

INSPECTION REPORT

FRIDAY BRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Friday Bridge, Wisbech

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110633

Head teacher : Mrs Jayne Williams

Reporting inspector: Mrs Barbara E Doughty
22261

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th October 2002

Inspection number: 250969

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Maltmas Drove Friday Bridge Wisbech Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE14 0HW
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Reach
Date of previous inspection:	27 th April 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs Barbara E Doughty Registered inspector 22261	The Foundation Stage curriculum Education inclusion Special educational needs Science Art and design Design and technology Religious education	What sort of school it is and what it should do to improve further The school's results and pupils' achievements How well the pupils are taught How well the school is led and managed
Mr Peter Oldfield Lay inspector 1112		How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with parents
Mr John Linstead Team inspector 20948	English Information and communication technology Physical education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils are
Mrs Christine Canniff Team inspector 18703	Mathematics Geography History Music	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a small village primary school that caters for boys and girls aged four to eleven. There are 101 pupils on roll, with 12 per cent more girls than boys. The school serves a fairly rural community and 12 per cent of the pupils travel to school by bus. There is an average take-up of free school meals, around 11 per cent, but this is not an accurate reflection of the pupils' circumstances. The school is situated in one of the most impoverished areas of Cambridgeshire. Unemployment is above average and income is low; much of the work is seasonal agricultural work. There is a broadly average number of pupils with special educational needs, 19 per cent, and twice the national average percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, but there is a small number with behavioural difficulties. All of the pupils are from white English speaking families. Thirteen per cent are from Traveller families. Pupil mobility is high at nearly 22 per cent, taking the last three years together. Attainment on entry is below that typically found elsewhere. There are four classes, always with more than one age group in them. Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. Two of the four teachers are new and there have been temporary absences, which have been difficult to deal with because of problems in recruiting supply staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils do well from starting school to leaving because of effective teaching. Despite their below average attainment on entry, pupils attain broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. This is because very good leadership and management by the head teacher promote a team spirit and an atmosphere in which everyone is valued. Consequently, teachers feel supported and most pupils are very secure learners; pupils and staff work hard to improve standards. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Most pupils make good progress over time because of effective teaching and learning.
- Standards are above those expected in religious education and art and design at the end of the infants and juniors.
- Very good teaching and learning opportunities in Reception means that children get off to a good start.
- Teaching is organised extremely well in the first three classes to accommodate mixed ages in the same class.
- The school meets the needs of Traveller children and pupils with special educational needs well.
- Pupils enjoy their work and behave well because of the good range of learning opportunities, which they find extremely interesting.
- The care shown for pupils is exceptional; the provision for pupils' personal and social development is very good and everyone gets on very well together because of this.

What could be improved

- Brighter pupils do not do well enough in English, mathematics or science by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to practise information and communication technology (ICT) skills in relevant situations.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since its last inspection in 1998. This is because improvements in leadership and management have resulted in all of the key issues being dealt with. Standards in science and ICT have improved from below expected levels to in line; those in religious education and art have gone from as expected nationally to above. Good teaching has been maintained in the infants and juniors and led to standards rising at a greater rate than nationally. Reception children now make good progress and most of them attain the early learning goals by the time they start Year 1. Parents are happier than they were four years ago because this is a much more successful, caring and approachable school.

STANDARDS

Results are rarely published. This is because fewer than 10 pupils usually take the tests, making comparisons with what is happening nationally unreliable. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress given their below average attainment on entry. Most of them achieve at least the expected level in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. Between 1997 and 2001, the trend of improvement in test results was greater than that found nationally and year by year the school achieved closer to the national picture. There was a dip, however, in 2002, when not all pupils did as well as they should have done. This was mainly because of disruptions to their learning in the lower juniors, which have been dealt with. This year standards are set to rise again and the school is likely to meet its targets. However, whilst the majority of pupils are working within the expected level for their age, reflecting good progress, the brighter pupils are not attaining as well as they could. In writing, pupils do not learn to write in different styles. In mathematics, they make errors in some of their written calculations, such as when multiplying and dividing three-digit numbers, and do not interpret graphs and diagrams accurately. In science, they have difficulty forming and testing hypotheses, selecting appropriate methods and equipment, and drawing and recording conclusions, preventing them from attaining the higher level.

Standards in art and religious education are above those expected by the time the pupils leave the school. Pupils have a good awareness of artistic skills and techniques of famous artists and use them well in their own artwork. Their knowledge of world religions is good and they have clear views on their own beliefs. Standards in all other subjects are broadly as expected at the end of the infants and juniors, but pupils make too little use of their ICT skills to support work in other subjects.

Children do well in Reception and the infants, mainly due to effective teaching. Most children attain the early learning goals in all six of areas of learning and do exceptionally well in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly as expected in reading, writing, mathematics and science, with an increasing number of pupils each year attaining the higher level. Pupils with special needs and those from Traveller families do well, mainly because of effective teaching and support. In the past, girls have usually done better than the boys, but the school has worked hard to deal with this and in lessons, they do as well as each other and are given equal attention from the teachers and support assistants.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic learners. They often cheer when homework is set and talk excitedly about what they are doing and have done. They follow the teachers' instructions, work hard, and listen attentively.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave well in and out of lessons. Older pupils take care of their younger schoolmates and pupils from all backgrounds get on well together.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils listen to each other and patiently wait their turn to speak. However, there are too few opportunities for older pupils in particular to show initiative, for example in science investigation work.
Attendance	Below average. Although most pupils show enthusiasm for school and enjoy coming, there are one or two families who reduce the attendance rate through children's persistent absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching and learning are good and consequently most pupils do better than could reasonably be expected from starting school to leaving. The teaching in Reception is very effective and children do well in their first year in school. Teachers throughout the school manage pupils' behaviour and learning well, and lessons run smoothly. Teachers and classroom assistants plan lessons very thoroughly and get all of the resources ready beforehand so that no time is lost. Their explanations are clear and their questions extend pupils' thinking well. This is because teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn by the end of each lesson. As they tell the pupils this, pupils see purpose in what they are doing and, most importantly, understand the need to work hard. Pupils with special needs and those from Traveller families do as well as their schoolmates because teaching takes good account of their needs.

The teaching of basic skills including those, in particular, of literacy and numeracy is good from Reception to Year 5, and sound in Year 6. English and mathematics teaching is good overall, but again is better from Reception to Year 5 than it is in Year 6. This is because in the first three classes, teachers make good use of pupils' previous knowledge and understanding to set challenging work for those of different attainment. However, this is not the case in the Year 5/6 class where not enough work from the higher level is used to challenge the brighter pupils. This means that the school does not meet the needs of all pupils equally well and not enough of the brightest pupils attain the higher level by the time they leave the school. In all years, teachers' marking does not show pupils what and how to improve their work or set them personal targets for their next piece of work. The oldest pupils are given insufficient opportunities to show initiative, such as by setting hypotheses in science and planning their own experiments. They are not encouraged to show pride in their work by presenting it neatly or to look for ways to improve it next time. The teaching of ICT is sound, but teachers do not give pupils enough opportunities to use their ICT skills in other subjects.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good. Learning opportunities are rich and varied, including visits and visitors. They interest the pupils and make their life at school enjoyable.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support assistants guide these pupils extremely well; they help them to understand what is expected of them and, if necessary, explain the work more clearly.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. Pupils are taught to respect the different cultural heritage of each other and they gain enrichment from the knowledge and experience of others' beliefs and customs.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has high regard for the pupils' well-being. Good behaviour is promoted exceptionally well through effective policies and consistently implemented procedures.

The school works well in partnership with parents. The support teacher for Traveller children teaches each class in turn and because he always chooses a theme from Traveller tradition, promotes the culture exceptionally well. The Foundation Stage curriculum is very good because it is based on children learning through observation and exploration. No one area of learning is taught in isolation and children learn a variety of skills from each activity. This is because of very effective planning that identifies all of the skills to be developed from each task.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Good. The head teacher gives very good direction for the future. She has a very clear idea about where the school is going and how to make it more successful. She gives effective support where it is most needed and involves the English, mathematics and science subject leaders fully in bringing about improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have an adequate awareness of the strengths and areas for improvement.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The priorities for development are relevant to the needs and circumstances of the school and the school takes effective action to bring about improvement over time. Hence standards have risen at a greater rate than nationally.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The principles of best value are applied soundly, but the governors are holding a lot of money in reserve so that they can deal with the predicted fall in numbers in two years time. However, there are things that they need now, such as computers.

