

INSPECTION REPORT

WATERGALL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Bretton, Peterborough

LEA area: City of Peterborough

Unique reference number: 131240

Headteacher: Mrs S Pitcher

Lead inspector: John William Paull

Dates of inspection: 15th - 17th March 2004

Inspection number: 258315

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
Number on roll: 281

School address: Watergall
Bretton
Peterborough
Cambridgeshire
Postcode: PE3 8NX

Telephone number: (01733) 264 238
Fax number: (01733) 266 440

Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr Brian Skinner

Date of previous inspection: 27th April 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- The school received an *Investor in People* award in 2003.
- The school gained a *Basic Skills Quality Mark* in 2002.
- Just before the inspection, the school was awarded funding to establish itself as a *Children's Centre*, which will help it to develop further its numerous services and links with the community.
- Present community links include:
 - Out of School Club (before and after-school care for 4 - 11-year-olds).
 - Young Enterprise in Greater Peterborough (which promotes citizenship and enterprise projects around the city).
 - Bretton Community Play Group (pre-school provision for 2½ - 4-year-olds).
 - Bretton Woods Community School (ICT technical support, an advanced skills teacher in performing arts, music, sport and swimming).
- Just over 36 per cent of pupils (above average) are known to qualify for free school meals.
- Nearly 37 per cent of pupils (well above average) have special educational needs, including nearly two per cent of pupils (around average) who have a statement of special educational needs. Most of these pupils with special needs are identified with learning difficulties of different kinds and, in one or two cases, these are severe. Another significant group has emotional and/or behavioural difficulties.
- The majority of pupils are white, but about one third are drawn from a range of other ethnic groups, including families that originated in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean islands.
- Just over 19 per cent of pupils (higher than in most schools) speak English as an additional language.
- Pupils are drawn mainly from local authority and social housing.
- Many pupils who start at the school move away before they reach Year 6, and are replaced by others who move into the area.
- Overall attainment on entry is well below average and it is very low in communication, language and literacy.
- Socio-economic circumstances in the area around the school are well below average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
22028	John William Paull	Lead inspector	English Religious education Music Citizenship English as an additional language Special educational needs
9420	David C Martin	Lay inspector	
22113	Aileen King	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage
18241	Wendy Harknett	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History

The inspection contractor was:

Tribal PPI
Barley House
Oakfield Grove
Clifton
Bristol
BS8 2BN

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Watergall Primary is an effective school. Overall, teaching and learning are currently satisfactory. Wide variations were observed, including a high proportion of very good lessons, whilst a few lessons that were unsatisfactory were also observed. Bearing in mind that pupils' starting points are often well below average, their overall achievements are nevertheless good. **The school achieves satisfactory value for money.**

The main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Standards of attainment are often well below average, although much improved since the last inspection of 1998.
- Pupils' attitudes to the school, to learning and their behaviour are good.
- Pupils of different ethnicity and a wide range of backgrounds are included well in what the school offers.
- Overall, relationships with parents are very good and links with the community are excellent.
- Attendance is poor, although it has improved recently.

The school's effectiveness has improved well since the last inspection. In Years 2 and 6, overall trends in attainment are currently above the national trend. Leadership and management are good, based on a strong vision for the future. This vision includes extending the school's services to the community, thus improving what pupils know and can do before coming to school, and helping to equip them more fully to take advantage of what it offers.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	E	E*	E	C
mathematics	E	E	B	A
science	E	E	C	A

Key: A - top 5% nationally; A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average; E* - bottom 5% nationally. Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' overall achievements, bearing in mind that their starting points are well below average and often very low in communication, language and literacy, **are good overall.**

The table indicates a sharp rise in standards in 2003 although, in English, attainment remained well below average at the end of Year 6. Two main barriers to raising attainment in English exist. First, many children enter the school with very low starting points in communication, language and literacy, which delays their understanding of what is taught. Secondly, a relatively high proportion of pupils have special educational needs of types that affect their learning significantly. Another contributory factor is that many pupils who have made good progress, leave the school before they reach Year 6. Records show that newcomers to the school also make good progress but their levels are frequently lower than the leavers. Nevertheless, the proportion of pupils who attain the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science has increased over the years, although only a few attain at higher than expected levels. For similar reasons to those given above, **standards at the end of Year 2 are also frequently well below average although, when pupils' knowledge on starting school is taken into account, achievements are generally satisfactory.**

In other subjects, standards vary. In those where English is less important, such as physical education and singing, what was observed was often of a good standard, whereas in history and

geography, what was sampled was below expected levels for the age group. At the end of Reception, despite satisfactory teaching, only a few children attain the goals that are normally expected, again reflecting their starting points on first entering school.

Pupils' standards of behaviour are good. They are friendly and polite towards visitors, unfailingly holding doors, offering help and they behave well in lessons. The attitudes, social and personal development of pupils of all ages, including their awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural factors, are good. Attendance, however, is well below average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, although inconsistent. Those teachers who maintained high quality based their practice on carefully adapted tasks that met the needs of all pupils, including higher attainers; used carefully chosen methods to support learning; and displayed very good knowledge of what should be taught. This impressive practice can be used to model and improve teaching throughout the school, as these features were exactly those missing, especially the focus on higher achievers, on the occasions when teaching was unsatisfactory. The school's curriculum is strong with many features that enrich what pupils learn. For example, many interesting clubs, including sports, bird-watching and musical groups, are provided at lunchtimes and after school, as well as visits and visitors during lessons. This provision offers good real examples and a wide range of situations that support teaching and learning very well.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides good leadership. She has ensured that senior staff, including the deputy headteacher and main co-ordinators, work well together as a senior management team. They have concentrated successfully on raising standards in English, mathematics and science, ensuring that many pupils achieve well. Good monitoring of progress and assessment procedures help to focus attention on pupils' weaknesses and strengths, although more needs to be done to use this information to adapt teaching to the needs of higher attainers in particular. Nevertheless, the promotion of ideas to include pupils with a wide range of special educational needs and specific requirements of individual pupils, including health and emotional factors, are very strong. Management of the school is efficient and smooth, ensuring that spending is directed effectively on items that help pupils to learn. Governors also know the school's strengths and weaknesses well, whilst their involvement in the support of the headteacher and staff is a good feature.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Those parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting and those who returned a questionnaire are strongly supportive of what is provided for their children. They feel that the headteacher and staff are very approachable and confirm inspectors' judgements that the staff are willing to listen to their queries. Their main concern is about bullying. Inspectors found little evidence of any systematic oppressive behaviour amongst pupils. Those pupils who were asked expressed the view that squabbles sometimes occur, but that adults in the school take any form of unkindness very seriously and can be relied upon to follow up either their parents' or their own complaints.

Pupils are also largely supportive of their school, believing that the adults who work in it both like them and do their best for them. Nearly all pupils stated that there was at least one teacher they trusted sufficiently to confide in, with any problem or concern that might arise either in or outside school.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- In English lessons and across the whole curriculum, develop the school's focus on the enrichment of spoken English, the breadth and understanding of general vocabulary and skills in standard forms of English, as a starting point to improving standards both in literacy and across the curriculum.
- Raise the overall quality of teaching and learning (from satisfactory to good or very good and eradicating what is unsatisfactory) to help pupils to accelerate their rates of progress, thereby raising general standards of attainment, especially, but not exclusively, in English.
- Help teachers and subject co-ordinators to use information from monitoring and assessment more consistently.
- Continue to work with parents to improve levels of attendance.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Whilst **pupils' achievement is good overall**, **standards of attainment are often below average** when pupils leave at the end of Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Weaknesses in general vocabulary and uses and understanding of standard forms of spoken English are barriers to higher attainment, as they hold back pupils' written work in a range of subjects.
- Attainment in National Curriculum test results, at the end of Years 2 and 6, has improved since the last inspection in all the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Currently, standards in English are well below average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6.
- Pupils with special educational needs, those of different ethnic groups and pupils with English as an additional language make progress at similar rates to all other pupils.

