

INSPECTION REPORT

ELM ROAD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Wisbech

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110650

Headteacher: Graham Lockwood

Lead inspector: Judith Charlesworth

Dates of inspection: 8th-11th March 2004

Inspection number: 260417

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:	242
School address:	Elm Road Wisbech Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	PE13 2TB
Telephone number:	01945 584591
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Richard Edwards
Date of previous inspection:	November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Elm Road community primary school is situated in one of the highest areas of social deprivation in Cambridgeshire. Numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals are above average. However, two fifths of its pupils come from outside this catchment area and overall, pupils' socio-economic background is average. The school is typical in size for schools of its kind, and the majority of pupils are white British. There are very small numbers of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds, including Bangladeshi, Indian, mixed race and other white ethnic groups. One pupil has English as an additional language. Seventeen pupils come from settled Travellers' families. Most pupils in each year group started their school life at Elm Road. However this is not the case for Years 5 and 6 where more than a quarter of the pupils joined the school at other times.

Pupils' attainment on entry to the Reception year is a little below average. Around 15 per cent of the pupils have special educational needs, which is a bit lower than average. The main problem experienced is moderate learning difficulties, with a few pupils having social and emotional behavioural difficulties and physical difficulties. Above average numbers of pupils have Statements of their Special Educational Needs. Pupils are mostly taught in single-age groups but there are also mixed age classes for Reception/Year 1 and Year 1/2.

The school gained the School Achievement Award in 2001 and 2002, and in 2003 gained an award from the National Association of Advisors in Computer Education (NAACE.)

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21501	Judith Charlesworth	Lead inspector	Foundation stage; science; religious education; English as an additional language
13706	Gillian Marsland	Lay inspector	
25778	Andrew Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; personal, social and health education; design and technology; music
8056	Howard Probert	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; art and design; geography; history; physical education

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective** school. Leadership and management are good and the school is improving well. Pupils' achievement is good and standards attained are higher than average due to the good quality of education provided, despite the difficulties in recruiting teaching staff. The school provides **good** value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Good leadership and effective management underpin the supportive, inclusive ethos, and are moving the school forwards;
- Teaching, learning and achievement are good overall; they are very good in Year 6;
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work, and much of their personal development, are very good;
- Pupils attain increasingly high standards for their age as they move through the school;
- Parents' views of the school are very positive;
- The provision for English is very good;
- There are inequalities of provision between the two classes for Reception children;
- Systems for recording pupils' progress other than in English and mathematics are insufficiently robust, and assessment information is not used to best effect to inform planning.
- Practical work in two classrooms is restricted by their small size and the large class groups.

The school has made **good** progress since the last inspection and has kept pace with national developments and expectations. Curricular initiatives in literacy; numeracy; personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE); and information and communication technology (ICT) have been successfully implemented. Standards attained and pupils' behaviour and attitudes have improved. The style of leadership has changed and is successfully dispersing through the school, improving its ethos and inclusiveness. The governing body is more effective and involved. Staff now welcome responsibility and the opportunity to attend training. Outdoor provision for the Reception children is somewhat better, and there is still a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Pupils' achievement - including that of pupils with special educational needs and from Travelling and minority ethnic backgrounds - is **good** overall, and very good in Year 6. Children enter Reception with skills a little below average in all areas of learning except creative development, where they are average. Number skills are a particular weakness. However, children achieve well, and are on line to attain the goals expected at the end of their Reception year. Year 2 national test results in reading, writing and mathematics have risen faster over the past three years than the national trend, and in 2003, results were above average in reading and writing, and well above average in mathematics. The current standards in Year 2 are average in mathematics, science, ICT, religious education and art and design. They are above average in reading and writing. The gains made by pupils by the end of Year 6 have been well above average. This is a very positive picture. The dip in the Year 6 English test results in 2003 was predicted and due to an exceptional number of pupils in the cohort

with literacy-based special educational needs. The school met its English targets for 2003; the 2004 targets reflect the current cohort's attainment. Current standards of work are above average for pupils' age in English, mathematics, science, religious education and art and design. They are average in ICT. Throughout the school, pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **good**, and much – particularly their attitudes and behaviour- is very good. Attendance and punctuality are **satisfactory**.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided is **good**. Teaching is **good** and pupils learn well because they are interested and motivated by their lessons. Teaching in Year 6 is very good; pupils learn rapidly and make very good progress in this class. Occasional unsatisfactory teaching results from methods, work or support that do not meet the needs of all the pupils in the class. Assessment is **satisfactory**. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is carefully tracked, but systems for other subjects are variable. Overall, the assessment information is not used to best effect to inform teaching or whole-school plans. The curriculum is **good** and well resourced. However, the accommodation for a minority of Reception children is unsatisfactory, and two classrooms are too small for the large classes, particularly during practical work. Arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **satisfactory**. Pupils' literacy skills are very well promoted through other subjects, and overall the support for learning through cross-curricular links is good. ICT is well used to enhance teaching, and shows pupils the benefits of a technological society. Support and guidance given to pupils are **good**. The school maintains **good** links with the community and **satisfactory** links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **good** overall. The head teacher provides effective leadership and direction for the school and is supported well by the leadership team. Management is good and the systems underpinning school improvement are becoming increasingly rigorous. Governance is **satisfactory**. Governors are interested and involved, have a good overview of finance and ensure that statutory requirements are met. As they become more knowledgeable, they are beginning to understand how to challenge and develop ideas put forward, and hold the school to account.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils are very enthusiastic, happy and enjoy school. They feel important and influential in decision-making. Parents, too, think highly of the school and are supportive of its work and their children's learning. They particularly like the quality of information they receive, opportunities given for them to learn how to help their children at home, and the way staff become involved in community events.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the inequalities of provision for Reception children;
- Develop systems for recording pupils' progress other than in English and mathematics, and use assessment information more effectively to inform planning at pupil, class and school levels;
- Improve the accommodation, and/or alter the organisation of lessons to support practical work.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Pupils' achievement is good in the Foundation Stage and standards attained are average by the time they enter Year 1. Achievement is good in the rest of the school and very good in Year 6, by which time standards attained are above average overall, and well above average in some aspects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' achievement has improved since the previous inspection, and is good;
- Pupils attain increasingly high standards for their age as they move through the school;
- The standards attained in Year 6 are above average in English, mathematics, science, religious education, and art and design;
- Pupils' speaking and listening skills are particularly good;
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.

