

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **HARPOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121976

Headteacher: Mr T Mortimer

Reporting inspector: Mr N Sherman  
16493

Dates of inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> March – 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2003

Inspection number: 248309

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 -11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Larkhall Lane Harpole Northampton
Postcode:	NN7 4DP
Telephone number:	01604 830072
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Calderwood
Date of previous inspection:	23 <sup>rd</sup> February 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16493	Mr N Sherman	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design The Foundation Stage	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What could the school do to improve further?
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
31807	Mr D Carpenter	Team inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language Educational Inclusion	How well does the school care for its pupils?
1939	Mr M Benson	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education	How well is the school led and managed?
32136	Mrs L Brooks	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Religious education Pupils with special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>33</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Harpole Voluntary Controlled Primary School is situated in the village of Harpole, five miles to the west of Northampton. It is average in size and provides education for children aged four to eleven. There are 207 pupils on roll, although there are slightly more boys than girls. An average number of pupils have special educational needs, and there are an average number of pupils with a statement of special educational need. The number of pupils who claim free school meals is below the average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is low and none are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils enter the school with a broad range of attainment, but are generally in line with the average.

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

Harpole Voluntary Controlled Primary school is a good school which continues to improve after a period of considerable change following a large turnover of teachers. The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is very good and the children get a good start to their education. By the end of Year 6, standards are in line with national expectations in English and science. In mathematics, art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education, standards are above expectations. Pupils very much enjoy their learning and work diligently and with high levels of enthusiasm. Teaching is good with some very good features. The headteacher provides good leadership and has been successful in engendering a strong team spirit among the many new teachers at the school. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The quality of provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Standards in mathematics, art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education are above national expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning and relationships are very good.
- Teaching at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is good.
- Attendance rates are well above the national average.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and the way pupils with a high level of need are included in all aspects of school life is very good.
- The school is effective in how it plans to enrich pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- The school has good links with parents.
- The recently appointed headteacher provides good leadership and has been very successful in developing a good team spirit among staff.

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

- How the teachers assess pupils' progress in subjects other than in English and mathematics.
- Clarification and agreeing leadership roles and responsibilities in order for co-ordinators to support the management of the school.
- How teachers use information and communication technology in daily lessons.
- The planned programme for pupils' personal, social and emotional development.

*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 February 1998. The overall pace of progress has been satisfactory, although the school has made more rapid improvement since the appointment of the new headteacher. He has successfully encouraged a strong sense of teamwork and is aware of the need to redefine the roles and responsibilities co-ordinators hold so that arrangements for how teaching and learning are monitored become stronger. Most of the key issues from the last report have been tackled. However, there is still further work needed to develop more robust assessment procedures to monitor and track pupils' progress and in how the co-ordinators, many of whom are new to their responsibilities, play a full and active part in the management of the school. The school is suitably placed to improve 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				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	A	A	B	C	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	A	A	B	
science	B	A	A	B	

The results of the 2002 Key Stage 2 National Curriculum tests were that standards were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, standards were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The pace of improvement by the school in raising pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests over the past three years has been at the level seen nationally. However, standards in English in 2002 were not at the same level as seen in mathematics and science. The school sets challenging improvement targets for pupils in National Curriculum tests.

The findings of the inspection are that pupils at the end of Year 6 achieve above average standards in mathematics and standards in line with the national average in English and science. The difference between the inspection findings and end of key stage national test results is the difference in attainment between different year groups. The school's predicted test results indicate that pupils are not likely to attain as highly in English, mathematics and science as in previous years as there are a higher number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group. Pupils make good progress in English, mathematics and science, largely as a result of the teaching that they receive which is often very good.

The results of the 2002 end of Key Stage 1 national test results indicated that standards were average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools, standards were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The findings of the inspection are that standards in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with the average and are improving.

Pupils achieve good standards at the end of both key stages in art and design, design and technology, music and religious education. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are also

good in information and communication technology and physical education. Standards in other subjects are satisfactory.

By the end of the Foundation Stage, pupils achieve beyond the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in all areas of their learning except their physical development where standards are in line with expectations. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage in many areas of their learning.

The school is effective in ensuring that the pupils with special educational needs are included in the full range of activities and the pupils concerned make good progress as a result. The school has yet to develop its arrangements for ensuring that pupils who are gifted and talented are identified and given appropriate support. Although inspection findings indicate no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls, evidence from the National Curriculum tests over a three-year period indicates that the boys are outperforming the girls.

### **PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils work very hard in lessons and are highly stimulated by the work set for them by teachers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils work very effectively with one another and many are sensitive to the needs of each other.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils work very well together and co-operate very effectively with one another when asked to work in small groups. Personal development is good. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good and have a positive impact on learning.
Attendance	Very good. Levels of attendance are well above the national average.

### **TEACHING AND LEARNING**

<b>Teaching of pupils in:</b>	<b>Reception</b>	<b>Years 1 – 2</b>	<b>Years 3 – 6</b>
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Good.

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 it is frequently very good. In the Foundation Stage, very good use is made of imaginative structured play and the teacher has a very good understanding of how best to support the children's learning. At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 the teaching of English and mathematics is good and teachers are effective in how they plan to develop pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through other subjects. The teaching of art and design, design and technology, music and religious education is good and pupils make good progress. The teaching of information and communication technology is good, although greater use could be made of computers in daily lessons to support the pupils' learning. Good features of teaching include the way pupils are managed, which is very good and the planning of interesting and challenging activities which the pupils are enthused and motivated by. The teaching of pupils with special



educational needs is good and teachers and support staff are careful to ensure that those with a high level of need are successfully included in all planned activities.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and well matched to the children's needs. The school provides a broad curriculum for all pupils at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 that is suitably enhanced by the effective links with the local community. The curriculum for the pupils' personal, social and health education is, however, unsatisfactory. The school provides a satisfactory range and quality of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with a high level of need are very successfully included in all activities provided by the school and are given sensitive support at all points of the school day.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There is good provision for the few pupils at the school who have English as an additional language. No pupil is at an early stage of learning English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for pupils' social and moral development and that made for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good. Good scope is given for pupils to develop their initiative by, for example, using information and communication technology at home to help them with their homework.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils are well cared for and the staff have a good understanding of the pupils' individual needs. Assessment procedures need to be further developed in subjects other than in English and mathematics, however, so that a more comprehensive picture of pupils' attainment and progress can be gathered to plan more effectively their subsequent learning.

The school has forged good links with parents who support the school well in encouraging their children with their learning.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and satisfactorily managed, but some aspects of management need to be strengthened. The headteacher has been very successful in developing a strong team spirit since his appointment and has a clear idea of what further work needs to be done in order to bring about further improvements. The senior management team performs its duties well, but its roles and responsibilities, as well as those of other co-ordinators, need to be refined and strengthened to enable them to play a more active part in how the school is managed.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have supported the school well during its recent history of much change in terms of personnel. They fulfil most of their statutory duties, but there are omissions in certain literature provided for parents and they have yet to implement a policy for Racial Equality.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school, under the guidance of the new headteacher, is making increased use of assessment data in English and mathematics to plan improvements, although further work needs to be undertaken to explore why boys perform better than the girls. The school has yet to develop robust procedures to ensure that day-to-day teaching and learning are effectively monitored by co-ordinators.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of additional grants given to support the pupils' learning. Resources are targeted well to improve the school, and very effective use is made of the school's 'art studio' for art and design and design and technology. The school has a satisfactory understanding of the principles of 'best value'.

The school has sufficient accommodation to ensure that the National Curriculum can be taught and is enhanced by the good provision of an art and design studio. There is a good number and a suitable match of experienced and recently qualified teachers and support staff. The quality of learning resources is satisfactory.

## 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>• The school's friendly atmosphere.</li><li>• How the school encourages the pupils to do their best.</li><li>• How the school has moved forward since the appointment of the new headteacher.</li><li>• The progress their children make.</li><li>• The care demonstrated towards the children.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The way that the school works with parents.</li><li>• The way the school keeps them informed about their children's progress.</li><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities.</li></ul>

Inspectors support the many positive views that parents hold of the school. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils are provided with a satisfactory range of homework and that the range of activities to enhance pupils' learning after school is satisfactory. Parents are provided with a suitable range of information about their children's progress. Inspectors do not support parents on these issues.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. The children start school with average levels of attainment, although their attainment in their personal, social and emotional development is often above expectations and their speaking and listening skills are also well developed. The children make good progress in the Reception class and by the end of the Foundation Stage, they attain above the expected levels in most areas of learning. Standards in their physical development are in line with expectations of the Early Learning Goals and progress in their physical development is satisfactory.
2. The end of the Key Stage 1 national test results for 2002 indicated that standards in reading and writing were in line with the national average. In mathematics, standards were above average. When the results are compared with similar schools, standards were below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. The most recent results showed a marked decline over those of the previous two years. However, this was predicted, as the attainment of pupils was not as high as that in previous years. In science, based on teachers' assessments, the number of pupils reaching the expected levels was well above the national average.
3. The inspection findings indicate that the pupils' attainment in reading, writing and science at the end of Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations. In mathematics, standards are above expectations. Pupils are currently making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics and this reflects the attention the school has paid to tackling the shortcomings identified particularly in English. Standards in speaking and listening are above expectations and pupils make good progress. This reflects the good attention paid by teachers in providing the pupils with many opportunities to work in small groups or to discuss the best approach to solve the problems they are set.
4. On the basis of the 2002 end of Key Stage 2 national tests, pupils' attainment was above the national average in English and well above the national average in mathematics and science. When the results are compared with similar schools, based on the number of pupils claiming free school meals, standards were average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The results in English were not as high as they were in the previous three years when standards were consistently well above the national average. Standards in mathematics and science have improved over the past three years.
5. The inspection findings indicate that standards in English and science at the end of Year 6 are in line with the national average and in mathematics standards are above average. However, the findings do not represent a fall in standards. The current group of pupils has been identified by the school as having a higher number of pupils with special educational needs. The targets set by the school for pupils' performance in the 2003 tests indicate that the current group of pupils are not likely to attain as well in the national tests as previous years. The situation has been worsened by the staffing history the current Year 6 pupils have experienced. For example, this is the only school year in Key Stage 2 where the same teacher has taught the pupils for the full academic year.
6. The quality of the teaching, which is good, and in Year 6 is often very good, is a main factor in explaining why pupils currently are making good progress in English,

mathematics and science in each of the year groups. The school has increased the time for the teaching of English and has been more creative in exploring ways in which pupils' literacy and numeracy skills can be extended through other subjects. This is also having a beneficial impact on their progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident writers who are increasingly aware of the importance of using language in an interesting and creative way. Much writing is technically correct and pupils have a secure understanding of the need for correct forms of punctuation and of the importance of presenting their work neatly and tidily knowing this has an impact on the reader. Pupils very much enjoy their reading and by the end of Year 6, have a satisfactory understanding of the works of modern and more classical authors. High expectations of pupils in terms of their speaking and listening skills ensure that by the end of Year 6, pupils reach higher than expected standards.

7. In mathematics, by the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of number and their skills in solving problems using a range of different methods are well developed. In shape and measure, pupils ably calculate the areas of irregular shapes and three-dimensional figures. Pupils have a good understanding of how numerical data can be presented in the form of tables and charts and their well-developed skills in information and communication technology give them a good base upon which to use their knowledge and understanding of spreadsheets to further develop this understanding. In science, throughout the classes, teachers increasingly recognise the importance of investigative work and the development of scientific language and encourage the pupils to explore the reasons for any predictions or conclusions they form.
8. The school has maintained the high standards noted in some subjects at the time of the last inspection and in others, they have improved. Good progress has been made in improving standards in design and technology, which were below expectations at the time of the last inspection. This subject now features more prominently in the curriculum and good links are identified by teachers to promoting pupils' skills in design and technology through other subjects. As a result, by the end of both key stages, standards are now above expectations and pupils make good progress. Standards in art and design, music and religious education are above expectations at the end of both key stages, as noted at the time of the last inspection. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards in physical education are above national expectations. Pupils make good progress in these subjects. Standards in history and geography are in line with expectations at both key stages and pupils make satisfactory progress.
9. Good progress has been made in improving the provision in information and communication technology and as a result, pupils reach standards in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6, pupils' standards are above national expectations. Pupils are confident users of information and communication technology and ably use computers and other related equipment to support and extend their learning in various subjects, particularly in mathematics and in supporting their research work. Pupils make good progress.
10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their learning as they move through the school. Teachers, in consultation with the co-ordinator for special educational needs, identify the pupils' individual needs early, and the pupils' class teachers and learning support assistants give them well-targeted support. Teachers are careful to plan work that matches pupils' identified targets and this enables them to achieve well. Those few pupils with a very high level of need are fully integrated into all lessons and they make good progress. The school has a small number of pupils with English as an additional language and they are given equally well-targeted support in lessons and make good progress in all aspects of their learning.