Commentary

1. Statutory targets for the attainment of subsequent year groups, at the end of Year 6, are agreed with the local authority. These targets, when set, are challenging and realistic. However, several pupils leave and join the school each year, so this is not always the case by the end of the year. As a result, such targets are not always met. However, in 2003, targets were exceeded. Nevertheless, in English, although the overall quality of teaching is good, a number of important factors keep standards at low levels compared with those attained nationally. First, pupils' general knowledge when they start at the school is frequently well below average. Secondly, many pupils, both of indigenous backgrounds and those of other ethnicity, have a limited vocabulary and often use patterns of speech that do not reflect standard forms of English. Thirdly, a significant restriction to standards of attainment and results of tests is that the number of pupils with special educational needs is high. Targets in these pupils' individual plans often indicate difficulties that are associated with the development of language. Although support for them is good and usually results in progress at similar rates to other pupils, their learning difficulties are often of a nature that prevents them from catching up by the time they leave in Year 6. Taking these factors into account, pupils' overall achievements are often good, which is consistent with the quality of teaching and learning in this subject. Overall attainment is also higher now than in 1998.
2. Standards in mathematics and science fluctuate as different year groups with different characteristics move through the school but, as in English, have risen overall since the last inspection. In both these subjects, overall attainment is currently around average and, in recent years, has consistently been higher than in English. In the 2003 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, for example, results were particularly good. These figures were above average in mathematics and average in science. In comparison with similar schools, results in both subjects were well above average. Overall attainment is higher partly because pupils' weaknesses in spoken English have less direct impact in mathematics and science, partly because a relatively high proportion of those pupils with special educational needs have identified difficulties that impact on language and also because mathematics and science have been consistently well managed for a number of years. In English, a new co-ordinator has many good ideas, but has not been in the post for long enough to see them into practice through the school.

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.4 (22.8)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (23.6)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.3 (26.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 34 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- At the end of Year 2, in 2003, results in National Curriculum tests in reading, writing and mathematics rose significantly in comparison with the previous year and were higher than those observed in the last inspection. Assessments of pupils' attainment in science were also higher than those of 1998. Overall, these results were broadly in line with those of similar schools, although they were well below the average of all schools nationally. Samples of work that were observed during the inspection largely reflected this improved performance, especially in science, in which standards were about average. In mathematics, standards were below average, whilst in reading and writing, they remained well below. Bearing in mind pupils' frequently low attainment at the start of reception, these findings represent satisfactory achievements.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	14.4 (12.1)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	13.3 (11.9)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	15.1 (13.3)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

- Many pupils do not reach the expected goals for their age group at the end of the Reception Year, which reflects their low standards on entry. In communication, language and literacy, only a few attain the expected goals. Attainment is also well below average in mathematical development and knowledge and understanding of the world whilst, in physical development, attainment is closer to what is typically found. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs, and those with minority ethnic backgrounds, including speakers of English as an additional language. Compared with their low starting points, pupils' achievements are generally satisfactory during their Reception Year.
- Standards in subjects outside the core subjects vary, although they are below average overall. Often, this variation is according to the importance of language and literacy in recording pupils' knowledge. For example, in information and communication technology, at the end of Years 2 and 6, whilst spelling and grammatical errors are frequently apparent in word processing, overall attainment is only below, rather than well below, what is typically seen. This is because in other aspects, such as keyboard skills and skills in controlling programs, many pupils work at expected levels. Furthermore, in physical education, art and design and design and technology, standards in the lessons that were observed were usually about average, so many pupils with special educational needs attain expected levels in these subjects, which represents good achievement. Conversely, in the age groups that were sampled in history and geography, standards were often below expected levels. Religious education was a significant exception. In this subject, what was seen broadly matched expectations in the locally agreed syllabus, largely because of good teaching in the lessons that were sampled, including for pupils with special educational needs.
- Recently, Watgall has been using its links with a local advanced skills teacher from Bretton Woods Secondary School to provide workshop opportunities in the performing arts, as well as utilising specialist skills of its own staff in this area. Although relatively few pupils are identified as "gifted and talented" in subjects such as English and mathematics, several have been identified in singing, dance, drama and associated subjects. The school's provision reflects the

needs of this group well. Sampled evidence, such as the standard of choral singing in assembly, achievements of pupils in musical clubs and groups, and recordings on audio and videotapes suggests that some pupils do indeed attain a very high standard. Furthermore, systems to track pupils' progress are very thorough. Information from these systems has been used well, especially in Year 6, to target pupils who are on course to attain higher than expected levels in National Curriculum tests. As a result, more pupils than in the past may well attain above the level that is normally expected for their age. Targets for pupils with special educational needs of all types are realistic and support for them is skilled and provided well. As a result, their rates of progress generally match that of other pupils, albeit at a lower level of attainment.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes towards school are good. Their behaviour in lessons, the playground and around the building is also good. Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is generally good through the school, with some elements being very good. Attendance, however, is a weakness.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are nearly always attentive in lessons, which contributes to their achievements.
- Pupils feel that bullying is rare and that incidents of unkindness are dealt with effectively.
- Pupils have very good relationships with each other and demonstrate very well that they are able to be part of a community.
- Pupils carry out any duties or responsibilities that they are given with a strong commitment.
- Attendance is well below that in most primary schools, although systems to monitor it are very thorough.

Commentary

7. Parents who made their views known to inspectors are generally pleased with their children's behaviour and feel that staff are fair towards their children, treating them equally. Inspectors agree with this positive opinion. Pupils throughout the school are polite, holding doors open for visitors and offering help. Pupils also listen to their teachers well in lessons, which contributes to learning. Pupils also show enthusiasm in all of their activities and many are confident in expressing their views in assemblies or when talking to visitors. They also demonstrate very good relationships with each other, including across different age groups – all of which helps with their progress and personal development.
8. A significant minority of parents feel that bullying or other forms of harassment are a problem in the school, but there was little evidence during the inspection to support the idea that it is a significant problem. Pupils who were interviewed said that incidents occur occasionally but that these are quickly and effectively dealt with. These pupils felt that such incidents are rare and that staff deal with complaints about unkindness of any sort very quickly. Furthermore, parents and pupils from ethnic minority groups shared this view. Four incidents of a racial nature were recorded during the last school year and the circumstances were subsequently closely monitored by the school in an incident book. Pupils were also sure that they knew at least one member of staff in whom they could confide, even with personal information if the need arose.
9. Pupils develop their own classroom rules and appreciate the need for them. They also co-operate well with each other when given tasks and diligently carry out responsibilities such as being buddies or monitors. The atmosphere in the school and the relationships between pupils was well illustrated at the end of a playtime when younger pupils collectively waved and applauded as their older playground buddies left. This incident is also a strong indication that pupils enjoy responsibility and rise to the occasion.
10. Pupils demonstrate that they are well prepared to become effective members of a multi-cultural society. For instance, they know right from wrong, understand the workings of the

School Council and also that skin colour is not an indicator of nationality, personality or intelligence. A recent multicultural week was much appreciated.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.7	School data	1.5
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

11. Overall attendance is poor and is well below the national average. The incidence of both authorised and unauthorised absence is high and is above the national average. This represents a decline in performance since the last academic year and the time of the last inspection. However, statistics for the current year to date show a small improvement in authorised absences and a substantial improvement in unauthorised absences. Punctuality is satisfactory. The school's actions to chase up all unexplained absences are very good and the systems are rigorously and conscientiously applied by school staff and the education welfare officer. When informal approaches to parents fail, the worst cases are considered for legal action, making it all the more disappointing that a few parents still do not respond better. This poor attendance has a clear effect on learning, as children cannot take advantage of teaching and learning when they are not present. The school promotes good attendance in documents to parents and rewards pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance. Bilingual support staff are also used to approach parents in cases where lack of English might be a barrier.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	Number of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White - British	198	15	0
White - Irish	3	0	0
White - any other White background	21	0	0
Mixed - White and Black Caribbean	5	3	0
Mixed - White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed - White and Asian	3	0	0
Mixed - any other mixed background	4	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	11	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	21	1	0
Asian or Asian British - any other Asian background	6	0	0
Black or Black British - Caribbean	4	0	0
Black or Black British - African	3	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0

The table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

12. No permanent exclusions were necessary in the last full year and all pupils excluded were boys, several of whom had more than one period of exclusion.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Overall, the quality of education provided for pupils is **satisfactory**. Although care of pupils is strong, and links with parents and the wider community are particularly good, the important aspect of teaching generally meets pupils' learning needs satisfactorily. The curriculum is a good feature that meets statutory requirements and is enhanced by many strong features.

Teaching and learning

The overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, including a high proportion of good and very good teaching and a few lessons that are less than satisfactory. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress in the core subjects are good although, in a few classes, their use is insufficiently consistent to ensure that work is based on prior learning, slowing pupils' progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Opportunities to broaden and develop pupils' understanding and uses of vocabulary and standard forms of spoken English are often missed.
- A high proportion of teaching in English, mathematics and science is strong, which is contributing to pupils' good overall achievements in these subjects. However, teaching and learning was not as strong in what was sampled across the curriculum and contained some unsatisfactory lessons.
- Teaching is consistently very good in Year 6, which helps pupils considerably in preparation for National Curriculum tests and secondary education.
- Support of pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is often good, which ensures that they progress and learn at rates similar to those of other pupils.
- The school has a good range of systems and strategies for assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills, although not all teachers use this information with equal impact on learning and progress.

