valuable links with the church and community that contribute positively to children's learning. A good example is the close liaison with local playgroups and nurseries to ease children's transition into the primary school. These judgements are broadly similar to those made at the time of the last inspection.
46. Parents say they feel the school expects their children to work hard and achieve their best, that there are good standards of teaching throughout the school and that they would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. Inspectors' judgements support these positive views. However, a handful of parents do not feel that the school keeps them sufficiently well informed, that it works closely with them or that children get the right amount of work to do at home. Inspectors found no evidence to support these less positive views of the school, although the new security system makes it less easy for parents to enter the school informally to see class teachers before or after school and this may help to make those parents feel less welcome.
47. The school provides a very good range of information for parents. For example, letters and newsletters celebrate the school's successes and keep parents informed about events, issues, and forth-coming school trips. The school provides opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress and attainment and these are generally very well attended. The parents of new children gain information about the school through the school prospectus, meetings and visits to the school. The governors' annual report to parents provides another useful source of information for parents.
48. Annual pupil reports have improved since the last inspection and give parents clear information showing how children can move forward in their learning. The school offers an opportunity for

parents of Year 5 children to attend a session aimed at informing them about the differences their children will experience in Year 6, such as the residential trip and sitting the eleven plus examination and how these may affect their children. The provision for activities outside of lessons is very good and the school has added to the range of activities available after school including many sports clubs, choir, and a young citizens club in the autumn and spring terms. Parents are very supportive of consultation meetings for children with learning difficulties. There are good arrangements for parents of children with a statement of special educational needs to receive appropriate information through annual reviews. The school listens to parents' concerns about pupils with learning difficulties and immediately shares any of their own with parents.

49. Parents are made welcome in the school and the headteacher and class teachers are accessible to parents and carers wishing to discuss matters or make complaints. However, this is not always possible without appointments and it is sometimes difficult to enter the school informally now that there is a system of heightened security. The headteacher often mingles with parents as they collect their children from school at the beginning and end of the school day. Parental involvement in children's learning both at home and school is very good. Parents co-operate with the school and the school welcomes the help of parents and grandparents who give time to work alongside teachers for example, in helping with class activities such as sewing. Many more are involved in supporting school activities such as the sports days, school productions, and school outings. Many parents support their children through their homework tasks and listen to them read. Inspectors found that the school's provision for homework is good.
50. Parents, carers, and members of staff provide the school with valuable support through the very active parent teacher association. This arranges fundraising and social events for the school such as the summer and winter fairs and children's discos. Monies raised are used to support the children's education; for example, they have enabled the school to increase the provision of computers in the computer suite and have helped to stock the library with books. These links between the parents, the community and the school demonstrate that parents make a very positive contribution to the work of the school and what their children achieve.

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

51. Leadership and management are very good. This is an important factor in the high standards achieved by the school. It is a significant improvement on the findings of the inspection in 1997. The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that the senior management team has developed its confidence and leadership skills and makes a vital contribution to the school's provision. There are now clear targets for improvement which allow the school to chart its progress precisely and it is committed to the highest standards of achievement. This is enhanced by its very thorough systems for assessing and monitoring the academic progress of children. The head teacher and senior management team now provide very strong leadership and have a very clear view of how the school is to move forward in order to raise standards. The head teacher provides very clear educational direction for the school.
52. Governors make a very good contribution towards school improvement and fulfil their statutory duties very well. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. Governors take part in training, visit school and hold regular committee and full governing body meetings. They are assigned to each major area in school. They receive regular reports from the headteacher and staff and have a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This enables them to help to shape the direction of the school and to act as critical

friends when considering initiatives and areas for developments. They take a full part in devising the school development plan and, for example, questioned aspects of the school health and safety plan and plans to extend the premises, so that improvements were made. The headteacher, staff and governors together provide a strong sense of purpose and commitment to raising standards.

53. Responsibilities are clearly shared amongst staff. Effective use is made of subject leaders' skills and knowledge. They have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their subjects and provide very good leadership in the organisation of their subjects and in the monitoring of planning and pupils' work in order to raise standards. The headteacher, supported by members of the senior management team, very carefully monitors teaching and learning in order to identify areas of weakness so that improvements can be made. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. The school is aware of the need to provide subject leaders with further opportunities to check teaching and learning and work alongside colleagues in classrooms in order to make improvements and help to raise standards.
54. The school is well provided for in its teaching and non-teaching staff. Subject leaders are well matched to their skills and experience. The school has in place good systems for staff development, performance management and the induction of new staff. Learning support assistants and assistants in reception classes make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and help towards the raising of standards. They are well trained and work very closely with teachers to plan work, support pupils and check their progress. Staff know children very well and establish very good relationships between themselves and with pupils so that children generally feel secure and valued. The school is generally well resourced and recent improvements to the generally adequate accommodation, such as the computer suite and library, help to improve the overall provision and assist in raising standards. The building is well maintained and cleaned and enhanced by attractive displays of work by children and staff.
55. The school development planning is clear, detailed and manageable. Priorities are very clear so that the school has a very good view of its strategic development in order to raise standards. This is closely linked with the budget so that priorities are prudently financed. Finances are very astutely managed. This enables the school to be in a good position in order to consider future initiatives such as the improvement of the accommodation and information communication technology resources. Financial planning is very good and the finance committee has a carefully considered strategy for the consideration of finances in subsequent years. Office routines are well organised and appropriate financial controls are in place. Recommendations from the most recent auditor's report have been met. Because the school is very well administered the headteacher and staff are able to focus on the central purpose of teaching children and raising standards. Grants and funds for special educational needs are used to very good effect and the school has a very clear understanding of *best value* in its purchase of resources. Governors, teachers and support staff are very hard working, enthusiastic and committed to raising standards and improving the quality of education for all pupils. Given the quality of leadership and management, teaching, and the standards reached by children, the school provides good value for money.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

56. The school should:

- Ensure more attention is given to the development of investigative skills in science in Key Stage 2 so that attainment in this subject matches that in English and mathematics.