Effective evaluation of why some Year 6 pupils last year did not perform as well as they might has led to some useful strategies being put in place in order to ensure that it does not happen again. However, not enough is done to evaluate how well different groups are doing. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate, but there are insufficient computers to enable pupils to practise the skills taught and use them in different situations. Too much time elapses between the teaching of the skills and pupils using them.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • The progress their children make and the standards they achieve. • The way in which staff help children to become mature and responsible. • The quality of the teaching and the way children are taught right from wrong. • The approachability of staff and the way the school works with them and keeps them informed about how well their children are doing. • The leadership and management of the school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of work their children are given to do at home. • The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspection team agree with all of the parents' positive comments but not their concerns. Homework arrangements are satisfactory and the work the pupils are asked to do at home makes a good contribution to their work in school. It is relevant to their class work and, most importantly, pupils enjoy doing it. The range of extra-curricular activities is adequate but not extensive. However, this is a small school, making fewer staff available to run lunchtime and after-school clubs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils do well at this school and, from the low attainment on entry, standards are higher than could reasonably be expected in English, mathematics and science by the time the pupils leave the school. When pupils start school, there is a significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. However, the school has worked hard to redress this balance and there is strong evidence to show that this now diminishes as pupils move through the school so that in lessons and by the time they leave the school, boys and girls attain at about the same level.
2. Most children attain the early learning goals by the end of Reception in personal, social and emotional, language and literacy, mathematical, physical and creative development. They are confident and secure learners. Most add two numbers confidently up to ten and take away from 20 using fingers. They count up to 30 in ones, 12 in twos, and 100 in fives and tens. Children's communication, language and literacy skills are particularly weak on entry. However, they do very well to attain the early learning goals by start of Year 1, when they speak confidently and communicate well in sentences. They form letters correctly and know most initial sounds. They have favourite books and stories, such as *Don't put your finger in the jelly, Nelly*. They understand the term 'author' and 'illustrator', and talk about the main characters in stories. Likewise, their knowledge and understanding of the world are good and they are well prepared for their National Curriculum work in science, ICT, history, and geography. For example, they use the computer confidently to paint pictures and print them. They name parts of a plant correctly and sort animals and creatures according to features, such as those that fly, crawl and swim. They draw birds' eye maps of their journey to school and name special features of the village of Friday Bridge, such as the water tower.
3. Likewise, achievement is good in the infant classes and standards are broadly as expected by the end of Year 2, having risen from well below average in 1999 to above average in 2002, when a higher than usual number of pupils attained the higher level in reading, writing and science. This is because teachers have good regard to what pupils need to learn next and use this information well to give the brighter pupils work from the higher level in English, mathematics and science.
4. Similarly, standards in the juniors have risen steadily since 1997, when pupils' attainment was well below expected levels in English, mathematics and science. In 2001, with standards close to the national picture, the school received a government award for rising achievement. However, in 2002, this improving trend came to a halt. This was because, whilst most pupils made satisfactory progress from the end of Year 2, some of them did not do as well as expected in the Year 6 tests. This was mainly due to gaps in their learning, exacerbated by staffing disruptions in 2000/2001, when these pupils were in Year 5. The head teacher spent a lot of time and energy supporting temporary teachers in that class, but even so, the following year, when these pupils were in Year 6, it became clear that some of them were not on course to attain the expected level. Although the head teacher withdrew some pupils for additional booster work, there were too many gaps in their learning that left too much to be done. Consequently standards fell in that year and pupils made sound progress, at best, with some evidence of underachievement.
5. However, all teaching staff are now on permanent contracts and the school is back on track to meet its targets at the end of this year. From the work seen, past test results and talking with Year 6 pupils, most are set to attain the expected level in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. However, not enough of them are working within the higher level. In English, whilst their writing is generally interesting and ideas are sustained and

developed, they do not write for a variety of different readers or choose a style appropriate for the occasion. Their mathematical data-handling skills are not advanced enough to attain the higher level and they make careless mistakes in computation of larger numbers. Equally, scientific enquiry skills are insufficiently developed; whilst pupils predict what might happen and then record what did happen, they do not say why. For example, they concluded that treacle flows through a funnel faster than water, but did not say why this was so. They do not confidently plan investigations and some do not understand the word 'hypotheses'.

6. However, with the exception of the oldest brighter pupils, the school meets the needs of all other pupils well. Those with special educational needs make good progress. This is because their personal targets are precise and attainable. Teachers have good regard to these in lessons such as, "Focus without prompting for five minutes" and "Improve speed of two, three and four times tables". These pupils are often supported well by classroom assistants, who guide them appropriately, reiterating what the class teacher has told them and simplifying, if necessary, the language used. Likewise, Traveller pupils make the same good progress as their schoolmates. This again is due to good teaching and effective support.
7. Standards in religious education and art and design are good by the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils of all ages have an increasing understanding that religion plays an important part in people's lives. They enjoy "finding out about other people and what they do in their lives" and show great interest in what others believe and how it affects the way in which they live. Year 3 pupils know, for example, that Muslims pray facing Mecca. Knowledge of world religions is good and Year 6 pupils talk confidently about the history of Buddhism and compare it with Christianity. They reflect sensibly and respectfully on the way in which Muslim women hide their faces in public, declaring, "If you believe in something different, it doesn't matter".
8. The artwork around the school and in pupils' portfolios and sketchbooks is of good quality. Year 6 pupils have drawn intricate pictures of fruits, showing shape and texture well. Their drawings of a motorbike are detailed well and show good use of shading to create shadow and depth. This is mainly because of the effective support from a visiting artist, who teaches the pupils new skills and techniques, which they then practise in class art lessons until his next visit.
9. Standards in ICT are in line with expected levels, but pupils do not use the skills they are taught well enough to support work in other subjects. This is partly because the little time they get working on the three computers in each class is mainly spent practising the skills taught earlier in the week rather than using them in relevant situations. Standards in all other subjects are broadly as expected.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour, personal development and relationships are very good. These continue to be a strength of the school as they were at the time of the last inspection.
11. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their learning and school life generally. In lessons, they listen attentively and are interested in the work. They sustain this interest from the beginning of lessons to the end and are keen to share what they have learned. For example, pupils in Years 2 and 3 eagerly told their classmates about the poems they had read and each received a spontaneous round of applause when they had finished speaking. In one lesson, despite it being at the end of the day, Year 1 and Reception children eagerly discussed the characters in a book they had read to them. They had sustained their interest from the morning's literacy lesson with a similar theme. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 were delighted when told they were going to look at witches' spells and again when an ICT lesson was announced. In Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils cheered when given homework.
12. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and play a full part in lessons; their teachers take care to include them in discussions and encourage them to participate. Two

pupils were excluded for short periods during the previous year but this is exceptional. Pupils are well motivated and want to do their best, fully understanding the consequences of not doing so.

13. The rate of attendance has fallen since the last inspection and is well below the national average. However, the figures are unduly affected by a very small number of families and the movements in and out of the school of others who have to remain on the school register until they enrol elsewhere. The school discourages the taking of holidays during term times and the vast majority of parents abide by this. However, again a small number of families do not and they are raising the percentage of absence that, in turn, is impacting on the school's overall attendance rate. Pupils invariably arrive on time and lessons start promptly.
14. The behaviour of pupils is good both in lessons and at other times. Pupils of all ages know and understand the school rules and in the older classes have helped devise them. In an assembly, a visiting speaker generated a lot of excitement and laughter but pupils immediately responded to his signal to fold their arms and listen. Pupils play together well at break times with older pupils acting as 'guardians' to younger ones. The school council recently decided to make positive efforts to involve younger pupils in the games the older ones play so that they might enjoy breaks more. In lessons, pupils listen to what others have to say and show their appreciation when good things have been achieved, for example, when complimenting their classmates on their choice of graph or when trying a new voice for a character in a play. Pupils are polite to each other and the teachers. They know when their actions may have affected others and apologise when necessary. They help each other by discussing their work or lending their equipment, and by working together on computers. They respect each other's feelings and beliefs. This was apparent when pupils discussed different religions with an inspector and pupils showed a surprising maturity. They felt everyone was entitled to follow their beliefs and that people should be allowed to worship in their own way.
15. Relationships throughout the school are very good and play a significant part in pupils' personal development. Pupils respond well to the teachers, who treat them with respect and value what they have to say. The school council meets regularly and the pupils involved feel they have a say in the running of the school and can point to several ideas they have had which have been taken up. These include lunchtime duty rotas, the introduction of discos, and the support of different charities.
16. Pupils, in particular the older ones, are willing to take responsibility and show initiative. In science, however, older pupils are not given enough opportunities to devise their own experiments, with teachers often carrying them out while pupils watch. These methods deny pupils the chance to develop independence as well as to experience investigations at first hand. Teachers are encouraging, and create an atmosphere where pupils feel they can say or try things without the fear of being 'wrong'. Young pupils new to the school settle quickly and are soon gaining confidence, for example, holding their own with older pupils when discussing texts and the merits of different foods in their lunchboxes. Pupils see the good relations that exist between the staff and take from these examples, which they can aspire to. Adults work well together in lessons, again providing good examples for pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teachers manage the teaching of different year groups exceptionally well. In the youngest class, for example, the Reception children, who are new to school, are taught with the Year 1 pupils and in the next class, the Year 2 pupils are taught with some of Year 3. The teachers and classroom assistants in both classes cope very well with this situation and provide relevant activities for both age groups. For example, in a science lesson in the split infant and junior class, the teacher talked first with the Year 2 pupils and explained their work to them whilst the classroom assistant supported the Year 3 pupils. The groups then swapped over, with the Year 3 pupils being taught a new idea whilst the classroom assistant helped the Year 2 pupils with an experiment into growth. This is

achievable because teachers are well aware of the needs of the pupils through well-focused assessment of what pupils already know and need to learn next.

18. Throughout the school, lessons usually run smoothly. They have purpose and direction because the teachers are clear about what pupils are going to learn by the end. They share this with the pupils so that they, in turn, see the purpose of working hard. Teachers give clear explanations and questions focus on extending pupils' understanding. For example, "Does this poster do its job?" encouraged Year 6 pupils to think about the need to make written instructions clear.
19. Teaching is interesting and makes learning enjoyable, particularly in the first three classes. For example, the teacher of the Year 3, 4 and 5 class brought in flower heads for the pupils to take apart, examine and draw in science. Pupils were spellbound as they discovered pollen and "fine hairs" on the inside of the iris petals and carefully drew them, looking through magnifying glasses so that they were sure to include every detail. In the Reception/Year 1 class, a pregnant mum came in regularly throughout last year to talk about the progress of her unborn baby, to show pupils the scans, and tell them about her preparations for the birth. Once the baby was born, she brought him in to show the pupils. They measured, weighed and bathed him, and compared his measurements with their own. They are looking forward to seeing him again and plotting his progress through his second year. In a Year 2/3 design and technology lesson, the teacher and classroom assistant created lots of excitement when they showed pupils a mat woven from reeds. The assistant pretended that she was going to use it as a place mat from which to eat her dinner. The pupils excitedly suggested lots of reasons why she couldn't do that such as, "If you spill something, it will go through the holes". The adults then challenged the pupils to make a waterproof placemat using the same weaving technique. Pupils rose to the challenge and made some excellent placemats from paper weaving, which they then laminated.
20. Pupils with special educational needs and those from Traveller families do equally as well as their schoolmates because of effective teaching. As well as supporting individual pupils in lessons, the Traveller support teacher teaches each class in turn. He expertly chooses a theme from the Traveller tradition and heritage, such as following instructions for plaiting when looking at instructional texts in a literacy lesson and designing and making bender tents in design and technology. This respectfully celebrates the heritage of these pupils, makes them feel special, and reflects the inclusive ethos of the school. Those pupils with special needs are supported very effectively. Trained learning support assistants work closely with teachers to meet the targets in the pupils' individual learning programmes. Work is appropriate and because of this, these pupils usually do as well as their classmates in lessons.
21. Children learn very well during their first year in school. This is because the Reception teacher's understanding about the way in which young children learn has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is due, in the main, to very effective in-service training for herself and the classroom assistant. They provide many opportunities for children to learn through observation and exploration. For example, these children, who have been in school for only a few days, start the lesson on the carpet with their Year 1 classmates. They join them, for example, reciting counting rhymes or listening to a story. During their first half term children spend an increasingly longer time being taught on the carpet before leaving their Year 1 classmates and going to the activities set up in the classroom and outside. For example, they buy things from the shop, extending their knowledge of money, or build with the bricks, developing their physical and creative skills. The adults are very clear about what the children will learn from each activity, all of which are purposeful and relevant. Each day, the teacher sets up different activities, choosing them carefully to promote a relevant range of skills, knowledge and understanding. Because of this, the adults' intervention in children's learning is always effective. For example, they ask children who are playing in the class shop, "How much?" in order to develop their awareness of money, or "What sort of shops have buns for sale?" to promote knowledge and understanding of the world. They take note of which