11. Higher-attaining pupils are set work that matches their ability and they respond well to the high expectations teachers have of them. The school has yet to develop rigorous methods to assess any pupil that may be gifted and talented, although those that show a particular flair for learning to play a musical instrument are given additional support through peripatetic teaching. Evidence from National Curriculum tests over a three-year period indicates that at the end of Key Stage 2, the boys attain higher standards than the girls. While the inspection indicated no sharp difference in lessons or in the nature of the work that the pupils produce, the school has yet to develop effective and rigorous procedures to monitor and keep a careful watch to ensure that the girls attain standards as high as the boys.
12. The school does set challenging targets for improving pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. Those for the current year, given the slightly lower than average attainment of the pupils, are particularly challenging. However, those for the pupils in the current Year 5 are higher and reflect well the attainment of that particular year group.

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

13. Throughout the school pupils have very good attitudes and they are enthusiastic and eager to be involved. This makes a very positive contribution to their progress and achievements and is a considerable strength of the school. Pupils of all ages, including those with special educational needs, are happy and enjoy their learning. The school is a very pleasant and orderly establishment where pupils are supportive and caring of each other. Parents are unanimous in their view that pupils behave well and that the school has high expectations of them. During lessons most pupils concentrate well on their work, often independently when the teacher is working with another group. The majority listen attentively and especially when teaching is good they eagerly respond to questions and challenging tasks. In all classes pupils work well together in groups and they share resources sensibly and co-operatively. For example, during a Year 1 numeracy lesson pupils of all abilities worked very well together in identifying values of coins and suggesting combinations to a specified total. Pupils in Year 4 worked very well together during an information and communication technology lesson helping each other to link and test procedures when using appropriate software. Pupils are very friendly and polite and they are helpful and courteous towards visitors. Children in the Reception class settle quickly into very well organised and established routines where they feel secure and happy.
14. Behaviour is very good in all areas of the school and this has been well maintained since the last inspection. Pupils, including the children in the Foundation Stage, respond well to the school's positive system of reward, encouragement and celebration of success. They value the opportunity to gain points, stickers and stars for good work and behaviour. Through the school's ethos and the good adult role models pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong. In the hall at lunchtime pupils are very polite and well behaved as they sit at tables together to eat their packed lunches. They play together very harmoniously in the playground and older pupils acting as playground partners are very sensitive in the way they care for the younger ones. A significant strength is the way in which pupils in Year 6 care for a physically disabled classmate and the genuine help and support they provide to enable him to enjoy all activities. Incidents of bullying or harassment are very rare, and pupils and their parents are confident that any problems are dealt with promptly and effectively by staff. There have been no exclusions during the past year.

15. Relationships throughout the school are very good. In all classes pupils have a happy relationship with their teachers and support assistants and this makes a strong contribution to their achievements and self-esteem. Pupils with special educational needs and physical disabilities are particularly well included by teachers and pupils alike. They are respectful and often respond to each other's success by spontaneous applause. The very good relationships amongst pupils and between pupils and all adults in the school have a strong effect on pupils' personal and academic progress.
16. Since the last inspection pupils' personal development has continued to be very good and is closely linked to high expectation and the opportunity to take responsibility for various jobs and independent learning particularly in Year 6. The children respond well to the good provision that is made for their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils feel that staff are proud of their achievements and recognise them. Although at present there is no school council pupils have completed a questionnaire giving their views on the life of the school. Their ideas and suggestions have included the planning and designing of the new playground markings which have recently been completed. In all classes pupils help as monitors and pupils in Year 6 assist as librarians. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously and are keen to help. Many pupils are involved in after-school clubs and learn to play musical instruments. They enjoy going out on educational visits including residential visits for pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 which provide them with a good opportunity for the development of social and personal skills.
17. Attendance is very good and at 96.5 per cent is well above the national average. Unauthorised absence is low. The level of attendance has been well maintained since the last inspection. Pupils are punctual and they are eager to come to school. Registration and lessons start on time and there is an efficient and well-ordered start to the day. This has a very positive effect on pupils' attitudes towards school and on their progress and achievements.

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

18. Throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning is good. During the inspection, teaching was excellent in 7% of the 42 lessons seen, very good in 36%, good in a further 43% and satisfactory in the remainder. While there is good teaching in many classes, teaching in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6 is frequently very good and occasionally excellent. Despite the recent heavy turnover of teachers, the quality of teaching is as good as that noted at the time of the last inspection. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to forge and establish a common approach to teaching and this is leading to consistency of practice in all classes.
19. The teaching of English and mathematics is good throughout the school. In English, teachers provide regular opportunities for pupils to practise and further refine their literacy skills through other subjects. In lessons, pupils are given good scope at the end of sessions to share with the rest of the class what they have learned and this allows pupils to enhance their confidence in talking to a wider audience. Teachers strongly encourage the pupils to listen effectively and this has a beneficial impact on their listening skills. In mathematics, good scope is given for pupils to practise their mental arithmetic skills at the start of numeracy lessons. The problems that are set for the pupils are often set in a meaningful context enabling them to appreciate and understand the purpose and relevance that mathematics plays in their daily lives. Teachers carefully plan to extend pupils' mathematical skills in other subjects and in design and technology and science, for example, pupils are encouraged to discuss, plan, estimate,

measure and record their work in detail. The teaching of science at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and at Key Stage 2 it is good. At Key Stage 2, teachers are starting to place greater emphasis on encouraging pupils' investigative skills and this is beginning to have a beneficial impact on their progress.

20. There is good teaching in many other subjects throughout the school. The teaching of design and technology is much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers are now confident in their approach and plan interesting and challenging work for the pupils to which pupils respond by producing work of a high quality. Good emphasis is given to developing the pupils' learning of the different terminology associated with the subject and equally good attention is paid to enhancing their skills in making different artefacts. The teaching of art and design is good, and teachers make good use of the art studio to enable the pupils to extend their skills across a broad range of activities. Good use is made of the works of famous artists to broaden the pupils' understanding of how art and design can be fashioned through a wide range of media. There is good teaching of music, physical education and religious education and information and communication technology. However, in information and communication technology there are some missed opportunities in lessons for pupils to use computers to support their learning. The teaching of information and communication technology at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. The teaching of history and geography in both key stages is satisfactory.
21. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is frequently very good. The teacher has very good knowledge and understanding of how young children learn, and the quality of the planning is equally very good. The teacher is very aware of the good social and co-operation skills many children demonstrate when they first enter school, yet she is careful to further develop these and makes very good use of imaginative structured play to support their learning. By carefully planning topics and themes such as 'People Who Help Us', teaching effectively ensures that the children refine their understanding through working in the class based 'hairdressers' or by undertaking role-play work by working as 'fire-fighters' who have to solve problems such as how to rescue a 'cat' who is unable to get down from a tree. The children often become totally immersed in such activities and work creatively, demonstrating high levels of co-operation. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are further developed as a result as is their personal, social and emotional development as the children work productively with one another. The teacher carefully plans out the work that learning support assistants are to undertake when working alongside the children and they make a valuable contribution to the children's learning. The teacher fully realises and makes positive use of the strong links that have been developed with parents, a significant number of whom work in the classroom at some point during the week. Many give further support to their children at home and this helps to reinforce the impact that teaching has on the children's learning.
22. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good and is currently successful in building on the good gains in learning that many of the children make while in the Foundation Stage. Good use is made of the information that is passed to them about the precise stage of the pupils' academic and personal development in English and mathematics and teachers use this information well to ensure that the children are presented with work that successfully builds on what they have learned previously. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding and are equally aware of the need to continue to provide the children with imaginative play activities. Good scope is given for the pupils to work in small groups in solving problems of an open-ended nature and this impacts well on their personal and social development. The teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is effective and where possible, teachers draw on the potential of other subjects to support the pupils' progress in literacy and numeracy.



23. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good and in the Year 6 class it is very good and occasionally excellent. A key feature of the good teaching is the quality of the planning. This is well referenced to the National Curriculum and good attention is paid by teachers to the guidance materials in the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Teachers carefully plan interesting and challenging activities that hold the pupils' interest, motivate them highly and result in good progress being made in lessons. In one very good design and technology lesson seen during the inspection, for example, the Year 6 teacher was following on from a series of lessons based around the theme of 'Structures'. After commencing the lesson by showing the pupils photographs of everyday objects such as bus shelters and bridges, the pupils, working with a partner, had to make a simple structure of their own using straws, pipe cleaners and sellotape. At intermittent points during the lesson, the teacher gave just enough intervention asking pupils probing questions and exploring with them the importance of how the pipe cleaners could be attached to the straws in order to make their structure stand correctly. The teacher successfully drew upon the pupils' work at various points of the lesson and gave them good encouragement to share their work with the rest of the class, thereby developing their confidence of speaking aloud to a wider audience. At all times during the lesson, the teacher pushed the pupils to produce work of a high quality yet equally emphasised the need for them to draw upon the ideas of their partner to enable their work to be refined further. By the end of the lesson, pupils had made very good progress in their understanding of the different elements of structures and of the design and make process.
24. In all classes in both key stages, lesson objectives are clear and these are shared with the pupils at the start of the lesson so that they are aware of what they are expected to achieve. Lessons proceed swiftly and teachers make crisp use of time, with pupils often reminded of the time remaining before the lesson is to be brought to a close. Learning support assistants are fully briefed as to the best ways they can support the pupils they work with. This particularly benefits the pupils who have special educational needs who value and appreciate the help and assistance they are given. The school has a small number of pupils with a high level of need and care and attention is paid by the staff to ensure that these pupils are fully included in the full range of teaching activities planned. Teachers effectively ensure that higher-attaining pupils are given work that matches their ability and this ensures that they are challenged and extended. The school has yet to develop a clear rationale for identifying and teaching the pupils who may have particular gifts and talents, although pupils with a flair for playing particular musical instruments are given additional support in the form of peripatetic teaching to extend their learning.
25. Throughout the school, the pupils are very well managed and there is a close rapport between pupils and the adults supporting their learning. Relationships are positive and many teachers make appropriate use of humour, ensuring that learning can be light-hearted whilst remaining purposeful. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously and written guidance is clear and explicit allowing the pupils to identify with the success in their work yet at the same time be clear on how it may be improved further. However, there is no clear rationale for how the school assesses pupils' progress in subjects other than in English and mathematics. This makes it difficult for teachers to know the precise stage the pupils are at in their academic development in order to plan precisely what certain groups of pupils need to do next in order to build on what they already know. Satisfactory use is made of homework with teachers encouraging the pupils where at all possible to draw upon their access to computers at home to support their studies.

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

26. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good for pupils throughout the school. Through careful planning by teachers, all pupils receive a balanced curriculum. Since the last inspection the school has implemented changes in the curriculum effectively, including for example the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Statutory requirements for drug awareness, health and sex education are met. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. At the time of the last inspection, the school was found to be providing a broad and balanced curriculum that met with statutory requirements. This is still generally the case. All pupils have equal access to what is planned. Teachers' planning across classes and across years is good ensuring that there are no repeats or omissions of work. All subjects have suitable schemes of work and most follow the national guidance given to schools to support pupils' learning in subjects other than English and mathematics. Time allocation is sufficient in most subjects, though the time for physical education is less than that found in other schools. However, the current situation is unusual in that the school has taken a conscious decision to focus on improving the fall in standards in literacy and has adjusted the timing of subjects accordingly. This is to be reviewed at the end of the current academic year. Appropriate use is made of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in other subjects, although pupils do not always get regular access to computers in classrooms to extend their learning. Visits and visitors to the school suitably complement the curriculum.
27. Although a significant number of parents feel that the school provides insufficient extra-curricular activities, which include all pupils, the inspection finds that the quality and range are satisfactory. Younger pupils are able to join a recorder group and the gardening club. Boys and girls of all abilities in Year 3 to Year 6 have the opportunity to join a drama club and football and netball teams. The choir is open to pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 and more able musicians join the top recorder group and orchestra. All pupils are involved in the performance of school productions and in a range of visits to places of educational and cultural interest.
28. The provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory. The role of the co-ordinator is not established and a policy has not yet been adopted. The school has recognised this as an important area for development, and has recently acquired the local authority scheme of work, which will be introduced in the next academic year. Although lessons for the pupils' personal, social and health education are not planned for on the timetable, opportunities are provided within the curriculum and 'Circle Time' for pupils to discuss and reflect on a range of moral and social issues.
29. The school's links with the local community make a good contribution to pupils' learning and personal development. Regular visitors into school help to enrich the curriculum and local clergy lead assemblies. School news is published each month in the village's parish newsletter, and pupils participate regularly in a range of activities in the community. For example, they sing and play instruments at the Northamptonshire Music and Drama Festival, and they contribute to village events such as the Rose Queen Annual Festival, Scarecrow Festival and the church fete. The choir visits to sing to the elderly residents at the local sheltered housing complex, and the school supports a number of local and national charities. The local environment is used regularly as a learning resource for such topics as local history and geographical investigations.