Other minor issue:

- Continue to extend the influence of subject leaders, as outlined in the school's development plan, by providing them with opportunities to observe lessons and work alongside colleagues in order to raise standards even higher.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	34	24	20	0	0	0
Percentage	3	42	30	25	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	406
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

<b>Special educational needs</b>	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	64

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	20
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### Attendance

<b>Authorised absence</b>	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.4

<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	%
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)***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	33	27	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	32	32	33
	Girls	27	27	26
	Total	59	59	59
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (97)	98 (97)	98 (98)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	31	32	33
	Girls	27	26	27
	Total	58	58	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (97)	97 (97)	100 (100)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	37	27	64

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	29	33
	Girls	24	23	24
	Total	53	52	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (86)	81 (73)	89 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	27	31
	Girls	24	22	22
	Total	52	49	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81 (87)	77 (76)	83 (92)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

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

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	387	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	8	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	2	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	1	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)	14.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27.8
Average class size	31.2

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

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	213

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	716260
Total expenditure	672100
Expenditure per pupil	1655
Balance brought forward from previous year	74280
Balance carried forward to next year	44160

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

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

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	406
Number of questionnaires returned	106

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	28	7	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	58	36	5	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	44	6	1	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	49	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	60	35	5	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	51	10	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	64	30	4	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	42	46	6	4	3
The school is well led and managed.	62	30	6	1	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	40	5	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	38	6	1	9

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

57. Children are provided with secure foundations at the start to their education in the reception classes and they reach at least the national targets by age five in all the areas of learning in the Foundation Stage curriculum. They exceed the targets in personal, social and emotional development and reading. They enter school at the beginning of the school year in which they become five years of age and most have attended a local pre-school group or nursery. They come from a variety of backgrounds and, as a result, their skills and knowledge are varied. On average, attainment on entry is similar to that normally found in children of this age. The baseline assessment, which is conducted soon after children start school, is used very well to identify, at an early stage, the learning needs of each child. These, and informal ongoing assessments, result in the staff knowing each child well. A picture of the progress being made is built up, which helps to ensure that future work builds on what the child already knows. Staff work and plan well together in developing the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and ensure that all children are fully included in all areas of learning.
58. Teaching is good overall and some aspects are very good. It is very good when the children are given direct teaching in reading skills and early writing and learning about number. The classroom assistants work very closely with the teachers and they are fully aware of the learning needs of individual children. Relationships and the management of children are very good and children make very good progress in developing personal and social skills.

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

59. Teaching in this area of learning is very good. As a result, the majority of children are exceeding the standards expected, the *early learning goals*, by the end of their time in the reception class. The adults are very good role models and they develop very positive relationships with the children. Teachers target questions well so as to catch and maintain the interest of the children. They have a positive, consistent approach to behaviour so that children know what is expected and, as a result, they feel very secure and respond very well. Adults have high expectations of children as they work together. They share, take turns, organise themselves and show a very good level of self-control. For example, following a lesson making jelly children taste and the jelly; with the three jellies on different tables and a bowl of water to wash their spoons the children wait their turn, taste and discuss their findings with the teacher with a minimum of direction. Teachers' very effective planning for this area of learning helps children to be very enthusiastic in their learning. They concentrate very well as they work together as a class and in many of the group activities.

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

60. Teaching is good overall and it is very good in focused teaching which helps children enjoy books and understand that print *tells the story*. They begin to read and enjoy books for themselves. This early work has helped children to make good progress in reading and most children exceed the standards expected by the end of their time in the reception class. Children sit and listen well to stories. They comment on what might happen next and discuss familiar books enthusiastically. Children have many opportunities to use and extend their speaking and listening skills. Through their every day routines as they discuss the weather, have a *show and*

*tell* time and explore exciting themes such as birthdays they become very confident in talking with adults and each other. Adults use questions very well to encourage children to extend their speaking skills by talking about their work in the different areas of learning. They also sit and listen very well to instructions as, for example, during a lesson in the computer suite where they very successfully follow instructions, logging on and opening the correct programme very quickly. On entry to school, children have limited knowledge of letter names and sounds. Very well planned teaching, carefully matched to individual children's needs, helps children make good progress. The majority know the sounds of most letters. All children are beginning to use this knowledge to work out unfamiliar words and the higher attaining children are confidently writing sentences on their own. This group of children exceed the standards expected for their age. All the children make good progress. This was seen in a lesson where they were concentrating on the sound *ar*. They identify objects in the 'sounds bag' and help the teacher write the word on the board by sounding out the letters in, for example, *Barbie*, they understand that a name needs a capital letter. By the time they leave the reception class, all children are likely to reach the *early learning goals* in this area of learning and some will exceed them.

### **Mathematical development**

61. Teaching is good in this area of learning. Children count confidently to numbers beyond 20, recognise numbers and explore patterns in number as they count in tens and double numbers that total up to ten. In a lesson on addition using a set of 5 teddies children explore addition and discuss the patterns they see in written recording. In the group work, a significant number of children confidently add two numbers together making totals up to 10, another group look for and confidently tally different party items, and a group of children choose items to buy and count out the correct number of pennies with the support of a classroom assistant. Good links are made with literacy as children *read* the labels as they shop to identify the items. All children can count correctly to at least ten items and recognise numbers beyond twenty. The higher attainers are confident with numbers in the hundreds and are confident in saying what number comes between 216 and 218, for example. They all recognise circles, squares and triangles and have the opportunity to use sand and water to extend their understanding of the capacity of various items. By the end of the reception year, most children are likely to achieve the early learning goals set for this age and some will exceed them.