children visit which activity and those not experiencing the full range are sensitively guided to try something else.

22. The teaching of the infant children is good, as is that in the class of Year 3, 4 and 5 pupils. This is mainly because the teachers of these classes keep and use day-to-day records of what pupils have learnt and use this information to decide whether to revisit an idea in the next lesson, or move on to the next. However, this is not the case in the oldest class, where some unsatisfactory teaching was seen. This is because teaching takes too little notice of what pupils already know and need to learn next. Expectations of what the brighter pupils can achieve are too low and teaching makes little use of work from the higher levels in the subject guidelines; pupils are set the same work, based on their age, regardless of what they already know. Often the work is too teacher directed and pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to show initiative, such as setting hypotheses in science and planning experiments. Pupils do not have a secure enough understanding of their own learning because they do not have personal targets and little to challenge them to achieve more. This is exacerbated further because, in this class and throughout the school, marking does not tell pupils what to improve and how to do this.
23. The teaching of religious education and art and design are good. In religious education pupils are encouraged to think about their own beliefs, but are also taught about those of others. They have many opportunities in religious education lessons and personal, social and health education (PSHE) sessions to reflect on what is happening in the world and the different religions and cultures represented in it. Consequently, they show mature thinking for their age. In art and design, a visiting artist's demonstrations and effective teaching of skills and techniques inspire pupils to have a go. Consequently, they are enthusiastic learners and try hard to recreate, in texture and form, precisely what they see. They practise hard between his visits, encouraged by the class teachers to remember what he has told them.
24. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory. Pupils are taught new skills together as a class. They then get to practise these skills when it is their turn to go on one of the classroom computers. However, because they sometimes have to wait several days for their turn, much of their time is spent practising the skills taught rather than using them in relevant situations, such as to support work in other subjects.

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

25. The school provides a good range of activities that covers all subjects and is relevant to the age and interests of the pupils. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection and now provides very well for the needs of all pupils in each of the areas of learning. Pupils make good progress and achieve well against their attainment on entry to the school.
26. At the last inspection, planning in several subjects was criticised for not identifying what pupils should know and what levels they should reach. The curriculum in the infants and junior classes is now mostly based on national guidance and legal requirements are fully met. This guidance has improved the quality of what should be taught in each year group to make sure pupils build on what they learned before.
27. However, ICT is not used enough to help pupils learn in other areas. This is because of the way the teaching of computer work in particular is organised. Skills are class taught and then pupils practise these when they have the chance to get onto one of the class computers. However, they often have to wait several days for this opportunity. Their time is then spent relearning and practising what they were taught earlier and this leaves them with very little time, if any, to put the skills to use.
28. The curriculum is good because it is enriched by additional support for those who need it and the good opportunities pupils are given to develop their PSHE. Pupils of lower ability benefit

considerably from early and additional literacy support, booster classes and 'Springboard' mathematics lessons. The school has made good use of the 'Reading Recovery' programme to improve the reading of all pupils. Sex education forms part of pupils' science work, and related issues and others to do with pupils' health and social well-being are very well covered in additional PSHE lessons. These are provided in all classes and contribute well to the all-round development of pupils.

29. Good use is made of visitors to the school and visits to places of interest to broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils make regular visits to places of interest, which they talk about enthusiastically. These include Duxford War Museum, the National Gallery and Ely Cathedral. Visitors to the school leave a lasting impression on pupils, who excitedly recall visits by many musicians and dancers. A local television artist makes a significant contribution to the teaching of art and design. The school makes good use of his expertise and pupils receive skilled teaching that considerably builds their skills and adds to their understanding.
30. The school successfully implements the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies to improve pupils' reading, writing and mathematical skills. Pupils have greater access to a range of different texts and reasons for writing than they had at the last inspection. This has improved their writing but there are still not enough opportunities for them to write in other subjects and for a variety of audiences.
31. Through the school's provision of additional support in English and mathematics, lower ability pupils have a greater understanding of the work in all other subjects. They take an appropriate part in these lessons and play a full part in school life generally. Traveller pupils receive good support when they need it and pupils with special educational needs are provided with appropriate work. They make good progress and often reach levels of attainment close to the expected levels. The needs of more able pupils in English, mathematics and science in Years 5 and 6 are not, however, being met. This is because the work planned for them does not take enough account of what they have already know and so often lacks sufficient challenge and pace. Few opportunities are taken to extend their work beyond what was planned which hinders the rate of progress they can make.
32. The school benefits well from its involvement with the local community and pupils have many enriching experiences. These include a day spent busking in the playground for charity and making paintings to display in a local exhibition. Pupils have received certificates from Wisbech Town football coaching scheme and visited the local residential home to entertain the elderly. Pupils in the junior classes have made good use of the local police 'Superhighway' scheme to use e-mail communication to solve a 'crime'. The school's provision on the dangers of drug misuse is supplemented well by the local authority sending a mobile exhibition to the school on a regular basis.
33. Overall, the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development is very good and a strength of the school. This is a significant reason why pupils' personal development is also very good.
34. The school's provision for spiritual development is good. Opportunities for spirituality are planned in religious education lessons when pupils reflect on their own and others' religious beliefs. Assembly themes are chosen carefully to help pupils empathise with others, often those less fortunate than themselves, and time is given when they can reflect on this. Music is used to generate mood, for example a warm feeling in a recent assembly about special people. Texts in English lessons often provide examples of how authors seek to understand the wonders of life. For example, poems about man's relationship with nature and animals were read by pupils in the junior classes. Younger pupils empathised with the sentiments expressed in poems about times remembered and sharing favourite moments. Pupils speak fondly of their visits to Ely Cathedral and especially about the performances they took part in there. Teachers too talk of these special moments and the look on pupils' faces when entering

the National Gallery. These enriching experiences have helped the school raise the standard of spiritual provision since the last inspection.

35. The provision for moral development is still very good. Pupils are fully aware of the school rules and the reasons why these are necessary. Older pupils have helped develop them and all pupils keep to the rules. The PSHE lessons explore moral and social issues well, helping pupils to come to an understanding of their importance. Each class has a time each week when they can share their ideas and talk about their experiences. These provide opportunities when pupils feel safe to raise fears and concerns of a moral nature under the guidance of a teacher. Assemblies are also used to explore moral issues. For example, during the inspection, pupils considered that favourite things did not have to be those that cost money. Pupils in the older classes decide for themselves that they want to raise money for certain charities and have recently chosen to collect presents for more needy children this Christmas.
36. The school's provision for social development is also very good, as it was at the last inspection. The whole ethos of the school is one of sharing and seeing everyone as equal. Teachers value the contributions of all pupils and encourage them to work together and share ideas. The very good relationships in the school are a testament to the success of its efforts to promote social harmony. Pupils know that the school believes no adult is more important than another and that they can approach any of them with problems. Older pupils look after younger ones at break times and help supervise while they drink their milk. In one class, younger pupils made genuine offers to share their lunchtime drinks with the teacher when she confessed to having forgotten her own.
37. The school has improved its provision for cultural development, which is now good. It recognises that many pupils have little experience of life other than within a restricted area. This is one of the reasons it set a high store on pupils visiting a variety of locations both near and further away. Through these, pupils learn of their own heritage, for example attending a Tudor workshop, the National Gallery, Duxford War Museum and Grafham Water Centre. Pupils' knowledge of other cultures has been extended well through the curriculum and the use of visits and visitors. Pupils have celebrated the Chinese New Year, for example, and participated in the performances of *African Madonna* in Ely Cathedral. The Traveller culture is explored well in the school, not least through the efforts of the visiting support teacher. He teaches in every class in the school and takes appropriate opportunities to tell of Traveller ways. Pupils helped him build a bender tent in the school's environmental area, while others used the 'art' of plaiting to help them learn how to write instructional texts.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. Very good procedures are in place for ensuring pupils' welfare. The school has a very high regard for the safety and care of all pupils and provides a caring and welcoming environment where all pupils are valued and where they receive a high level of support. Staff and adults have a genuine concern for pupils whatever their needs. The strong support the school provides gives them a good start and enables pupils to feel highly valued.
39. There has been appropriate training for child protection. All of the teachers are aware of how to recognise potential incidents, and discharge their duties very well. The school has a very high number of first aiders. Very good procedures are in place for dealing with minor injuries. Appropriate testing has been done of fire fighting and electrical equipment, and fire drills are carried out regularly.
40. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The head teacher has taken a keen interest in the need to improve attendance levels and has been monitoring absences for over 4 years and has introduced additional procedures over the years. She contacts parents for explanations and has already established a consistent approach to lateness – more than ten minutes late is recorded as an absence. Parents are supplied twice per year with a report clearly showing attendance statistics, with the head teacher adding

notes to draw attention to poor attendances. A few parents do not always follow the school's guidelines regarding holidays in term time, however, and persistent absence and some pupils remaining on the school register even though they have left has had a detrimental effect on the attendance rate.