30. The relationship with other schools is good. Liaison links with the secondary school are constructive and good arrangements are made to support older pupils on their transfer to Year 7. Joint sporting activities are arranged with other local schools, and staff have worked together on joint training courses. Pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 benefit from an input by the secondary school language department when they learn some basic French conversation. prior to their residential visit to Paris.
31. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school is a happy and caring environment where pupils are able to express their feelings and opinions. They have the opportunity to reflect on events that have significance in their lives and they know that there is always a supportive adult willing to help them. In their lessons in religious education, for example, they gain spiritual awareness through their study of different faiths and religions. Stimulating displays and areas of interest in classrooms and around the school encourage pupils in their reflections and draw links between the subjects of the curriculum. In one classroom the music of Grieg provided the backdrop for a display linking art, music, history and literacy. In the school entrance, the display of work linked to the study of the concept of 'Time' allowed pupils to really extend their imaginations as they explored the complexity of the passage of time. During the course of the inspection, members of the local police force visited children in the Foundation Stage. Those from Year 1 were able to visit a local farm. In both cases the sense of awe and wonder made each event a spiritual experience in the joy of learning. Visitors to the school, the Bishop's Visitor for example, give added focus to the collective acts of worship.
32. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The school encourages tolerance and respect between individuals and groups and in lessons such as geography pupils are able to discuss the dilemmas of the misdistribution of resources in the world. Pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 reflect on environmental issues in their geography lessons. Pupils of all ages show a respect for the concept of right and wrong and accept the presence of a moral code in the school. Class rules are simple yet positive and, even though levels of maturity vary, pupils show good levels of self-control in their own behaviour. 'Circle Time' has yet to be fully developed but teachers make good use of incidental opportunities for raising pupils' awareness of moral issues, enabling them to have a greater understanding of the concepts of truth, justice, honesty and fair play.
33. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and pupils enjoy being in a socially inclusive school. Teachers provide good role models in helping pupils develop and sustain their friendships. Very good use is made of the educational opportunities provided in the local community and environment to extend pupils' awareness of social belonging and the residential visits, to Wales and France, arranged for the older pupils provide them with valuable social and cultural experiences and assist them in developing their teamwork skills. In discussion Year 6 pupils indicate the frissons of fear and excitement that accompany the transition from primary to secondary school and express the view that everything will be fine as long as their new teachers are as kind as their present ones.
34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. They have a good awareness of their own cultural heritage and, through their studies in history and geography, art and music, they can bring their experiences to bear on features of cultures other than their own. Pupils in Year 2 have been able to compare stories from England, India and China and, in one geography lesson, pupils in Year 6 conducted a mature discussion around the inferences to be drawn from pictorial evidence concerning life in India. A feature of their discussion was the way in which they attributed value to a culture that none had

experienced first hand. The foundation subjects are supported by good collections of artefacts and these, especially in religious education, help pupils in their understanding of other faiths and cultures.

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

35. The provision for pupils' support and welfare is very good and the school provides a safe and caring environment in which to learn. Parents are confident that their children are well looked after in school and that any problems are quickly resolved. In spite of the recent high turnover of staff, teachers know their pupils well and they are very alert to their individual, physical and emotional needs. This helps pupils to learn and has a very positive effect on their attitude and behaviour. The school's policies provide very clear guidelines on all aspects of safety and pupils' welfare. The school has recognised the requirement for a Race Equality Policy. Pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical disabilities, are very well supported and this enables them to take full advantage of all educational opportunities. Good induction procedures ensure that children and their parents understand the organisation of the school and help them to settle quickly into school routines. Pupils in Year 6 and their parents are very well supported to ensure a smooth transition into secondary education.
36. The Health and Safety policy is implemented well. The site is well monitored through good procedures and a named governor and teacher representative take responsibility for regular risk assessment. The site supervisor and staff are vigilant in ensuring that any safety issues are reported and appropriately followed up. Pupils are well supervised during lessons and in the playground and staff ensure that pupils are aware of safety. Electrical equipment and physical education apparatus are checked regularly and fire drills are held each term. The provision for first aid is good with several qualified first aiders on site. All accidents are well recorded and parents are contacted promptly where necessary.
37. Child protection procedures are good and any concerns are well monitored and recorded. The headteacher is the named designated person with responsibility, and will be attending a local authority training course very shortly. The headteacher has ensured that all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, are aware of the procedures as outlined in the school's policy. All pupils have access to outside support agencies. Good up-to-date personal and medical records are kept for all pupils and these are used well to support their personal needs.
38. Satisfactory procedures are followed to monitor and promote attendance. Registers are completed accurately and consistently. Parents support the school well by reporting absences promptly in the morning, and any unauthorised absence is followed up by the end of the week. The procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are good and are followed consistently throughout the school. There is a good system of rewards for good work and behaviour but the school is now looking to develop this further by using pupils' own ideas for commendations. The manner in which pupils behave and conduct themselves and their attitudes towards school reflect the school's good procedures and high expectations. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' educational and personal development are satisfactory. Although there is no formal system of recording personal development teachers know their pupils well and their personal achievements are well monitored on an informal basis.
39. The schools' procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress other than in English and mathematics are currently unsatisfactory. Foundation Stage children are

assessed within five weeks of entry to the school and further assessments take place as pupils' progress through the school. Assessment in science is underdeveloped and unsatisfactory and no whole school assessment procedures are in place for the foundation subjects. The school is about to introduce a pilot scheme for the assessment of history that will, if successful, become a blueprint for assessment in other foundation subjects. The statutory end of key stage national tests are analysed to enable the setting of targets and planning for the future and the school also uses standardised reading and spelling tests to support teaching in English. Individual teachers keep records and they know their pupils well and the school is in a position to build on this knowledge in the future development of its assessment policies and procedures.

40. At present, use of assessment results to monitor pupils' progress over time is inconsistent as is the tracking of the progress made by individuals. In the Foundation Stage, assessment is incorporated into the very comprehensive planning based on the Early Learning Goals and children progress into Year 1 with a very good indication of their prior attainment. The good teaching in Key Stage 1 ensures that teachers use assessment information to establish targets for individual pupils and their personal knowledge of the progress towards these targets is good. In Key Stage 2, the use of assessment is less well grounded although individually the teachers know their pupils and are able to establish targets for them. Many of the pupils' workbooks in English in Year 3 to Year 6 show targets being established and a record being kept of progress towards them. In the majority of books seen teachers mark work in a detailed and helpful way and the comments invariably give a clear indication of what pupils have to do to improve the quality of their work. Overall, this enables pupils to make good progress in the subject although the standard of presentation of the work could be higher.
41. The school is rightly proud of the inclusive social environment provided for its pupils, but needs a coherent policy for identifying and assessing the work and progress of gifted and talented pupils. It also needs to more rigorously address the reason why the boys are attaining higher standards than the girls in the National Curriculum tests. The development of a whole school approach to assessment is now a priority in the schools' plans for the future and will provide an opportunity to address the need for a policy towards the gifted and talented pupil. It is apparent from inspection evidence that the caring and supportive environment for learning provided by the school gives pupils of all ages and abilities a sense of being valued for their strengths and helped in their weaknesses.

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

42. The school has a good partnership with parents, which has been well maintained since the last inspection. Many parents make a strong contribution to the work of the school and children's learning by helping at home with reading and homework topics. Parents are made very welcome in the school and the vast majority feel comfortable to ask questions and discuss any concerns. The headteacher works hard to encourage the involvement of parents and to ensure a good relationship with them. A recent questionnaire asking parents for their views on school improvement brought very little response. The majority of parents are very satisfied with their children's progress and are very positive in their views about the school. However, a significant number feel that the school does not work closely with them and they would like to receive more information about their children's progress. The headteacher and staff are readily available to speak to parents informally at the start and end of the day. During the inspection, a number of parents of children in the Reception class attended an early

open morning when they helped children with reading, colouring and activities in the 'hairdressing' shop.

43. A significant number of parents provide regular help in classrooms and with extra-curricular activities. More parents help when pupils are taken out on visits. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved well and each term are invited to attend meetings to review progress and discuss targets for improvement. The majority of parents are satisfied with the arrangements for homework and the amount of work pupils are expected to do at home. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has recently introduced a homework diary for all pupils in Key Stage 2 and parents are being encouraged to use these as a means of communication. Reading books are taken home regularly although there is some inconsistency between classes in the use of home/school reading records. The Friends of Harpole School (FOHS) is a supportive and very active group of parents which organises regular fundraising events for school funds. Activities are well supported by the whole community and enable the Friends to provide a range of additional learning resources such as computer equipment, musical instruments and play equipment for the youngest children.
44. The quality of information for parents is good and the headteacher's regular newsletters are friendly and informative. These provide clear information about events and organisation and ways in which parents can help. Parents appreciate the good amount of helpful information they receive prior to their child's induction into the Reception class. At the beginning of each term class teachers provide a good amount of information for parents about the curriculum and the topics to be covered and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Regular consultation evenings are held for parents to discuss progress with teachers and these are well attended. The Mission Statement is displayed prominently and an information file for parents and visitors containing a good range of information and the school's improvement plan is located in the entrance to the school. The school has recently launched its own secure website following close consultation with parents and many are now using this as a source of information.
45. Reports to parents are satisfactory and cover all subjects of the National Curriculum and the areas of learning for the Foundation Stage. Reports contain sufficient information about what has been taught and pupils' effort and progress. However, insufficient information is provided about progress against national standards. Attainable individual targets are set for English, mathematics and science. The prospectus and governors' annual report to parents contain a helpful amount of information about the organisation of the school and the curriculum. The overall quality of the school's links with parents has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

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

46. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall and the headteacher's leadership of the school is good. This has been central to development of the school and the effective way in which the major staff changes have been managed. This success is derived from the headteacher's clear sense of direction and from the commitment of the staff to improvement that his leadership has generated. As a result, the school has successfully passed through a period of intense change and the school benefits from a very positive ethos in which all pupils and staff feel valued and supported. There is a shared understanding of the importance of continuing to raise standards whilst ensuring that the school maintains its reputation for achievement in the foundation subjects and the arts. There are two teachers in the senior

management team, and they share the headteacher's enthusiasm and commitment to the school and provide good support. Both are very effective in their own classrooms. As a result, they have made a very good contribution to maintaining the development of the school and in providing an effective role model for other staff. The school currently does not have a deputy headteacher and one is currently being recruited. It will be important to define the leadership role of this senior member of staff and how it relates to the current roles of the curriculum co-ordinators.