Commentary

13. Despite their confidence and willingness to speak, a key barrier to learning is that pupils' skills in spoken language are often well below expected levels. Their vocabulary is often limited and lacks flexibility, and their knowledge of standard modes of speech is also restricted. As a result of these weaknesses, pupils' learning is affected in several subjects across the curriculum. Furthermore, numerous occasions were observed when pupils employed very short answers, or even colloquial language, to respond to teachers' questions. Teachers did not always use these situations to offer alternative expressions or more precise vocabulary. At the same time, in response to deficiencies in provision that the headteacher and staff have identified in some of the non-core subjects, the latest school improvement plan includes a focus on the use of more flexible and creative approaches to teaching and learning across the curriculum. These factors are of considerable significance. A focus on the use of spoken language, general vocabulary and more flexible patterns of speech in creative situations, both in literacy hours and across the curriculum, would clearly be a way of improving teaching and learning in both these prioritised areas of development.
14. Whilst satisfactory overall, teaching and learning vary considerably through the school and sometimes even within the same class, depending on the subject being taught. In general, teaching is much better in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, than in what was observed in the other subjects taken together. Over a third of lessons that were observed in the core subjects consisted of very good teaching whereas, in other subjects, a small but significant proportion was less than satisfactory. However, even this inconsistency does not describe the finding fully, as what was observed in religious education was consistently good and teaching and learning were also good overall in physical education. Teaching and learning of the areas of learning for children in the Reception Year are satisfactory overall. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed in this age group and good teaching of phonics and musical elements of children's creative development was also seen.

Good practice in the development of children's personal, social and emotional awareness was also apparent.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 30 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	7 (23%)	8 (27%)	12 (40%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	0 (0%)

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

15. One likely reason for this variation is that the core subjects have received a lot of focused developmental work in recent years, which has meant that other subjects have conversely received less time and attention on in-service training. The headteacher and senior staff are well aware of this factor but, in view of the school's well below average standards in past National Curriculum tests, they and the governors have felt justified in such a strategy. Furthermore, so far as results in English, mathematics and science are concerned, the school has been successful in raising pupils' attainment to the extent that the school's trend now exceeds the national trend at the end of Years 2 and 6.
16. In those lessons where teaching was of high quality, especially Year 6, in which all lessons that were observed were very good, teachers based their practice on carefully adapted tasks that met the needs of all pupils, including higher attainers. Such teaching used strategies that were carefully tailored to support individuals' learning, and displayed very good knowledge of what should be taught. This impressive practice constantly prompted pupils to ask questions and informed them about the level at which they were learning. Pupils themselves, for example, were able to make comments about whether work was at "Level 4" or "Level 5", referring to the levels in the National Curriculum. This knowledge about the quality of their own learning was good for their self-esteem, as it seemed to spur them on in wanting to move to the next topic and to improve their standing. This consistently high quality in Year 6 is evidence of the headteacher's good leadership and management, as it is of strategic importance in helping to maximise pupils' attainment and test results before they move on to secondary education. The presence of this impressive practice is also important as it can be used to model and thereby improve teaching throughout the school. The more so, as many of these features were invariably those missing in lessons in which teaching was unsatisfactory. In the context of pupils' low starting points when they first join the Reception, it is particularly important that weaknesses are addressed successfully, so good or very good teaching is consistently apparent through the school and what is unsatisfactory is eradicated. In this way, the quality of learning will also be improved, so pupils are enabled to catch up with those at other schools, rather than simply keep pace at a lower level.
17. The school has a good range of systems for assessing the quality and standard of pupils' work and for keeping track of their progress. However, a few teachers do not use this information well enough to ensure that the level of planned work matches pupils' prior understanding. For example, in two examples of teaching that was less than satisfactory, work was insufficiently adapted to meet the different needs of all pupils in the class. The expectation of what pupils could do was therefore inaccurate and their learning was thus affected adversely. Similar weaknesses, in which work was either too hard or too easy, were also apparent, albeit to a lesser extent, in a few lessons that were otherwise satisfactory. The most telling cases were associated with a lack of open investigative opportunities in a few lessons in mathematics. On these occasions, pupils of higher attainment continued to work with similar examples to those that had already been completed, when a further challenge would have been more appropriate to their needs. As a result, learning was less effective than it might have been.
18. Teachers know their pupils well and work hard to include them all in lessons. Teachers work very hard to ensure that pupils behave well in lessons and are usually successful. They involve pupils in decisions about rules for their classrooms and explain the need for good attitudes. As

a result of this provision, pupils listen well, which contributes to successful learning. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are often brought together as a group and a learning support assistant is nearly always available to ensure that they know what to do to make progress. Pupils with English as an additional language are similarly supported effectively. These pupils are represented well amongst the school's highest attainers by the time they leave in Year 6. Similarly, pupils with identified behavioural and/or emotional difficulties are well known and the availability of knowledgeable assistants provides them with support and guidance, aiding their inclusion in lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Opportunities for enriching what is taught are good, as are accommodation and learning resources.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- What is taught has improved well since the last inspection.
- The curriculum does not fully meet pupils' needs in the development of spoken language.
- Good opportunities exist for enrichment through sports, the arts and several other activities.
- Although provision for personal, social and health education is satisfactory, drugs awareness is still not sufficiently focused.
- Pupils are prepared well as they move on from one stage of education to the next and especially so when they move on to secondary school.
- Accommodation is generally good and meets the demands of the curriculum well.
- No designated outdoor area exists for physical development of children in the Reception Year.

Commentary

19. The curriculum is adequately broad and balanced, and is good in these aspects from Years 3 to 6. Statutory requirements are met through the school and curricular time is close to national figures. At the time of the last inspection, the nationally recommended areas of learning were not being used in the Reception Year, and few whole-school policies or schemes of work were in place on which to base teachers' planning. As a result, it was unclear that what was taught progressed without unnecessary repetition or omissions. Since then, these weaknesses have been corrected. Schemes of work are in place in all subjects and the relevant agreed syllabus is used to plan religious education. *The Curriculum for the Foundation Stage* (a nationally prepared document that indicates what should be taught in Nursery and Reception classes) is now used in the Reception Year. Planning that is based on this document is now ensuring an appropriate balance across the areas of learning for this age group. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced successfully to plan lessons in English and mathematics. However, many pupils who attend the school employ speech patterns that are characterised by restrictions in general vocabulary and short imprecise sentences. Currently, no specific strategy is in place to address this weakness at all times, whenever the need or opportunity arises. Nevertheless, the curriculum is adapted well for pupils with special educational needs, and pupils with English as an additional language receive the necessary support to enable them to understand how to make progress.
20. Opportunities for enrichment of what is taught are good. A range of clubs and other after-school and lunchtime activities representing especially the performing arts and physical education are a particular strength of the school. The headteacher and staff rightly emphasise these areas as contributing strongly to pupils' self-esteem and their attitudes to school and, as a result, benefits to learning as a whole occur. The specialist skills of staff from the local secondary school are utilised to enhance the quality of provision in the performing arts, including dance. Pupils' concerts and class assemblies are also held regularly and very good support in art has helped pupils to produce, for example, murals to decorate their environment. Many pupils, both boys and girls, are active participants in many competitive activities in

sports, including, for example, football teams and, more unusually, ice hockey, through a scheme with the local professional club. Other extra-curricular activity includes a gardening group, which parents help to run with pupils, and bird watching. All these activities are well supported and help pupils to learn.