41. The school has very good procedures in place to monitor behaviour. A large number of adults are always on hand to give clear guidance; this is in keeping with the philosophy of giving pupils stability and support during their school lives. The pupils are familiar with the school's requirements because the school and class rules are displayed around the school. They show a mature attitude and there was no sign of inappropriate behaviour during the inspection week. As a consequence, all pupils work and play happily together in a harmonious way. Pupils know that oppressive behaviour will not be tolerated and they respond very well.
42. Pupils with special educational needs and children from Traveller families receive good support. They are enabled to take a full part in the work of the school, often with classroom assistants and other adults working with them.
43. There are effective procedures in place for assessing and recording pupils' achievements in English, mathematics and science; the head teacher uses this information well to identify those pupils who need additional support in English and mathematics. Teachers in the first three classes make good use of what they know about pupils' previous learning to set all pupils suitably challenging work. Junior test papers are analysed and this gives Year 6 staff information about weaknesses in pupils' learning the previous year; they then use this information effectively to adapt long-term curriculum plans. However, teaching in this class does not make effective use of short-term assessment information to challenge, in particular, the brightest pupils, who are not given enough work from the higher levels.
44. Assessment in ICT is not good enough, with teachers tending to teach the skills from the teaching guidelines rather than using what they know about pupils' competencies in the subject to set them more challenging work or to get them to use these skills to support work in other subjects.
45. The procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. All adults know the pupils well; staff are encouraged to share any concerns they have about individuals. The school has well-developed reporting procedures; the progress of pupils' personal and social development is reported to parents in a formal report twice each year, which is much valued.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school has worked hard to improve its relationship with parents since the time of the last inspection when its partnership with them was sound. It is now good. Parents like this school and most of what it offers. The pre-inspection meeting they had with the registered inspector indicated that some parents had chosen to send their children to this school even though it was not the nearest. Other parents talked positively about the popular assemblies to which they and members of the local community are invited.
47. In order to gauge parents' opinions, the school sends out regular questionnaires and responds positively to any concerns that are raised. For example, clubs and events have been introduced in answer to the request for more extra-curricular activities; some of these are now at lunchtime, such as an art club.
48. The school has an 'open door' policy. This, along with the high profile of the head teacher around the school at the beginning and end of the day, means that parents feel able to come into school to discuss any concerns they have about what is going on in school. There are very good relations with parents of children in the Foundation Stage as most parents come to school every day, or visit the playgroup which rents a spare room in the school. The school has a formal meeting with parents of young children early into their first school term.

49. A few parents regularly help in class. In addition, the school works hard to encourage parents to support children's work at home by sending homework guidance and games that parents and children can play with together. Although there is no formal parents' association, there are always sufficient parents who are very happy to become involved in organising social and fund-raising events, which give support to the school for new equipment and outings.
50. Good information is provided for parents through regular newsletters that give a good view of the life and work of the school. Parents are always keen to support their children. At the parent and teacher consultation evenings, there is a high turnout; the few parents who cannot attend are separately contacted by the school and attempts made to set a convenient date. Reports on pupils' progress give information about the work done, what pupils have achieved, and what they need to learn next. Where pupils have taken national tests, parents are given clear tables for comparison with how other pupils in other schools have done.
51. The school has attempted to further encourage parents and give them full information by producing the school brochure and governing body annual report as one document. This provides good information.
52. The school is at the heart of the local community and enjoys a good range of visitors including a local vicar and community police officers; this further develops the social development and understanding for all pupils. Parents feel the school works hard to give their children the opportunity to grow and develop.
53. A few parents believe that homework is not always set but inspection evidence found this was being set regularly in all classes.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The school is well led and managed. The head teacher has a very clear idea about where the school is going and how to make it more successful. She leads with enthusiasm and determination and has achieved a team spirit within which she, staff and governors pull together in the same direction. Consequently, standards are rising and there is very good capacity for the school to improve further. She has implemented many effective procedures since the last inspection, when she was new to the post. These have brought about a continuous rise in standards, except for the dip in 2002. Her effective monitoring of and support for teaching and learning are improving the quality of both. Likewise, she listens to what pupils, parents and staff have to say and acts on their comments and suggestions, making everyone feel valued. She encourages pupils to think about their actions and always has time to listen to them.
55. The school has had some difficulties to contend with over the last two years, in particular with regard to staff absence and recruitment difficulties. A lot of the head teacher's time and energy has been spent supporting temporary teachers in Years 3, 4 and 5, which left her with little time to support the teaching in the Year 5/6 class. Last year, in particular, this was a difficult class, with a high number of pupils with special needs, which had already had a lot of disruption in Years 3 and 4. In 2002, standards fell and some pupils underachieved. The degree of underachievement was not picked up as early as it might have been. This is because, whilst there were systems in place to record pupils' achievements at the end of each year and identify those that were doing well and those that needed a boost, this information was not collated effectively. This meant that any drops in standards or slowing down of progress by all pupils or different groups of pupils were not quickly and easily spotted. However, this is now being dealt with and the head teacher has started to collate the information in an easy-to-interpret format. This reflects her willingness to try different things in order to find the most effective way of doing something.

56. Unlike at the time of the last inspection, when governors were not involved enough in strategic planning, they now have a clear idea of where they are going and what needs doing. They know what the priority areas for development are and that the main focus is on raising standards. However, a falling roll is predicted for 2004 and they are, understandably, starting to make contingency plans. They have looked at how classes might be organised to see them through this time, and the level of funding that should now be prudently set aside to cope with the changes. As a result, large sums are being held back and not being spent to benefit pupils who are currently at the school. This is unsatisfactory because, before they reserve funds for something that may or may not come to fruition in two years time, the governors are not ensuring that the pupils in school now have what they need. Nevertheless, they use grants and other funding effectively and fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. Their role in asking questions that help the school to ensure that it has the right priorities and is doing its best is developing satisfactorily over time.
57. This is a small school, with responsibilities shared amongst a few. This means that teachers take on the leadership of a number of subjects, which they do well in English, mathematics and science. Leaders of these subjects have a clear idea about what is happening in teaching and learning through observing lessons and looking at pupils' work. This has led to good improvements since the last inspection, and rising standards in all three subjects. In-service training relates well to issues raised through the monitoring of teaching and learning, and performance management targets are set regularly. Consequently, priorities for development are relevant to the needs and circumstances of the school and are financed appropriately.
58. The co-ordination of special needs is exceptionally good, reflecting the school's aims and values and its policy of making sure all pupils take part in what the school offers. The leadership and management of all other subjects are satisfactory, but co-ordinators have less of an idea of what is going on because they do not observe lessons or look at pupils' work. This is because the focus has been on the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. However, one of the school's identified priorities for improvement is to extend these procedures to other subjects, in particular, ICT and religious education.
59. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are adequate to meet the demands of the curriculum. The induction of new staff to the school is good and they are properly informed about school routines, policies and procedures. There is a good number of trained support staff to help pupils, especially those with special needs, and very good support for Traveller children. The accommodation is spacious and well laid out and there is an adequate range of learning resources, although there are insufficient computers in the classrooms for pupils to practise the skills they are taught and then use them in different situations.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. The head teacher, staff and governing body should now:

(1) Ensure that the oldest brighter pupils are sufficiently challenged to attain the higher level in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school by:

- i) making better use of what these pupils already know, understand and can do to set them suitably challenging work from the higher levels;
- ii) giving them more opportunities to show initiative to, for example, plan their own scientific experiments;
- iii) enabling them to write for different purposes and present their work in different ways, including using ICT;
- iv) ensuring that they experience data-handling in mathematics to a higher level and that they use the four calculations competently using large numbers.

(Paragraphs 5, 16, 22, 31, 43, 78, 83, 84, 86, 89, 92, 93, 100, 108)

(2) Improve teaching and learning opportunities in ICT by;

- i) making sure that pupils get enough opportunities to practise their ICT skills and then use them to support work in other subjects;
- ii) improving the assessment arrangements so that teachers can use the information more effectively to make sure that pupils are given suitably challenging work to extend their learning further;
- iii) monitoring teaching and learning in order to identify and deal quickly with any gaps in pupils' learning.

(Paragraphs 9, 24, 27, 44, 95, 112, 113)

In addition to the issues above, there are some minor areas for improvement identified in the report that the governing body should have regard to when writing their action plan:

1. Marking does not point the way to improvement or help assessment by making it clear how much support, if any, the pupils had in order to be able to do it. (Paragraphs 22, 87, 95, 101, 129)
2. Senior managers do not use the information they have about pupils from different backgrounds to check that they all learn equally well and no one checks on teaching and learning in subjects other than English, mathematics, science and physical education. (Paragraphs 55, 102, 109, 115, 119, 125)
3. Whilst the governors are holding a large amount of money in reserve for a predicted falling roll, there are things that they need to spend on now, such as more computers. (Paragraph 56)
4. Attendance rates are well below the national average and the school should continue to seek ways to improve it. (Paragraph 13)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

29

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

26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	16	9	3	0	0
Percentage	0	3	55	31	10	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

YR – Y6

Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	101
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

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	19

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
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Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.8
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2001	7	8	15

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (73)	80 (67)	80 (67)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	11	14
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (67)	73 (67)	93 (73)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	4	6	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	*	*	*
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	*	*	*
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	*	*	*
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

* Because fewer than ten boys and fewer than ten girls took the tests in 2001, the numbers at each level are omitted from the tables in line with the governors reporting arrangements to parents.