Commentary

1. Children enter their Reception year with below average skills, and particular weaknesses in emotional development, language for communication and thinking, and numbers and their use. They achieve well, although achievement is better in the Reception-only class than in the mixed age class as provision is not entirely suitable for them there. Nevertheless, halfway through their time in Reception, all children have gained good ground and made particularly good progress in the identified areas of weakness, evening up the profile of their skills. By the end of their time in Reception, the children are on course to attain average standards for their age in all areas of learning. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the majority did not achieve the outcomes expected.

2. Pupils continue to achieve well in Years 1 and 2 due to the good quality of education provided, and over the last three years, they have exceeded the performance of others their age in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2003, test results in reading and writing were above the national average, and well above average in comparison to schools with a similar intake of pupils. Results in mathematics were well above the national average and very high in comparison to similar schools. Staff assessment of pupils' attainment in science, which is not included in the national tests, was that it was below average. This is at odds with assessment results in reading, writing and mathematics, and is judged to be inaccurate. Current standards of work are average except in English, where they are above average with particular strengths in speaking and listening. However, a good number of pupils are attaining at levels above those expected for their age in all subjects inspected in depth, so this year's test results are likely to be above the average for similar schools once again.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	16.8 (15.3)	15.7 (15.8)
writing	15.4 (14.5)	14.6 (14.4)
mathematics	17.8 (15.8)	16.3 (16.5)

There were 35 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Over the last three years, the school's overall performance in the national tests at the end of Year 6 has exceeded the national average. The gains made by pupils during their time at the school

have been well above both the national average, and the average of schools with a similar intake. This is a very positive picture and a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The 2003 test results showed a dip, particularly in English, but this was predicted and reflected in the school's targets for the year. It was due to an unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs, many with specific problems in their literacy skills. This year's English targets reflect the current cohort's skills.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.5 (29.1)	27.0 (27.0)
mathematics	27.9 (29.1)	26.8 (26.7)
science	29.6 (30.5)	28.6 (28.3)

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

4. Pupils are given very good opportunities to practise and use their English skills in all subjects of the curriculum, and as a result standards are above average in English throughout the school. In addition, the good provision for pupils' personal development gives them the confidence to speak out and take part in discussions; consequently, their speaking and listening skills are well above expectations for their age. Good English skills have a positive knock-on effect onto other subjects, and standards in many of these are above average too by the time pupils leave the school. This is further supported by a strong focus on cross-curricular links which supports achievement in the subjects concerned, and exceptionally effective teaching in Year 6.

5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well throughout the school. Well-written individual education plans make clear what pupils should learn next, and how this should be achieved. Work in most lessons – particularly English and mathematics - is well adapted to suit their needs. A number of pupils are taught effectively in special small groups, giving extra support in writing, spelling and mathematics. Good support ensures they achieve the objectives of each lesson and the longer-term targets set on their individual education plans. The achievement and standards attained by pupils from minority ethnic groups are no different to their peers'. Traveller pupils achieve well due to well-focused support, although standards they attain are often below average.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

6. Pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are very good. Their spiritual development is good, moral and social development are very good, and cultural development is satisfactory. This makes these aspects of personal development good overall. Attendance is average and punctuality satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils take pride in their work and want to do well;
- Pupils develop very good moral and social values; they set their own class rules on the basis of these;
- Pupils are confident and mature because relationships throughout the school are very good;
- Assemblies and PSHCE lessons contribute well to pupils' spiritual development.

Commentary

7. Since the last inspection pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and relationships with others have all improved because the school has worked hard on these areas. Standards are now very good. Pupils work to the best of their ability and are justifiably proud of their efforts. Written work, projects and art work are increasingly well-presented as pupils mature. They join in lessons

enthusiastically and take the initiative well and with confidence, for example volunteering to act as Jesus when comparing life in biblical times with their own. Pupils' good personal organisation and co-operation contribute well to their achievements, such as when devising and carrying out science investigations in groups.

8. The very good example that adults set leads to pupils' very good social and moral standards. No pupils have been excluded for three years. Pupils respect the school's behaviour code and they base their own class rules upon it. They appreciate how the "time to think" room, introduced since the last inspection, allows them to reflect on misdemeanours and to discuss rationally what they can do to help prevent a recurrence. Courtesy and respect are at the heart of the very good relationships seen across the school. As a result, pupils are happy and settled. This leads, in turn, to very good self-esteem, confidence and maturity. In a wide-ranging discussion held with inspectors, older pupils explained how, amongst many other things, teachers expect them to organise themselves, for instance to complete homework on time. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, such as supervising behaviour near the outside doors at break times and carry out their duties efficiently.

9. The school ethos and the programme for PSHCE develop pupils' sense of self-worth and respect for others well, although life in multi-cultural Britain is not strongly enough promoted other than through the study of other faiths in religious education. Well-planned assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. In one example, the story of David and Goliath, and the period of genuine reflection that followed, helped pupils to understand how personal and religious beliefs help people overcome apparent impossibilities in times of adversity.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

10. The quality of education provided is good overall. Teaching, learning, the curriculum and the support, advice and guidance given to pupils are all good. The school maintains good links with parents and the community, and satisfactory links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

11. Teaching and learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall. Assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in Year 6;
- Teaching for the children in the two classes for Reception children is of differing quality;
- Teachers make good cross-curricular references in lessons which link subjects together and reinforces learning well;
- The quality of marking is inconsistent;
- The use of assessment to guide teachers' planning and to inform pupils of how they can improve is not good enough in subjects other than English and mathematics;
- Support staff are deployed effectively and make a good contribution to learning.