21. Personal, social and health education is provided satisfactorily. At the previous inspection, a statutory policy for sex education was in place. However, lessons to promote awareness of the misuse of drugs were yet to be developed. Developmental work in this area has been started but, when pupils were asked during a discussion with an inspector, it was unclear whether lessons are provided adequately. Although pupils knew that taking drugs "...for fun is wrong", they could not recall any specific lessons that had been undertaken in school.
22. Procedures to prepare and induct pupils for subsequent stages of education as children first join, then move through and leave the school, are good. These procedures are particularly effective to promote transfer to local secondary schools. All pupils new to the school are offered introductory visits, and a pre-school group meets on the premises.
23. Cultural diversity, both in the school and the general population, is celebrated. The school holds multicultural weeks and, in dance and music, for example, different styles from around the world are included in what is taught. All pupils are encouraged to share their experiences and the school includes its many different groups well. A weaker element is inconsistency in the extent to which work is adapted to meet the needs of pupils with higher prior attainment. Nevertheless, arrangements for gifted and talented pupils have recently improved considerably with the introduction of a register of their separate gifts and the start of particular provision for them. For example, a group of pupils with identified mathematical talents analysed the results of a recent pupils' questionnaire and prepared a report. The quality of this work was so good that inspectors were able to use it during the inspection to augment their own investigations into pupils' views of the school.
24. Overall accommodation is good, including a computer suite, specialist areas for music and food technology, two halls of a reasonable size and a library space. Another space is available for adult classes in information and communication technology. The impact is good, as these areas provide more frequent opportunities for specialist learning than would usually be the case. Pupils also witness adults in learning situations, which provides them with visible adult role models, who learn within the same building. Resources are satisfactory overall with a particular strength in mathematics. In this subject, many resources are new, plentiful and of high quality. However, the library does not offer a sufficiently wide range of non-fiction to meet the needs of pupils of different ages and reading skills. As a result, it may not always be possible to provide books of sufficient ease or difficulty on particular areas of pupils' research or interest. Support staff are knowledgeable, well trained and meet the requirements of pupils and the curriculum, especially of those pupils with special educational needs and with English as an additional language.

Care, guidance and support

The procedures for child protection are very good and those for supporting and guiding pupils through monitoring are good. Procedures for seeking and acting on pupils' views are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for child protection are in place and followed very closely and effectively.
- Pupils have very good and effective relationships with adults within the school.
- Pupils are provided with very good support, advice and guidance in regard to their personal development.
- The school provides a safe and healthy environment but some minor items, and the question of site security, need to be addressed.

Commentary

25. Relevant training in child protection has taken place for all staff and they are provided with copies of the school's policy. Procedures are well understood and staff are vigilant, so appropriate report sheets are used whenever necessary. Developments are then monitored closely and necessary actions taken.
26. Health and safety checks are regularly carried out on the buildings and facilities. Pupils are therefore well cared for in this respect, in a safe and healthy environment. Nevertheless, a few minor issues were noted during the inspection and senior staff have been made aware of them.
27. During the inspection, several examples were seen of adults, both teaching and support staff, providing very good comfort, care or guidance to pupils, either because they were distressed, had suffered an injury or had breached the discipline codes. In all cases, the strength of the relationships between pupils and adults was very apparent and was obviously enhancing pupils' personal development. The systems for rewarding good behaviour and for disciplining pupils, including use of the supervision room, are effectively applied. Following consultation with pupils and observations, additional facilities have been provided at playtimes to ensure that all pupils, including those who may feel nervous about more boisterous activities, are able to feel included and to make progress. Further illustrations of the very good support that pupils receive are the buddy systems for new entrants to the school, for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and for those who are moving into Year 3. Furthermore, pupils starting in Year 6 are given written advice on what is expected of them, both personally and academically, in preparation for their transfer to secondary education. Pupils who may find this transition difficult are identified and offered additional support. The very high level of support and guidance which pupils receive greatly aids their personal development and leads to the good attitudes and behaviour described earlier, which in turn leads to better learning. This support extends to pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. Outside agencies are called upon and their expertise is used well to guide pupils' education further whenever appropriate. Particularly, these agencies include relevant advisory teachers, the educational psychologist and education welfare officers.
28. The school carries out very good and regular consultations with pupils, through questionnaires and the activities of the School Council. Matters raised have been shared at a whole school assembly, analysed by a group of pupils and prioritised for future action. Pupils are also consulted on, and agree to, their own learning targets. Pupils therefore are participants in, rather than simply recipients of, their education.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Parents' links with the school are very good. Links with the local community are excellent and those with other schools and colleges are also very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Links with parents and the local community have both improved substantially since the last inspection.
- Parents are encouraged and helped to become more involved in the education of their children, either through helping in the school or through enrolling in adult education and whole family classes.
- The school actively seeks and acts upon the views of parents.
- There are omissions or deficiencies in some of the statutory information provided to parents and annual reports on pupils' progress are inconsistent in quality from one class to another.

Commentary

29. The school's very good and developing links with parents and other schools provides a strong contribution to pupils' learning and personal development and, together with the excellent links with the local community, are strengths of the school.
30. The meeting held for parents prior to the inspection was not well attended. However, they and the larger number who responded to the questionnaire and those interviewed during the inspection, expressed largely positive views of the school. For instance, they felt their children enjoy school, make good progress and that teaching is good. A significant minority of responses to the questionnaire showed concerns about the level of bullying or other forms of harassment and that parents do not feel well informed, particularly about the progress of their child. Discussions with pupils during the inspection did not produce evidence that they are unduly concerned about bullying or other forms of harassment. In fact, they were confident that bullying is rare and not tolerated. They were also sure that the headteacher and staff would follow up problems rigorously. However, the quality of written annual reports on pupils' progress is inconsistent. A new format that the school has recently introduced is very good and some teachers complete it excellently. However, it is clear that a few teachers do not understand the difference between comments that describe what pupils have done, and targets that advise parents about how to help their children to make future progress. A few minor deficiencies or omissions from statutory documents, such as the school prospectus, are also evident. Other information for parents, including regular newsletters, notices posted on classroom windows and information on children's targets for numeracy and literacy are very good.
31. Meetings are organised each term for parents and teachers to discuss pupils' progress and are well attended. Such arrangements include opportunities to discuss and set targets for pupils with special educational needs, as well as to review individual education plans and statements of special need. Parents are routinely invited to annual reviews of statements, as required statutorily. The school makes a strong effort to see all parents, including flexible times for those who cannot attend in the evening. Foreign language support is also available if necessary. Procedures are also in place to follow up on parents who do not respond to the initial notice of meetings.
32. The school has a very good range of opportunities to seek the views of parents and has acted upon these views as a means of raising the overall quality of education. The headteacher and governors have used questionnaires to parents and consulted them on topics such as the style of pupils' annual reports, the content of certain subject policies and target setting. Responses have been analysed and have resulted, for example, in the establishment of pre-school facilities and a revised sex education policy. Parents have also been consulted about the ability of their child to adapt to the challenges of entering secondary education.
33. Parents also have a very good relationship with the school in regard to matters that affect their children's learning at school and at home. Parents are encouraged and advised about becoming involved in homework and additional worksheets are available for those who would like them. Parents are given opportunities to come into school for events such as the recent multicultural week or to help in classrooms or for shared reading. As a result of this contact, parents have been recruited and trained as teaching assistants and currently parents are undergoing training to become a youth leader and a netball coach. A good range of educational courses are offered at the school, including some that involve the whole family. These opportunities provide new or enhanced skills that enable parents to become more involved in their children's education. Parents who successfully complete such courses are given their awards at whole school achievement assemblies, much to the delight of their own children! This very good partnership helps to reassure parents that the school works with the best interests of their children and families in mind. On the few occasions when concerns are raised, the school deals with them very well.
34. The school has forged excellent links with the local community as part of its planned strategy to improve the quality of education that it provides. It has been a driving force in an action group

formed to bring about improvements to the adjacent shopping and community facilities. Proposals are well advanced and a display of current plans is in the school lobby. The school is also taking forward proposals for an extended school and the creation of a children's centre on the campus. Just prior to the inspection, it received the news that its bid for funding to support the latter had been successful. At a more immediate level, as a result of links with the local ice hockey team, pupils are receiving regular coaching.

35. Links with other schools and organisations are very strong. These links provide further opportunities for improved teaching and learning. A local group of schools, known as a consortium or cluster, is working together on a drug awareness scheme; local secondary schools provide assistance and support in information and communication technology, sports and the performing arts. Furthermore, links with Peterborough College led to the development of courses for adults and contact with a number of local retail stores has aided fund raising, the teaching of citizenship and healthy eating.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good overall**. The headteacher provides strong leadership and management is generally good. Governors carry out their role well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a strong determination to raise standards.
- Governors are actively involved with the work of the school.
- Effective systems and procedures have been established which ensure the smooth running of the school.
- The headteacher and the governing body are committed to developing the school as a learning centre for the community.
- Finances are managed well.
- The use of assessment needs to develop, in order to adapt the teaching to the needs of higher attaining pupils in particular.