47. The Governing Body has a good awareness of the main strengths and weaknesses of the school. Each governor is paired with a member of staff to share responsibility for an aspect of the school. This means that the governors are well informed and as a result base their decisions on reliable information. A good example of this is the way in which the Governing Body is managing special educational needs. This is one of the reasons why both the provision and progress of these pupils are good. The governors are regular visitors to the school and this further enhances their knowledge and understanding and gives a depth to the knowledge base they can draw on when making decisions. Whilst most statutory requirements are met, some items are missing from the governors' annual report to parents, and from the school's prospectus and the school has yet to implement its policy for the promotion of Racial Equality. Despite these shortcomings they do monitor the work of the school carefully to ensure that statutory requirements are met in other respects. They have agreed a performance management policy for the school and have set appropriate targets for the headteacher.
48. Responsibility for the leadership of the curriculum presently rests with the subject co-ordinators. They have embraced the role enthusiastically. Co-ordinators in the core subject of English, mathematics, and science have begun to identify where the strengths and weaknesses lie in their subject. They have made good use of the analysis of the performance data that they have available and as a result have developed action plans that reflect their evaluations accurately. Similarly core subject co-ordinators have undertaken some formal monitoring of pupils' work. This has yielded some valuable information that has been used to plan strategically. A good example of this is the work undertaken by the science co-ordinator to determine if the difference in the performance between boys and girls in the results of national tests was still reflected in their everyday work. Although informal monitoring of the foundation subjects has been undertaken, this is not yet systematic or rigorous. Similarly there is no systematic and regular monitoring of teaching taking place, other than that initiated by the headteacher upon his appointment and this remains a weakness in the present arrangements.
49. Despite the staffing changes the headteacher has implemented an effective performance management policy that fully meets statutory requirements. This is linked with the professional development of the staff. As a result staff understand what their role is in the school and feel supported in their efforts to achieve it. This is generating a strong sense of community and commitment to the aims of the school. Morale in the school is high and despite the recent changes there is a very strong sense of commitment to the school, from the pupils and the staff. This again stems from the leadership of the headteacher. For newly qualified teachers or those new to the school induction procedures are good. This enables staff to settle in very quickly.
50. A school improvement plan has been created that has enabled progress to be made in a range of areas this year. It has served its purpose well and has helped the school to judge the progress made. The headteacher and Governing Body, having successfully managed a year of considerable staff change are in the process of developing the

school improvement plan, to better reflect the aims of the school, analysis of performance data and the priorities of the local education authority.

51. An examination of the school improvement plan alongside the resources that are available to it show that it has targeted its spending effectively, the school's finances are in good order and the headteacher and Governing Body are kept well informed of the current financial position. Specific grants allocated to the school, for example for special educational needs provision or for training, are used for their intended purpose. The school administrator's efficiency makes a good contribution to the efficiency of the Governing Body and the way the finances are run. Whilst the Governing Body monitors expenditure retrospectively well, it has yet to implement arrangements to evaluate the impact of larger spending decisions on standards. For example, data projectors have been purchased and interactive whiteboards introduced but there are no plans in place to assess what effect these are having on the pupils' performance or to see if value for money was sufficiently good. Relating these purchases to the improvements in pupils' standards is not yet clearly established.
52. The local education authority carried out a financial audit of the school in October 2002. It revealed some shortcomings in the financial arrangements and procedures that the school had been following prior to the appointment of the present headteacher and bursar. Action has been taken on most of these areas but some further work is still required. In addition, arrangements to assess whether the necessary procedures have been adopted and whether the improvements are being maintained need to be documented rigorously by the governors. For example, the follow up to this critical report needs to become a fixed item on the Finance and Personnel Committee agenda for some time yet to ensure that progress on the necessary changes in procedure are monitored regularly.
53. Overall, however, the Governing Body satisfactorily applies the principles of best value in its use of resources. Alternative options are considered before financial decisions are made. Parents and pupils are consulted about how the school is run. The school makes satisfactory use of the grants, funds and resources available to it. As a result, the school gives good value for money overall.
54. The school makes appropriate use of information and communication technology for a range of tasks, such as analysing pupil performance information or planning pupils' work. All classrooms have whiteboards which can be turned into interactive whiteboards. The teachers are using laptops and data projectors in most classrooms and it is planned to extend the use of interactive whiteboards further. This is making a good contribution to the pupils' performance and helps to engage and sustain their interest in lessons. The bursar makes good use of information and communication technology for managing the budget and this is why accurate analysis is always available to the Governing Body. Attendance is one area where the school could benefit from using information and communication technology to analyse absence patterns.
55. The school has recently undergone a period of instability and very high staff turnover but is now well staffed with suitably qualified teachers to teach the National Curriculum and the Foundation Stage. A deputy headteacher has not yet been appointed. All teachers except the headteacher have responsibility for a class. All have additional responsibilities as subject co-ordinators but there is inconsistency in allocation to ensure that sufficient time is available for subjects to be developed and well monitored. Staff attend regular training courses that are well matched to their needs and linked to the school improvement plan. The provision of experienced learning support assistants is good and sufficient to effectively support groups in classrooms and individual pupils.



The school has good procedures to ensure that new members of staff and newly qualified teachers are well supported and mentored. The commitment and efficiency of the secretary, lunchtime supervisors and site supervisor all ensure the effective day-to-day running of the school.

56. The accommodation is good and provides sufficient space and facilities for the teaching of the National Curriculum and for children in the Foundation Stage. The building is very clean and well maintained. Since the last inspection the caretaker's house on site has been converted into an attractive art and design studio, which provides a good amount of teaching space. Classrooms and central areas are of sufficient size to comfortably accommodate the number of pupils on roll. The library, which has been re-sited into the centre of the school, is attractive although space is rather limited. The information and communication technology suite with updated computer provision is too small to accommodate whole classes but is well used for small groups. The large hall is well used for assemblies, physical education and for dining. Throughout the school colourful and attractive displays of pupils' work, pictures, photographs and artefacts provide an interesting and stimulating learning environment. The school makes good use of all available space. All parts of the building are accessible to disabled pupils. Outdoor play facilities are good and include a large hard surface playground and quiet garden area. Pupils use the large playing field opposite to the school for sports. An outdoor swimming pool on site provides a good additional learning resource during the summer months. A large secure covered play space for the youngest children is currently in the final stages of completion and will provide very good facilities for a range of learning activities.
57. Overall, learning resources to support teaching are satisfactory. Since the last inspection the school has updated its provision of reading books and non-fiction books for the library. Resources for history, geography, religious education and music are good and there is satisfactory provision for all other subjects. All resources are accessible to teachers and pupils and are well used to support learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. In order to improve the quality of pupils' learning further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) develop procedures in subjects other than in English and mathematics to ensure that pupils' learning is monitored and systematically built upon as they move through the school.**

*(paragraphs → 25, 39, 103, 110, 114, 118, 122, 123, 127, 132)*

- (2) clarify the role of the co-ordinators and extend the part they play in monitoring teaching and learning in their subjects of responsibility**

*(paragraphs → 46, 48, 83, 114, 118, 127, 132, 136)*

- (3) ensure that where possible, teachers make greater use of computers in daily lessons in order to support the pupils' learning.**

*(paragraphs → 20, 26, 87, 96, 119)*

- (4) develop and implement a consistent approach and programme of learning for the pupils' personal, social and health education.**

*(paragraph → 28)*

The following issues should be included by the governors as part of their action plan:

- ensure that the school's policy for the promotion of Racial Equality is effectively implemented and monitored

*(paragraphs → 35, 47)*

- monitor carefully the performance of the girls compared to the boys in end of key stage national tests.

*(paragraphs → 11, 41, 48, 76, 85, 99)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	15	18	6			
Percentage	7	36	43	14			

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 two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	207
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	3
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	55

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.5

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	16	17
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	29	28	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (93)	93 (93)	100 (100)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	17
	Girls	12	12	13
	Total	26	29	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (96)	97 (100)	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	13	19	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	13
	Girls	18	16	19
	Total	28	28	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (93)	88 (81)	100 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	11	12	12
	Girls	16	14	16
	Total	27	26	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	84 (89)	81 (85)	88 (89)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

**Ethnic background of pupils**

**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	177		
White – Irish			
White – any other White background			
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean			
Mixed – White and Black African			
Mixed – White and Asian			
Mixed – any other mixed background			
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1		
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani			
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi			
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background			
Black or Black British – Caribbean			
Black or Black British – African			
Black or Black British – any other Black background			
Chinese			
Any other ethnic group			
No ethnic group recorded			

*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 – YR**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.8
Average class size	30

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

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	207

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	505 730
Total expenditure	469 995
Expenditure per pupil	2 270
Balance brought forward from previous year	19 300
Balance carried forward to next year	38080

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
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	207
Number of questionnaires returned	83

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	36	1	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	40	48	6	4	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	58	0	0	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	54	10	5	4
The teaching is good.	47	41	5	5	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	50	25	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	55	35	6	4	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	39	1	4	2
The school works closely with parents.	28	45	18	5	4
The school is well led and managed.	28	53	2	5	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	32	57	4	3	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	37	25	4	14

### **Other issues raised by parents**

No other issues were raised by parents.



## **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**

59. Children start school in the academic year in which they become five. Most children have had some form of pre-school education and the school works closely with the various pre-school groups that serve the local community. Secure arrangements are in place to enable the children to visit the school prior to formally commencing their full-time education and this enables the children to settle quickly into the school. This process is aided further by the strong links that the Reception teacher has forged with the parents. Some assist in classrooms and many parents support the children well in their early learning at home. These positive links are further developed through an 'Open Morning' that is held once a week where parents are encouraged to visit the school prior to the start of the school day and work alongside their children.
60. The overall provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and good progress has been made since the previous inspection. Teaching has improved and the teacher has worked hard to ensure that the guidance given to schools for children of this age is closely followed. A real strength in the provision is the quality of the curriculum. This is very good, and very much geared to the children's interests and levels of need. Imaginative structured play is used very well to support pupils' learning and this teaching strategy is used creatively at many points of the day. At present, there is some outdoor play, but the space for this is somewhat restricted. However, at the time of the inspection a new outdoor play area was being built next to the classroom and once completed will offer rich scope to enhance the quality of pupils' learning even further.
61. The needs of a small number of children with special educational needs, are very well addressed. The overall attainment of the children on entry to the school is average, although many of the children enter the school with well-developed personal and social skills and are confident in their use of spoken language. Children make good progress in the Reception class and by the time they are due to enter Year 1, the children exceed the Early Learning Goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and their personal, social and emotional development. Children's attainment in their physical development is in line with expectations and satisfactory progress is made in this area of their learning.
62. The quality of teaching is very good, enabling the children to make good progress in most areas of their learning. The teacher has a very good understanding of the needs of young children and chooses activities that they find highly stimulating and at the same time challenging. Classroom organisation is very effective and at the end of each theme is often reorganised to allow different activities to be organised to support the next topic. Very good liaison is evident between the teacher and the two learning support assistants. The teacher carefully plans their work and short but effective guidance is given to them at the start of each day so that they can effectively support the children when they are working alongside them. Assessment information is used well to guide the teacher in what work should be modified in light of the children's efforts. A further strength in the teaching is how the children are managed. This is highly effective and the children are made to feel comfortable in their surroundings and all the children are given suitable praise and encouragement in their efforts that help to boost their self-esteem. Relationships between the children are very good and the

quality of teaching has a beneficial impact on the children's attitudes to learning, which are very good.

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

63. By the time they transfer to Year 1, children achieve above the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in relation to their personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is very good and characterised by the frequent opportunities provided, for the children to work with one another on the tasks they are set. Children make good progress as a result. Many of the children are able to work creatively and co-operatively with one another and understand well the need to take turns when using equipment. This was clearly demonstrated during the inspection when children worked in the class-based 'hairdressers' specifically created by the teacher as part of the theme, 'People Who Help Us.' Children worked very effectively together as they washed, combed, 'cut' and re-styled one another's hair and all were most enthralled and totally engrossed in their work. The children shared the scissors, combs and 'hairdryers' freely and easily and many children demonstrated high levels of independence as they were able to work on the task set with the minimum of adult intervention. Behaviour between the children is very good and they make good progress in their understanding of the need to treat one another with courtesy and respect. Teaching is effective in ensuring that the children take on increasing responsibility for themselves and when getting changed for physical education activities, for example, children are encouraged to change quickly and to leave their clothes tidily in order to get dressed again quickly on their return.

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

64. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children's attainment exceeds the expectations of the Early Learning Goals and a significant number of the children are working within the early levels of the National Curriculum for English. Teaching is very good and the children make good progress. The teacher is very aware of the good speaking and listening skills many children demonstrate when they first enter the school yet is effective in ensuring that the teaching continues to extend these. The classroom is organised in such a way that many of the children are encouraged to use their speaking and listening skills at different points of the day in a range of activities. Very good use is made of play to support this learning. Children dress up as 'fire-fighters' and are given interesting tasks to solve in a group that involve much discussion. These include rescuing a 'cat' from a 'tree' and such activities actively encourage the children's skills of negotiating and listening to the views and ideas of their classmates. Their listening skills are further developed through other areas of their learning. As part of the same theme of 'People Who Help Us', the children listen to talks by the police, the local nurse or the local fire brigade about the work that they undertake and at the same time are encouraged to ask questions of the people they are listening to. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are confident speakers and are confident in talking aloud both within a smaller or a larger group.
65. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children have a good understanding of the basic elements of reading. They very much enjoy listening to a range of stories and understand well that the words on a page 'tell a story'. Many children, including those who need additional support, have the skills to pause on a word they may not be familiar with and use the picture to help them understand the text. Children know what a full stop is and pause appropriately when these are arrived at in their reading. Children know that an author writes books, but are unfamiliar with what an illustrator is. Classroom organisation is such that the children are often surrounded with books

about the themes they are following and this helps to develop their understanding that there are books that give information rather than just tell a story. Many of the children are heard read at home by their parents and this has a beneficial impact on their learning and further raises the status that reading has in the minds of the children.