Commentary

12. Good teaching throughout the school supports pupils' achievement well, but this is particularly effective in Year 6. Pupils make great strides in this class. They are very keen to learn because of the class teacher's particular methods. Every opportunity here is used to promote learning and understanding. Good practice includes:

- thinking laterally to make very effective cross-curricular links with what pupils have learned in other subjects. For example, on one occasion the adaptation of sea life to the environment (science) was reinforced by a short discussion about the underwater-based Disney cartoon *Finding Nemo*. On another occasion, Religious Education was planned to reinforce the *conditional* (Literacy) – why people involved with Jesus might hold different points of view about Him because of their own experiences, and *historical research* – how purported facts may differ according to interpretation. This particular teaching skill is also evident in the good teaching in the rest of the school. For example, the teacher in the Year 1/2 class very effectively based a literacy lesson - writing a booklet – on the class' science topic on scooters (*forces and materials and their properties*) so that learning in both subjects was very well reinforced.
- making very good use of interesting resources complemented by imaginative use of the new ICT equipment; for example, the scene was set for an English lesson on propaganda by an automatically-run slide show of war-time photographs accompanied by traditional songs of the time, such as *We'll meet again*. This was left running over lunch time and the atmosphere created in the classroom was excellent.
- getting over to the pupils her very real desire for them to be interested in and enjoy what they are doing, and to learn as much from it as possible. This is done by a constant, helpful commentary of additional information or questions to extend what the pupils know and understand, carried out almost as if the conversation was between two individuals, not 36.
- giving pupils many opportunities to use their initiative, be independent and responsible for their own learning, which they very much enjoy.

13. Children in the Reception-only class are well provided for, and teaching is good and appropriate for their needs. The provision for Reception children in the mixed age class, however, is not good enough, and contributes to some ineffective teaching. This is partly due to lack of suitable space and classroom facilities, and partly due to inappropriate planning. At times, teachers' expectations of the children are too high, for example in relation to whole class work in mathematics. On one occasion, the tasks were not pitched at a suitable level for them; and on another, the amount of time they were expected to sit working at a table was too long. Support staff do not always give the Reception children the right help, and do not appear well enough briefed to do this. Generally, however, support staff are well-informed and make a good contribution to pupils' learning. They work well with pupils with special educational needs, and any pupils who need additional help in support of aspects such as behaviour, basic literacy and numeracy skills, and subject-specific skills, for example in practical work in science.

14. The school keeps good records of pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Teachers use the key learning objectives from the national strategies for literacy and numeracy effectively to check pupils' on-going progress. They test spelling and mental mathematics every week and set written tests every half term or so. Records of progress and test results are shared with pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, where they keep their own records in the front of their exercise books. As a result, pupils know how well they are progressing in these subjects. Record keeping in other subjects, however, is underdeveloped. There are no school-wide systems in operation. Pupils' work is marked regularly, but while some teachers correct work and explain well where pupils have gone wrong or what they need to do next, this good practice is not seen in every class.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 33 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	7 (21 %)	14 (42%)	10 (30%)	2 (6%)	0 (0%)	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.

The curriculum

15. The curriculum is good and supports pupils' achievement well. The range of extra enrichment activities offered is very good. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, and resources are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has an appropriately strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy, well-balanced by good cross-curricular planning;
- The Year 6 arrangements for teaching English and mathematics work well and support pupils' achievement effectively;
- Educational visits and visitors to the school make a very good contribution to learning;
- Provision for PSHCE is good;
- Accommodation for Reception children in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class is unsatisfactory, and the Year 4 and 6 classrooms are very cramped and restrict practical work.

Commentary

16. Work is well planned, and good links between subjects contribute well to pupils' achievements. Literacy links are particularly good and are often well supported by ICT. Although more time than average is timetabled for English and mathematics, the cross-curricular approach ensures that all subjects receive an appropriate emphasis and learning is continually reinforced across the subjects. An additional contribution to pupils' success is the split of the Year 6 class into a higher attaining group and a lower attaining group for some lessons in English and mathematics. This helps teachers to plan suitable challenge and support for pupils' different needs. Coupled with the very good teaching in Year 6, this arrangement is very effective in promoting high standards.

17. Pupils throughout the school enjoy a wide range of educational visits and other activities, including visits from health workers, the emergency services and opportunities to take part in sporting activities. Year 6 pupils speak highly of how much they learned from a drama specialist who worked on improvisation and acting skills related to Shakespeare's "A Midsummer Night's Dream". Visits to local castles and places such as Hunstanton provide first hand experiences on which to base study in subjects such as history, geography and science.

18. Formal PSHCE is provided through a good, planned curriculum including appropriate attention to drugs awareness, sex and relationships education. Topics such as healthy living are often deliberately threaded through other subjects such as science and physical education. This provision is complemented by the supportive ethos of the school. Pupils' personal development, confidence and self-esteem are supported well in the school's everyday work. For example, celebratory displays of Year 2 pupils' achievements announced – "I am good at reading" and "I am good at helping my mummy wash up." Other activities, such as residential trips and Christmas productions, contribute effectively to pupils' growing independence and sense of teamwork.

19. Improvements to the accommodation are ongoing. Plans are in place to improve facilities for the disabled, which is a very large and expensive undertaking in this Victorian building. A new computer suite has been created, although this is small for its purpose, and a secure play area for the Reception-only class established. These have both added considerably to the curriculum provision. However, Reception children in the mixed-age class do not have access to the new play area, nor to any suitable secure outside space (although plans are in hand to create this.) The classroom is too small to meet the needs of both the current Year 1 pupils and the Reception children. For example, the role-play area is very small, and includes a sand-tray positioned against the wall, restricting the number of children who might use it. The classroom cannot provide a suitable range of practical and creative activities in the Foundation Stage areas of learning. These factors limit children's personal, creative and physical development in comparison to the children in the Reception-only class. The Year 4 classroom is too small to accommodate practical activities

properly when all 35 pupils, teacher and support assistants are together. In one science lesson observed, adults could not squeeze between the working groups without asking pupils to move. The Year 6 classroom is little better.

Care, guidance and support

20. The school has satisfactory arrangements for ensuring pupils' care, welfare, health and safety. Support and guidance given as a result of monitoring pupils' personal development and achievement are good. The pupils are well consulted and involved in the life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The care and support offered through PSHCE, strong relationships with staff, and helpful targets set in English and on individual education plans, are good;
- Pupils with special educational needs and from minority ethnic or Travelling backgrounds are well supported and fully included in all that the school does;
- Good induction procedures help Reception children settle swiftly into school;
- The Class and School Council systems provide an opportunity for pupils to have a real impact on school life;
- Progress tracking in English and mathematics is good.

Commentary

21. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is informal, but effective. Staff know the pupils very well and liaise closely with parents and outside agencies. A discussion period (*circle time*), which forms part of the PSHCE programme in each class, is used so that pupils can openly discuss issues such as bullying or friendship. A good example of this was observed in a Year 3 lesson where pupils talked about being assertive, calming down, and when to tell an adult when serious problems arise. Such sessions are often supported by outside agencies such as the Life Education Bus that promotes drugs awareness and the 'safe person day' organised by the fire service.