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	91	3	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR– Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Average class size	27.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	9.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	141

FTE means full-time equivalent

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
	£
Total income	329598
Total expenditure	322001
Expenditure per pupil	2850
Balance brought forward from previous year	66546
Balance carried forward to next year	74143

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1.5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	110
Number of questionnaires returned	27

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	33	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	52	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	56	44	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	44	37	15	4	0
The teaching is good.	70	30	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	59	30	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	74	26	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	56	37	4	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	33	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	78	22	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	41	22	0	0

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

61. The school has improved the provision for Reception children since the last inspection from satisfactory to very good. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. It is at least good in all areas of learning and very good in personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because all of the activities have a clear purpose and promote a wide range of learning opportunities. For example, the regular visits from a mum and her baby promoted mathematics when children measured the baby, history when they talked about how he had grown and changed from his first scan and since his last visit, science when thinking about what he eats, and communication when listening, asking questions, and talking about their observations.
62. Reception children are taught in a class with Year 1 pupils. The teacher and support assistant cope well with this situation and successfully manage to give the youngest children a good range of learning opportunities based on the Foundation Stage teaching guidelines. When these children start school, their attainment is below that typically found in most other schools, but they make good progress in Reception and by the time they start in Year 1 most attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, physical and creative development. Their personal and social skills are well developed and their knowledge and understanding of the world exceeds national expectations.

Personal, social and emotional development

63. This area of learning is promoted very well. On entry, children's social skills are immature and individuals mainly play and work alongside others, only rarely engaging in conversation. Occasionally in role-play situations they attempt negotiation, such as who will be the shopkeeper, but this is more in terms of one child instructing another. Nevertheless, by the end of their first year in school, they are confident and secure learners. They engage in conversation readily and talk enthusiastically about what they are doing and have done. For example, they talk about the village in which they live, their families, and what they like doing most. This confidence emerges over time because of the effective way in which they are taught. Activities are exciting and children are eager to try them. When they start school, they struggle to stay at one activity for any length of time, but as the year goes by they learn to concentrate so that, by the end of Reception, most sustain good concentration and focus on their work well. They are sensitive to others and when talking in a large group, patiently wait their turn, share equipment well and show exemplary behaviour. For example, in a mathematics lesson, groups of four or five new Year 1 pupils who had only just left Reception, looked at and discussed the features of different coins, without any support from an adult.
64. This enthusiasm is extended to the work done at home. Children are eager to be 'the one' to take home either 'Homework Ted' or 'Watchdog'. Activities children are given to do at home encourage parents to work with their children and often involve brothers and sisters as well!

Communication, language and literacy

65. From a low starting base, children do well in this area of learning by the end of their first year in school. When they start in Reception, some children struggle to maintain a conversation. Many do not talk in sentences and are reluctant to say what they are doing, mainly pointing and using short phrases to communicate. However, so effective are the teaching and the relationships between the adults and children, that by the end of the year, most children chatter happily about their work. They take turns in conversation and speak clearly and confidently. For example, when talking with an inspector, pupils who had only just left

Reception listened to each other with interest and responded politely to what others had to say.

66. Children enjoy writing and, by the end of the year, nearly all choose writing activities. Most of them form letters correctly. They know what sounds letters make in words and use this knowledge well to help them to read and spell. They write in sentences, answering questions such as, "Why is Teddy in bed?" with "Teddy is in bed because he is sleepy". Most write their own name and by the time they start in Year 1 write short stories, prayers and poems about, for example, a tree in the school grounds.
67. Reception children enjoy stories, mainly because the teacher's enthusiasm promotes a love of books when she reads to them. They know that authors write the books and illustrators draw the pictures. They quickly and easily locate particular poems in a poetry book, for example, by using the contents page. They have learning targets for the term, which are kept in their reading diaries so that their parents know what they are. Parents and teachers write messages to each other in these diaries and the twice-yearly reports inform parents well about what their children know and can do and what they need to work on next.

Mathematical development

68. This is another area of learning that is taught well. This is because there is a wealth of learning opportunities in the classroom and outdoor learning area, such as number lines and sets of objects to count, and shops with price lists, as well as number games to do at home. Teachers use every opportunity possible to encourage children to use mathematics in other activities, such as when sorting leaves according to size, colour and shape and when fitting conkers into shells; "I need a smaller one ... it's too big ... it doesn't fit", said one child, showing a developing understanding of size. By the end of the year, most children count up to 30 at least, and in twos to 12, and in fives and tens to 100. They add and subtract two numbers up to 20 and understand the idea of 'one more than'. They say and use number names accurately and positional language correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Very good promotion of this area of learning means that children are extremely well prepared for their National Curriculum work in Year 1. Work is based on observing and exploring. For example, children watched how a tree changed through the seasons, first predicting what they were most likely to find before they looked at it. They talked about how a baby grew in a "mummy's tummy" from looking at the scans and, once born, how his needs changed. They explored, for example, how at first he will need a pram "because he can't walk", and milk to drink "because he has no teeth". They followed his Christening with interest and offered reasons for him crying, saying, "He might be hungry" "or have a dirty nappy".
70. Teachers use every chance they get to promote children's learning, such as when a large puddle appeared in the playground. They looked at their reflections in it and floated leaves, discussing the movement of water generated by the wind. Children grow plants from seeds and by the end of Reception correctly name the stem, roots and leaves. Walks around the village draw children's attention to particular features such as the water tower and Post Office. They notice how builders use "a cutting machine" and how "You can post letters in the letter box round there". They see that the church has "a pointy roof" and that the clock tower is a rectangle shape. They draw maps of their journey to school and look at photographs of places and objects in and around school, such as the outside lights and the alarm bells, discussing why they are there. Visits from the local police, fire brigade and RSPCA develop their knowledge and understanding of 'people who help us'.
71. Designing and making skills are developed well. Last year, children made a vehicle from wood and plastic construction equipment to carry the class Teddy, and a sledge to carry Santa.

With their Year 1 classmates, they planned and prepared their own Christmas party, deciding what they wanted to eat. They agreed that if only six people liked something it would be wasteful to buy or make it. They wrote out a shopping list, went shopping, and then made buns, biscuits, sandwiches and jellies. The older children organised the games and served the food, taking good care of their younger schoolmates and promoting good relationships.

72. Children's computer skills are good. Most children use computers confidently to "dress Teddy" and draw pictures. They drag and drop parts of sentences so that they make sense and print off their work. They use tape recorders and microphones, operating them confidently and without adult support.

Physical development

73. Physical skills are taught well so that by the end of Reception, children move with good control and co-ordination. They balance quoits on their heads whilst walking and step cautiously from one stepping-stone to another. Their games of hopscotch develop balance and prepare children well for work on the large apparatus. They know that exercise makes their cheeks glow and their hearts beat faster. They use small equipment in the classroom, such as scissors and glue spreaders to cut and paste, and manipulate small plastic building bricks well, joining them to make models of houses and cars, for example. They use pencils and paint brushes confidently to write, draw and paint, and templates to make cut-out figures to dress.

Creative development

74. The teaching of this area of learning is good. Children paint and draw, and make collage pictures of, for example, paper plate faces. Their three-dimensional doughfaces, which they used to decorate calendars, were particularly effective. Equally so were their patterns made from threading wool through holes they had punched in card. The designing and making of model gardens promoted creative and mathematical skills well when children used, for example, tessellated shapes for the patio and rectangular paving slabs for the path.
75. Children's singing skills are developed well. They sang both the French and English version of Frère Jacques, for example, with enthusiasm and good voice control, singing tunefully and keeping the beat successfully.

ENGLISH

76. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' attainment in English is broadly in line with that expected nationally and pupils make good progress over time. They make particularly good progress in the infants and satisfactory progress in the junior classes. Test results are much better than they were at the time of the last inspection and standards have risen over time.
77. The school makes good use of the visiting Traveller support teacher who works in every class and Traveller pupils in the school reach similar levels of attainment as others. Likewise, pupils with special educational needs are very well supported so that they make good progress in all classes, with some reaching average standards.
78. The quality of teaching and learning is good in the infant classes so that pupils make good progress in all aspects of English. Overall, the teaching in the juniors is satisfactory but with some good teaching in the earlier year groups, where pupils' progress is more rapid. However, in the oldest class, more able pupils are not set challenging enough work so their achievements are not high enough.
79. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards in speaking and listening are broadly in line with those expected nationally. By the time they leave the school, many pupils are confident speakers,

such as those chosen to serve on the school council or take part in the drama productions. Teachers plan opportunities in each class throughout the year, for pupils to speak in different situations, including the use of puppets, tapes and story telling for younger pupils and editing magazines, play scripts and 'being detectives' for older ones. However, in some lessons opportunities are not always taken to ensure pupils answer fully. Too often one-word answers are accepted or questions posed which require only a brief response.

80. In the infant classes, teachers use discussion sessions well. All pupils are encouraged to answer questions, with teachers trying to draw in the less confident, and praising the efforts of all those who speak. Pupils' responses are used well as teachers often turn these into questions that encourage deeper thinking and a more detailed reply. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils became very animated when discussing the contents of lunchboxes and were keen to call out their ideas. Without dampening their enthusiasm, their teacher skilfully led them into observing the rules for talking. In this lesson, pupils' vocabulary was widened as the teacher introduced and explained new words. At the end of the day, when the subject was returned to, pupils expressed their views well with the youngest often talking in sentences. Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils became very excited at the prospect of taking the part of characters in a play during a literacy lesson. They entered into the spirit of the work well, tried to take on the characters by using different voices and then actions. They were even more excited when given the scripts to take home and learn.
81. Standards in reading are in line with national expectations by the end of Years 2 and 6 but progress is better than that reported previously as the school has improved what it does to help pupils learn. For example, the reference library has now been moved so that pupils can use it whenever they want. This means that they make greater use of this facility to find reference books to help them with their studies. However, the move is recent and pupils' library skills are still underdeveloped; for example, older pupils could not find a particular book quickly because they did not fully understand the categorisation system. In addition, the school makes more regular checks than it did at the time of the last inspection on the progress pupils are making in reading. The information gathered is used very well to identify which pupils need more support and then to provide the appropriate help, such as through additional literacy support and 'Reading Recovery' sessions, which help a large number of pupils make good and sometimes very good progress in reading.
82. Consequently, by the end of Year 2, most pupils read with suitable expression, fluency and accuracy, with the more able expressing a fondness for reading. Most pupils recognise an appropriate range of familiar words on sight and use different methods to try and read unfamiliar ones, such as sounding out letters or using picture or contextual clues. Pupils in each class show good understanding of the texts they read. In a class of Year 2 and 3 pupils, for example, they listened intently as their teacher read favourite poems. Afterwards the effective questioning by the teacher meant that pupils readily picked out the significance of the poets' words and expressed their own preference of what they liked. By the end of Year 6, the more able readers give their opinions about the sort of books they like and why. For example, one pupil gave several reasons why she preferred the book to the film version of *Tom's Midnight Garden*, realising that the latter was someone's interpretation of the book. They can predict and sum up what they have read although average readers are less sure about hazarding a guess at what might happen next. Teachers ensure a good range of books is explored in lessons so that pupils experience texts written for many different purposes. These include a good variety of poems and stories, instructional texts and information books.
83. Standards in writing are in line with those expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6, which again is good achievement for pupils when measured against their attainment on entry to the school. By the time they are seven, pupils write correctly punctuated sentences, often making them more elaborate by the use of joining words. Their spelling is good and their handwriting is legible; letters are usually well formed. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has ensured that pupils get more practice in writing for a range of purposes than was apparent at the last inspection. However, there are still not enough opportunities for them to