66. Children make good progress in their understanding and ability to write. By the time they enter Year 1, many of the children can at least write their names and higher-attaining children write simple statements about, for example, their experiences over a weekend. Much of the children's writing is neat and legible and higher-attaining children are starting to demarcate their work with a full stop and a capital letter. When taking part in imaginative play, children write simple 'messages' about the 'emergency' that has developed that requires the assistance of 'fire-fighters'. This helps the children to make good progress in their understanding that writing has a purpose and relevance. Teaching makes effective use of computers and other related information and communication technology equipment to support the children's early literacy development. Children are encouraged to work in pairs, for example, and discuss the best ways to solve a certain mathematical problem.

### **Mathematical development**

67. The quality of teaching is very good and by the end of the Foundation Stage, children exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals in this area of their learning. Progress is good, and by the end of the Foundation Stage, children have a good understanding of early mathematical ideas and the part that mathematics can play in their everyday lives.
68. The children are provided with a good range of suitable practical activities for the development of their mathematical understanding and a good foundation is laid for their future interest and progress in mathematics through the structured play activities that are organised for them. Through playing in sand and water, for example, they learn about 'full' and 'empty' and pupils explain well what is meant by 'half full'. Many of the children demonstrate a secure understanding for their age of number and teaching makes good use of everyday activities such as counting the number of children during the registration periods and how many are in the class if a certain number are absent all help reinforce the children's familiarisation of the numbers 1 – 20. Good use is made of the class based computer to help the children's early understanding of number and by the end of the Foundation Stage many of the children can recognise simple coins and solve simple problems by adding, for example, 5p plus 3p. Higher-attaining children are able to solve similar problems but involving the concept of subtraction. Children's understanding of the concept of 'time' for their age is good and many understand that a day is divided into morning, afternoon and evening. Teaching ensures that the children have regular access to using mathematical games and equipment and this ensures that by the end of the Foundation Stage, many of the children differentiate between two-dimensional shapes and higher attaining children can give some examples of three-dimensional shapes.

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

69. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children exceed the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Teaching is very good and children make good progress in their understanding of their immediate locality and in the wider world in which they live. Good use is made of the local environment to extend the children's learning. Regular visits or visitors to the school are organised for them. These include visits to local farms or talks by the police or the fire rescue service to see or hear first hand what sort of work farmers, police personnel or the fire safety people undertake. This proves successful, for example, in developing the children's understanding of the work farmers undertake and of the fact that other living creatures need food, water and a place to live. Children receive good opportunities to develop their understanding of the work that people such as the vicar, fire service or nurse undertake in the community and they make good progress in their awareness of the help and assistance these people give to other people in the community. Good opportunities are provided by the teacher for the children to learn about the main features of the village of Harpole. Children recall the main features of the village such as the local church and the types of houses there are and they can give examples of some of the small shops that are in the village such as the newsagents.
70. The teacher makes good use of occasions such as the children's birthdays both to celebrate the fact and to develop their understanding of the notion of what it means to grow older. Children understand well the importance of why birthdays are often celebrated as special events. Equally good use is made by the teacher of special events in the calendars of different religions to raise the children's basic understanding of the customs and traditions of other religions. Good use is made of the school's computer suite to develop the children's understanding of how computers can support their learning. In addition, equally effective use is made of the classroom based computer at many points of the day in order for children to develop their basic information and communication technology skills. As a result, children ably use a mouse to move around the different parts of a piece of software and can explain the main components of a computer system such as the monitor, keyboard and printer. Many of the children are able to work independently of the teacher at the computer and this has a positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development

## **Physical development**

71. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children reach the expectations of the Early Learning Goals. Although teaching is good, the progress of the children is occasionally hindered by the lack of a fully open and easily accessible outside play area adjacent to the classroom. However, at the time of the inspection this situation was being remedied and once the renovations have been completed the new provision will offer rich potential to significantly improve this aspect of the children's learning. The children do currently have access to a small space that lies near to the main classroom that does allow them to ride small bikes and trikes within a small defined area. When using such equipment the children are mindful of the needs of others and demonstrate suitable dexterity on the equipment they are using.
72. By the end of the Foundation Stage, most of the children are able to change for physical education and dress themselves. Suitable opportunities are provided for the children to undertake physical education work in the main school hall. When doing so, the children use the equipment sensibly and demonstrate suitable poise and balance when walking over a bench, for example. In warm up activities, children are able to move around the hall at different speeds, in different directions and when asked to, by

moving around on different parts of their bodies and at different heights. Good opportunities are provided for the children to work in small groups in such sessions and this has a positive impact on their personal, social and emotional development as they work collectively on the problems posed for them by their teacher.

### **Creative development**

73. By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children exceed the Early Learning Goals and make good gains in the creative aspects of their development. Teaching is very good and a strong emphasis is placed by the teacher on ensuring that this aspect of the children's learning supports their other aspects. After visiting a local farm as part of the theme of 'People Who Help Us' the children are given good scope to use clay in order to make simple models of farm creatures. This helps to develop their finer manipulation and physical skills. Within the same theme, children are given good opportunities to paint large pictures of people who serve in the community such as police personnel. The children ably use a paintbrush and are able to mix and apply paint in a fair and even manner. The teacher places good emphasis on ensuring that the children use an apron when working with paint or clay and equally good encouragement is given in order for them to wash and replace any materials they may use. This proves useful in developing the children's understanding of the importance of replacing equipment after it has been used in order for their classmates to be able to use it.
74. A real strength in the provision for the children's creative development is the effective use that is made of structured imaginative play in order to extend not only their creative abilities but support their learning in other areas of the curriculum also. Effective use is made of the classroom and outside play in order to support this that is often reorganised in light of the theme that the children are exploring. A 'fire station', for example, had been created with a good range of equipment and clothes that allow the children to dress-up and to take part in imaginary play activities requiring them to work in small groups in order to solve solutions to particular 'problems' they are posed. These may include rescuing a 'cat' from a tree. The children often work with high levels of enthusiasm and become totally absorbed in their learning. The teacher provides good opportunities during various incidental moments during the school day such as registration periods to give the children scope to take part in the singing of simple songs, tunes or nursery rhymes. The children sing well and very much enjoy their singing. The teacher also arranges a range of different simple musical instruments around the classroom and many children at different points of the day often pick these up and experiment with the sounds that they make. This successfully develops their early understanding of the sorts of sounds simple musical instruments can make.

### **ENGLISH**

75. The 2002 National Curriculum test results for Year 2 showed that the pupils' attainment was average in reading and writing when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, based on the numbers of pupils who claim free school meals, attainment in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 was below average. The 2002 National Curriculum test results for Year 6 pupils showed that attainment in English was above average when compared with all schools nationally. When compared with similar schools, standards were average. The inspection findings indicate that pupils' attainment in English at the end of Year 2 is in line with national expectations and may show a small improvement over the standards reached in 2002. At the end of Year 6, standards are in line with the average. The findings indicate some decline since the time of the previous inspection when standards were above the

national average at the end of both key stages. Pupils in Years 3 to Year 6 have been affected by the turbulence in the staffing situation in the school over the past few years and those in Year 6 in particular are benefiting from a stable year for the first time in their school career.

76. Throughout the school, pupils are now benefiting from both the stable staffing profile and the measures that have been put into place to address the shortcomings identified by the headteacher. Throughout the school, pupils are currently making good progress. Those with special educational needs make progress similar to their classmates because of the good quality support from their teachers and learning assistants. Currently, the school does not identify pupils who are gifted and talented but inspection evidence suggests that good support is given to higher attaining pupils. While inspection findings indicate no difference in attainment between boys and girls, results from the National Curriculum tests over the past three years indicate that the boys have been outperforming the girls. The school has yet to rigorously explore what possible reasons may account for this difference. Overall, pupils achieve well and the recent decline in standards of attainment is being addressed.
77. Pupils throughout the school demonstrate very good listening skills. They listen attentively to their teachers and to each other and show very good levels of respect and tolerance for the views of those around them. They listen to and process instructions skilfully and teachers rarely have to repeat instructions or information. The mature relationships that exist between adults and children in the school clearly help in focusing the attention of the pupils, who feel that their responses will be valued and treated seriously by their teachers. The quality of the relationship means that teachers are able to make best use of their teaching time, as they know they can trust their pupils to follow the guidance they are given.
78. Pupils speak with confidence and, by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, pupils' speaking skills are good. By the end of Year 2, pupils are confident in expressing their thoughts and feelings and use a good vocabulary as they do so. During the course of the inspection, pupils in Year 1 were observed discussing their visit to a local farm. They discussed the birth of a lamb with a sense of wonder and fascination. Teachers use the 'Big Books' in literacy lessons to very good effect in creating a climate in which pupils can express themselves by responding to the text and they encourage them in the use of appropriate vocabularies that help them to use their literacy skills in other subjects. Lesson planning identifies the need for regular opportunities for pupils to take part in discussion and inclusion is ensured through the support given by teachers to those pupils who most need it. In Year 3 to Year 6, teachers have high expectations of the pupils when it comes to expressing themselves and the vast majority do so with increasing confidence. During the course of the inspection, pupils were observed making mature and sensible contributions to their lessons. When in a Year 4 lesson pupils took a while to grasp that their teacher required a simple answer to a question the shared good humour was a strong feature of the lesson. In discussion, pupils from Year 6 made it clear that they thought the school had prepared them well for the future demands of secondary education by helping them to become socially confident speakers. High expectations of pupils' speaking skills carry over into other subjects and teachers pose questions that challenge the responses of their pupils.
79. Pupils are currently making good progress in Year 1 and Year 2 in developing their reading skills and standards in reading are in line with expectations by the end of Year 2. Pupils read aloud with confidence, fluency and understanding. They have books at home and enjoy contact with the printed word. A selection of fiction texts is easily available in the classroom and even the youngest pupils have experience of using the

non-fiction library. Teaching is good and places an appropriate emphasis on core reading skills that can be transmitted to other areas of the curriculum. Those who are less confident receive good support from their teachers and learning assistants and the reading logs provide a valuable support link between home and school. During the course of the inspection pupils in Year 2 expressed a sense of awe and wonder at the quality of the illustrations in the story of Lao Lao as the teacher developed a significant link with pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

80. Pupils in Year 3 to Year 6 make good progress in the further development of their reading skills and by the end of Year 6 are attaining good standards in their reading. The good and very good teaching in these year groups encourages a critical awareness of literary style amongst pupils and by the end of Year 6 they have a good understanding of genre in literature and the vast majority are confident independent readers. Many of the new favourites are prominent in their personal choices but pupils also enjoy some of the older classics of children's literature. Good use is made of books in support of learning across the curriculum and Year 6 pupils value their opportunity for running the school library.
81. The 2002 national test results showed that standards in writing at the end of Year 2 were average compared with all schools. Evidence from the inspection suggests that the school has maintained and may well have improved on this position. The majority of pupils are writing clear and readable sentences and are beginning to show imagination in their extended writing. The good teaching ensures that writing skills are used in subjects such as history and religious education. Marking is up-to-date and teachers endeavour to help pupils by indicating how their work might be improved. The quality of handwriting and presentation has deteriorated in recent years and is now a priority for improvement. To this end pupils now have regular practice in handwriting and spelling and are beginning to use the computer as a tool to help in the final presentation of work.
82. The standard of writing in Year 3 to Year 6 has been prioritised for improvement. Evidence from the inspection suggests that standards are currently satisfactory by the end of Year 6 but improving overall. The high quality of teaching in Year 6 ensures that higher attaining pupils are developing higher order skills in their writing. Examination of workbooks in all years shows pupils writing in a variety of genres and able to express themselves clearly and with confidence. They regularly revisit skills and address different styles of writing and their teachers set them clear and challenging targets. Good quality writing is also evident in pupils' work in other areas of the curriculum and some of the extended writing in the foundation subjects indicates good quality research skills underlying the quality of the end product. With the completion of the computer suite pupils are increasingly using word processing skills and the interrogation of data bases for information to support their work.
83. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. During the inspection, a significant proportion of very good and excellent lessons was seen. The quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils is a major factor in the quality of work and progress seen during the course of the inspection. Teachers use a good range of strategies in their teaching and pupils respond with a commensurate level of enthusiasm. In return, teachers know they can trust their pupils to follow their lead and this gives them the time to concentrate support where it is most needed in the class. Pupils with special educational needs make the same good progress as their peers and are valued in making a full contribution to group work and discussions. Books are well marked and teachers use homework effectively as an opportunity for consolidating learning.