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

62. Although children's knowledge varies when they start school, most children are likely to reach the standards expected at the end of the reception year. Teaching is good overall and very good in teaching and using information communication technology. As a result, children achieve well in this area. Children design and make a card for a character in a reading book; they work in pairs, log on, find and open the Word program and write a greeting enlarging the print size. A significant number of children also change the colour of the print. All children work very confidently, showing high levels of concentration. Children have well planned opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world around them. They discuss the weather and confidently put the days of the week and months of the year in order. They have improved their outside play area through planting large planters with a variety of flowering plants. They grew seeds as part of this project and they are currently growing and looking after tomato plants. Effective links are made to children's developing literacy skills as they talk about what they have done and begin to record their experiences. They enjoy making jelly and discuss the changes that occur as the hot water is added. They describe the process confidently in discussion. Very good use is made of planned visits to places of interest such as the *Butterfly Park*. Children have a growing knowledge of the natural world and in discussion with some

children they were able to explain that the butterflies were in *a very hot place* and could further work out that this was because these butterflies *live in a very hot country*.

### **Physical development**

63. Teaching is good in this area of learning. In a well-planned physical education lesson children show good control as they warm-up, change speed and follow instructions well as they *draw a circle with their bottom* and lift their heels off the floor. Children explore and practise the conventions of races through carefully planned and organised activities. They control the bat and ball skilfully along the course or run and climb through a hoop as they successfully follow the rules of the race. They become aware of the need for safe procedures and quickly learn to follow these. They have good control of the ball and succeed in completing the races successfully, with obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment. Although rain inhibited the use of the outdoor area during the inspection week provision in this area has been well developed to support children's physical development. Children use equipment in the reception classes well. They manage number fans in mathematics very efficiently. They move confidently around the school as they leave their classroom block to go the main school. Their skills in using the computers are good. They confidently use the mouse to control the cursor and the keyboard to write letters. All children reach the *early learning goals* for this area of learning by the end of the reception year.

### **Creative development**

64. Teaching is sound in this area of learning. By the end of the reception year all children achieve the *early learning goals*. Children use and explore a range of materials and paint as they make patterns for butterflies, create textured fish and explore spiral patterns through their observation of snails. Through carefully planned themes children are helped to use their developing understanding of pattern and work together to design wrapping paper for a reading book character's birthday. They enjoy role-play and take on the role of shopkeeper and customer in the *party shop* as they buy and sell items linked to the recently introduced birthday theme. They enjoy using the computer to make birthday cards and successfully design and print out their card. They have many opportunities to sing and know many songs and rhymes. They sing well in assembly and join in singing a song about the bible character *Zacchaeus* tunefully.

## **ENGLISH**

65. The judgement of the previous inspection was that by the end of Year 2 attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing was above average. The judgement of this inspection is that these standards have been maintained. By the end of Year 6 attainment in all aspects of English is well above average. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection where attainment was judged to be average overall. An important factor in the high standards of achievement and the good progress made by most children, including those with learning difficulties of which there are 30 per cent, is the overall very good quality of teaching. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. This in turn is enhanced by the very good use the school makes of its very comprehensive assessment procedures to help planning and set children targets for improvement. For example, following an analysis of its assessments it was decided that teachers needed to focus on children's skills in *reading between the lines* to help them to understand the deeper meaning of their texts. This led to improvements in standards of reading.

66. Teachers use and adapt the guidelines of the National Literacy Strategy very effectively in order to plan lessons and ensure that children build securely on what has gone before. This is one of the reasons why standards are very high by the time children leave the school. They also give children many opportunities to use their literacy skills in other subjects of the curriculum so that their English skills are improved along with their understanding of the other subjects. For example, in history children in Year 4 read newspaper articles about evacuation during the Second World War. In Year 2 children produced well-written comparisons between life in Spalding and in Kaptalamwa in Africa. Year 5 children used their computer skills to research different species of animals and write very well organised and finished booklets incorporating text, graphics and photographs.
67. Relationships between teachers and children are very good. This gives children the confidence to contribute to class and group discussions because they know that their efforts will be valued and respected. It helps children to achieve high standards in their speaking and listening skills. For example, in Year 1 lower achieving children worked eagerly in pairs to rehearse sentences in the past and present tenses; Year 2 children confidently and carefully explained how they collected letter combinations to form words; in Year 6 higher achieving children shared their explanations of words such as *poignant* with peers and confidently discussed the use in stories of techniques such as flashbacks. Because teachers ensure that behaviour is generally very good, noise levels are usually conducive to good listening and children have many opportunities to increase their listening skills. In Year 4, for example, children listened carefully and commented on other children's writing about the work of the author Allen Ahlberg. The school provides many opportunities for children to develop their speaking and listening skills in assemblies and in drama productions and in other subjects of the curriculum; for example, children in Year 5 described their research about the ancient Egyptians in history.
68. Basic skills are taught very well so that children make good progress in their reading. By the end of the infant stage most children use a well-understood range of strategies such as the use of phonics, picture cues and meaning when meeting new or unfamiliar words. Children in Year 2 have a good knowledge of letter patterns and sounds and use these confidently. Books are chosen which are suited to children's abilities so that although lower achieving children in Year 2 read more hesitantly they understand the main ideas of their stories and make good progress. More able readers read accurately and fluently. They discuss plot and characters in detail and read with expression. As they move through the school, teachers ensure that children have opportunities to develop their research skills so that by the end of Year 2 most children know how to use index and contents in order to obtain information. By the end of Year 6 children build on these skills and use glossaries confidently and are familiar with the system for locating books in the main library. The school's very well appointed and organised libraries and the wide range of books available to children of all abilities throughout the school enhances these skills.
69. By the time they reach the end of the junior stage, most children achieve well above expectations in reading. This is because teachers sustain the thorough and comprehensive focus given to children's early reading. Children are encouraged to take books home to read and teachers keep careful records of their progress and set appropriate targets for improvement. Because teachers generally have high expectations and present children with appropriately challenging texts, by the end of Year 6 more able children read fluently and bring their stories to life by using appropriate expression and emphasis. They compare different authors and refer in detail to the text when explaining their views. Teachers ensure that reading is an enjoyable activity so that lower achieving children, for example, enjoy their reading and read mostly accurately with some expression. Where necessary, children with learning difficulties are given well considered and manageable individual education plans with clear targets for improvement in

their work in English. These children, and children of all abilities, are supported effectively by teaching assistants so that they are helped to make good progress.