22. Through the good system which identifies and caters for pupils with special educational needs, pupils' individual needs are carefully identified and well met. Where necessary, good quality individual educational plans are established which indicate clearly what pupils need to learn next, and how this should be tackled. The quality of support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Support assistants and teachers work well together to provide effective support and guidance in lessons, and there are dedicated sessions devoted to improving pupils' skills in spelling and writing. The pupils achieve well as a result. Traveller pupils are fully integrated into school. Parents commented that they did not know who the Traveller pupils were, although sometimes their own children came home and said, for example, "I wish we lived in a caravan." High quality support is given to them, together with others with similar needs so that they are not singled out, by a visiting support worker – herself a Traveller. Pupils' work and the school's resources reflect the range of pupils' backgrounds well. For example, staff-made and commercially produced pictures and books, and children's own work, show skin colours in various tones, and include celebration of difference.

23. There are well planned and organised induction procedures to support children entering Reception. Parents' evenings are arranged and the children have the opportunity to meet the staff and sample school on 'taster days.' Children adjust to school life by attending on a part-time basis at first. The school provides a good range of information for parents to explain school procedures and how they can help their children at home.

24. The School Council is a very good forum in which pupils discuss matters arising in their Class Councils. Members canvas for support and are elected from within the Class Councils. Suggestions are taken forward, and decisions made that have a proper influence on school life. For example, pupils chose to have a *Mad Hatter* fund raising event for their chosen charity, the RSPCA, and the introduction of the "friendship bench" in the playground came about from pupils' suggestions.

The Friends of Elm Road School have provided the Council with a budget, which is very good preparation for adult life.

25. The assessment co-ordinator and senior managers keep extensive records of progress based on standardised test data drawn from the national tests in Years 2 and 6, and optional annual tests, in English and mathematics. This supplements other records of progress in these subjects well. Class targets are set for younger pupils, and from Year 3 onwards pupils negotiate their own individual targets with their class teachers. These give the pupils an insight into the progress that they have made and what they must do to improve their work or behaviour. Information is used well to help establish where pupils are underachieving or may have special educational needs in order to give them appropriate support. Further use of this data is being developed, but at present pupils have individual short term learning targets only in English

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

26. The school maintains good links with parents and the community. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents' views of the school are very good;
- Good quality information for parents keeps them well informed of school events and their children's progress and achievement;
- Good use is made of the community to enrich the curriculum.

Commentary

27. The great majority of parents think highly of the school. They made this clear in both the parents' meeting held prior to the inspection, and in the questionnaires returned. In particular, parents like the opportunities they are given to learn how to help their children at home; the way staff get fully involved in local and community events which involve the school, such as the Rose Fair Pageant; the quality and frequency of information they are given about their children's progress; and the school's open-door policy. Attendance at curriculum workshops, leavers' assemblies, parents' meetings and school productions is good. The Friends of Elm Road Association organises social and fundraising events such as dances and fairs where a substantial amount of money is raised to benefit the pupils, for example buying resources and funding the School Council budget.

28. The school website and regular newsletters keep parents informed about school events and what their children will be learning. The pupils' progress reports are of a good quality and contain all the required information. Formal parents' consultation evenings are held each term and parents receive a full report in the summer term and short half-termly summary progress reports. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well-informed of their children's achievement, and are fully involved in all reviews.

29. Links with the local community support learning well. Subjects such as art and history are enriched by visits to art galleries, Wisbech castle, museums and Georgian and Tudor houses. Personal and social education and science lessons are enhanced by visits from practitioners such as the dentist, and expert professionals to reinforce drugs awareness. The local vicar supports the pupils' personal and religious education by leading school assemblies and encouraging the use of the church for projects such as *homes and buildings*. The local supermarket is used for literacy activities and members of the community have come into school to talk to the pupils about life during World War 2. Residential visits are also arranged to locations such as Scarborough and the Isle of Wight to support subjects such as history, geography and science.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

30. Leadership and management are good overall. The head teacher provides effective leadership and direction for the school and is supported well by the leadership team. Management is also good. The governance of the school is satisfactory. The recruitment and retention of staff is a local problem, and has affected the stability of the school's staff.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and leadership team provide strong direction for the school based upon a good analysis of its overall provision;
- The school does not make best use of the data it gathers;
- The quality of the teamwork in the school is very good and this provides a supportive ethos and an inclusive school;
- The provision and organisation for pupils with special educational needs is good;
- The governors monitoring role is underdeveloped;
- The leadership in some subjects is underdeveloped.

Commentary

31. The last inspection judged management and efficiency to be good. Since then the expectations of leadership and management in schools have increased considerably, but the school has kept pace and moved forward well. Senior managers are clear-headed about the strengths and weaknesses of the school and what should be improved, although this is not embodied in a sufficiently well developed strategic plan. The current head teacher has improved many of the management systems, which has had a successful impact on pupils' achievements. For example, a rigorous behaviour management system was put into place in order to address escalating challenging behaviour. This has been very effective. Pupils are now reflective about any instances that occur, and are keen and eager to learn. They are in a much better position to achieve well. Staff and parents appreciate the welcoming and supportive ethos of the school. The headteacher and the leadership team have inspired close teamwork and a shared vision amongst all staff, focused on every pupil's personal care, development and high achievement. They provide good role models for other staff in their teaching. Staff performance management is now fully in place and has been very effective in bringing about improvements in teaching and learning and the raising of achievement and standards. Effective arrangements are made for the induction of new staff. This is important in the light of a considerable turnover as the school and locality have difficulty in recruiting staff. This has had a detrimental effect on Years 4 and 5. The managers of the school are aware of the need to minimise disruption to pupils' education so that this problem does not occur again.

32. Senior managers and subject leaders have made a good start on the analysis of pupils' performance data in English and mathematics. This has led to effective curriculum and organisational developments in order to support improved standards and achievement in these subjects. However, the same focus is not given to analysis of science test results. Although some data is gathered, it is not used as effectively to raise standards throughout the school, other than in Year 6. Very detailed data arising from the computerised Foundation Profile (ongoing assessment of the Reception children's developing skills) is collected efficiently, but not used well enough to identify relative areas of weakness, or to compare achievement in the two classes. Subject leadership is variable, but overall, their work is not based on a clear identification of what to do to raise standards.