84. The co-ordinator offers effective leadership and management in English. She is very well informed in terms of subject knowledge and has very good management skills. Although only recently appointed she is having a significant impact on the school's commitment to raise standards in English. The action plan for literacy is a challenging document and good progress is being made towards achieving the goals established in it. The headteacher has carried out some monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom and the action plan specifies that the co-ordinator will be given release time to carry out more during the summer term. Satisfactory use is made of assessment data in planning for the future but the school could make better use of a computerised programme to make best use of the extensive data now being collected. Improvements planned for the future include updating the administrative computer network to improve data handling. Pupils are playing an increasing part in setting targets for their own learning and good quality marking helps individual pupils in developing a sense of their own learning. There is no formal recognition of gifted and talented pupils in the school's documentation but teachers are providing good support for higher attaining pupils in their classrooms. Resources overall are satisfactory, with good use being made of the small non-fiction library and the fiction libraries in classrooms. Resources using information and communication technology are developing and pupils are increasingly using the computer as a tool for learning. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and has fully addressed the need for the inclusion of all pupils based on the principle of equal opportunity.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. The 2002 National Curriculum results at Year 6 show that pupils attained standards well above average. When compared with similar schools, standards were above average. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, standards were above the national average. When compared with similar schools, standards were average. Inspection findings indicate that current standards in mathematics are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, which reflects the standards reported at the time of the last inspection. The difference between inspection findings and National Curriculum test results in 2002 for Key Stage 2, is attributable to the differences in attainment between cohorts of pupils. Historically, the attainment levels of the pupils presently in Year 6 have not been as strong. Overall, pupils make good progress in both key stages largely as a result of the good teaching. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress towards their individual mathematical learning targets. Although inspection findings indicate no difference in attainment between boys or girls, the results from National Curriculum data over a three year time line indicate that the boys are performing better than the girls in mathematics.
86. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of tens and units numbers, including handling money calculations, and how to write, order, add and subtract numbers. The pupils use this knowledge effectively to solve simple problems, some of which are presented in word form. Pupils' abilities to solve problems mentally is good. Pupils cover a broad range of mathematical topics including estimating, partitioning, and time problems, and pupils' understanding of concepts such as shape and measurement and how to present information in the form of simple tables and charts is above expectations.
87. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of the number system, including decimals, fractions and percentages. They quickly multiply or divide any number by 10 or 100 and are aware of how a fraction can be reduced to its lowest form. Their recall of basic number facts, such as the times tables, is enhanced by



regular practice and the use of 'loop' activities with 'follow me' cards, carefully prepared to ensure that pupils of differing abilities can participate successfully. While most work is neatly presented, some untidy presentation hinders progress for some pupils. Marking comments showed that teachers are well aware of such problems, and emphasise neat presentation to enhance accuracy. Overall, attainment is above average in this year group because of the good teaching pupils receive, and the effective use of planning to build on pupils' skills. The planned use of mathematics in other curriculum subjects is having a beneficial impact on the development of the pupils' numeracy skills. In information and communication technology, for example, older Year 6 pupils make good use of computers and software such as spreadsheets to promote their understanding of how numerical data can be entered and evaluated and eventually be re-presented in the form of tables and charts. The high expectations teachers have of the pupils in design and technology enable them to develop their skills of estimation and measurement and this has a positive impact on their understanding of measurement. The introduction of 'booster' classes, the teaching in which is often good, strengthens pupils' skills and confidence as the national tests approach, and is having a good effect. At both key stages, pupils have limited opportunities for mathematical investigations, and for interpreting and solving written problems. The school has identified both elements and plans are already in place to address the shortcomings.

88. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Lessons are well-planned and detailed, with due attention to the teaching of basic skills as well as effectively promoting the pupils' understanding of numerical vocabulary. Teachers provide a good mix of mental and written activities and there is an effective balance between whole class, individual and group work. Introductions to lessons set out clearly what is to be learned, and teachers then help pupils effectively as they work, with good support from teaching assistants. The structure and pace of lessons are good, so that there is ample time for pupils to work at their own level and to review their learning at the end of the lesson. Following well-structured introductory sessions, pupils settle quickly to their tasks, sustaining a good level of effort and concentration, co-operating well with their friends when necessary, and producing good quantities of work.
89. The rate of learning for higher attaining pupils is good and teachers ensure that work is well matched to their capabilities, stretching them effectively. They demonstrate a good capacity to think creatively about how to solve difficult problems. Generally, lessons promote a good rate of learning. Lessons do provide some opportunities for the use of computers, though this is not a strong aspect of provision, and there are good examples of pupils developing and using their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example, by using graphs and charts to present findings in science and geography lessons.
90. Leadership and management of the subject are good,. The co-ordinator, appointed some fifteen months ago, has identified that the same deficiencies apply across all years, for example data handling and the solution of written problems, and is introducing strategies to cope with perceived shortcomings. The school has introduced its own scheme of work in the form of sample plans to supplement the materials outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy and these are used as a working document and reviewed weekly. This ensures that any shortcomings are quickly identified and addressed. The co-ordinator also identified that there was no regular, systematic assessment against key objectives. She has adapted and introduced a suitable, manageable system. The system is being further fine-tuned through the development of assessment software, the use of which highlights the strengths and weaknesses of whole classes and individuals and identifies targets. The system feeds directly into

annual report writing. The co-ordinator has identified the key priorities through checking the pupils' work and has established and produced a clear action plan, giving the school a good capacity to continue improving provision and standards.

## SCIENCE

91. In 2002 National Curriculum teacher assessments for Year 2 showed that the number of pupils' achieving the expected level in science was well above average but was well below average at the higher level. Inspection findings indicate that standards at the end of Year 2 are in line with the national average. The national test results for pupils in Year 6 in 2002 indicated that standards were well above the national average. Inspection findings show that by the end of Year 6 standards are in line with national expectations. A higher number of pupils with special educational needs in the current class of Year 6 explains the lower level of performance. Over time this class has had a large number of teachers in a relatively short period, making it difficult to achieve consistency in teaching and for the pupils to build progressively on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Standards in investigative work at both key stages are improving and are now in line with national expectations. This is as a result of the better use made throughout the school of investigative tasks in lessons and the matching of work more carefully to individual pupils' needs.
92. Overall, the pupils are making good progress and standards are improving. This is also true of those pupils with special educational needs. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is also making a good contribution to this improvement. The school still lacks a coherent and rigorous approach to assessment overall and not all teachers have sufficient up-to-date information on what the pupils already know when starting a unit of work. This slows progress over time and is one of the reasons why attainment in some aspects of the subject is lower than it could be.
93. By the end of Year 2, the pupils satisfactorily develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of science and the vocabulary associated with scientific ideas and concepts. They are increasingly using their observational skills well to see what happens in their investigations and can record what they see in a simple way. They make simple predictions, such as why a car with large wheels will go further than one with smaller wheels and give simple reasons to support why they have made that prediction. They can explain what friction is and have a satisfactory understanding of forces such as push and pull and demonstrate the effect of those when applied. They are beginning to understand the importance of a fair test and the importance of keeping most things in an investigation constant and only changing one thing. They still find it difficult to be certain at this stage about what must be kept the same. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of other scientific ideas. They know, for example, that other living things need water and food in order to thrive and the majority of pupils explain which materials can be classified as man-made and which are natural.
94. By the end of Year 6 the pupils are achieving satisfactorily. They are skilled at making accurate predictions because they use what they have previously learned and apply it in new situations. For example, a group of pupils studying the amount of up thrust that a body experiences in water correctly predicted that the force they measured would be less than when the object was in the air. One pupil was unsure and was reminded by another pupil about what they had been taught previously, explaining, for example, why an aircraft carrier does not sink. They understand the importance of a fair test and are able to control variables well to make sure that they are measuring only one reading. They take great care to make sure that their readings are accurate and want to repeat

them for an appropriate number of times to ensure that they have reliable data. They know how to record and display their results using tables and graphs. They can select the most appropriate for themselves. Their written work is satisfactory although their explanatory writing still lacks sufficient depth.

95. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a satisfactory understanding for their age of the habitats of other living creatures, how animals adapt to their surroundings and what is meant by the 'food chain'. They understand the role of switches and how these can be used in a circuit and can explain what is meant by a 'circuit breaker' when discussing electricity. Pupils have a satisfactory understanding of materials and are able to give examples of different rocks and soils. As they move through each of the classes, pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of appropriate scientific vocabulary such as evaporation and condensation when discussing gases and they know that different sorts of gases constitute and make up the Earth's atmosphere.
96. Information and communication technology is used to some extent to support learning in science, by using graphs or tables, for example, but current planning does not provide systematically for the use of information and communication technology to support learning. Given the good skills many pupils demonstrate when using information and communication technology, greater use of appropriate hardware and software offers the potential to improve standards in science further.
97. The quality of teaching in Year 1 and Year 2 is satisfactory, with some good features. Interesting activities and clear explanations make topics simple to understand for the pupils. A good example of this was in Year 2 where a good series of lessons had enabled the pupils to develop a sound understanding of how to carry out an investigation and deepened their understanding of forces. In Year 3 to Year 6, the quality of teaching is good, enabling the pupils to build up a solid foundation of knowledge, skills and understanding across all aspects of the curriculum for science. The very best teaching is in Year 6 where pupils are encouraged to take charge of investigations, make decisions for themselves and use their initiative. Teachers carefully explain the nature of what pupils are to do and check for understanding with well thought out questions that make the pupils really think about what is being discussed. This sustains their concentration and means that no time is wasted. As a result of well-managed lessons all of the pupils are fully involved and they have good attitudes to learning and this makes a very positive contribution to their productivity. A strength of the teaching throughout the school is the increasing appropriate emphasis that has been placed on investigative science and encouraging the pupils to think scientifically of the reasons for any predictions or statements they are making. In this way, pupils use what they know in new situations and are gaining the confidence to use their initiative. The pupils with special educational needs are given very effective support by classroom assistants which effectively ensures that the pupils concerned are included in all science work enabling them to achieve and make similar progress as their peers.
98. The curriculum is planned effectively and the subject makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development as they are given good scope to ponder and explore the contribution that science makes to the world around them. Although there are assessment tests at the end of each unit of work, and national test results are analysed, the procedures and arrangements for assessment in science are insufficiently developed. Pupils' subsequent learning is not always influenced or modified by the teachers as a result. This shortcoming in assessment remains from the last inspection and is the main obstacle left to eliminate in order to improve pupils' performance.