70. Teachers generally have high expectations so that as they move through the school children's handwriting and presentation are clear and accessible. In Year 2, children's handwriting is usually legibly formed and positioned and most children begin to join their letters when writing independently. By the end of the junior stage handwriting is usually clear, joined and fluent. Teachers' thorough knowledge of how to teach literacy is evident in the good teaching of grammar and punctuation as they move through the school. Children in Year 2 use capital letters and full stops accurately and understand the use of tenses, although lower achieving children do not achieve the same levels of consistency. Faster learners use complex sentences. By the end of the junior stage most children punctuate their work accurately to enhance the structure and meaning of their work.
71. Teachers usually present their work in lively and interesting ways so that children are interested in their work and sustain their concentration. This helps them to make good progress. For example, in Year 4, children's understanding of the use of punctuation and short sentences to create dramatic effect in their writing was extended when they listened to the teacher's expressive reading of extracts from texts. Because teachers have high expectations children write imaginatively and use an increasingly adventurous and effective vocabulary. In Year 2 children use vivid descriptions: *a long sparkly, bright multi coloured dress*. By the end of Year 6 children bring tension and suspense to their writing: *I edged towards the portrait, aware that the eyes of the picture were following me*. Teachers usually plan work so that children are challenged according to their abilities. For example, in Year 1, higher achieving children worked with the teaching assistant to write their own sentences using the present and past tense; children of average ability chose words in the correct tense to complete sentences; lower achieving children, supported by the class teacher, selected from a choice of words to indicate the correct tense. This helped most children to make good progress and ensured that all children had equal access to the curriculum and opportunity to succeed. As they move through the school most children make good progress in their spelling so that by the end of Year 6 most children's spelling of complex words is usually accurate. This is enhanced by the strategies children are taught for improving their spelling and by the regular homework and testing of spelling.
72. Teachers mark children's work regularly and generally provide comments which are supportive and help children understand what they do well and what they need to do in order to improve. In Year 2 a teacher commented, *A good story but read through to make sure your story makes sense*. In Year 5, the teacher engaged in a helpful dialogue, *Be confident - get as much down as possible. Don't worry about mistakes- we can sort them out*. However, the use of marking in this way is not consistent throughout the school and results in some missed opportunities to extend children's skills. Teachers' planning of work is generally clear and when they share lesson objectives with children they have a good understanding of their own learning. In Year 4, for example, the teacher carefully indicated at the beginning of the lesson that children were to make comparisons about an author's work and write from a character's point of view. At the end of the lesson she returned to these objectives and discussed how far they had been achieved so that children were more aware of the progress they had made.
73. A significant factor in the high levels of achievement throughout the school is the very good subject management. The two leaders work very effectively to support teachers and monitor teaching and learning. They are very knowledgeable about the teaching of literacy and organise the subject very well. They work very well together to ensure the continuity of education

throughout the school and have a clear understanding of how the subject is to develop in order to further improve standards.

## **MATHEMATICS**

74. The last inspection judged standards as high in Year 2 and average in Year 6. Standards in mathematics are now above average at both ages seven and eleven. They have been maintained in Year 2 and have improved in Year 6.
75. Children in Year 2 attain standards that are above average for their age in all areas of mathematics (number, algebra, space, shape, measures and handling data). Children at this age are particularly good at explaining what they have done and describing their thinking. For example, following a written mental test, they are able to clearly define several methods of subtracting 67 from 100 and elucidate how they selected half a metre as the correct measure for the height of a desk from the three alternatives they had been given. The only weakness is their ability to organise and set down their work, which is one of the targets in using and applying mathematics. This is mainly owing to the overuse of worksheets that constrain ways of presenting work.
76. The attainment of Year 6 children is also above average. Children at this age are good at using and applying their number skills to solve problem, for example, when working out the exchange rates of English pounds to foreign currencies such as the dollar, the euro and the Greek drachma. Oral and mental skills are also sharp in Year 6 and most other junior classes. There is a good recall of number tables and children are quick and accurate when challenged with work such as multiplying and dividing whole numbers by 10 and 100.
77. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls or boys and progress is good. Children with learning difficulties are supported well and also make good progress. This comes from the careful planning of tasks that match their ability and the additional help they receive from learning support assistants. For instance, a Year 6 child improved his understanding of fractions because the support he received kept him on task and, to help him improve, he was encouraged to refer back and build upon what he already knew. Higher attaining children are also regularly given work compatible with their ability that makes sure they make appropriate progress. For example, in a Year 2 lesson they had a higher starting point in their task when learning methods of multiplying by repeated addition. These elements of lesson planning make sure that all children are included and each of them has an equal opportunity to achieve the aims of the lesson.
78. A significant strength across the school is in the use of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum. For example, Year 2 use information and communication technology to learn more about right angles when programming a floor robot and Year 1 construct graphs showing the different eye colours of children in the class. Year 3 children use mathematical diagrams in science when studying the permeability of rocks, Year 4 use four-figure coordinates to pinpoint places on maps and Year 5 use grids and symmetrical shapes in religious education to produce Islamic patterns. The heights of the highest peaks and mountain ranges of the world are studied and recorded in various mathematical formats by Year 6 children who also use computer generated graphs in science to illustrate the quality of insulators and measure accurately in millilitres the absorbency of different types of paper.
79. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when it was judged to be sound. It is now good overall although a significant number of very good lessons were observed and



there was one lesson of excellent quality. Teachers have good subject knowledge and successfully teach mathematics and numeracy. Oral sessions are used effectively to sharpen and develop mental skills. For instance, Year 2 children are encouraged to explain the way they have worked out answers and asked to think of alternative ways. Lessons are carefully planned and children well informed about what they are expected to learn. However learning was compromised in one lesson when a task which was too difficult for the ability of the children was set. Good use is made by teachers of the discussion period at the end of each lesson to check what has been learned and plan future work.