Commentary

36. The headteacher has led the school well through a period of considerable staffing change since the amalgamation of two previous schools and since the last inspection, six years ago. Throughout this period, she has worked towards the development of a committed team of staff that works together well for the good of pupils. The present staff are strongly committed to raising standards and have united well behind a strong senior management team. With the support of the governing body, the school is moving forward with a clear vision that involves a very strong commitment to building an ever-closer partnership with the community. This commitment has already resulted in an environment that is increasingly rich and in which pupils are cared for and keen to learn. The promotion of ideas to include pupils of different backgrounds and ethnicity, with a wide range of special educational needs and with English as an additional language, is also a strong feature. These ideas help to ensure both social and educational inclusion well. The school gained a *Basic Skills Quality Mark* in 2000.
37. The governing body has played a central role in moving the school forward. Governors have a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They recognise that attainment on entry is often low and understand why the enrichment of spoken English needs to be developed across the whole curriculum. Governors are justifiably proud of the trust that has been developed with parents and the community and have established an effective working relationship with the headteacher and senior management team.
38. Governors are involved well in all developmental and improvement planning and receive regular reports on how prioritised matters are progressing. They have recently evaluated their own

efficiency, with particular respect to the use of meetings and, as a consequence, have rethought their use of committees and sub-groups. They are active in visiting the school and monitoring its work, helping them to fulfil their strategic role. Senior staff and governors understand and apply principles of best value to their decisions to good effect.

39. Management of the school is good. All staff know its procedures well, and their responsibilities within them. Efficient systems cover all aspects of provision. Teams of staff work closely together, and this means that daily routines run smoothly and efficiently, with strong support from committed office staff. The school's senior management team includes the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinators of the core subjects. This team strongly seeks higher standards, staff development and the building of positive relationships with families that use the school. The importance of managing the performance of all staff, including their professional development, has been recognised with the achievement of the *Investors in People Award* in 2003. As a result of this commitment to training and development, pupils' standards in the core subjects are rising, and improvement since the time of the last inspection has been good overall. Monitoring of teaching has effectively contributed to improvements in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, and information and communication technology, which were issues in the last report. However, a strong emphasis on these subjects has resulted in less time being spent on checking the quality of teaching in some of the others. The headteacher and subject co-ordinators are aware of this factor and provision in these other subjects has been prioritised in improvement planning for next year and beyond. Findings during the inspection support this change of priority, as teaching and learning were weaker in non-core subjects, including a few lessons in which both aspects were unsatisfactory. Furthermore, lack of recent opportunities to monitor teaching directly in these subjects is a likely contributory factor to the identified weaknesses. However, the staff are hard working and committed and, through a programme of training, they are acquiring more thoroughly the skills needed to evaluate what is taught and learnt, both in their own lessons and, where appropriate, as subject co-ordinators.
40. Procedures for the induction of all types of staff are satisfactory. Target setting and the tracking of achievement is developing well for individual pupils in the core subjects – another previous issue. However, targets for higher attaining pupils are insufficiently challenging, although arrangements for the gifted and talented have improved considerably.
41. The management of finances is satisfactory. Substantial reserves are being used to maintain a good level of staffing to support pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language. However, these reserves will be depleted in two years, as the number on roll has fallen a little in the past few years. Nevertheless, governors are aware of the difficulty and a strategic plan is being developed with the headteacher to deal with it. There are reasons to believe that the new project to develop the school as a children's centre with further opportunities for educational outreach to the community will generate more pupils. Optimism is high and the school's bid for funding of this project has recently been accepted.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	799,008
Total expenditure	836,272
Expenditure per pupil	2,784

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	106,237
Balance carried forward to the next	68,972

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

42. The children are in two classes, one of which is a mixed-age class, which also accommodates pupils in Year 1. All groups of children, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress overall, which means that overall achievement is also satisfactory. However, as many children start school with levels of attainment that are well below average, this rate of progress is not fast enough for them to catch up. For this reason, overall attainment is unlikely to match the expected goals for the age group at the end of the year in the case of a significant proportion of children. Exceptions are in personal, social and emotional development and physical development. In these areas, good teaching is producing learning at a fast rate and good progress occurs. The staff have appropriate knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for young children, ensuring that behaviour is good and that children have very positive attitudes to their learning. Plans are carefully thought through to accommodate those in the mixed-age class, so equality of opportunity is not compromised. Provision for children with special educational needs is good, with support that ensures their involvement and understanding of what to do. Children from a range of backgrounds, including those from minority ethnic groups, are also included well. Emphasis on literacy and numeracy is strong. Opportunities for children to initiate their own play, including role play, are provided. However, what was seen during the inspection was not sufficiently spread across all areas of learning, nor was it led sufficiently by adults. As a result, opportunities for children to acquire new vocabulary and to develop skills in spoken English were missed. The lack of a designated outdoor area for children in the Reception Year is also a drawback, as it limits opportunities for planned educational play outdoors or simply to allow children freedom to run and play whenever they need it. However, the direct impact of this lack on children's physical development is not an issue of attainment, as time in the school's hall and playground is readily available. Assessment procedures are good and adults keep comprehensive records of what children accomplish, especially in literacy and numeracy.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good** overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children behave well and their attitudes to learning are promoted strongly.
- Adults provide good role models of co-operation, care and kindness.
- Children are secure and happy in school.
- Children are learning to share and co-operate well.

Commentary

43. Children's progress in personal, social and emotional development is good in both classes. All staff understand the need to set very good examples and to create a good atmosphere of care and co-operation from which the children can take a lead. As such good role models are evident, children thrive and demonstrate similar qualities. They are consistently reminded about the importance of good behaviour and of sharing fairly and taking turns. Nearly all of them respond well. Teaching and learning are good and the children achieve well in this area. Expectations for behaviour are high and good management of the children promotes their personal development well. Showing respect for others is given strong emphasis. Again, it is clearly apparent that teachers, nursery nurses and all other staff treat the children with understanding and give them positive encouragement to do their best and to achieve in all that they do. As a direct result, nearly always, children are keen to share what they are doing and to

seek assistance from adults when they need it. Confidence is high and the children are well settled and give every appearance of feeling secure.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Emphasis on reading and writing is strong.
- Bearing in mind their low attainment on entry, opportunities to develop the richness of children's vocabulary and imaginative uses of spoken English are insufficient.

Commentary

44. Bearing low starting points in mind, children achieve satisfactorily in communication, language and literacy. However, this level of achievement is insufficient for them to catch up from their low start so, overall, their attainment at the end of the year remains well below what is usually found. Nevertheless, teaching and learning are satisfactory and children are beginning to understand how to communicate their ideas on paper. Written work and reading are given good emphasis. All adults with responsibility for the age group plan sessions conscientiously. Phonics are well taught and promote children's ideas about how letters sound and are blended to make words. Children are also shown how to form letters correctly and to combine them, especially when writing their own names. The children take books home regularly to share with their parents and carers; they handle books properly and understand that print has meaning. They have opportunities to use various role play sessions in the classroom. However, in the context of their weaknesses in spoken English and vocabulary, these sessions do not have sufficiently clear learning objectives. As a result of this shortcoming, opportunities to promote skills in spoken English are missed. It is vital that this weakness is rectified, so pupils can benefit fully from the good work that takes place in the development of literacy.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good emphasis on numeracy prepares pupils well for numeracy hours further up the school.
- Not enough opportunities are provided to talk about number and shape or for children to develop mathematically through play.
- Not enough use of incidental opportunities to develop mathematical language.

Commentary

45. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematical development is satisfactory overall and the children achieve appropriately, bearing their low starting points in mind. Nevertheless, as in the case of communication, language and literacy, this achievement is insufficient for them to catch up. In terms of attainment, therefore, a significant proportion is unlikely to reach the expected goals at the end of the year. Mathematical development is promoted strongly in sessions that are similar to the full numeracy hours that children will meet as they move on through the school, which means that they are prepared well for what will follow in Year 1. Opportunities to count and recognise numbers and shapes are frequently provided in well-planned tasks and situations. Conversely, opportunities that arise informally, during children's own incidental talk and play, are not fully exploited. Similarly, reinforcement of work with two- and three-dimensional shapes and pattern making, using imaginative and creative work, are

not employed as frequently as they might be and, as a result, pupils' rates of progress are affected.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Skills in the use of technology are taught well in the computer suite.
- The locality around the school is used effectively.
- Links with the area of personal development are very good.

