

INSPECTION REPORT

Little Houghton Church of England Primary School

Little Houghton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 122025

Headteacher: Mrs P George

Lead inspector: Julia Elsley

Dates of inspection: 19th January –22nd January 2004

Inspection number: 260764

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	96
School address:	Lodge Close Lodge Road Little Houghton Northampton Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN7 1AF
Telephone number:	01604890788
Fax number:	01604890788
Appropriate authority:	928-Northamptonshire
Name of chair of governors:	Mr David Holding
Date of previous inspection:	12 th -15 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This small, rural Church of England school serves the two villages of Little and Great Houghton, as well as the outlying districts of Northampton. It has a strong Christian ethos, in keeping with its Church of England Voluntary Aided status. There are 96 pupils on roll and the numbers are increasing. From year to year, the children's attainment on entry to school varies considerably within the small cohorts, but overall it is generally average. There has been a high percentage of pupils joining and leaving the school over the course of the past three years. This was due to the change from the three to two-tier schooling arrangements within the Borough, but it now appears to be becoming more stable. Almost all of the pupils are of white British ethnic origin. A very low percentage of pupils have English as an additional language or are bilingual. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is broadly in line with that found nationally. There is one pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Since the last inspection, there have been many staff changes. The headteacher took up her post in September 2003. The school received an achievement award from the DFEE in 2001.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16892	Julia Elsley	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, design and technology, personal, social and health education, music, physical education, Foundation Stage
9510	Christine Murraray-Watson	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	English, science, information and communication technology, geography, history, special educational needs

The inspection contractor was :

Inspire Educational Ltd

The Coach House
132 Whitaker Road
Derby

DE23 6AP

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website (www.ofsted.gov.uk).

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	8
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	15
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	17
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	28

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective school**. Its very good ethos has a positive influence on the personal development of the pupils. The pupils are making good and sometimes very good progress and achieving well because the teaching is good overall. Staff are trying continuously to improve the curriculum, and leadership and management are good. The unit costs per pupil are high and there is a considerable budgetary underspend, but nevertheless the school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall the pupils are achieving well and making good progress.
- Standards are above average in reading, spoken English, listening skills, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and well above average in design and technology.
- In the Foundation Stage, the planned provision and very limited resources do not allow the school to fully meet the national guidelines.
- Overall the teaching is good.
- The marking of the children's work is not sharply focussed enough.
- The pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are good. The school provides good opportunities for the children's spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- The governors and the headteacher provide strong leadership and are well supported by the teaching team as they strive to bring about continuing school improvement.

Since the last inspection, the school has had two acting headteachers and two headteachers. Despite this, there has been a substantial improvement in many areas of its work. Monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum are now firmly established and led by the headteacher and the co-ordinators. Other matters raised as key issues in the last report have been dealt with well. Although much has been done to improve the school's assessment procedures, the staff recognise that further work is required to make the process more manageable.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

The pupils are achieving well. In the Foundation Stage, the children are on course to reach the expected goals; by the end of the reception year many will exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development.

In 2003, the results for the Year 2 pupils were average in reading but well below the national average in writing and mathematics. This data should be treated cautiously because the cohort comprised only eight pupils, a high percentage of whom had special educational needs. In contrast, the inspection findings indicate that the current Year 2 pupils are on course to attain above average standards in reading and science, and average standards in writing and mathematics. The pupils are making good progress and achieving well. The Year 6 results in 2003 were above average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The current Year 6 is also a very small cohort; the inspection indicates that these pupils will reach average standards in English and mathematics, with a small proportion achieving the higher level. In science, all the pupils are achieving above average standards and making very good progress. Throughout the school, the pupils' spoken English and listening skills are good. In ICT pupils are above average and in design and technology well above average. The standards in art and design are good and in music very good.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	C	B	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	B
Science	C	A*	A	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
 Caution should be taken when evaluating these results because only twelve pupils took the tests in 2003.*

The pupils have good attitudes to learning. They are always ready to start lessons promptly and they listen carefully to their teachers' instructions. They respect each other and their behaviour is good. Attendance levels are above average. **There are good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development**, which enhance the good relationships in the school. The teachers also extend the pupils' understanding of moral issues very well.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent, but taken overall it is good. Most teachers plan interesting tasks that stimulate and motivate the pupils. The teachers have high expectations and the work is challenging but well matched to the pupils' individual needs. However, a sharper focus on assessment evaluations at the end of a lesson would help to refine the next steps in learning. Good use is made of the available resources and artefacts such as the interactive whiteboard to stimulate learning, with the result that pupils apply themselves diligently and enthusiastically to the tasks.