80. Resources are used efficiently and there is increasing access to computers to support children's learning; an example is the *Maths House* program, which extends and consolidates children's skill and understanding of basic numeracy, such as tables, addition and subtraction. Teachers make sure that classroom assistants are well informed and effectively deployed to give the best possible help to enable children to progress.
81. The main qualities of the very good and excellent teaching are in the level of challenge and expectation. For instance in the excellent Year 4 lesson the pace and enthusiasm of the teaching inspired children to remain focused and work really hard. The increasing difficulty of the questions made more demands of their learning. The high quality relationships and discussion gave them a sense of pride in their achievements and the result was better knowledge and understanding of multiplication and division. Similar very good qualities were seen in a Year 5 class where children were taught the difference between transformed and symmetrical shapes drawn in a four-quadrant grid. The methodical step-by-step explanations and the way the teacher demonstrated and illustrated the mathematics being taught enabled children to understand complex mathematical terms such as congruence and how to describe shapes symbolically. This is advanced learning for children of this age.
82. The management of the subject has improved and is now good. The two leaders are well informed about the standards of attainment and the quality of teaching. They have contributed to the development of mathematics through a well-written action plan, which is currently being implemented. One aspect of this is the introduction of children's individual targets for improvement which are intended to boost progress and give children more information about their own learning. They have been active in standardising lesson planning which was criticised at the last report. Their efficient analysis of test results has enabled them to act upon weaknesses in learning, for example, in junior classes in solving written problems and, in infant classes, the subtraction of large numbers.

## SCIENCE

83. The standard of attainment at the end of Year 6 is in line with the national average; by the end of Year 2 it is above the national average. Standards have declined since the last inspection when they were judged to well above the national average. However, in recent years, standards attained in national tests for eleven year olds have been consistently in line with the national average. As there was no opportunity to observe any Year 6 science lessons judgements were made from looking at children's work and talking to a group from one of the classes. Inspection evidence suggests that standards will be similar this year. Children's progress including those with special educational needs, is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6.

84. By Year 2, children can sort a range of objects into man-made and natural materials. They know that water can be made into ice and have experimented with melting ice in different places predicting the results but without drawing any conclusions. They understand how to make simple circuits and what substances are good conductors. The children have explored friction through studying the distance a toy car will roll from different heights, predicting what will happen, thinking about how to make the test fair and recording results on a graph. They have drawn some conclusions from this work. Children know the differences between living and non-living things and have considered what to eat for a healthy diet and why exercise is good for you. In a recent experiment children have planted seeds in different environments to compare their growth and find out what is needed to help them grow. When asked about a plant's needs, they responded by saying water, heat and light because those without water did not grow and neither did those without heat and those in the cupboard grew but were white not green; this shows a good understanding. During a class session looking at seeds and how they are dispersed, children were amazed at the large size of a lychee stone compared to the small pips from a grapefruit and this sense of wonder contributes to children's spiritual development. There is adequate coverage to ensure children achieve at the required levels. However, they have few opportunities to devise their own experiments and predict the results. Most of their results are recorded on worksheets, which does not leave much opportunity for individual thinking.
85. By Year 6, children's knowledge has been extended and they are confident in explaining a range of scientific concepts. However, work samples show there is limited opportunity for children to devise their own experiments, to make predictions and draw conclusions, which is an important aspect of the requirements for National Curriculum science. The school is aware of the need to review its provision for children to devise investigations, hypothesise and then draw conclusions and has already identified this as an area for development. It is a weakness across the school but more prevalent in Years 3 to 6.
86. Children understand the differences between a gas, liquid and solid. They have used their experiences to devise an experiment to find out which material makes the best insulator. The children knew how to make it a fair test but made no predictions of the results. Animals in their habitats and food chains were discussed. The small group of Year 6 children interviewed used their knowledge to explain how you could separate soil, salt and iron filings by filtration, evaporation and magnetism. They also explained what happened to their bodies when exercising: increased heart rate and more rapid breathing. Despite the fact that they have few opportunities to do experiments the children were able to talk about fair tests and what should be changed and what should be kept the same. Although the children have covered all aspects of science much of their work was recorded on work sheets or copied, leaving few opportunities for them to explain their thoughts and devise their own experiments. Because of this, children have limited opportunities to use their literacy skills in science. This is an area for further development particularly in Years 3 to 6. However, cross-curricular links with numeracy and information, communication and technology are encouraged as children record data in graph form.
87. As so few lessons were seen across the school it was not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching. The quality of teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory or better in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 4 and 5. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives that teachers share with the children. However, sometimes there is limited evidence of planning work to match the needs of all children; for example, extension work for the higher attainers or simplified tasks for those who have special educational needs. Where teachers are enthusiastic, knowledgeable and provide children with appropriate challenges, they are motivated

and well focused on the task. Questions are used effectively to reinforce or extend children's understanding. Information and communication technology is used effectively to process and present findings from experiments.