Commentary

46. Children's knowledge and understanding of technology is well taught in the computer suite and, in this aspect, children make good progress and attain standards close to the goals that are normally expected. Although pupils receive open access to classroom computers, their skills are not exploited fully in lessons, as classroom computers are not used as frequently as they might be. Making models is included in the curriculum when the children make three-dimensional models of objects and artefacts that they observe in the world around them. However, not enough opportunities are planned for children to practise their skills and techniques in their own role-play. Conversely, very good contributions to children's personal development are made when they learn about other cultures, religious ideas and similar activities.
47. Children's overall achievements are satisfactory in this area of learning. The quality of teaching and learning is also satisfactory. Topics that involve observations of plants and animals and how they grow are effectively planned. Children also learn about historical characters and their own locality. The locality is used well to promote their knowledge and ideas across the area of learning. However, general knowledge is unlikely to match the expected goals at the end of the Reception Year, which reflects the low general knowledge of several children when they first come to school.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's skills, especially in the control of their hand and finger movements, are promoted well.

Commentary

48. Overall, children make good progress in physical development and they achieve well. Teaching is generally of good quality. It is based on a well-planned programme of activities, even though they do not benefit from a designated outdoor area to which they have continual access. The staff ensure regular opportunities for children to use apparatus to pedal, push and propel themselves along on wheeled toys. The children use bats and balls to develop their hand and eye co-ordination and control. Skills are also well taught through a good range of activities and the use of implements to draw, write and paint. Further teaching is regularly organised in the school hall, which is used to develop ideas about space and how to manoeuvre around obstacles and other children. This good provision results in good learning overall.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Techniques using a good variety of materials are taught clearly and effectively.
- Early musical skills are taught well.
- Not enough opportunities are available for children to apply previously learned techniques independently.
- Not enough use of role-play and other imaginative play is planned.

Commentary

49. In their creative development, the children's achievement and the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory. Creative techniques, using paint and materials to make, for example, collage pictures and patterns, are well taught. However, not enough opportunities are planned for children to explore and practise their skills independently and to develop their own ideas. Opportunities in role-play and drama, in which children can use their imagination and develop linguistically, with support and participation from adults, are not provided sufficiently. In a music lesson that was observed, children clapped rhythms to the pattern of their names and demonstrated good recall in picking out named instruments. Learning was good when they were taught to sing *English Country Garden*. A weaker element of teaching, however, is that children are not given enough opportunities to develop language through creative development, composing and talking about their own ideas.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are generally good.
- Attainment is limited by pupils' weak language development and, currently, too little emphasis is placed on development of pupils' speaking skills.
- The subject is well led.

Commentary

50. In terms of work that was sampled during the inspection, it is apparent that a significant proportion of pupils enter Year 1 with low levels of skills in communication, language and literacy. During literacy hours, the quality of teaching and learning is good overall with consistently very good teaching in Year 6. Very good teaching was also observed in Year 3 and Year 4 and the amount of catching up that pupils achieve in these years is significant. Both planning and pupils' work indicate that teachers' expectations of pupils are particularly high in these age groups. Progress and achievement is maintained at satisfactory levels, at least, in other classes. However, the low attainment on entry means that, whilst pupils achieve well in comparison with starting points, standards of work are below average overall. Skills of listening are taught and promoted well. Pupils are consistently encouraged to attend to each other and to adults, and nearly all pupils of all ages give speakers a polite hearing. However, standards in speaking are a major weakness. Many pupils have a limited vocabulary and their speech is characterised by short, often single word, responses or, when longer, by idiomatic expressions. This deficiency in spoken language has been identified and prioritised for future action. Currently, though, not all teachers provide sufficient opportunities within lessons for pupils to develop their vocabulary, nor do they consistently question pupils about more precise modes of speech or offer alternatives. This weakness contributes to low attainment in other

areas of English, especially writing, where pupils repeat the same features that are apparent in their speech.

51. Overall attainment is also affected by relatively high numbers of pupils who join the school at times other than usual starting dates and/or who leave before or during Year 6. This mobility also affects the results of National Curriculum tests. Furthermore, its effects are different from year to year, so consistency in setting statutory targets and achieving the predicted results is made difficult for the school to achieve.
52. Standards in reading are currently a little higher than in other aspects of English. Since the last inspection, the development of reading has been very strongly prioritised. Reading record books provide a useful link between home and school. As a result of developments, pupils' reading material is usually well matched to their level of ability, providing sufficient challenge for them to make progress. Books and resources are sufficient to meet the needs of different ability levels. Higher attainers in Year 2 spoke confidently about their favourite books and several are on course to attain a standard higher than that normally expected for their age. In Year 4, two local residents were observed listening to pupils read their books. Those pupils whose reading was sampled were reasonably fluent for their age group and explained that they enjoyed this opportunity. This finding is repeated amongst older pupils. For example, pupils in Year 6 spoke with interest about a good range of authors, plots and characters, such as Judy Blume's *Are you there, God? It's me Margaret*, Michael Gerber's *Barry Trotter* and Robert Swindell's *Room 13*. They explained their ideas about these books, focusing on style and genre. For example, they explained that *Barry Trotter* is a type of "spoof" because its humour is based on imitating elements of stories about Harry Potter. Lower attaining pupils know the sounds of different letters and use them to work out new or less familiar words, as well as looking at pictures for clues to the meaning. These good skills are apparent because reading is taught systematically. Nevertheless, lower attaining pupils of different ages find it quite hard to explain what they have read, even when they recognise the words accurately. Despite this, nearly all pupils are enthusiastic about stories. Pupils are also able to use the library to find books that interest them or to research a topic. However, the stock of books in the library is not extensive. Several books are ageing and, furthermore, the range of non-fiction does not sufficiently cover the requirements of pupils of different prior attainment, age and ethnicity that is in the school.
53. Standards of writing, including spelling and grammar, are restricted by pupils' lack of knowledge of standard forms of English and their limited vocabulary. This finding is true of age groups throughout the school. Nevertheless, the proportion of higher attaining pupils in Year 6 is growing, supported by very good teaching, and these pupils are clearly developing careful and accurate styles of writing and are able to write successfully for many different purposes. As well as in reading, the school has placed a high priority on the improvement of writing skills and includes sessions for the development of writing on its timetable. The use of teaching assistants is generally good. They offer suggestions and lead pupils to make choices by asking appropriate questions. They explain the meaning of words and assist pupils with their written work. Often, they support pupils with special educational needs, and those with English as an additional language, ensuring that they know what to do to make progress and achieve well.
54. A new subject co-ordinator, in post since September, is a very good practitioner herself and a member of the school's senior management team, so is particularly well placed to lead developments in provision. She fully understands the links between pupils' lack of flexible patterns of speech and how such factors affect attainment in reading and writing. The development of a strategy to rectify this deficiency is a key factor for the school in helping pupils to catch up with normally expected levels of attainment.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. Reading is used effectively in subjects across the curriculum to research information. Often, writing is emphasised as a way of recording what pupils find out and know. However, worksheets are used frequently in subjects such as history and geography. Whilst this strategy ensures that pupils record their work with reasonable accuracy, when it is over-used, it restricts opportunities for them to practise the very skills that are often a weakness and therefore progress is not as fast as it might otherwise be. Information and communication technology is used successfully to word process and those pupils who were asked explained that they enjoy this type of work.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection.
- A strong focus is placed on pupils' numeracy skills.
- Variability in the quality of teaching impedes the progress of pupils' learning.
- There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils, especially in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

56. Standards in mathematics are currently below average in Year 2 and around average in Year 6. These standards are not quite as high as in the 2003 National Curriculum tests, owing to differences in the characteristics of subsequent year groups. In the 2003 tests, in both age groups, over three quarters of pupils reached the expected standard. Results in Year 6 were particularly good as over one third of pupils attained a level higher than that normally expected, whereas only one in ten of those in Year 2 did so. Nevertheless, the school does well for its pupils overall as many begin at well below average levels. In Year 6 especially, with consistently strong teaching, pupils gain significantly in self-confidence and respond well to the challenge of higher-level work. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported by learning assistants and many progress at similar rates to other pupils, albeit at a lower level of attainment. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress. Pupils from minority ethnic groups also do well and are represented amongst the school's highest achievers.
57. Since the last inspection, the school has made very successful efforts to improve its performance in mathematics. Considerable investment in resources and training has been made and this provision is having a positive effect on learning. The quality of teaching, although it varies from one class to another, is satisfactory overall with many good features. It is very good in Year 6. A particularly telling feature is that strategies to help learning are used consistently as pupils move up the years. Such strategies are also adapted well to meet the needs of different ages. For example, pupils in every class use number lines as a method of understanding new ideas. In Year 1, they have individual number lines in the form of apples to learn how to count on or back in either addition or subtraction work with money. In Year 2, the number line is part of a computer program that gives practice in understanding division. By Year 4, pupils are consolidating their understanding of fractions by placing the appropriate segment of "pizza" on a number line with divisions into fractions, and so on as pupils get older. In Years 1 and 2, the focus is correctly on practical mathematics, with recording being secondary to understanding. However, weaknesses with this approach were also observed. While the steady pace and close direction of teachers supported the majority of pupils well, for higher attainers, learning was too slow. On occasions, they became bored and restless, owing to this lack of pace and challenge. Furthermore, little evidence of tasks that were adapted to the needs of higher attainers was seen. Part of the reason is a lack of opportunity for pupils to become independent learners at this age. In classes for older pupils, more discussion about mathematics was observed. Where good and very good teaching was seen, questions pushed

pupils to express their thinking clearly, the pace of learning was brisk when pupils understood, and then slowed down appropriately when a more repetitive method was needed. Furthermore, opportunities for solving open-ended problems were more frequently apparent. By Year 6, pupils know how to use appropriate metric or imperial measures, and higher attaining pupils can work out problems, such as how many cans of soft drink would fill a bathtub.