33. The school's special educational needs co-ordinator works effectively to organise support and provide directly for pupils with special educational needs and Traveller pupils. Work is carried out in line with the revised Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs; individual education plans are well written and accurately reflect pupils' needs and progress; staff are well supported and a committed and effective team of support staff are well organised and contribute significantly to pupils' achievements. Good links are made with outside agencies to support the work in school.

34. The governors are keen and enthusiastic about their role. They welcome the open and encouraging attitude of the current head teacher, and the opportunity to be properly involved in running the school. The governing body meets its statutory duties but, at this stage, has not been sufficiently proactive in monitoring progress, challenging the ideas put forward by the school and holding it to account. This weakness is currently being well-addressed. The school's budget is managed well and monitored regularly by the governors' finance committee. The rather large balance carried forward is earmarked for improvements to the building in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	678,980
Total expenditure	582,493
Expenditure per pupil	2,407

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	95,676
Balance carried forward to the next	107,405

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

35. Personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; and knowledge and understanding of the world were inspected in full. Creative and physical development were sampled.

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

36. Reception-age children are split between two classes. Twenty seven children are in one class and the eight oldest are in a mixed class with 17 Year 1 pupils. The Reception-only class is small, but suitably set out to provide a practical, play-based environment, taking good account of the Foundation Stage curriculum's areas of learning. There is full access to an adjacent outdoor play space, although this is not yet used to the full. Provision for the Reception children in the Year 1 class is inadequate. There is no secure outdoor area (although plans are in hand for this) and there is not enough room to provide the same sort of learning experiences as in the single-age class. While this situation is unsatisfactory, it is partly due to organisation and provision for Reception-age children overall is satisfactory overall.

37. The outcomes of children's Reception year are good; however the process in getting there is better - and in keeping with current thinking on the education of Foundation Stage children - for those in the Reception-only class. Nevertheless, children achieve well overall, with some variations between the two classes. Children join the school with below average skills, and particular weaknesses in emotional development, language for communication and thinking and numbers and their use. However, most children in both classes are on course to achieve the expected goals for this stage of their education.

38. Teaching is satisfactory overall. It is better in the Reception-only class than in the mixed-age class, partly due to better resources, and partly to better planning and expectations of the children. Leadership of the Foundation Stage is under-developed. There is a lack of clarity about the respective roles and responsibilities of the Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage leaders in relation to the mixed Reception/Year 1 class. Management is satisfactory. The new Foundation Profile (a computerised assessment system) has furnished some very helpful data, but this has not yet been put to full use. The curriculum is sound and appropriately based on the national Foundation Stage curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

39. Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well;
- Children receive unequal experiences in provision in the two classes.

Commentary

40. Children join the school with below average skills, particularly in emotional development. They make very good progress in their attitudes to school, and achieve well overall, especially in the Reception-only class where relationships with staff are very strong. Here children are given the time, opportunity and encouragement to develop at their own pace, and follow their own interests and lines of enquiry. In the mixed age class, this approach is sometimes sacrificed to the needs of the Year 1 pupils, and the children do not have enough opportunity to make decisions and choices of their own. In general, though, all children learn to concentrate well – some for long periods of time, use resources and dress and undress independently, and see to their own hygiene needs. For example,

one child put a fresh roll of toilet tissue into place to make sure that others weren't inconvenienced as she had finished the previous one. The children are very co-operative. They work and play well together; for instance two boys worked out a joint strategy to help one another when searching for shapes buried in a bowl of pasta. Most are fully aware of their place in a group, and can switch attention from their own interests, such as building with bricks, when asked. Most have a good awareness of the difference between right and wrong, for example one child knew he should not have hit another, but struggled with this because he was "being a Power Ranger" at the time, and this is what they do. This showed complex and advanced thinking and reasoning.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

41. Provision in communication, language and literacy is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's skills are developed systematically in both classes;
- Children achieve well.

Commentary

42. Children enter Reception with below average skills, especially in reading. The systematic approach to teaching and learning in communication, language and literacy means that children achieve well, and in both classes are on course to achieve the expected goals in this area of learning.

43. Teaching was observed in the Reception-only class. This was good, and well supported by resources such as a wide range of books, opportunities for free writing, and labels and captions on drawings and pictures. The teacher followed a tight structure, working on *books* (title, author), *sentences* (capital letters, full stops) and *words* (initial and final sounds.) She also drew out children's views on the *feelings* of the Three Little Pigs in the story, which supported their speaking and listening skills and their personal development well. Most children could read the story out loud as a class group, filling in words deliberately left out; they understood the sequence of events in the story, and enjoyed joining in with the chorus. They identified and wrote the sounds required, and suggested words to be incorporated into a sentence. Higher attaining children could, independently, copy a model sentence from the white board, inserting a word of their own choice to complete it. Their writing was reasonably well-formed and easily legible. These skills are above those expected for children at this stage. Most children speak clearly, with confidence and control whether to adults, a friend or in a group. The language used in the role-play of some is advanced; for example, children running a "café" offered pizza to an inspector, and as an afterthought, suggested that she pay £500 for the privilege! Another child described how the previous day he had been acting King in "...the Indian version of Cinderella."

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

44. Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve well, particularly in calculation

Commentary

45. Children enter the school with below average skills. Their calculation skills are especially low. Children achieve well and at this stage of their Reception year are on line to achieve the expected goals in mathematical development. Satisfactory teaching was observed in the mixed age class, and none was observed in the other class. Children developed their understanding of

counting accurately and counting on by use of a *number line*, but not all understood the task set to split a number of objects evenly into two groups. Expectations were too high for these children, and they were not given suitable support. This meant that they did not learn in this part of the lesson. Suitable mathematical tasks were set up in various places in the classroom. For example, children competed to see how many sand castles they could build, and how many of each shape they could find buried in pasta. A further activity was set up on the path outside, but the space available was very cramped, resources were minimal and blew around in the wind, and the children got cold. Overall, there seemed little point in being outside as these negative aspects detracted from the task, although it was achieved. In both classes, children talk about and make simple patterns, and use mathematical words such as *bigger than*, *under* and *heavy* in their everyday language. They recognise simple shapes such as a square and circle, and more advanced children can incorporate these into their drawings, for example of a crenallated turret.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision is too different in the two classes;
- Children's making skills are well developed in the Reception-only class.