88. As science has not been a priority in the school development plan the subject leader has had limited opportunities to be active in the role. There have been few classroom observations and little checking of children's work across the school. However, science will be a focus for the next academic year with the appointment of a new subject leader. There is an intention to develop the role to help raise standards in science by the end of Year 6.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

89. The judgement of the previous inspection was that by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 standards were in line with those found in most other schools. The judgement of this inspection is that standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are better than those typically found in other schools. Significant factors in the very good improvements in standards are the quality of teaching, which is very good overall and sometimes excellent, and the contribution by the subject leaders in helping to raise standards.
90. Teachers have a very good understanding of how to teach the basic skills. They ensure that children make good progress in a wide range of techniques and processes, and in the elements of art and design work. They make work interesting and challenging so that all children, including those with learning difficulties, approach their tasks eagerly and make good progress. This was epitomised in the excellent teaching in Year 2; the children visited a sculpture park and worked with the resident artist; they observed the sculptures on display and recorded their experiences on the digital camera; when they returned to school the teacher thoroughly reviewed the previous day's visit; they were then set challenging tasks so that most children produced well-finished clay models. Because the teacher managed them very well and engaged them in an excellent ongoing discussion whilst they were fashioning their clay, children behaved very well, worked very enthusiastically and made very good progress during the lesson. In a similar way, during a visit from a local artist most children throughout the school produced pleasing landscapes and seascapes in watercolours. Teachers make good use of the locality to enhance children's work. Children in Year 5 used digital cameras to record places and objects around the school from different viewpoints. Because the teacher used his very good subject knowledge to demonstrate techniques of shading and colour mixing most children made very good progress in their understanding of the use of different media in picture making.
91. Teachers generally make effective use of sketchbooks in order to develop children's skills. In Year 2 children learn to look closely and draw carefully outlined and shaded sketches of fruit and shells in their sketchbooks. The work of lower achieving children is less well controlled. In Year 3 children use their sketchbooks to develop their understanding of how to use pencils of different hardness in their sketches of plants. Higher achieving children draw carefully proportioned and detailed faces. Sketchbooks are well used in Year 6 in order to explore line, using a range of media such as, crayon, charcoal, paint and pencil. However, the use of sketchbooks in order to develop and rehearse skills is inconsistent throughout the school.
92. Teachers ensure that children make good use of their artwork in other subjects of the curriculum. This gives an added purpose and relevance to their work. In Year 6, children used colour mixing, wax resist and cling film texture techniques in order to illustrate aspects of the text being studied in literature. They also produced careful and detailed pencil sketches of

characters from history. In Year 1, children made good use of their computer skills to create patterns in primary colour inspired by the artist Mondrian. In Year 3, children produced closely observed and detailed sketches of bulbs as part of their work in science.

93. The very knowledgeable and enthusiastic subject leaders work hard to organise the subject and support colleagues. They check planning and children's work. They help to bring interest and stimulation to the subject by organising events such as art week, exhibitions and competitions. The school is aware of the need to provide further opportunities for the leaders to check teaching and learning in lessons in order to make improvements.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

94. Only two lessons could be observed during the inspection so judgements were also based on work in books, on display, records on computer and teachers' plans. By the ages of seven and eleven, standards are above expectations. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory, particularly at the end of Year 6. The curriculum and management of the subject was also criticised for being under developed. All the issues arising from the previous inspection have now been successfully addressed.
95. The knowledge and expertise of the subject leader has given the subject a higher profile than previously and this, together with improved planning, ensures the children combine their designing and making skills to complete a wide range of projects, using a variety of materials, construction techniques and ingredients. Children are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary to discuss and evaluate their work. They work conscientiously to measure, mark, cut and join accurately, building structures, products and money containers to a design specification. For example, children in Year 5 were observed carefully marking the centre point on the top of a box to drill a hole for the camshaft. Initial work begins with a review of commercially available products such as moving books in Year 1, biscuits in Year 5 and greenhouses in Year 6. Children are encouraged to understand the essential elements of how the product is made, the way the structures are assembled, including how to find out about prospective customers. Children are encouraged to raise questions about materials, how structures are joined together and to consider details of appearance. The children with special educational needs achieve good standards where the work is practical and allow them to achieve levels of success not always evident in other areas of the curriculum.
96. Progress is also good. By the time they are eleven children demonstrate the importance of marketing a product as they design and make biscuits. For this work they tasted a variety of biscuit products and recorded much of the data in graphs and star charts, illustrating a good use of skills in information communication and technology. They carried out interviews with Reception children to discover what they looked for in a biscuit. After having made the biscuits, they shared them with those children to ascertain their views about the finished product. Year 4 children looked at the workings of a torch as a preparation for designing their own torch or child's lamp. These had to include bulbs, reflectors and drawing on their knowledge of circuits, a simple bulb and switch mechanism. The result was some interesting lighthouses, torches and children's lamps using a variety of materials. The Year 6 children used a range of joints to build a shelter or greenhouse. The youngest children begin their design and technology course by making levers for moving parts in a book. These were very successful as children used their imagination to illustrate the text; for example, the gingerbread man running away not just straight across the page but down some steps.

97. Very effective cross-curricular links allow children to draw on and consolidate a wide range of skills. For example, measuring and drawing skills to produce accurate plans, writing appropriate labels on their designs, using computers to record data in various forms and literacy skills to write up their findings. Work in books and in lessons demonstrates a high level of self-evaluation, even in Year 1. Children are encouraged to review the work they have done and to speculate how it might be improved in future projects.
98. Children's attitudes are very positive. They work hard and make good use of their previous learning, technical knowledge and evaluation skills as they draw up their plans for their design. They talk confidently about what they are making.
99. Although only two lessons were observed (one in the infants and one in the juniors) both were very good. Teachers plan lessons well to ensure that an appropriate range of different processes is covered and children have the opportunity to use a range of tools. The school has a curriculum plan which identifies a specific design and make project for each term except in Year 1 where the children begin in spring term. This ensures that children develop their skills, knowledge and understanding progressively without missing out any essential elements. From the work in books and lessons observed, particularly in Years 3 to 6, teachers ensure children have opportunities to review disassemble and compare products before making their own to an informed specification. There is good emphasis on children planning their own work after considering products already available; for example the biscuits made by Year 5 children.
100. The subject management is now very good and all issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. Teachers benefit from the leader's expertise and guidance and a new scheme of work highlights, and ensures appropriate progression, of skills development.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