99. The subject on the whole is well managed and the co-ordinator is effective and efficient. Some monitoring of learning has been possible, such as evaluating the work produced by pupils. This has been used to good effect and the findings incorporated into a subsequent action plan. Whilst no differences were seen in the performance of boys and girls in science during the inspection, some work has been undertaken to try and discover the underlying reasons for the differences in performance between boys and girls evidenced in the national test results over a three-year period. Whilst no obvious reason has been established, it has raised awareness of this issue, which in itself makes a good contribution to the provision in the subject. In order to further strengthen the leadership and management of the subject, the role of the co-ordinator in monitoring teaching and learning needs to be extended.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

100. By the end of both key stages, standards are above national expectations. The school has maintained standards since the previous inspection, and in some respects has improved provision still further. This has been achieved by converting the caretaker's house into a well-resourced art and design studio to which all pupils have regular timetabled access. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in the development of their skills and understanding as they move through each of the classes. The subject holds high status in the school and this has been further boosted by the award of an 'Artsmark' given to schools following an evaluation of the standards reached by pupils by a national body.
101. By the end of Year 2, pupils have developed a good understanding for their age of the work of famous artists and are able to identify the materials and methods used by craftspeople in the work they produce. Pupils are given good opportunities to experiment with a range of different pencils, developing a good understanding of line and pattern as a result. The quality of their drawings is at a standard higher than normally found in pupils of this age. Pupils are given equally good opportunities to use and apply paint and have a secure understanding of how colours can be combined to create others. Pupils are starting to develop the skills of predicting the outcomes of colour mixing and are confident in exploring how colours can be changed through adding white or the effect on a colour when water is added to it. Pupils know that paint can be applied not only through using paintbrushes but in using other tools such as sponges. Most pupils are able to create simple prints using natural objects such as leaves or potatoes. Pupils, by the end of Year 2 understand how simple weaving techniques using strips of paper can be used to create pieces of art. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of three-dimensional materials and are able to construct simple models from paper, card, boxes or recyclable materials.
102. Pupils continue to make good progress and further refine their skills as they move through each of the classes in Key Stage 2. Pupils make good progress in developing their drawing skills and use shading to create shadow effects. A current display based on the theme of 'Time' encouraged pupils to explore the effects that the passage of time has on people as they get older. Pupils compared pictures of older people with pictures of children and learned that drawings and sketches of older people are easier to achieve because their skin has wrinkles. As they move through the classes, pupils are encouraged to paint from more abstract sources such as music or poetry and as a result they are able to make and blend colours to represent or catch a mood. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of colour that includes opacity or transparency and apply these to their artwork to make it more visually striking. Pupils

have a good understanding of primary and secondary colours. By identifying potential links with other subjects, especially design and technology, pupils make good progress in their understanding of three-dimensional work. By the time pupils leave the school, they have developed a good artistic vocabulary and a good understanding of how certain artists are often associated with particular artistic movements. However, while pupils have some scope given to them to use sketchbooks to develop their ideas, more could be made of these to develop their understanding of the need for preparatory work.

103. The quality of teaching and learning at both key stages is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and present the pupils with interesting, challenging work to which pupils respond with work that is of a very good quality. Good use is made by all teachers of the stimulus afforded by the work of famous artists. In Year 2, for example, the teacher made very effective use of Van Gogh's 'Wheat Fields' to develop the pupils' appreciation of how certain artists use paint to create specific results. Each pupil was given a small piece of the picture to replicate and had to use paint to try and copy on a larger scale the picture they had been given. The resulting work was then put together into a large collage. Much of the resulting work was of a high quality and helped to reinforce their understanding of how Van Gogh used paint to create a sense of movement of wheat in a breeze. In Key Stage 2, pupils are given good opportunities to explore the work of the Impressionists and the resulting work of pictures of still life images using pastels and chalks is of a high quality. Teachers make good use of computers to stimulate pupils' learning and Year 2 pupils are given good opportunities, for example, to use an art package as they explored the work of Mondrian. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are good, and effective use is made of everyday objects to sharpen pupils' observational and drawing skills. In addition, where possible, teachers draw on the potential in other subjects to provide a further stimulus for artwork. Year 1 pupils, for example, as part of exploring the story of Joseph and his brothers in religious education, explored 'tie and dye' in order to make a 'coat' that Joseph may have worn. In Year 4, pupils have listened to the music of Grieg and produced paintings of the sort of dreamlike images the music suggested to them. Although teaching is good, the school's lack of a whole school approach to assessment makes it difficult for teachers to plan more precisely on what the pupils know in order to move them further on in their learning.
104. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has just taken over the role of co-ordinator and is overseeing provision in a temporary capacity. There are few mechanisms in place for teaching and learning to be effectively monitored, other than by determining the quality of pupils' work on display, and the headteacher is aware of the need to ensure the management of the subject involves developing more robust ways to evaluate teaching. In addition, there is no whole school approach to assessing pupils' progress in the subject and this makes it difficult for teachers to know with a fair degree of precision the precise stage of pupils' academic development in order to plan learning to move them further on. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to make their own choices about what materials they are to use to complete a task and this has a beneficial impact on their personal development. In addition, teachers make good use of trips to museums and galleries and this helps to raise the pupils' understanding of how artists from other cultures create works of art.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

105. By the end of both key stages, standards in design and technology are above expectations and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs

make good progress as they move through the school. This is a substantial improvement since the last inspection when standards were judged to be unsatisfactory. The school has worked hard to tackle the shortcomings in the last report. Teaching has improved. Teachers' understanding and confidence in developing pupils' design and technology skills through other subjects have also improved. In addition, teachers use the scheme of work introduced by the school effectively and this ensures that pupils' learning is successfully built upon as they move through each of the classes.

106. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 make good progress and by the end of Year 2, pupils have a good understanding of preparatory sketches as a basis for their work. The majority of pupils make realistic plans for the objects that they are going to make. They produce well-annotated drawings, often in simple three-dimensional arrangements that give details that are helpful in the construction phase such as the size of wheels or reminders of what glue to use. They are becoming skilled at working with a range of materials and when finishing their models choose appropriate decoration that enhances the finished product. For example, in Year 2, when pupils were constructing wells, they chose materials that gave texture to the surface of their models to better represent grass and soil. Pupils work hard to produce simple models of a high quality, are keen to discuss how they may improve their work and many take pride in producing work that reflects their abilities.
107. By the end of Year 6, the pupils' design skills, knowledge and understanding are becoming much more sophisticated. The plans that they produce are more detailed and often drawn to scale with different elevations shown. The pupils put much more thought into the construction phase and usually have foreseen any difficulties before they arise. They have a well thought-out sequence of steps worked out before they start to build their model. Because of this insight they choose materials for their models carefully, fitting them appropriately to the function they will serve. They are able to evaluate the success or otherwise of their work and decide what they will do differently the next time.
108. The quality of teaching at both key stages is good and much improved since the previous inspection. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and understanding and a key feature of the teaching is the way in which teachers carefully plan to use other subjects and topics to support the pupils' learning of design and technology. All teachers carefully explore with the pupils the importance of design and technology in their everyday lives and this helps to reinforce for the pupils the purpose and relevance of the subject. Teachers give the pupils good scope to think through their ideas and equally good attention is paid to allowing the pupils to write up their project with clear and effectively labelled diagrams. This has a positive impact on their literacy development. The co-ordinator has devised a very efficient way for pupils to record their work. This ensures that throughout the school the pupils are following the design cycle and they individually record their thoughts. This is particularly effective in getting the pupils to explore a range of solutions to the design brief and to refine and improve on their chosen solution. It is also enabling them to foresee building problems. For example, during one lesson seen during the inspection, a Year 5 pupil predicted there would be difficulty in joining wheels to their model and so devised a good solution. Others in Year 2 decided not to use sticky tape, their first proposal as they realised it would fail when wet.
109. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good, which are effectively promoted by the quality of teaching which is good at both key stages. They enjoy working on this subject throughout the school. They behave well in lessons and use equipment conscientiously

and safely. They collaborate well which helps them discuss the piece they are working on. For example, Year 2 pupils deciding on the finish to their wells considered each other's suggestions before deciding on a textured finish to represent the grass. They use their initiative well because teachers give them the opportunity to choose and select their own materials from a reasonably wide range.

110. Leadership in the subject is good and is the main reason why standards have improved since the previous inspection. Design and technology is now taught regularly throughout the school in line with the school's scheme of work and is effectively supported by commercially produced materials. The staff are enthusiastic and committed to the subject. Assessment arrangements and procedures still remain weak and action on this will need to be incorporated into the action plan that the co-ordinator is developing for the subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

111. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the majority of pupils attain standards that are in line with national expectations and the school has maintained provision in the subject since the previous inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress as they move from class-to-class.
112. In Year 1 and Year 2 pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of the locality through visiting, for example, a local farm and have been able to engage in a widespread discussion of the nature and layout of the farm and its activities. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good awareness that the world extends beyond their home area as they engage with visits to the seaside and, during the summer, the travels of 'Barnaby Bear'. They have a satisfactory understanding of maps and are able to make simple plans. Higher-attaining pupils can distinguish between man-made and natural geographical features. As pupils progress through the school, good quality teaching ensures that they learn from geography as well as learning about it. In Year 5 and Year 6, for example, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the impact that climatic conditions can have on a country and are able to discuss problems such as poverty in the midst of plenty in many countries of the world. During the course of the inspection some very good discussion, based on secondary sources, took place in Year 5 and Year 6 as the pupils studied aspects of India. Good cross-curricular links also occur when, for example, climatic data is analysed as part of work on data handling in mathematics. By the end of Year 6, pupils have made satisfactory progress in the development of different geographical language such as that associated with rivers and are able to use and explain the different geographical symbols associated with Ordnance Survey maps.
113. Teaching and learning in geography are satisfactory overall. Planning is in terms of a two-year rolling programme and coverage of the subject is good. Effective use is made of the local environment as a resource for learning and pupils are also able to enhance their fieldwork skills during support visits to more dispersed locations, including in Year 5 and Year 6 visits to Wales and France. In lessons, teachers set high expectations that pupils will address challenging questions and have ensured that the quality of recording in workbooks shows a regard for literacy skills. Through discussions and research, including the use of electronic media, geography is making a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and planning takes account of the need for the inclusion of all on the basis of equal opportunity. The pupils' understanding of countries and locations other than their own is good and discussions contain little of the stereotyping frequently associated with such activities.

The positive attitudes to learning shown by the pupils are a reflection of the quality teaching they receive.

114. Leadership and management in geography are satisfactory, with the role of the co-ordinator not yet sufficiently well developed to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom. No formalised scheme of assessment is currently in place and too much reliance is placed on the need for individual teachers to collect evidence of pupil progress. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and oversight of the plans for teaching. Resources are satisfactory.

## **HISTORY**

115. Standards of attainment are in line with national expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6, maintaining the standards reached at the time of the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress as they move through the school.
116. Pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 cover a suitable range of topics and by the end of Year 2, have a secure understanding of the passage of time and its link with elements of their own lives. They have access to a good range of artefacts and know that these are sources of evidence. The comprehensive photographic record of activities and events in the school also provides pupils with an understanding of pictures and photographs as sources of information. Teachers encourage pupils in developing the skills of independent work and they are able to incorporate the collected experiences of their parents and grandparents into their understanding of history. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are beginning, in their speaking and writing, to distinguish between fact and opinion. When studying the lives of famous people they know that much of what they read and hear is a matter of interpretation.
117. By the end of Year 6, pupils have reached a sophisticated level of debate and discussion and are wary of the prejudiced interpretation of the lives of heroes and famous people. Because of the good use made of the local environment, pupils are aware of the significance of historical change in their own area. The expansion of the historic village of Harpole and the industrial and technological changes to affect Northampton are part of their understanding of the passage of time. Through educational support visits, for example to Holdenby House, they are able to use fieldwork skills to understand how evidence is gathered. These skills also help them in their understanding of the way in which historians and archaeologists have literally unearthed the evidence of history in locations such as Egypt and Greece. A striking exhibition of work on the passage of time adorns the entrance hall to the school and is a good indication of the way in which quality teaching has led pupils into an exercise of their historical imaginations. Only one history lesson was seen during the course of the inspection, but discussions with pupils and scrutiny of work indicate that the quality of teaching and learning in history is satisfactory overall. The quality of recorded work shows a commitment to high standards and the books and displays illustrate effective planning for links across different subjects of the curriculum.
118. Leadership and management for history are satisfactory. The co-ordinator, who combines the role with co-ordinating geography, is not yet able to monitor teaching and learning in the classroom and there is no whole school assessment scheme for history. This makes it difficult for pupils' subsequent teachers to build on what pupils know in order to move them on in their learning. A pilot scheme for assessment in history is to be trialled from the summer term and will, if successful, also become the



model for other foundation subjects. Teachers' plans are monitored by the co-ordinator. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and teachers ensure the inclusion of all pupils as part of the schools' commitment to equal opportunity.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

119. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are above national expectations. This represents good improvement since the last inspection. Good opportunities are provided for pupils, particularly for those in Year 6, to develop their understanding of how information and communication technology can be used to support their learning. The provision of a small but useful information and communication technology suite since the previous inspection has enabled pupils to be taught in small groups and this has had a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. Older pupils in particular are encouraged to use their initiative by using the computer suite to support their learning and where possible, pupils are strongly encouraged to use the computer facilities they have at home to complete, for example, their homework. However, while pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2, there are missed opportunities during the course of lessons for pupils to use computers and this hinders their progress.
120. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a satisfactory understanding of how to use a mouse to load programs and by being taught in the school's computer suite, understand the terms 'logging on' and 'logging off' and do so sensibly. They use the mouse well to move around the different parts of a program and can use the tools within an art package to good effect to create simple pictures and images. Pupils enter simple instructions into a programmable toy and this successfully develops their insight into how mechanical devices need instructions in order to make them function. Pupils can explain at a basic level what the Internet is, knowing that computers can be used to explore a range of information that is held away from the school. Weaker features in attainment include pupils' understanding of the common terms often associated with a computer. They know that a word-processor can be used to type in simple stories or accounts, but their understanding of terminology such as 'fonts' or 'highlighting' and how these terms can be combined to manipulate their text are under developed. Pupils have a very limited perception of how to use compact disc software to support them in their learning. Their understanding of the part that information and communication technology plays in their daily lives is satisfactory with pupils able to explain, for example, what the benefits of a mobile phone are over a more conventional one.
121. Pupils make more rapid progress in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 owing to the increased expectations that teachers have of them and as a result of the quality of teaching which is good. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to assemble multi-media pages about topics of interest of them. For example, the pupils having been given the task of constructing pages about the planets, mini-beasts or the life of Shakespeare are able to devise simple text and use the advanced features of a multi-media program to make their work visually pleasing for the reader. When using a word-processing package, they are skilful at adding graphics and additionally manipulating these so that their work is enhanced yet further. Pupils have a very good understanding of the Internet for their age, enhanced for some by their participation in the 'School Web Club' an after-school club where pupils assist teachers in adding information about the school onto the school's web site. They know what is meant by a 'hyper-link' and are adept at explaining the benefits of electronic mail. Pupils have a good understanding of

the terminology associated with a spreadsheet and know that data can be entered into cells and a formula added to the foot of a column of cells in order so that the totals can be worked out quickly and easily. Pupils demonstrate well how to use the graphing features of a spreadsheet in order to present numerical information in a range of different charts, tables and graphs. Pupils have a weak understanding for their age of control technology and few know how to use sensor or modelling equipment in order to extend their awareness of how electronic devices can be used to record and interpret information.

122. The quality of teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding are secure and many make good use of laptops to demonstrate certain teaching points. Teachers have a good appreciation of how information and communication technology can be used to support learning in other subjects and choose appropriate activities for pupils that support such learning. In Key Stage 1, for example, the Year 2 teacher having drawn a large-scale map of the imaginary island of Struay as part of geography work, made good use of a programmable robot which the pupils had to 'move' around the island. Such work not only developed the pupils' understanding of position, but helped to reinforce their knowledge of how electronic devices have to be programmed in order for them to work. In the upper part of the school, teachers have high aspirations of the pupils that translate in to pupils being expected to use their information and communication technology skills in literacy and numeracy work that is often planned in an open-ended manner. For example, Year 6 pupils having been given an imaginary £100 budget and they have to use a spreadsheet to work out how best to use this in terms of planning what food or drinks would be needed if they were to organise a party for their friends. In literacy, pupils are expected to use a word-processor to devise as full as possible a biography of a close elderly relative. Such activities kindle the pupils' enthusiasm well and they respond by producing work of a high quality. Although there are strengths in teaching, some shortcomings prevent teaching being of a higher quality. These include the generally weak use of assessment on a day-to-day basis to plan pupils' subsequent learning and there are missed opportunities by teachers to give the pupils more opportunities in daily lessons to use computers.
123. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has only recently assumed responsibility for the management of the subject and, together with the headteacher, has devised an action plan that highlights clearly what the planned next steps are to improve provision. Once actioned, they offer much scope to improve pupils' learning. However, there is a need to strengthen procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress so that pupils' progress can be evaluated more frequently and comprehensively so that teachers can plan what the pupils need to do next to build on what they know. In addition, the co-ordinator has few opportunities at present to directly monitor teaching and learning and this limits her effectiveness in gaining a clear idea of what is working well in the school, where the pupils achieve best and what improvements are still needed. Resources are good overall, and teachers make as full a use as possible given the limitations of the size and location of the school's computer suite.

## **MUSIC**

124. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in music and standards overall for pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 are at levels above those expected for their ages. As well as music lessons within the curriculum, many pupils take part in individual and group tuition in a broad range of instruments. There are good opportunities for pupils to take part in a

range of extra-curricular activities, including membership of the school choir and recorder ensemble. Pupils take part in external concerts and festivals, and achieved good results, both individually and together, in the recent Northamptonshire Music and Drama Festival. Approximately 30 children regularly attend weekly choir practice, which takes place before school. Very good teaching produced a lively session in which pupils were very responsive and achieved high standards, singing tunefully. Present standards, although good, are not as high as at the previous inspection, but recent turbulence in staffing at the school has been a contributory factor. There has not been sufficient time for the new staff and subject co-ordinator to have an impact.

125. Choir practice, 'Song and Worship' sessions and recorder groups, and one lesson in music were observed during the inspection. Teaching in the upper school was not observed during this inspection but a review of current planning and work produced, for example in Year 6, shows that pupils are attaining high standards overall and that teaching in both key stages is good and is successful in moving the pupils on in their learning. In the Year 1 and Year 2 classes, staff encourage response to music well. In one lesson seen during the inspection, pupils listened to the story 'Where the Wild Things Are' by Maurice Sendak and selected from a broad range of available instruments to add their own musical sounds to illustrate the story. They interpreted the story well with a good range of sounds and effects, using body and mouth sounds as well. They demonstrate a good understanding of how a story can be enhanced. For example a child suggested that the sounds should 'get louder as the forest grew and grew'. A recorded tape showed similar success in adding sounds to an original story of a walk to the woods. The quality of singing in assemblies is good and pupils very much enjoy what they are asked to sing.
126. As pupils move through the school at Key Stage 2, they learn to write music scores, using symbols, and as they progress they learn about scales, harmony and chords. There are some opportunities provided for pupils to study composition as a class. There are examples of music being used as a stimulus in other subjects. For example there is a display of paintings produced in response to 'Peer Gynt'. Pupils spoke of music being used in 'Circle Time', and enjoy listening to the incidental pieces of music that are sometimes played during the course of day-to-day lessons.
127. The music curriculum, which is satisfactory, is based on national guidance and published materials are used to provide appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum as well as guidance for staff. Currently, the quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has been in post for a very short period of time but is currently revising the school's scheme of work to enable non-specialist staff to develop greater confidence in teaching music. The changes should ensure that music continues to receive appropriate time and coverage in the school curriculum. At present, assessment of progress is too informal with class teachers making their own notes. The school development plan shows that assessment of pupils' progress in foundation subjects is to be introduced. The co-ordinator, a music specialist, offers good support to staff but has not yet had the opportunity to lead staff training or to monitor teaching and learning, other than by informal discussion. An audit of resources shows that they are good and that the range of instruments includes those from other cultures.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

128. Standards in physical education are in line with expectations at the end of Year 2 and above expectations at the end of Year 6. At Key Stage 1, pupils, including those with

special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and at Key Stage 2 pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress. Standards have fallen slightly since the last inspection when they were above expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Factors that have contributed to this include the high turnover of staff.

129. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in their learning about the importance of warming up when taking part in physical activity. They understand well the function of the heart and why it is important to exercise and the benefits it brings. Pupils learn to work together in teams as well as on an individual basis. This makes an important contribution to their social development. By the time they leave the school, the majority of the pupils achieve the national standard of swimming 25 metres unaided. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are achieving good standards in games. They have a good understanding of how to set a field in rounders so that the batsman finds it much harder to score runs. Pupils successfully demonstrate the skills of observing how the game is going and modify their strategy accordingly. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to obtain a balance between their desire to win and at the same time enjoy the thrill of just taking part in physical education work. As a result the games that the pupils play are fast paced, closely matched and very enjoyable and many pupils demonstrate a strong team spirit. This extends to ensuring that those with a high level of physical need are fully incorporated into the games sessions and that their contribution is seen to be valued.
130. Only one lesson was seen in Key Stage 1, and it is not possible to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in that stage. In Key Stage 2, however, the quality of teaching is good overall. In these lessons a good and thorough warm up started the session with good links being drawn to the effect of exercise on the heart and lungs. Because the units of work have been planned to last 6 to 9 sessions the pupils very quickly pick up where they left off. This means that no time is wasted repeating work. The class teachers' expectations are appropriately high, which ensure that the pupils are suitably challenged. As a result, the pupils are starting to make good progress although this has yet to show in higher standards in most classes. Staff have a good understanding of the different areas of activity and so their explanations are clear and they use demonstration by other pupils to illustrate key points. They remind pupils to make decisions for themselves. For example, in a Year 6 games lesson based on rounders, the pupils were able to reset the fielders for left or right-handers. They also placed fielders in position to trap the 'big hitter' and catch them out. The pupils enjoy this aspect of using tactics to defeat their opponent. They thrive on the level of competition and play with great team spirit and friendliness. As a result of the good teaching, the pupils' response in physical education lessons is good. They really enjoy their lessons and work hard throughout. They participate fully and high levels of enjoyment are evident in the activities seen. Pupils work hard to develop these skills. Their ability to collaborate and co-operate effectively makes a good contribution to their standards and the progress that they are making. They have pride in their achievements.
131. A very positive feature of the school's approach to physical education is the way in which pupils with special educational needs are fully included in all lessons. This allows the pupils concerned to work on the same programme and objectives as the rest of the class and motivates both them and their peers. They are making good progress and achieving well. In particular the support given in Year 6 by the classroom assistant is outstanding in enabling the pupil in her care to have full access to the curriculum.
132. The leadership and management in physical education are satisfactory. The co-ordinator is new to the post and has not been able to monitor planning. There is a

satisfactory scheme of work that ensures that all the areas of activity are covered systematically. No lesson observations have yet taken place and this makes it difficult for the co-ordinator to get a clear idea of the quality of teaching in the subject. Assessment arrangements and procedures are unsatisfactory and the school has yet to develop clear ways to ensure that the pupils' progress in physical education is monitored and checked as they move through the school.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

133. By the end of both key stages, standards are above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. The school has maintained the standards since the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs make good progress in developing their understanding of different faiths and customs and in their understanding of the impact that religious education has on their daily lives. Pupils' achievement, as they move through the school, is good because of the effective teaching and learning and through the well-planned interesting curriculum that is devised for them. The range of assembly themes enhances learning and achievement. There are good opportunities for all to gain new knowledge and older pupils have opportunities to extend their writing and research and this has a positive impact on their literacy development.
134. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a good knowledge about the Christian faith and how the stories of the birth and life of Jesus and some of the main events that took place in his life. They are able to recall, for example, the main events leading up to and including Christmas and Easter. They study symbols from other religions and other forms of religious expression such as Sukkoth. By the end of Year 2, pupils' knowledge is developing appropriately, enhanced by appropriate visits and visitors. Effective cross-curricular links are made. For example, pupils in Year 1 made a multi-coloured coat for Joseph using art and design technology skills, and using their literacy skills to report on the task.
135. By the end of Year 6, pupils have built on their knowledge and understanding of religions, studying the Islamic and Hindu religions and they ably discuss and contrast the main elements of these faiths with those of the Christian tradition. Such studies make good cross-curricular links with history, art, mathematics and information and communication technology. For example, in a good observed lesson in Year 5 pupils, showed that they understood the significance of the 'OM' symbol in Hinduism and developed their own symbols to illustrate the most important elements in their own lives. By the end of the key stage, pupils demonstrate a good recall of the facts learnt about Islam and were in the preparatory stages of collecting information to be presented in leaflet or poster form, to inform people with little knowledge of Islam beliefs and practices. Effective cross-curricular links here have included the design of prayer mats, which incorporated mathematical and artistic skills.
136. The overall standards of teaching and learning are good. Planning is thorough and covers the requirements of the agreed syllabus and teachers identify effective links with other subjects that impact well on the pupils' learning. Resources and artefacts are well used by teachers to enliven the subject and this helps to reinforce the pupils' interest in the subject. Assessment, currently informal, takes place at the end of each module and the results are fed into the scheme of work in order to plan what learning the pupils should undertake next. Pupils with special educational needs are included well. The co-ordinator took over the leadership and management of the subject in January this year and has had very little opportunity to make an impact on provision. Useful resource packs for each module in the scheme have been developed and once fully implemented should help to reinforce the pupils' learning still further.