Commentary

47. Children enter school with skills that are a little below average. General observations and evidence in children's books, on the walls and in staff's records indicate that they achieve well, and are on course to attain the expected goals in this area of learning. "Design and make" lessons were observed in each class. Provision in the Reception-only class was based on an appropriate mix of discussion, directed and investigative work, whereas in the mixed age class, it was mostly directed as there are fewer suitable resources and the work is more aligned to Year 1. On this occasion, children sat at a table for 40 minutes, drawing a "plan" of a building they were going to create, and then colouring it in. Only one child, who had drawn a very tiny picture which did not take long to colour in, actually got on to using bricks to build the structure. Not enough was learned in this lesson. In contrast, children in the Reception-only class found the plan they had drawn the previous day and then selected items of domestic waste materials to build it from. These children knew what they wanted, for example clear plastic containers for the windows, and a tube to represent a spire. They had their own ideas about how to fix the items together (sellotape being a firm favourite) but accepted advice graciously. They spread glue carefully and joined items together purposefully. In this class, children also demonstrated their skills in computer use, collage work, assembling a commercial train kit, and "mending" items outdoors, in the guise of Bob the Builder. In both classes, children understand that people live in different types of home, including a Travellers' caravan, and some early scientific principles such as healthy and unhealthy foods, and light and energy sources.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

48. Children enter their Reception year with skills that are a little below average, but there was insufficient evidence to judge achievement overall, although children in both classes demonstrate good hand-eye co-ordination. No lessons in physical development were observed, but these do take place in the school hall. Children in the Reception-only class have open access to the outside play area. This supports their physical development to some extent, as they can use bikes and wheeled toys freely, but the space lacks interest and challenge. Children in the mixed age class do not have open access to a secure play area, which restricts their opportunities in comparison to the other group. In both classes, most children use a pencil and write and draw reasonably well. They use scissors and glue carefully and effectively, and handle small objects and malleable materials with dexterity.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

49. Assessment shows that children enter school with around average skills in creative development. There was insufficient evidence to judge achievement overall, but skills in art and design are at expected levels in both classes. Children's imaginative skills are good in the Reception-only class. They were not observed in this context in the mixed age class, but opportunities for imaginative and role-play are not as good. Children sing simple songs from memory, but no other free use of songs and musical instruments was observed.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

50. Provision in English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Leadership and management of the subject are very good;
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well;
- Pupils are given very good opportunities and encouragement to practice speaking and listening in all areas of the curriculum;
- The resources available to support pupils' learning are very good;
- The support given to pupils with special educational needs is good;
- Effective strategies are in place to raise standards in writing.

Commentary

51. Significant priority is given to the development of pupils' English skills, with very good effect. There has been very good improvement in speaking and listening, reading and writing since the last inspection when it was recorded that pupils were reluctant to speak in complete sentences and progress in writing was poor. The subject is managed very effectively by an enthusiastic subject leader, who provides a very good role model for teaching. There is a good scheme of work, and teaching and learning are monitored carefully by the analysis of pupils' books, observation of lessons, and the checking of progress against pupils' individual targets. Pupils' achievements, including their responses to questions in standardised tests, are thoroughly analysed and the subject's improvement plan is soundly based upon this monitoring.

52. Over the last three years, both boys and girls have achieved standards above the national average for their age in the national tests for Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, although there was a predicted dip in 2003 due to increased numbers of pupils with special educational needs. Evidence shows that achievement in Year 6 is very good due to the particularly good quality of education provided. Standards are currently above the national average and a number of pupils show well above average skills, especially in speaking and listening. Pupils with special educational needs and Traveller pupils achieve well because they are well supported and the work is planned carefully to meet their individual needs, although the standards they attain tend to be lower than their peers'.

53. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the teaching of English is good throughout the school and very good in Year 6. Pupils are made aware of learning objectives in lessons and concentrate very well. Teachers use questioning skills well to develop the pupils' vocabulary and understanding, enabling them to contribute well in oral work. In the instances when the teaching of reading and writing are very good, the teacher is innovative, sets a brisk pace, and uses a variety of multi-media approaches and ICT to stimulate pupils' interest and enjoyment. The recently purchased Tablet PCs are used extensively to support the teaching of English. There is a wide range of books in the classrooms and library which supports both boys' and girls' reading by appealing to their different interests, ensuring that all pupils achieve well.

54. Pupils respond enthusiastically to lessons and are keen to join in class and group discussions. They anticipate well in discussions, make predictions and use spoken language freely to extend their learning. The school has identified writing as an area for improvement. To support this, specifically planned writing tasks are developed from the *literacy hour* work or from cross-curricular links, for example in history. Some lessons are devoted to encouraging pupils to become more confident writers, able to generate and record their ideas with confidence. These measures are already improving pupils' writing skills. Pupils achieve very well in reading and benefit from a well-structured approach. All pupils have daily opportunities to read books at their individual level of interest and competence. Lower attaining pupils benefit from guided reading which helps them to focus on reading simple text to gain understanding. Higher attaining pupils read fluently and as they mature, widely, interpreting information very effectively to use in their work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

55. In all lessons staff have high expectations of pupils' literacy skills. They are expected to listen carefully and explain themselves fully, for example, to explain the differences between fact and opinion in a historical context. In mathematics, pupils in Year 4 interpreted word problems and were beginning to create their own from a given calculation. In science, pupils explain observations, and know the conventional way of writing up investigations, which they recognise is different, for example, from writing a book review. Pupils use books, CD-ROMs and the Internet to research information. These aspects are integral parts of all lessons. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils can research non-fiction books for information, for example establishing time connectives in a step-by-step guide to mummification. They study and understand Victorian classic literature, including *Oliver Twist* and *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*, building on their historical knowledge and understanding of the setting and issues of the time.

MATHEMATICS

56. Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils perform well in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6;
- Pupils achieve well, especially in Years 3 to 6;
- Teaching overall is good and it is very good in Year 6;
- Teachers keep good records of pupils' progress; pupils know how well they are doing;
- Not enough written work is recorded in Year 2.

Commentary

57. Standards in mathematics are rising. Year 2 test results were well above the national average in 2003, and current Year 2 standards, although average, are better than in previous years. Year 6 test results have been above average for several years, and current Year 6 pupils are on target to maintain this good record. Test results in both Year 2 and Year 6 are well above those attained by pupils in similar schools.