The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is good and this is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors. Though the Foundation Stage curriculum is broadly satisfactory, the general activities and the use of resources do not always challenge the children sufficiently. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Care and support of the pupils is good. The guidance given to pupils is satisfactory overall, but better marking of work will allow the children to know what they need to do to improve. Staff know the pupils very well, listen to them and welcome their comments and ideas. The newly formed school council is a highly successful initiative. The school's partnerships with the parents and the community are good overall.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The governors help to give the school strategic direction. The headteacher leads the teaching team by example with her very good practice and gives very clear leadership for school improvement.

Parents' and pupils' views of the school

The parents think very highly of the school and support their children well. The pupils enjoy school and feel that they are valued and well supported.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school should now seek to raise standards further by:

- Making the assessment procedures more manageable
- Using lesson evaluations to identify more clearly the next steps in learning
- Marking work in a way that shows the children how to achieve the targets set for them
- Improving the curriculum planning, organisation and resources in the Foundation Stage

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Throughout the school, achievement is good overall. In most subjects standards are either average or above.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in reading and science are above the national average.
- By Year 6, standards in ICT are above average and in design and technology are well above average.
- The pupils' spoken English and listening skills are good.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are used effectively across the curriculum.
- The pupils' singing and instrumental playing are of a high standard.
- By the end of the Foundation Stage, the children are reaching the goals set for them. Limited provision and resources restrict progress to a higher level.

Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.0 (27.6)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	29.0 (28.8)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	31.0 (31.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

1. Since the last inspection, the school has been successful in raising standards in many subjects, such as design and technology and ICT and improving the use of literacy and numeracy skills across the curriculum. In 2003, the Year 2 results were well below the national average in writing and mathematics, but average in reading. In the previous year, the pupils had achieved very highly in all three areas. The Year 6 pupils in 2003 achieved above the national average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. When compared to similar schools they were average, but the statistics do not take fully into account the fact that there had been a high turnover of pupils within this year group. The results for 2004 are not likely to be as high but this fluctuation reflects the variations in very small cohorts. The inspection findings indicate that the current standards are average with a small proportion of the pupils achieving highly in both Year 2 and Year 6. However, the high quality of the teaching is ensuring that the individual pupils' achievements are well in line with their capability.
2. On entry to the reception class, the children's attainment is in line with the age-related expectation of the Foundation Stage guidelines. In the Reception year, the children make satisfactory progress and most attain the early learning goals by the end of the year. It is likely that most of the children in the current Reception class will exceed the expected levels in personal, social and emotional development and in communication skills. However, they do not have a wide enough range of activities and resources in both the indoor and outdoor learning environment to raise standards to a higher level.