write at length, in different styles or in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, there is little writing in history, religious education or geography. This is also true in science where opportunities are missed to improve pupils' ability to record their predictions, method and findings in a scientific way. The good progress of pupils in the infant classes is largely a result of the quality and use of the day-to-day assessments their teachers make of what pupils are achieving. This enables them to set appropriate and challenging work and give the correct level of assistance.

84. By the time they are eleven, pupils' progress in writing is satisfactory rather than good as judged in the last report and their overall attainment is in line with what is expected for their age, which is below that reported then. This is because of gaps in their learning caused by earlier disruption in the provision of consistent teaching. In addition, assessment is not used well enough in the oldest class to provide work suitable for all abilities and so ensure good progress for all pupils. Although most pupils are on course to reach the expected levels of attainment, few are likely to exceed them. Older pupils do not get enough practice in writing for a range of audiences or purposes. Although computers are used to produce more attractive final copies of work, they are not used enough as a method of drafting and re-drafting work. This is because there are too few computers available at present for pupils to practise the skills they have been taught in ICT lessons and then use them to support work in English.
85. Pupils' attitudes are good; they quickly become absorbed in work when it is interesting and challenging. This is because teachers invariably start lessons with work that immediately grabs pupils' interest and, in the more successful lessons, sustains it to the end. Years 5/6 pupils became very excited, for example, when presented with a poster showing the witches in *Macbeth*. In another lesson, Years 3, 4 and 5 pupils could hardly wait to read a play script of a favourite book, while in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were intrigued by the possible contents of their teacher's lunchbox.
86. Overall, the standard of teaching is good because pupils make good progress and achieve levels higher than expected from their attainment on entry. Throughout the school, teachers and learning support assistants work together well. Assistants give skilled support to reading and writing groups and have been well trained to do so. In the infant classes and younger juniors, teaching is consistently good, mainly because teachers are aware of what pupils already know and use this information well to set them suitably challenging work. In the older junior class, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In this class, work is not always sufficiently challenging for more able pupils. Opportunities are not always taken to reinforce and extend learning through good questioning and clear instruction that would speed up progress.
87. In the infants, marking is mainly ticks to show pupils they have done the work correctly and words of praise to encourage them to work hard next time. Teachers set pupils targets to achieve each term and this shows pupils what they need to work on next. However, this is not the case in the juniors, particularly in the oldest class. Teachers' marking is again mostly ticks and 'smiley faces' but does not point the way to improvement, limiting the pupils' involvement in their own learning.
88. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has acted on the findings of the last report to improve what the school does. Very good additional help for those pupils who need it is provided and all staff have had a considerable amount of training to improve their teaching. The monitoring of the subject has improved, but the co-ordinator recognises that more rigorous scrutiny of pupils' work and improved assessment are needed to raise standards further. Good plans have been made to extend the additional help to the younger pupils and starting support programmes and booster sessions earlier in the year, to check more regularly on pupils' progress, and to use the analysis of test data to strengthen areas of weakness in pupils' understanding.

MATHEMATICS

89. The standards achieved in mathematics by seven and eleven year olds have risen since the last inspection. This is due to the improved teaching of mathematics, particularly in Years 1 and 2, and the way the school has successfully adopted the National Numeracy Strategy, with good emphasis given to the development of number skills. The majority of pupils in Year 2 are working at the expected level of attainment for pupils of this age. Given pupils' below average attainment at the start of their schooling, pupils make good progress because teaching throughout Years 1 and 2 is good. Most of Year 6 pupils are on course to attain the expected level due to the wide range of measures taken to boost pupils' learning this year. However, aspects of their learning, such as pencil and paper methods of calculation, are not as secure as they might be and not enough pupils are working within the higher level. This is due to some disruption to their learning when in the lower juniors and teachers' insufficient use of information from assessment to match the work closely to the needs of these pupils.
90. Good teaching is evident in Years 1 and 2, and in the younger junior class. A strong feature of the lessons is the mental calculation sessions. Pupils are keen to volunteer, and respond enthusiastically to the challenge of well-directed questioning which carefully extends their thinking from recall and consolidation of what is already known to new learning. For example, in the Year 2/3 class the session started with pupils recalling pairs of numbers that make 10. They began to apply this knowledge to finding pairs of numbers to make 20 and became very excited when they could clearly see the similarities between the patterns created. In the lower junior class, teaching is also good and the teacher encourages pupils to explain the strategies they use when adding near doubles such as $19 + 22$. This helps pupils to recognise patterns and learn different methods of calculation. In both lessons, teachers made good use of assessment to match their questions to pupils' needs. In the lower junior class the teacher planned a separate programme of mental mathematics for pupils with special educational needs. This focused work and the good support from the classroom support assistant enabled these pupils to make good progress in their understanding and accuracy of calculation.
91. Analysis of pupils' work shows that teaching in Year 2 moves pupils' learning forward at a steady pace and that planned opportunities to revisit ideas taught help to secure pupils' knowledge and understanding. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of number work and data handling are better than their knowledge of shape. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of number. At the beginning of the year they add and subtract numbers to 10, some with the use of apparatus such as number lines. By the end of the year, they are developing an understanding of place value, which they apply when adding and subtracting multiples of 10 and when carrying out calculations such as $23 - 18$. They begin to solve simple word problems using their knowledge of multiplication and division. More able pupils develop a sound understanding of the 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 times tables. They recognise the relationship between multiplication and division and also show an understanding of the idea of a remainder when dividing. Pupils identify lines of symmetry in simple shapes, but their knowledge of the properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes is less secure.
92. In Years 5 and 6 the teaching places strong emphasis on extending pupils' numeracy skills, but data handling is not covered in sufficient depth. Consequently, pupils' experience and knowledge of representing and interpreting data are not extended to include the expected range of line graphs and pie charts, or to introduce simple statistics, such as finding the mode, range, median or mean of a set of data. Some pupils do not achieve as well as they should because planning is not targeted carefully enough to pupils' precise needs. This results in more able pupils not being set challenging enough work and this limits their potential for achieving at a higher level. Daily assessments are not used well enough when planning the next steps in pupils' learning, and pupils' learning is not always established and errors corrected before moving on. Although they extend their knowledge of written methods of calculation, such as long multiplication and division of a three-digit by a two-digit number, their understanding is not always secure, resulting in errors. By the end of Year 6, pupils are

completing number problems which have two steps. In one lesson, the teacher's well-structured step-by-step guide to problem solving helped pupils to understand the processes involved. Pupils' errors were used positively to demonstrate ways in which pupils could check their work for mistakes. They recognised when two fractions have the same value and began to convert a fraction to a decimal using division, and used this knowledge to find fractions and percentages of numbers or quantities, for example $\frac{1}{6}$ of 40. Pupils understand how to calculate the perimeter and area of simple compound shapes that can be split into rectangles.

93. Teaching and learning are good and have improved since the last inspection, particularly in Years 1 and 2 where teaching is now good. Reasons for this include improved teacher subject knowledge and better questioning strategies. Purposeful questioning is better in the infants, helps pupils to develop a clear understanding of new knowledge and enables pupils to develop thinking and reasoning skills. The strategy of lessons with a common theme is now well established and learning is good because the teachers ensure that the main focus of the lesson is clearly understood by all pupils. In all classes pupils generally respond well and are enthusiastic and keen to show their new learning. This leads to a good pace in whole class sessions. However, in the Year 5/6 class, the pace slows during independent work because the teacher does not expect enough of pupils, a significant minority of whom spend too much time talking. Consequently, they do not get the practice they need and this results in shaky understanding.
94. A notable feature of most lessons is the good use made of classroom support assistants to help pupils with special educational needs and less able pupils. The assistants are well informed and have a good understanding of their role. They know the pupils well and help them to develop confidence. Teaching focuses on what they need to learn, particularly in the infants and lower juniors, and the good support helps them to achieve success.
95. The subject leadership is effective. The co-ordinator has monitored teaching and learning and has a clear overview of the subject. There are appropriate targets for the subject's further development. The co-ordinator analyses the results of annual tests to identify which aspects pupils understand and which need more focus. However, not all teachers make enough use of this information to adapt their planning. Teachers' marking is ineffective. Their comments in pupils' workbooks contain very few pointers on how pupils might do better next time, for instance identification of where errors have been made or to set short-term targets such as learning the 6 times table. Pupils have opportunities to use their numeracy skills in other subjects, for example co-ordinates in geography and data handling in ICT, but more could be made of these skills and the use of computers further developed.