101. There have been improvements in both geography and history since the last inspection. Standards in geography are higher now by age eleven as they are above those typically seen in other schools. Work in history was under-developed in the infant classes in the last report but is now more effective in the infant classes following a review of policy and practices. The progress of children with special educational needs remains good in both subjects.
102. By the time they are seven, children reach levels that are in line with the national goals in geography and they have made steady progress. In Year 2, children can compare their homes with houses in a village in Kenya and they can explain similarities and differences between them. In Year 1, they follow the journeys of a bear called Barnaby and compare life in France and Britain picking out various features such as differences in language, food and currency. They develop good map skills as they establish an understanding of a *bird's eye view* and make simple plans and sketch maps. By age eleven, children achieve good standards in map reading and they study other countries in Africa in more depth. Progress is good. Children have particular strengths in their understanding of environmental issues and can identify at least ten ways in which action can be taken to protect the environment, from recycling to preventing more global warming. An example of their commitment to stewardship of the environment is the website set up by two Year 6 boys where a cartoon character saves the world from pollution. The use of local and topical issues by teachers makes the work relevant and children can discuss, coherently, the plans for wind turbines locally, the effects of an oil spillage off the coast of Spain and new house building in their town.

103. By ages seven and eleven, children's attainment in history is in line with national goals and they have made steady progress in their knowledge and understanding of how the past has influenced the present. In Year 2, children produced good work, when they interviewed their grandparents, by preparing questions, carrying out interviews and writing down the responses. They can identify famous characters such as Florence Nightingale and the aviators the Wright brothers. By Year 6, children have a good understanding of the consequences of the actions of invaders such as the Vikings and King Henry VIII. They can compare life in Ancient Egypt with now and they show empathy for people in the past as they learn about the Victorians and hardships suffered during World War II. Children are especially skilled at carrying out research from books, manuscripts and websites on the Internet. They can make succinct notes that convey the relevant information they require and they can engage in debates at a high level because of their very good literary skills. Standards are highest when children are freed from the constraints of worksheets to pursue their own learning and there were several examples of children voluntarily bringing work to school they had pursued in their own time.
104. Teaching is good, overall, in both subjects. As no history lessons were seen in the infant classes a judgement cannot be made on the teaching in Years 1 and 2. In the teaching seen in both the infant and junior classes in geography, and in the juniors in history, none was less than sound, and almost a third of it was very good; this is why children learn well. In both subjects, the best teaching is characterised by the ability of teachers to ask questions such as *What might have happened* and *How do we know* that make children think beyond the literal sense. Lesson plans are clear about what needs to be achieved to help children make progress, the work is interesting and timed tasks keep children working hard. Marking of work provides good guidance to children on how they can improve. Particular strengths in teaching are the wide range of visits to places of interest and the links made across other subjects so that children consolidate their learning. Booklets and work folders are enhanced by mathematical charts and diagrams, art illustrations and the use of information and communication technology to present work attractively and make it more personal.
105. All children are included in all activities and every effort is made to ensure that children with physical disabilities take a full part in visits so that everyone experiences activities such as being a Roman or Victorian. In lessons, those who need additional help are provided with work appropriate to their level and supported by classroom assistants who are briefed well about the objectives for learning. More demands are made of the higher attainers who are encouraged to be more independent.
106. The management of both subjects is very good. Subject leaders are keen and active and produce annual action plans for the development of the subjects. Liaison between the infant and junior classes is good and ensures steady progress in learning for children. While the leaders of the subject monitor curriculum plans and sample children's work, they do not yet have the opportunity to visit other classes to work alongside colleagues or watch them teach. There are plans to provide more opportunities for the sharing of good practice when funds and time allows.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards in information and communication technology have been maintained since the last inspection. Children at age seven and eleven achieve standards similar to children of the same age nationally. Evidence during the inspection week shows that this is an improving area as the computer suite is used very effectively in developing children's skills. This has had a direct impact on the every day work of children in both the infant and junior classes where information

communication technology is very well integrated in to the whole school curriculum. An improved curriculum is emerging and modern technology is now being systematically planned into other areas of the curriculum. Teachers are working effectively together as, for example, when a Year 6 class finds the website for Year 2 children to use in researching information for their geography lesson. This is a significant improvement from the last inspection when cross-curricular planning was judged to be insufficiently developed. This has had a direct impact on the teaching which is consistently good in all classes helping children make good progress in developing and using their information technology skills. There is no significant difference between the standards achieved by boys and girls and pupils with special educational needs make similar levels of progress to their peers.

108. There was no judgement on teaching in the last inspection. Although only one lesson was seen in the infant classes the range of work and discussion with children shows that information communication technology is taught well. In a Year 2 geography lesson using the *Google* web site children quickly log on and access the specific site as they gather information about schools in Kenya. They discuss enthusiastically what they find with each other and the teacher. Through good support individual children are helped to improve specific skills so that children of all abilities are fully included in the lesson. Teachers plan very good learning opportunities into most areas of the curriculum. Following a visit to the Burghley sculpture park children access photographs on the following day in order to write about them. As a result, children use writing in a meaningful way whilst practising and developing their word-processing skills.
109. Lessons in the junior classes are taught well. Teaching in information technology in good and in some classes it is very good. This very good teaching uses and extends children's developing skills in a very meaningful way. Children receive very good support and through well-designed tasks pupils of all abilities gain confidence and make good progress. In a Year 4 class, for example, children use the Internet to extend their database on mini-beasts. Through very well planned intervention during the lesson children are helped to develop their understanding of the range of information available and how to transfer this information successfully to their own databases. Children respond very enthusiastically, showing very good levels of concentration and confidence in using the Internet to research information and using it to extend their understanding in science. They copy and paste information from the Internet site to their own database and apply their classification questions. Teaching of the basic skills for using information technology is very good. This helps children to approach their tasks very confidently. In a Year 6 lesson, children listen very well as they recap what they have already learnt about using *MS PowerPoint* in order to create and make a multi-media presentation about their visit to Kingswood. Children work very purposefully knowing that their presentation is designed to help Year 5 children decide whether to go to Kingswood. All pupils including those with special educational needs work very confidently. They enjoy presenting information about an experience they have clearly enjoyed. They design and assemble slides for their presentation using the full range of the programme. They create eye-catching headlines, use colour effectively, select and find pictures to enhance their presentation. They work very well together, discuss and make decisions and through very effective support evaluate and change their work.
110. The co-ordination of information technology is very well managed by the two subject leaders. The well-planned use of the relatively recent computer suite has very effectively supported the improvements in communication technology. Their very active role in monitoring and developing the curriculum has ensured that it is effectively planned throughout the school in all the relevant areas of the curriculum. The school assesses pupils' work against nationally agreed levels and ensures that skills are taught at appropriate levels for different pupils. As yet there are no

planned opportunities for monitoring how the subject is taught in individual classes so that very good practice can be more consistently developed.