58. The best teaching is in Years 3 to Year 6, and consequently this is where pupils achieve best. Splitting the Year 6 class into two helps teachers plan well for different pupils' needs and contributes to the very good teaching and achievement seen in these lessons. In one lesson, higher attaining pupils converted pints and ounces into millilitres and grams. In a parallel lesson the remaining pupils worked through the answers to a mental mathematics test taken just previously. In both lessons very good questioning involved pupils well, giving them good opportunities to explain, for instance, how to change an eight ounce World War II sugar ration into grams or how to find two per cent of 400.

59. Most lessons move briskly, but a revision session on how to draw a line graph was too long, so that the lesson did not reach its planned intention of how to interpret the graph. In an unsatisfactory lesson, teaching was mundane and failed to capture pupils' interest. Consequently they lost concentration and achieved little. Teachers use the new data projectors effectively to introduce and explain work, which they do well. They focus well on mental methods of calculating, but Year 2 pupils do not record enough in their books to show how they work things out. This makes it difficult to plan effectively for later work that builds on what they already know, or to fill in any gaps in their understanding. Support for pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning assistants work well with small groups of pupils, discussing work with them, helping them with recording and, where necessary, managing their behaviour effectively. Pupils from Traveller families and minority ethnic groups are included well in lessons. All groups of pupils achieve equally well.

60. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory. Following recent changes, systems for assessing and recording pupils' long-term progress have improved. Regular tests and assessments based on key learning objectives drawn from the National Numeracy Strategy give teachers and pupils a good view of progress. However, this information is not yet used to set short-term learning targets for each individual pupil – a process which helps pupils in English. Some marking is good, for instance showing clearly where pupils have gone wrong and how to put errors right, but this good practice is not widespread throughout the school.

Mathematics across the curriculum

61. Pupils' mathematical skills are well reinforced and enhanced by their use in other subjects, which helps them understand the practical application of mathematics. This was seen, for instance, in a science investigation where pupils first predicted which balls would bounce best and then measured the heights they reached. Mathematics and ICT are linked well. For example, pupils explore shapes and patterns using computer graphics programs and are developing an understanding of algebra through the use of spreadsheets.

SCIENCE

62. Provision in science is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards attained by the end of Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection and are now above average;
- Teaching is good and pupils achieve well;
- Pupils' science skills and understanding are well reinforced by other subjects.

Commentary

63. Standards have improved considerably since the previous inspection, particularly the Year 6 national test results which have been above or well above the national average since 2001. In 2003, teachers assessed Year 2 pupils' skills to be below average, although this was not in line with the above average test results in reading, writing and mathematics. The standards of this year's cohort are average overall.

64. Year 6 pupils' 2003 results were well above the average gained by pupils with similar prior attainment. In particular, more pupils than expected reached levels above average for their age which, bearing in mind the very good quality of teaching in Year 6, confirms that pupils are challenged to do as well as they can. Current standards of work are above average. Pupils are thoughtful, bringing what they already know and past experiences to bear on the current work. For example, in a discussion on interdependence and food chains, pupils decided to add human beings into their chain as an extra predator. They ask interesting and relevant questions, for example wanting to know whether the *edible crab* was edible for humans, or other predators. Lower attaining

pupils also achieve well, although some make basic mistakes in factual understanding. However, because pupils' work is carefully and helpfully marked, and misconceptions sensitively corrected, pupils understand where they have gone wrong and make up the lost ground.

65. Pupils achieve well because teachers are skilled at helping them think logically and scientifically and make links between science work and what they have learned in other subjects. Pupils are encouraged to hypothesise, make predictions and build up their understanding. For example, a literacy lesson in the Year 1/2 class gave very good support to the topic being studied in science. Pupils were investigating forces, through the use of their own scooters, as well as the properties of the materials from which the scooters were made – metal, plastic, rubber etc. The literacy task was to write a leaflet on scooters (writing for different purposes), using the information gained in science. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' presentation and speed of work, and as a result, they cover and record a good volume of work.

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The subject is co-ordinated rather than led, and teaching and learning are not systematically monitored. Pupils' performance data is not analysed to the same extent as it is in English and mathematics, and so modifications to teaching and the curriculum are based on broader findings rather than specific issues. Nevertheless, some good initiatives have been introduced. The pattern of science teaching has been changed to promote higher standards and better achievement, which has been successful; a new system for recording and assessing pupils' investigative skills has recently been introduced; and staff have been made aware of weaknesses in pupils' test results as identified on a national scale. However, it is up to individual teachers to use this information to adapt their planning.

67. The Year 4 classroom is too small for practical work. Pupils are crowded together, and when working in groups, adults cannot easily move around the room to help and supervise them which could lead to a safety problem. Pupils' investigative skills are being hampered to a degree as a result.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the three lessons seen was good overall;
- Links with other subjects are good, especially in writing-related activities;
- The computer suite is well equipped but rather small for whole class use, especially in Year 3 to Year 6;
- Assessment procedures to monitor pupils' progress are not yet in place.

Commentary

69. Standards overall are in line with national expectations throughout the school, and pupils' achievement is satisfactory. The quality of teaching ranged from very good to satisfactory in the three lessons seen. Pupils learn well because teaching is based on well-prepared practical tasks. For example, through a succession of trial and improvement, Year 1 pupils developed a short program to make a floor "roamer" travel from its "home" to "school" on a map. Pupils worked hard, learned by their mistakes and quickly refined their instructions. They were justifiably proud when they finally succeeded in getting the sequence of instructions correct. In a Year 5 lesson on programming a lighthouse to flash on and off when it gets dark, good explanations and questioning made pupils think carefully about the precision needed when writing computer instructions. Pupils worked hard and achieved well. By the end of the lesson, many had produced working, or nearly working programs. Higher attaining pupils worked very well on their own, but the cramped conditions in the computer suite made it very hard for the teacher to move around the room to support other pupils effectively when they were stuck.