SCIENCE

96. The school has worked hard over the last four years to raise the profile of science and improve standards and progress from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Planning is better than it was and there is much more emphasis on learning scientific facts through investigation and experimentation. The co-ordinator now monitors teaching and learning and has a good overview of what is happening and what needs improving next.
97. Standards in science are now broadly as expected by the age of seven and eleven. However, they are better at the end of the infants than they are by the end of the juniors. This is because more pupils attain the higher level in the infants due to more effective teaching, which successfully challenges the brighter pupils to do well.
98. The quality of teaching is good in the first three classes, where pupils make good progress. This is because most of the work is based on experimenting and investigating. The school has focused successfully on improving this aspect of science since the last inspection, which is working well in the infants and lower juniors. For example, in a Year 3/4/5 lesson, the first on exploring and learning about the life cycle of a flowering plant, pupils' interest was captured when they dissected flower heads and looked at them through magnifying glasses. They

focused in particular on the bit that contained the seeds, realising that these were important in plant reproduction. They were spellbound as they laid the flower heads carefully on white paper so that they could see them clearly, took the heads apart and then drew different sections carefully to show where the seeds were located.

99. Very good preparation in this lesson and the Year 2/3 lesson seen, meant that both lessons ran smoothly and no time was lost. This is because teachers in these two classes plan lessons well, and their good use of subject language in particular means that pupils, in turn, talk knowledgeably about their work. Year 2 pupils, for example, explained that plants “need water, sun, food and air” to make them grow and carefully set up their investigations to show this. In Year 5, the teacher’s probing questions found out that pupils already knew that “roots draw water and food from the soil and anchor the plant”, before going on to study with them the life cycle of a flower. This careful analysis of pupils’ previous learning, which goes on in the first three classes, means that teachers know how to build on pupils’ existing knowledge and because of this they pitch the work at the right level and move on to a new idea at just the right time. This makes learning secure and pupils confident about what they know and need to learn next. Their work is neatly presented and well laid out, showing pride.
100. In contrast, however, the teaching in the oldest class does not build well enough on pupils’ previously acquired skills and understanding. Most pupils do the same tasks and learn the same things, regardless of their age or aptitude and little work from the higher level is attempted. Investigations are still too teacher directed and pupils have insufficient opportunities to formulate hypotheses, plan and organise experiments and draw conclusions. Whilst their knowledge of scientific facts is adequate to enable them to attain the expected level by the end of Year 6, they spend too much time writing up demonstration experiments carried out by the teacher without asking questions about what happened and why. This lessens their understanding and slows the development of their scientific enquiry skills. For example, Year 6 pupils struggled to explain what the teacher putting iodine on leaves proved, saying, “The leaf that was covered keeps the food in”. Many of these pupils have not heard the word ‘hypotheses’ and do not have a clear enough idea about how to plan and conduct an experiment to test an idea. Their writing is confused and their diagrams not as clear as they should be. They struggle to reach a conclusion because they do not really understand what they are trying to find out.
101. Resources are used well, such as the school pond and videos. The environmental area is developing well and is to be used to further pupils’ observational skills. The annual science week raises the profile of science as an important subject and makes the pupils realise that being ‘a scientist’ is a feasible choice of career. The use of ICT to support work in science is sparse, but adequate. Pupils communicate ideas and test results through writing up experiments and recording data on tables, charts and graphs. Likewise, their work in science promotes learning in other subjects satisfactorily. They measure how tall their seedlings have grown in Year 2, for example, and the lengths of different bones in a skeleton in Year 4. PSHE is promoted well when pupils investigate the dangers of smoking, the effects of unhealthy eating, and the dangers of drugs misuse. However, throughout the school, marking does little to tell pupils what they have done correctly and incorrectly or how to improve their work next time.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102. Good improvements have been made to teaching and learning in both subjects since the last inspection. Standards in art have improved from in line to above those expected at the age of seven and eleven because of good teaching, and in design and technology from below to in line because of satisfactory teaching. However, no one checks on teaching and learning and this means that the subject leaders’ influence on what changes need to be made in order to bring about further improvements are limited.

103. Pupils enjoy work in both subjects. They particularly enjoy looking at the style of different artists such as Kandinsky in Year 2 and Picasso in Year 6 and using these to influence their own artwork. A local television artist visits the school regularly to work with the pupils. He inspires them to try new skills and techniques and teaches them, for example, how to use shade to create a three-dimensional effect and show light and shadow. In the weekly art lessons between his visits, teachers skilfully remind pupils about the techniques he used and successfully encourage them to use these to influence their own artwork. For example, when doing observational drawings, teachers remind Year 2 pupils that they need to look carefully at how the shapes look, get all the details in, and think about the colours. Year 6 pupils take great care to paint exactly what they see, such as blades of grass that are each different in colour. They choose different pencils to create hard and soft lines when, for example, drawing the motorbike brought in by a teacher. In this lesson, Years 5 and 6 pupils worked particularly hard to recreate the shape exactly, first drawing different parts and views of it before attempting to draw the whole bike. They use 'vanishing points' to create perspective and different media for different effects, such as smudged pastels to blur edges and water pencils to get a hazy image. They are well aware of the visual and tactile qualities of the object they are drawing and show texture well. They produce computer-generated pictures and use the 'spray' function especially to create 'dotty' pictures.
104. In design and technology, pupils now have sufficient opportunities to design things before they make them and their knowledge of mechanisms has improved. Year 2 pupils have a good understanding of different ways to join materials such as glue, staples and sticky tape to join paper, and nails and glue to join wood. In the lesson seen, they worked hard to make a placemat suitable to protect the dining table from spilt food. This was because teaching made the project exciting by challenging the pupils to come up with good ideas. Because they saw it as a challenge, pupils made sensible suggestions about how to achieve this and showed pride in the end product. By the end of Year 6, pupils know that they need to think about fitness for purpose. For example, they talked excitedly about their plans to make slippers later on in the year. They talked about what size they would have to be and the materials they might use, and in particular the need to make them comfy. They intend to make them fireproof so they can get close to the fire and keep warm. They use electrical circuits in their models to make houses with buzzers and lights, and understand how to use levers to make things move. A visiting engineer supports teaching in the oldest class in particular by answering pupils' questions about his work and showing them how he uses different mechanisms, such as pulleys to make things move. He worked on designing moving wooden dinosaurs with the oldest pupils. These were particularly well made from wood, which had to be drilled and sawn. He also taught them how to make carousels with cogs and how to use gears in other models. Again, as in art, these visits inspire pupils to work hard and they practise and develop his ideas in the lessons between his visits.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

105. Standards in both geography and history are as expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6. During the inspection, only one geography and no history lessons were seen. Judgements are based mainly on talking to pupils, co-ordinators and teachers, and scrutiny of last year's work. The findings show that infant pupils continue to make the satisfactory progress that they did at the time of the last inspection. However, the Year 6 pupils' progress in history has fallen from good to satisfactory, due mainly to changes in staffing. These older pupils previously benefited from being taught by a history specialist. Class teaching now employs a more limited range of methods, which do not extend pupils' skills so effectively because teachers do not have the same enthusiasm for the subject and do not excite the pupils so effectively.
106. Equal opportunities are taken to develop skills as well as knowledge in both subjects so that, by the end of Year 2, pupils understand that a map can represent both physical and human features. They can describe the features of their locality and, in the lesson observed, the

teacher asked probing questions so that pupils generated their own questions in order to extend their understanding of how they might discover more information about the purpose of buildings in the village. Good links are made here with historical enquiry and sources of evidence. For example, pupils know that some buildings are old and that they could ask an older person in the village or go to the library in order to find out more about the village water tower. Pupils draw plans of the village and mark out the route taken on their walk. They explain the different modes of transport used by visitors to the area and know that some come to work as apple pickers during the harvest because more people are needed at this time. Pupils know about famous people from the past and aspects of life in Victorian times. They draw comparisons between schooldays then and now, for instance that not all children went to school, the curriculum was different then to what it is now, and that pupils did not always use pencils and paper when writing. They know about the changes, such as the invention of trains, which took place during the Victorian period.

107. In Year 6, pupils extend their geographical knowledge of the surrounding area through investigation of the Fens. They contrast this with Stanton in the Peak District. They use maps and videos to learn about the differences in physical and human features, from which they develop an understanding of how the features of a location affect the activities and lives of the inhabitants. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in map work, for example when using grid references to locate different places and features and when using ICT to log data from a weather survey. Throughout the juniors, pupils extend their factual knowledge of British history and history of the wider world in their studies of the Tudors, Ancient Egyptians, and Britain since 1930. Their knowledge of these periods is adequate and they talk confidently about what they know about them. Visits to places such as Duxford War Museum and the Victorian school-life day enrich the curriculum. These opportunities, along with visitors to school, such as the Roman Soldier, add to pupils' enthusiasm for the subject and give them a better insight into life and ideas in past times. They show some understanding of how people's lives were affected during World War II and awareness of moral issues arising from the holocaust. They describe changes in fashion that took place during the 1950s and 1960s and, when talking about the 'Mods' and 'Rockers', comment on the need to recognise and respect other people's ideas and opinions.
108. In the geography lesson seen in Year 2/3, the teaching was good and involved pupils in a good balance of discussion and tasks. The teacher took care to plan appropriate challenges for the two age groups within the class. Throughout the school, teachers plan a balanced and appropriate curriculum using the national guidelines for each subject. However, teachers' expectations of older pupils' writing, in both geography and history, are not high enough. There are too few opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills effectively because the ways of recording do not allow pupils sufficient opportunities to record their own ideas, feelings and opinions.
109. No one checks on pupils' learning in history or geography and teaching is not monitored, making it difficult for the subject leader to know what needs doing next and how to bring about improvements.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

110. Standards are broadly as expected nationally by the end of Years 2 and 6 and pupils make sound progress as they move through the school. Improvement has been good since the last inspection, when standards were below those expected and progress was unsatisfactory.
111. By the end of Year 2, pupils use the mouse and keyboard to make effective use of the increased variety of software available, including paint programs. They use the cursor successfully to select different brushes and pencils to create pictures and patterns. They also write simple texts, poems, captions and labels. Pupils program a 'turtle' to follow a prescribed pathway on the screen and a programmable toy to do likewise on the floor. By the end of Year 6, pupils access the Internet, send e-mails, download information and have good word-

processing skills. They incorporate text and pictures, use different fonts, colours and sizes and move their work around the page. For example, pupils in Year 6 created a magazine of their own work and photographs, which they edited and produced using the computer, photocopier and scanner. Recently, older pupils have used a microscope to produce large-scale photographs revealing the intricate details of leaves and plant parts. These pupils also use spreadsheets to enter and display data they have collected, for example on the temperatures recorded outside the classroom over a length of time. Pupils now have good word-processing skills and knowledge not seen in the last inspection. Teachers have arranged good experiences for pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 to link with the local police via the e-mail to solve a simulated 'crime'. However, pupils still have little idea of the merits or drawbacks of using technology as a means of communication or displaying information when compared to other methods.