## MUSIC

111. A judgement on the standards of all essential elements of music could not be made because lessons observed during the inspection were mainly singing. However, the standard of singing heard was good at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and music remains a strength of the school.
112. The youngest children can keep a beat and copy a range of complex rhythm patterns. They have success chanting a rhyme and accompanying it with claves. This was extended as groups performed the rhyme in different ways for their peers to guess the feeling they were trying to convey. The singing heard in a lesson for all reception, Years 1 and 2 children demonstrated a good standard. Children sing in tune, sustaining the long notes and making a very pleasant sound. In a lesson for older children they explore ways of accompanying a song using chords played on chime bars. They could sing the song with some enthusiasm but when adding the accompaniment found it was hard to do both at once. Further exploration was made of twelve-bar blues. As the children play the chords some notice how certain notes could be played in more than one chord. This lesson was a challenge for the children. Appropriate technical vocabulary is also taught. The Year 6 children were rehearsing their play for the end of term. During the practice all the children participated and sung with great enthusiasm, adding interesting actions to the songs. The singing was tuneful, with clear words and some well pitched high notes. Those children learning recorders or instruments develop the skill of reading standard notation. Across the school children make good progress as they develop relevant musical skills that help them understand musical elements and appreciate a range of music.
113. Children are enthusiastic and enjoy the challenges set by their teachers. All participate and are keen to respond to teachers' questions. Because of good relationships they are confident to perform to their peers. They listen carefully to each other's efforts and are well behaved.
114. As so few lessons were observed during the inspection it is not possible to make an overall judgement about teaching across the school. However, in the lessons seen teaching was at least satisfactory or better. Where teachers are interested, enthusiastic and provide a range of practical experiences, children are motivated and achieve well. Children who need more help are targeted effectively and this enables them to take a full part in activities. Questioning is used effectively to reinforce or extend children's knowledge. Lessons are well planned. Teachers stress the need for good technique, when taking singing sessions.
115. The subject leader is enthusiastic, a competent pianist and has worked hard to ensure the profile of music remains high. Standards have been maintained because of her efforts to provide teachers with the confidence to teach the subject, through guidance and planning. A range of extra-curricular music clubs are offered: recorders, choir and band. There are opportunities for children to learn orchestral instruments such as violin, cello, clarinet, flute and saxophone. Throughout the year children perform in a variety of settings: school concert, church services, old peoples' homes and the local music festival. Occasionally, musicians visit the school and perform a range of other styles of music. Children listen to music from around the world as they enter the hall for assembly. This enhances the children's understanding of music and develops their cultural awareness.



## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. It was only possible to observe games lessons during the inspection and inclement weather affected the timetable. In this aspect of physical education, children in both the infant and junior classes attain standards that are higher than those typical for their age. Standards are significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection when they were judged to be in line with national expectations. Progress is good.
117. Younger children show good skills in throwing, aiming and catching. Many are adept at striking a ball and, by the way they vary their response, are beginning to understand tactics in games. This was shown in Year 1 lesson when six year olds worked together in pairs with bat and ball to compete in an aiming and catching game. Infant children enjoy vigorous activities like chasing games and understand the importance of being active as seen in the Year 2 lesson when they recognised and described how their bodies felt during, and after, running about.
118. Junior children have above average skills when striking, throwing, fielding and passing a ball. They use these and apply tactics in games involving defending and attacking. They understand the importance of playing as a team and how to adapt their own performance in co-operative situations; for instance, when handling a rugby ball, developing tag tackling skills and competing in relay races; also, when developing individual athletic skills and applying these to team situations. Information about standards in swimming show that, by the time they leave the school, almost all children can swim unaided for a sustained period of time over a distance of 25 metres. Older children take part in outdoor and adventurous activities during the annual residential holiday. An orienteering course has also been established to develop skills in following trails and problem solving.
119. There is no significant difference between the standards of girls and boys. Most children with learning difficulties perform as well as others in physical education. Activities are carefully modified and additional adult support is provided to enable children with physical disabilities to participate fully in lessons. Children with particularly good physical skills have the opportunity to extend these during the many extra-curricular sports clubs that are organised. They also receive specialist coaching from time to time. This makes sure that all children have equal access to the learning opportunities and the chance to develop their potential.
120. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was judged to be sound. It is now very good. Lesson plans show teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of teaching physical education. They place appropriate emphasis on its importance to health and safety. The most striking feature is the enthusiasm of teachers which inspire the children to do their very best to improve. The effects of this were seen in the Year 4 athletics lesson when a circuit of organised activities enabled children to practise and improve a wide range of athletic skills. Standards are good because teachers insist upon children learning how to do things correctly. For example, in Year 1 and Year 2 lessons, performance in striking a ball improved considerably when children were taught how to hold and swing a bat.
121. The subject is managed by two enthusiastic and capable teachers. They have had significant influence in raising standards and the quality of teaching. This has been achieved through better planning and their efforts in sharing good practice, for instance, by recording lessons in action. There is a well-structured action plan for future development and a system of checking children's progress using *core tasks* is currently being implemented. Good attention is given to the contribution of physical education towards personal development; for example, social skills

involved in working as a team, moral issues in applying rules, and spiritual awareness as children discover the physical heights they can reach.