58. Pupils have a good attitude towards the subject. Older pupils explained that they feel involved in what they learn because in all lessons they are told what they will learn and the point of it. Inspectors noted that pupils are also frequently asked to reflect on what they understood and to share it with the class at the end of lessons. Pupils are constantly encouraged to risk a “wrong” answer and are praised for having the confidence to try. However, in some lessons, the majority of talk is from the teacher and pupils’ development of spoken English, which is a weakness, is hindered. Presentation of work is variable in quality, because teachers are not consistently insisting on the same routines and high standards of recording calculations.
59. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has led and managed the subject well. Planning is securely based on the National Numeracy Strategy and this, together with the recent purchase of a wide range of practical resources, has made a significant contribution to the rise in standards. Pupils are assessed regularly and the data collected is beginning to be used effectively to identify strengths and weaknesses in provision.

Mathematics across the curriculum

60. Opportunities to use mathematics as part of learning in other subjects are taken as and when they occur. However, such opportunities are occurring more incidentally than in planned situations. For example, during a recent multicultural week, pupils in Year 1 learnt to count up to ten in Portuguese and older pupils used a lot of measuring to prepare food from other countries. Although information and communication technology is often used in the production of graphs and charts, displays of pupils’ work in mathematics are not frequently evident, either around the school or in classrooms.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good overall and very good in Year 6.
- Achievement is good.
- Pupils display positive attitudes to learning.

Commentary

61. Pupils’ achievements are very good in science. From a low starting point when they first come into school, they make consistently good progress, owing to generally good teaching that they receive. Their progress in Year 6 is particularly good and they learn very quickly, as lessons are made very interesting, with a very good practical approach. Very secure relationships are established and maintained. Currently, standards in Year 6 are a little below average for the age group, but improving rapidly, and below average in Year 2. All pupils of different backgrounds and ethnic groups, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, achieve well overall, but their attainment remains below what is expected for their age. Nevertheless, pupils from minority ethnic groups are represented strongly amongst the highest attainers.
62. Teaching and learning in science are good overall and very good in Year 6. It is this good quality of teaching that drives pupils’ achievement well. What is taught meets National Curriculum requirements very thoroughly. Schemes of work have been reviewed recently to

ensure that pupils' needs are met effectively. This good provision also contributes to good learning. Assessments of pupils' attainment and potential progress are generally accurate and are used effectively to maximise standards. This thoroughness is helping to raise levels of attainment both in day-to-day work and in National Curriculum test results. Samples of work indicate that, in Year 6, pupils' studies of all aspects of the curriculum are closing in towards average levels nationally and that several pupils are on course to attain a level higher than that normally expected. In Year 2, pupils have studied forces, materials, growth and also elements of how electrical circuits behave. The standard of this work is also higher than in the past. However, what was observed in a sample of work tends not to be sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of pupils of differing prior attainments, with tasks that are less specifically matched to pupils' needs. Work sampling also indicates that lower down the school, pupils' written findings are sometimes copied, or completed on to worksheets. Whilst this method sets a standard of what is required, it restricts the amount of thinking that pupils must do for themselves, both scientifically and in the development of their skills in literacy. A related weakness was also observed on occasions. Teachers introduced scientific vocabulary well and pupils often showed confidence in using it. However, this finding did not extend to general vocabulary or to spoken English. When pupils spoke carelessly or used colloquial vocabulary, it often went uncorrected, so opportunities to increase pupils' flexibility in the use of language were missed.

63. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The subject co-ordinator is very aware of areas for improvement. Priorities include, for example, extension of the range of tasks suitable to different levels of prior attainment, and development of teaching skills in the use of assessment to influence planning and pupils' progress. Improvement in provision since the last inspection is very good.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many improvements have been made since the last inspection in resources, planning and expertise of staff.
- Tracking and assessment procedures are in place.
- Standards are below average by the end of Year 6.
- Insufficient challenge in activities to extend skills in some classes.
- Classroom computers were not consistently used during lessons in other subjects.

Commentary

64. Knowledge and skills are below expected levels in Years 2 and 6. However, several improvements in resources and provision have been made since the last inspection, including a network of computers that are linked to broadband; a set of laptops sufficient for whole class or group working; and the introduction of software packages that meet all requirements of the National Curriculum. Although standards were reported as average at the time of the last inspection, a considerable increase nationally in what pupils are expected to attain probably means that overall standards have not fallen and that achievements, bearing in mind low starting points, are satisfactory. In direct teaching sessions seen, pupils' learning was, however, variable, including one example when it was unsatisfactory, owing to unsatisfactory teaching. In this lesson, subject knowledge let the teacher down. However, samples of work that were provided and/or displayed indicated that pupils in Year 6 are currently working only a little below expected levels. For example, they use computers to produce graphs and charts, word process successfully and combine text with objects from *Clipart*. These older pupils are also learning to use *PowerPoint* for presentations to their parents.

65. Planning is based on national guidance, which ensures that the curriculum covers all expected strands. Other examples of pupils' work indicate that in Year 2 they select fonts, sizes and colours to produce a variety of effects and know how to save their work. Planning indicates that the progress made by the youngest pupils is greater than that of older age groups. The most likely reason is that improvements to provision are understandably having a more immediate impact on these age groups. Nevertheless, standards are likely to rise as they move on through the school.
66. From discussions with staff, as well as what was sampled, teachers' knowledge of the subject is inconsistent, with some having greater expertise than others. Where expertise is less secure, it clearly impacts negatively on pupils' progress. Nevertheless, several teachers have benefited strongly from national training. Good use is made of support given by a technician from the local secondary school and, as well as troubleshooting, he has provided further training opportunities to teachers.
67. Pupils who were asked were enthusiastic about information and communication technology and keen to explore whatever programs are available to them. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are confident in searching the Internet and skim text to find information. New programs are being very effectively used with a pupil who has severe special educational needs. These programs have assisted communication with others, making a radical difference to this pupil's experience of life in the classroom. All other pupils with special educational needs have equal access to computers and use them to help their learning and progress effectively.
68. The co-ordinator is relatively new to the post and has a clear vision for future developments in the subject. Systems for tracking the attainment of individual pupils are in place and used consistently. Teaching is monitored on a termly basis. The co-ordinator leads well by example and gives staff the confidence to try new equipment and programs. She has identified areas for development that are included in the school improvement plan.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

69. During the inspection, insufficient use was made of opportunities to use new technology in other subjects outside direct teaching sessions. Observation of lessons indicated that computers in some classrooms were not used frequently enough. As well as the adverse effect on progress, this factor raises important issues of efficiency in the use of expensive resources. The school's policy identifies ways in which computers can be used and, in fact, pupils spoke of using computers in other subjects and were able to explain several uses of computers in the community and the world at large. Furthermore, the use of electronic keyboards during lunchtime music clubs was impressive, as pupils worked at a high standard independently.

HUMANITIES

Inspectors were able to sample pupils' work and to look at planning. However, as only one lesson in each of geography and history was observed, overall judgements of provision in these subjects have not been made. Overall judgements are, however, possible in religious education.

Commentary

70. Planning and teachers' records demonstrate that the school makes good use of the locality and further afield to provide information for historical and geographical studies. For example, older pupils undertake a residential visit to Malham village in Yorkshire, staying at a local youth hostel. This field trip enables them to contrast a different geographical environment with that of their own in Peterborough, as well as to learn about the history of the Abbey. Younger pupils understand ways of making their immediate environment more attractive, working on the area from the school grounds to the local shopping centre.