3. In Years 1 and 2, challenging activities result in good levels of speaking and listening and reading. For instance, stimulating stories generate debate about plot, character and issues of right and wrong. Many families develop this work at home. Although the pupils' writing is of an average standard, the work in their books shows marked improvement since September 2003. There is good emphasis on handwriting, presentation of work, basic punctuation and self-editing skills. During a design and technology lesson, for example, the children confidently used dictionaries and ICT programmes to support their spelling. The older pupils are working individually and as a result achieving well. They make good, and often very good, gains during their lessons. Good attention is paid to the link between reading and writing, and the use of computers and the library to develop writing and research skills enhances pupils' progress. Consequently, the pupils acquire a critical approach to their writing and apply basic grammar and punctuation well. They take pride in their achievements. However, better marking matched more closely to the children's targets would increase the level of challenge and raise standards further. This equally applies to mathematics.
4. Throughout the school, the pupils are well challenged in mathematics lessons, and over the course of the year they achieve well in line with their capability. For example, lively mental mathematics sessions and demanding tasks are set for the higher attaining pupils. Similarly, the lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and they also progress well. In science, the staff place a good emphasis on investigation which interests and highly motivates the children. As a result, they acquire good investigative skills, which they are then able to use confidently and competently in other contexts, for example, in design and technology when they were required to produce an electrical circuit. Consequently, they make good and often very good gains in their scientific knowledge and understanding.
5. ICT is used well throughout the school. The present Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are making satisfactory gains in its use and are achieving well. By the end of Year 6, the pupils are achieving good skills, which they also use to support their learning in other subjects, such as history, geography, art and design. In history and geography the staff use the resources and their subject expertise to captivate the children and motivate them by using the interactive whiteboards to initiate discussion, questions and discovery. In addition, visits and visitors to the school extend their knowledge and understanding of historical facts, and residential field trips enhance the geography curriculum. The children enjoy singing and instrumental playing and are proud of their achievements.
6. There are areas where the pupils' achievements can be improved and standards raised further; for example, the school has identified writing and mathematics. It is evident from a scrutiny of the pupils' work that significant strides forward are already being made to bring about improvement. All members of staff are clearly committed to the process of improvement, and effective use is made of professional development and training, performance management and monitoring and evaluation to this end.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

The pupils behave well and take a keen interest in their lessons. They are confident when talking to adults and are friendly with each other. Attendance is well above the levels found in primary schools nationally.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils have a strong sense of ownership of the school
- The pupils are self-motivated and their behaviour is good
- The attendance levels are very good
- The children make good gains in their personal development during their first year in school

7. A high value is placed on each pupil's contribution to the life of the school, and through the School Council the pupils feel that they have an active role in its business. They compete cheerfully for house points and the possibility of losing points for poor conduct encourages them to behave well. Some of the older pupils volunteer to help with the younger ones, during wet play times for example, and both age groups benefit from this family "mix." The youngest children settle well into school and quickly become familiar with the routines. They are happy and feel secure within the school environment.
8. Good teaching encourages pupils to work hard and to take responsibility for their own efforts. As a result, they take pride in what they are achieving. For example, in one lesson pupils were designing posters and working independently with concentrated effort. Many experimented with quite complex computer graphics to achieve the best result, and were not satisfied with easy solutions.
9. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is good. Their moral development is very well promoted. The school encourages a reflective approach to work and to the development of the pupils' personal qualities. The teachers and teaching assistants are dedicated to promoting the pupils' self-esteem, thereby enabling them to benefit fully from the broad curriculum offered by the school. The curriculum provides for a good range of experiences that arouse the pupils' interest in and appreciation of the natural world and the concept of a higher being.
10. There are many opportunities for the pupils to appreciate the importance of rules in a community and to understand the difference between right and wrong. Each class has a clear and coherent Code of Conduct that is well known to the pupils. Through their curriculum work, they recognise that groups of human beings have benefited from the actions of others. For example, they have learned about people like Martin Luther King, Florence Nightingale and Mahatma Gandhi. The pupils behave very well towards one another so that the climate for academic and personal development is very good.
11. At the time of the last inspection, the pupils' cultural development was weak. The school has worked conscientiously to remedy this shortcoming and included a range of interesting activities to boost the pupils' awareness and understanding of the contribution of other cultures, such as African and continental European, to that of this country. In some classes, the registers are called in French and there is good use of texts from other cultures as part of the teaching of literacy. The work in religious education provides the pupils with good examples of how people of different faiths conduct their lives.