70. Developments in ICT are very well supported by the senior managers, and resources, especially, have been systematically enhanced over the years. They are now very good. While provision and outcomes in ICT appear to have remained the same since the last inspection, expectations of provision and use of the subject across the curriculum have increased enormously in the last six years, and improvement has been good. Subject management is satisfactory and developing well. The subject leader has not yet begun to monitor teaching and learning. There has been some good initial action to develop whole-school assessment procedures based on tracking pupils' developing skills, but this is not yet in place. However, staff have been successfully trained and are motivated to use the new computers and data projectors to enhance teaching and learning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

71. Displays of work around the school show good links with other writing-based subjects such as English, history and geography. For instance the following are all examples of good work:-

- Digital photographs taken on the Year 2 trip to Hunstanton with captions such as "the cliffs are made of sandstone and chalk"
- Year 4 newspapers, where pupils experiment with different text styles and layouts,
- Year 5 multimedia presentations on Hindu places of worship and
- Year 6 World War II propaganda posters;

72. Pupils' finished work has clearly undergone careful editing to remove typing errors and to improve layout. Pupils routinely use the Internet, for instance to research the life and work of famous people such as Dr Edward Jenner in science work on health. Links with mathematics are also good.

HUMANITIES

73. Religious education was inspected in full and is reported in below. One history lesson and no geography lessons were observed, so it was not possible to judge the quality of provision in these subjects. However pupils' work was sampled and lesson planning scrutinised.

HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY

74. The curricula for both history and geography are based on national guidelines and are well planned to appeal to pupils' interests. Resources to support learning are good. Evidence shows that the good standards observed at the time of the last inspection have been maintained. Displays around the school show that pupils have enjoyed studying the Greeks, Romans, Celts and Victorian Britain, and have developed a good sense of chronology from Ancient Egypt to modern times by the time they reach Year 6. Careful planning supports learning in other subjects. For example, a study of the Fens and what it was like before they were drained linked history and geography together well. Year 2 pupils, as part of a topic on famous people, combined English, history and science when learning about the work of Dr Edward Jenner and investigated *What did he do? Why did he do it?* and *How does his work help us today?*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

75. Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is important to the school and is taught well;
- Pupils achieve well throughout the school and standards are above average in Key Stage 2;
- Leadership and management are good.

Commentary

76. The subject leader decided to promote a more dynamic and less paper-based approach to teaching and learning after analysis of pupils' books and discussion with staff revealed that while pupils were learning facts, they were not learning enough from religious education to apply to their own lives. This was a good decision. Religious education is well taught in an interesting, thought-provoking and challenging way. Pupils are clearly interested in learning. As they mature, they develop a broader understanding of the five major faiths and learn to look beyond the facts to the meaning, significance and relevance to themselves. Teachers are creative in their approach. The strong school emphasis on speaking and listening skills, and promoting pupils' personal development, means that pupils welcome opportunities for discussion and role-play. By Year 6, they are able to put themselves in the shoes of the main characters in a scenario, such as Jesus, Judas and the Pharisees, and give opinions and a version of the facts from these people's point of view. This approach to religious education supports pupils' personal development and learning in other subjects such as English, history and geography very well.

77. An updated scheme of work was successfully introduced in September 2003. An associated assessment system is also being trialled for the LEA throughout the school. The subject leader is knowledgeable and confident, and has a good overview of both the provision and outcomes in religious education derived from analysis of pupils' work, and in the past, monitoring of teaching. She has built up a bank of suitable resources, although acknowledges that some of the video material is out of date, but has access to further resources held outside the school. There are no non-Christian places of worship for pupils to visit in the locality, and more needs to be done to compensate for this.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

78. No lessons were observed in art and design, design and technology or physical education; one lesson and singing in an assembly were observed in music. It is therefore not possible to judge the quality of provision in these subjects. However, pupils' work and teachers' planning was scrutinised.

79. Displays around the school and work in pupils' portfolios show that they achieve well in **art and design**. Pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding develop well as they mature, and standards are above average by Year 6. Fine print sketches show good use of outline and textured fill by pupils in Year 2. Year 4's close observational drawings of trees in pastels show how pupils' use of outline, tone and colour has developed. By Year 6 pupils experiment thoughtfully with techniques such as colour mixing, perspective and mixed media before creating their work.

80. The scheme of work for art and design is comprehensive and provides clear guidance for teaching staff and support assistants. Sketchbooks are effectively used from the Reception year. They show how pupils record and practice techniques for future reference, and design and plan work before carrying it out. This links well with work in design and technology, and the two subjects often run together. The quality of work in purses made in design and technology by Year 4 pupils is in line with national expectations. They are satisfactorily assembled and finished, and follow simple designs sketched out previously. However, they are not accompanied by evaluations of the work, for instance to show how pupils overcame difficulties as work progressed or ideas for improvements. Individual portfolios are kept for painting, drawing, collage, textile work and some items made in design and technology; pupils' three-dimensional sculptures in various media - such as glazed plates and ceramic houses - are attractively displayed around the school.

81. An appropriate scheme of work for **physical education** gives clear guidance to staff for the planning of lessons, and pupils take part in a wide range of physical activities, including swimming. In addition, the school buys in after-school multi-sport activities with support from Intersoccer, and takes part in inter-schools Topsport Tournaments, for example in tag-rugby, cricket, netball, tennis and hockey

82. In **music**, standards of singing are in line with national expectations when pupils sing together in assembly. They achieve a good unison, sing in tune and perform simple syncopated rhythms accurately. Words are clear. The lesson, taken by a visiting specialist, was very good. Skilled teaching developed the pupils' knowledge of the brass family of instruments well. In a succession of varied activities, pupils moved on to perform a series of short rhythms well, clapping and playing instruments while following a musical score. They read standard music notation satisfactorily, and had some success when playing in two parts. Pupils clearly enjoyed the short lesson, and were pleased with their efforts.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

83. Provision for PSHCE has been a focus for school development since the last inspection. PSHCE is now taught as a separate subject and includes the curriculum for citizenship. The provision makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development and the supportive, inclusive school ethos. Planning is based on national and local authority guidelines. It is appropriately taught through *Circle Time* (set discussion times) – which particularly supports personal education; some other dedicated lessons, usually for a specific purpose such as hearing a visiting health professional talk about their work; and through the everyday work of the school. The Class Council and School Council systems, for example, give pupils a very good insight into the democratic processes of societies and how people negotiate and reach decisions.

84. Only two lessons were seen. In one good lesson, pupils organised themselves into groups to work on short plays to show how they would react to potential bullies or to explore feelings such as happiness or anger. The teacher encouraged discussion well so that pupils were open and confident in relating work to incidents they had experienced outside school. At the end of the lesson, pupils reflected well on the difference between telling tales and reporting genuine problems to an adult. Older pupils responded well to a lesson on healthy lifestyles, appreciating by the end of the lesson how good use of leisure time can make a positive contribution to their health and well-being.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	4
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).