112. No lessons were seen in the infant classes and only one was seen in the juniors, which was satisfactory. However, from talking with pupils and looking at their past and present work, teaching is satisfactory overall. Teachers give clear instructions and demonstrate skills well so that pupils understand them. For example, in the Year 5/6 lesson seen, pupils learnt about file access, graph production and spreadsheet features. This was because the teacher used different types of graphs to show how data can be recorded and presented in different ways. Pupils listened and watched intently as their teacher explained how to put data on a spreadsheet to produce a graph. Pupils were keen to offer their views on what would be a suitable one to choose to show the data to its best effect. The teacher checked pupils' understanding by getting some of them to explain how they would enter the data when it is their turn on the computer. However, invariably a new skill or program is introduced to the whole class who watch while the teacher demonstrates and explains. Over the course of the ensuing days or weeks pupils practise the skill individually or in small groups. In some cases learning support assistants supervise these groups, which does speed up their learning. However, usually, although pupils are learning at steady rate, they have to wait some time before they can practise the skills they have been taught and have too few opportunities to practise them in relevant situations, slowing progress.
113. The increases in software since the last inspection, coupled with the good training staff have now received, mean pupils have access to a greater range of programs. For example, they make good use of information CD-ROMs and the Internet as a means of researching history topics. Nevertheless, pupils do not use computers and other technology enough on a regular, planned basis to enhance their learning in other subjects. This is because they spend their time on the computers practising the skills taught in ICT lessons and not enough time using them to, for example, record data from their science experiments or type up stories and poems in literacy.
114. Pupils have good attitudes towards ICT work. They speak enthusiastically about the work they have done and obviously enjoyed these experiences.
115. The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve what it does and has been successful in raising standards. The co-ordinator has introduced new equipment and increased the software available. She has raised the teachers' expertise in using ICT so that much of the school's documentation, worksheets and reports is produced in this way. The school is also improving the use of its assessment information through computerised record keeping. The staff are confident in their ability to teach ICT, thanks to the training they have had and continue to receive. Learning support assistants also receive training and, because of this, provide valuable help to pupils. For example, one pupil with pronounced special needs uses a laptop computer with the help of his learning assistant. This has improved his ability to communicate and enhanced the quality of his learning experiences in other subjects. However, other issues raised at the last inspection remain so that there is still insufficient monitoring of lessons and work. The assessment of pupils' progress and what they have covered is not always good enough to help plan appropriate work and so pupils' learning is not always built on. Time is also wasted when teachers receive a new class and need to find out

what pupils can do. The co-ordinator has plans to further develop the subject over the next few years, which include increasing resources, better Internet access and some networking.

MUSIC

116. Standards in singing are broadly as expected by the end of the infants and juniors. The two lessons seen during the inspection both focused on the practice of pupils' performance skills. No evidence of pupils' past work was available for analysis to judge standards or achievement in other aspects of the curriculum.
117. Pupils' singing was heard in both lessons and in assembly. There is a strong focus on this aspect of pupils' musical development throughout the school and pupils experience an appropriately varied repertoire of songs from different times and places. Year 1 pupils sing from memory, matching their voices well to the shape of the melody. Their movement to the music shows a developing understanding of rhythm as they clap in time to the beat of the song 'Frère Jacques'. They join in enthusiastically with all activities and are eager to play the claves to create an accompaniment. Careful listening enables them to keep time successfully. By the end of Year 2, pupils are able to name some of the percussion instruments, for example, the rainmaker, and play them using appropriate techniques. Year 6 pupils sing tunefully and rhythmically, although the tone quality is a little thin. Their diction is clear and they are developing the ability to adapt their singing to the style of the music. Younger pupils make up their own rhythmic patterns, but there are too few opportunities or pupils to create and develop their own musical ideas.
118. Not enough teaching was seen to make a secure judgement about the quality of teaching in music. Both lessons seen built on pupils' earlier learning. In the better lesson, there was a clear focus on the development of pupils' skills and opportunities were provided for pupils to consolidate and apply these in different ways. In the less successful lesson, the learning focus was too vague and opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own performance and make improvements were missed. Consequently pupils' progress was limited because errors in the melody line were not satisfactorily corrected. However, pupils clearly enjoy singing and they were willing to try hard, even though the new song proved to be challenging for them.
119. The school's provision is enhanced by good opportunities for pupils to take part in performance projects, some with professional musicians. For example, Year 5/6 took part in *African Madonna* at Ely Cathedral and a group went busking in the playground singing songs from the 1960s. The school encourages pupils to learn a musical instrument, and woodwind and guitar lessons are currently offered. There are no opportunities for pupils to further their interest in music and extend their skills beyond the classroom, because there are no music clubs on offer. There is no monitoring of teaching and learning in music in order to identify what is and is not working and so bring about further improvements.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with expectations. No lessons were seen in the junior classes so no judgement can be made on pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6. School records and other evidence shows that attainment in swimming by Year 6 is above average.
121. Pupils in the infants have developed a range of movements, which they use to carry out the gymnastic tasks set by their teachers. For example, they show a range of balances in which their body shapes are changed to match the required quality. Pupils show 'long', 'curled', 'small' or 'pointed' shapes while balancing on different parts of their body. They change balances with suitable transitional movements with good control over their bodies. Younger pupils' hand-eye co-ordination is appropriately developed so that in Year 1, for example, they

- could successfully hit and kick a ball with some accuracy and roll a hoop along a line successfully. These pupils knew that their heart beat faster after the exercise they had taken.
122. Too few lessons were seen to make an overall judgement about the standard of teaching. Teaching in the infant classes is good and pupils make good progress. In the lessons seen, instructions were clear so pupils knew exactly what was required. Teachers paid careful attention to the quality of the movements and encouraged their pupils to improve. They were helped to do this through suggestions and alternatives from the teachers. For example, in one lesson in Year 2, pupils were asked to find a variety of ways of travelling between mats. Then they were encouraged to decide which was best and refine that movement as well as they could. In this lesson the quality of movements rather than the quantity of them was important and raised the standard of performance well. In another lesson the teacher used the assessment of what pupils were doing to plan the next stage of their learning. Each child's achievement was recorded so that she could decide when they would be ready to move on to larger apparatus. No lessons were seen in the junior classes.
123. Pupils enjoy their work while at the same time try their best to respond to the teachers instruction and improve what they do. They observe the need to work safely and, for example, get out and put equipment away with care and good co-operation. Pupils work well with partners and in small groups and enjoy their successes. For example, Year 1 pupils were extremely pleased when they successfully kicked a ball into a goal.
124. The co-ordinator is newly appointed and so has had too little time to assess how things can be improved. Lessons have been observed previously and teachers consulted over ways to raise standards. The scheme of work covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum and records show it is being followed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. Standards in religious education have improved since the last inspection, when they were in line with local guideline expectations. They now exceed the requirements of the local non-statutory guidance and pupils achieve well over time. This good improvement is mainly because of more effective teaching of world religions, emphasis on pupils' PSHE development, and the teaching of good values. However, there is no monitoring of teaching and learning in religious education, limiting the subject leader's chances of identifying what needs doing next to bring about further improvement.
126. Pupils of all ages care for and about one another. They respect the beliefs of others, effectively promoted through the study of other world religions besides Christianity, and other cultures such as that of Traveller families. Although this is an all-white school, in a predominantly white area, pupils understand that people follow different religions and choose to live in different ways. Pupils have a very good level of understanding of the way the different cultures represented in Britain can enhance their own life. They know that a person's culture or religious belief can affect the way they live, for example, that Muslims pray towards Mecca and that the women cover their faces in public. Whilst they have personal opinions about this, and know that it would not suit them, they totally respect this chosen way of life. This is shown in comments like the one from a Year 3 pupil: "We should respect all religions because if you believe in Christianity and they in Hinduism, we should all be treated the same.... It's a matter of opinion, that's all."
127. Pupils have a good knowledge of the festivals and symbols of the different world religions, such as the lighting of candles in Buddhism and the Christian Easter celebration of Jesus dying on the cross and then rising from the dead. They know that when a baby is christened they "are welcomed into the Church of God and Jesus" and that, "The Muslim Holy Book is different to the Christian Bible". They have very close links with the church; the older pupils often lead services there.

128. Pupils want to help others. For example, when a missionary worker from Africa visited the school and told the pupils about people in Africa with terrible skin diseases, a Year 6 pupil said, "We felt really upset. We wanted to do something for them. We held a sponsored walk and she took the money back to buy medicine" They still keep in touch even a year later, mainly by e-mail. This caring attitude reflects the school's aims and values well and symbolises the school's ethos.
129. Although only one lesson was seen, it is clear from talking with pupils and looking at the work they have done, that teaching is good. The school places good emphasis on pupils' understanding of different religions as well as Christianity. Teachers encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs, but to have a good awareness of the beliefs of others. From talking with the pupils it is clear that discussions are handled well and that opinions are sought and given in an atmosphere of trust and respect. Other subjects are promoted well in religious education lessons such as literacy, when Year 2 pupils rewrote the story of the Good Samaritan, and geography, when Year 5 pupils drew world maps showing where Israel is. However, teachers' marking is not as effective as it could be because it does not tell pupils where or how they can improve their work. In addition, the little work that the oldest pupils do in their books is not presented as well as it could be.