Attendance

The high levels of attendance are well above the average found in primary schools nationally. The parents feel that their children like coming to school and this was confirmed by discussion with the pupils. The older pupils in particular commented favourably on how interesting and enjoyable they found many of their lessons.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-3

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.0
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.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

Teaching and learning

The quality of the teaching ranges from satisfactory to excellent, but taken overall it is good. Consequently, the pupils are making good gains in their learning. The quality of the assessment of the pupils' work is satisfactory, but requires further improvement. The accommodation and resources are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff plan interesting and challenging tasks, but the provision and resources in the Foundation Stage are insufficient
- Staff modify their plans well to meet the needs of different groups of children, including those with special educational needs
- Lessons start promptly and their quiet rigour and sharp pace sustain the pupils' interest
- Teachers assess the pupils' work regularly and record their progress but the current procedures are not easily manageable
- The work is not always marked in a way that helps the pupils to correct errors and achieve their targets

Commentary

12. Taken overall the teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory with some good elements. Good teamwork and positive relationships give the children the confidence to succeed and gain an appropriate start to school life. The teacher plans the lessons conscientiously, but in most cases the activities are too directed. This leaves little opportunity for the children to think for themselves, to be selective in the tools, materials and equipment they use and to have responsibility for some of their learning. There is a distinct lack of creative stimuli and interactive displays to promote the children's skills of enquiry, exploration and discovery. Furthermore, insufficient use is made of the outdoor area as an extension of the small classroom to support all areas of learning. In many instances, the children are sitting far too long on the carpet and as a result their concentration waivers and they become restless. In contrast, the teaching is well focused on the development of ICT skills, reading and listening skills and the development of the children's mathematical understanding. Here the teacher's challenging questions promote the children's interest and motivate them to want to learn. More on-going observations of the children at work and evaluation of their activities would help in the planning of the next steps in learning.
13. In Year 1 to 6, there is a good level of continuity in the teaching. This is because the staff all work together, share ideas and methods, both through their formal monitoring activities and their informal discussions and training. As a result, the teaching observed during the inspection ranged from good to excellent. There is a shared commitment to raise standards and bring about improvements by providing interesting, challenging and stimulating activities. The literacy and numeracy strategies have been a very good basis for professional development and the staff work very closely with similar local schools in devising their long-term plans based on the national guidance.
14. Many lessons start with a lively introduction and the teachers' probing questions and attention to detail ensure that the pupils are very clear about what they have to do. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, have good opportunities to develop their speaking and

listening skills. As a result the pupils use the subject specific vocabulary confidently and in its natural context. This was particularly the case in instrumental music sessions, design and technology, science and mathematics. The pupils have good support from the teaching assistants during these sessions, but in some instances the assistants' time could be better used, especially while pupils are on the carpet listening to the teacher.

15. In mathematics, the mental activities at the start of each lesson are a real source of challenge, but they are fun at the same time. For example, in Year 3 and 4, there was a great sense of excitement and achievement as the pupils walked around the room using their multiplication tables to count in fours, fives and sevens. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils strive to be the first to finish. These examples illustrate how the teaching strategies employed by the staff motivate and effectively move the learning forward. In science, history and geography and design and technology, the staff use their good subject knowledge and enthusiasm to stimulate the pupils' interest and learning. They also require the pupils to write for real purposes, such as evaluations of work in design and technology and historical accounts. Homework is set based on literacy and mathematics and on occasions the pupils do research for their topics in science, history or geography. This is another improvement since the last inspection.

16. The work of all pupils is carefully assessed and recorded. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection, but the process needs further review to ensure that it is more closely matched to the pupil's individual targets. The work is marked regularly and in some instances the pupils are informed how well they have done. However, in most cases, the comments do not relate to the targets at the front of the pupils' books and give no specific guidance on how the work can be improved. It would be beneficial if time was set aside for them to correct their errors or complete a piece of work.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 23 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	9	7	6	0	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

Overall, the school has a good curriculum. The National Curriculum is implemented well and is enhanced by a range of visits and visitors to the school. The accommodation and the resources are satisfactory overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is well planned and organised
- Literacy and numeracy skills are used well across the curriculum
- The provision for the Foundation Stage is broadly satisfactory but requires some improvement
- Good use is made of ICT to support learning in all relevant subjects
- The provision for the pupils with special education needs is good
- The accommodation has significantly improved since the last inspection
- The resources in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory

Commentary

17. The planning for the Foundation Stage broadly takes account of the national guidelines and the Early Learning Goals. The planning for the development of the pupils' personal, social and

emotional development and communication skills is good. Language, literacy and mathematical learning are satisfactory. However, in other areas of learning - knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development - there are insufficient self-initiated learning experiences for the children both indoors and outdoors. The activities are too teacher directed and this does not always allow the children to exercise some responsibility and decision making for their own learning. Furthermore, there are not enough artefacts displayed in the classroom to arouse the children's interest and promote enquiry, exploration and discovery. The available resources are generally unsatisfactory. For example, there is a distinct lack of equipment for role-play and no designated art area with paint and malleable materials readily accessible. Similarly there are no large-wheeled toys to enhance the children's physical development. The outdoor learning environment is greatly underused.