71. In work that was sampled, pupils' recording of their projects is limited and the evidence is principally photographic or produced with considerable help from adults in worksheets or recording frames. Some of these worksheets are commercially produced. Many are limited in scope and do not encourage the development of pupils' own ideas of geographical and historical enquiry. Opportunities are missed, therefore, to develop pupils' creativity, uses of literacy and of spoken English.
72. In both lessons that were observed, teaching was less than satisfactory. Task selection was a contributory factor in both cases, as were teaching methods. The use of worksheets contributed to difficulties with the quality of learning. For example, in the geography lesson, difficulties with the language used to set questions meant that lower attaining pupils did not understand what to do when they were asked to put in "...the destination of your choice".
73. The co-ordinators of geography and history are new to the posts and little direct monitoring of teaching and learning has yet taken place in either subject. Subject policies are due for review. Owing to strong emphases that have been placed on English and mathematics, these subjects have not been developmentally prioritised for a number of years and this has contributed to weaknesses. These weaknesses have now been prioritised and plans have been formulated to focus on staff training in both subjects in the school's next improvement plan. A positive feature is that pupils with special educational needs, especially in classes for younger pupils, have extra support available from teaching assistants, which promotes their learning effectively.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The relevant agreed syllabus is used to plan effectively.
- Teaching and learning in the lessons that were observed were consistently good.
- Pupils enjoy learning about other religions and cultures.
- Visits off the site and visitors to the school are used effectively to contribute to pupils' attainment.

Commentary

74. Overall attainment in Years 2 and 6 broadly matches requirements for the relevant age group as described in the agreed syllabus and pupils' achievements are generally good. At the end of Year 2, for example, pupils know that Christians see Jesus as their "Lord and King" as well as "God's son". In a good lesson, they expanded their previous knowledge well, building on ideas of what modern carpenters do to draw comparisons with Jesus's early life. Samples of their work demonstrate that they learn well from religion as well as acquire factual information. For example, attributes included in their ideas of "Things we need for life" include emotional and personal needs, as well as concrete features such as "food" and "drink". Samples of pupils' work in Year 6 indicate that they know many facts about faith and community leaders such as Martin Luther King and Nelson Mandela. A discussion involving a group of pupils in this year shows that their interest in the subject is at a high level. As a result, for example, they recalled facts about world religions very well. They knew about Jewish blessings of food and how special utensils are kept to maintain "kosher". They drew comparisons with Islamic rules for preparing halal meat and accurately retold the Hindu story of Rama and Sita. These pupils also knew the main ideas of Christianity and explained the significance of Christmas and Easter clearly. As well as demonstrating sound understanding and skills, this knowledge also indicates good coverage of the locally agreed syllabus.
75. Three lessons were observed and the quality of teaching was good in all of them. Teachers based their planning on relevant elements in the locally agreed syllabus. Their questioning was good and they led pupils to make good links with their own experience, so learning was rooted

on solid foundations. This method also engaged pupils well, as they were keen to express ideas and anecdotes with which they were familiar.

76. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development, with especially strong links with spirituality and morality. For example, pupils are introduced to real people and situations. As a result, they are able to appreciate the importance of religious leaders and codes of practice and beliefs to people whom they actually meet. Such provision contributes to the self-esteem of pupils who belong to a faith community, as it encourages them to feel confident about explaining their own religious ideas and cultural values.
77. The co-ordinator was absent during the inspection, so it is not possible to make complete judgements of management of the subject. Nevertheless, what was seen suggests that in most aspects, it is at least satisfactory. For example, the work of pupils of minority ethnic groups was similar to that of all other pupils and those with special educational needs were well catered for and made good progress.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Inspectors were able to sample pupils' work and to look at some planning. However, as only one lesson in design and technology, and no lessons in art and design or music were observed, overall judgements about provision in these subjects have not been made. Three lessons were observed in physical education, but only featured gymnastics and related skills, so only what was observed in this aspect of the subject has been reported.

Art and design and Design and technology

78. The standard of art and design, and design and technology, on display around the school, and in sketches, was at around the expected level for the relevant age groups. Techniques in art are developed well through the school, although a lack of maturity in subject matter is sometimes apparent in pupils' work. Several examples of collage through the school are carefully produced and presented. In a mixed-age class for pupils in Years 3 and 4, pupils designed and made their own photographic frames. These were of good quality and the skills that had been employed matched what is normally expected. In Year 6, pupils made masks. The designs were intricate and were followed through well into the finished artefacts. Pupils who were asked were realistically critical about this work, offering good ideas about how it could have been improved, suggesting that evaluations are also encouraged. In Year 2, pupils are currently working on making puppets, developing their skills in joining and working out their designs in practice. This work also provides good evidence of pupils' evaluations of their work, making suggestions on how to improve it. The quality of teaching and learning in the lesson that was observed was satisfactory. Planning indicated that National Curriculum requirements of designing, making and evaluating artefacts and products are understood clearly by the teacher. Pupils with special educational needs make similar models and artefacts as other pupils and their achievements are also similar, owing to good support when they require it.

Music

79. A discussion with a group of pupils in Year 6 indicates that music is a significant factor in their enjoyment of coming to school. All of them spoke with enthusiasm about their work and recalled many examples of compositions, musical performances in which they had taken part and explained favourite types of musical genre. They were very keen to show their compositions, on display near their classroom, to an inspector. This work was written down using a mixture of standard and non-standard forms of notation and was of expected levels of attainment for their age group. Singing that was heard during assemblies was of a good standard, both in those for younger pupils and in those for Years 3 to 6. Pupils' singing was in tune and its tone and volume was consistent with the words that were sung. Musical activities are also well represented amongst the extra-curricular activities that the school provides. Two pupils told an inspector about their enjoyment of playing the recorder. This had made a strong

contribution to the personal development of a boy, who commented that he had nearly given it up but, now that he can play many tunes by sight, he is "...really pleased that I did not". The subject co-ordinator also provided a tape of the school's Christmas concert performed by pupils in Years 3 and 4. Singing was again of a high quality with strong performances of *For unto us* and *Looking for a Star*. At their meeting, parents expressed pleasure with opportunities that are offered to visit the school's class assemblies and to see their children sing and perform.

Physical education

80. By the time pupils reach Year 6, standards in gymnastics are good. In well-taught lessons in Years 4 and 6, pupils' achievements were also good. In Year 4, the teacher's skilful questioning and explanation enabled pupils to move with confidence and imagination, creating their own sequences to music from *Bombay Dreams*. In Year 6, a very good lesson demonstrated how the teacher sensitively makes pupils aware of their own standard and what they need to do improve. As a result, learning time is used very effectively as pupils engage straight away on their own weaknesses and visibly progress. This strong method also ensures good inclusion of all pupils, as everyone knows what to do at their own level. By the end of this lesson, all pupils had devised their own sequences using benches and mats. Overall, their activities were of a higher standard than is normally expected. By the end of Year 2, pupils have not had as long in school to progress beyond the standards that are normally expected for their age. Nevertheless, all pupils made appropriate progress and achieved well in the lesson that was observed.
81. Planning indicates a good emphasis on all aspects of physical education through the school. Extra-curricular activity is also plentiful and broad. For example, a scheme to experience ice hockey has been taken up with a local club, and dance and competitive sports also figure. Swimming is also provided at a local pool and records indicate that the vast majority achieve the government's minimum safety requirement of 25 metres.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

82. Lessons were not observed in this area, so overall judgements have not been made. At the previous inspection, a statutory policy for sex education was in place. Lessons to promote awareness of the misuse of drugs were yet to be developed. The provision for personal, social and health education was judged as satisfactory. A lot more is expected now than was the case six years ago, and it is clear from the school's planning that considerable development has occurred. Development of pupils' personal, social and health education, as well as ideas of what it means to be a good citizen, are currently provided in timetabled lessons, as well as on occasions when such matters arise across the curriculum. The school also provides a good, well-established Young Enterprise Citizenship programme. Overall, what is provided in these subjects meets requirements and includes work on diet, health, personal safety and sex education. The school's programme helps pupils gain confidence, mix successfully with other people and know how to have a healthy lifestyle. The co-ordinator acknowledges that teaching about awareness of the dangers of misusing drugs remains a weaker area. Nevertheless, the help of the school nurse and the local police has been recruited. Personal development and good citizenship are also evident in the provision of clubs such as gardening and bird-watching. In these extra-curricular groups, ideas of looking after the environment so others will be able to enjoy it, as well as ourselves, are promoted strongly.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	3

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	6
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	1
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).