18. Since the last inspection, the curriculum for Years 1 to 6 has improved. For example, the provision for art and design and ICT has been enhanced. Moreover, the staff now skilfully ensure that the pupils use their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects, such as design and technology, science, history and geography. The curriculum is systematically and closely monitored by the headteacher and the co-ordinators to establish a consistency in its coverage. The planning of the half-termly projects follows the national guidance and takes into account the mixed age classes. The plans are good and are implemented in a way that ensures that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement, including those with special educational needs. The staff work very well together and use the resources creatively. This contributes to a very good ethos in which the pupils thrive intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.
19. The pupils with special educational needs receive good support in class and around the school. The work is carefully planned to meet their individual needs, and the pupils are aware of their individual targets.
20. The extra-curricular provision is good and embraces, for example, art, music, sport, history and geography. A group of actors came to the school during the inspection to perform a scenario about the Roman Invasion. Strong links with the local community also make a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. The local vicar from Little Houghton and Great Houghton is a regular visitor to the school and the pupils take part in local village activities. The school also enjoys very good relationships with other local schools and University College, Northampton. Many joint activities take place such as a residential visit, sporting and musical events. There are appropriate arrangements for the transfer of pupils to the next stage of their education.
21. The school has been through a long period of staff turbulence, but is now more settled and there are sufficient and well qualified teachers for the numbers of pupils on roll. The accommodation has improved since the last inspection and the health and safety issues raised at that time have been fully addressed. The school is safe, attractive and, in the main, adequately resourced. However, the library would benefit from refurbishment and more fiction and non-fiction books are needed.

Care, guidance and support

The pupils feel secure in a small "family" school where their views are taken into account and they are well supported and valued. They are actively involved in a shared vision for the day-to-day life of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The staff have good knowledge of individual pupils
- There are good procedures for establishing good behaviour and raising their self esteem
- The school council is effective

Commentary

22. Within the relatively small classes, the pupils are well known by their class teachers and the classroom assistants. Every child is valued for what he or she can contribute and is able to learn within a caring and secure environment. For example, one of the younger pupils commented on how much she liked her classroom because everyone's picture was on the wall and she felt safe "knowing everyone".
23. The teaching staff and classroom assistants have a consistent approach towards the pupils, based on praise and encouragement for effort, academic achievement or good behaviour whenever it is deserved. The many tangible rewards in the form of house points, cups and small prizes further reinforce the concept that the best way to enjoy the school day is to behave well and work hard. Underpinned by good teaching, this promotes a harmonious and lively environment in which the pupils can thrive.
24. The recently formed School Council is spoken of highly by many of the pupils, who feel this has given them a real say in the way the school is managed. They appreciate the way their wishes are taken into account and the fact that they can work in partnership with the teachers to bring about change. The class representatives play a major role, but all pupils feel that they are consulted and can bring forward suggestions for discussion.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school maintains an open and friendly relationship with parents and carers. It is actively involved in the life of the local community and the local parish churches. It also promotes effective links within its local cluster of schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an open response to parental suggestions and concerns
- There are shared activities within the local cluster of schools
- The pupils are involved with the local community

Commentary

25. The school staff are open to suggestions from parents and where possible act on them promptly. An example of this is the recent request for more curriculum information, particularly in Years 1 and 2, which resulted in a comprehensive newsletter being sent out with details of work being undertaken over the current term. Many parents feel comfortable in approaching the school and maintain a good relationship with the teachers.
26. The school joins with others in its local cluster for special projects and residential trips, for example the extra resources provided for a shared project on the Roman invasion of Britain enhanced the curriculum of all the schools taking part. The opportunity to work together gives the pupils a wider range of contacts than can be provided within a small school and also helps them to get to know some of the pupils they will be meeting when they move on to the local secondary school.
27. Where possible, the pupils join in with local village events, such as the Millennium Pageant, for example, and village residents attend the school's Christmas events and Summer Fayre. The parish churches of Little Houghton and Great Houghton maintain strong links with school. The school choir recently performed at a Christmas carol service. The church buildings provide an interesting focus for history and religious education topics and other local buildings and small businesses support work in geography.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has clear views about the future direction of the school and is well supported by the governors.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher has a clear vision about what she wants to achieve and communicates her aspirations clearly to the staff team.
- The chair of governors and other members of the governing body have undertaken a perceptive audit of the school and are working well with the headteacher to achieve improvements in key areas identified by them.
- The priorities set out in the draft improvement plan are very appropriate and clearly linked to raising standards of teaching and learning.

Commentary

28. Having been through a somewhat unsettled period, the school is now well on course in formulating a coherent approach to further improvement of its provision. The governors, headteacher and key staff have formed a very co-operative team so that there is a consistency in implementing measures that they have agreed upon. This is very evident, for example, in the way the curriculum is planned and in the development of a very distinctive ethos that underpins the teaching and learning. The teachers and classroom assistants support each other well in the way they present the curriculum and in the attention they give to the pupils' personal skills. They ensure that all pupils in Years 1 to 6 receive their full curriculum entitlement but further improvements are required within the Foundation Stage. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are managed well, thereby enabling them to contribute fully to all aspects of school life.

29. The governors have established various essential committees to carry out their strategic duties. They give very freely of their time to ensure that their work fully supports the new headteacher in achieving their collective vision for the future. They have monitored the work in the classrooms and regularly report their findings to the whole governing body. The headteacher and governors are in the process of developing the monitoring programme so that the implementation of policies, and the data about the pupils' achievement, are more precise. For example, the policy for racial equality that was agreed quite recently, is now being implemented, and will be evaluated in due course. The governors comply with all the statutory requirements. They have adopted a cautious approach to financial management and have accumulated a large underspend. This is because of a number of uncertainties in the recent past about some of the variables affecting the school's budget. Now that the future looks more secure, the programme for planned expenditure is more coherent and is tailored to ensure that expenditure will be directed towards the provision of more human and material resources. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

30. The management of the school is good. The headteacher now recognises the need to formulate and implement a performance management programme for the teaching assistants. The programme for staff development is well linked to the early priorities identified in the School Improvement Plan. The headteacher is very supportive of all the joint activities of the local cluster of schools and ensures that the teachers have access to the support available within the partnership. All the co-ordinators have a very clear view of their roles and are working effectively in leading the development of their subjects. For example, the literacy and numeracy strategies are being implemented very effectively and good progress is being made in planning

and improving the curriculum for information and communication technology. A systematic programme for the monitoring of subjects by the co-ordinators is shortly to begin.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	305380
Total expenditure	237764
Expenditure per pupil	2641

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	59800
Balance carried forward to the next	67620

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

There are nineteen children in the reception class, who share the same setting with six Year 1 pupils. The class does not have a full-time teaching assistant. The attainment of the children fluctuates year by year because of variations in the size and composition of the cohorts. However, the abilities and attainment of the most recent intake are average when matched to the national assessment profile and guidance.

The inspection findings show that there is a balance of strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning in the Reception year. Part of the provision meets the requirements of the Foundation Stage curriculum but in some aspects it is inadequate. Notwithstanding this, it is likely that the children will have sustained their attainment on entry and made satisfactory progress overall. Good progress is being made in their personal, social and emotional development, spoken English, listening skills, reading, ICT and music. However, there is need for further improvement in the planned provision for writing, knowledge and understanding of the world, and creative and physical development. This would enable the staff to move the children's attainment and achievements to a higher level across all areas of learning. Furthermore, there is a need to review the resources and the current organisation of the setting.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the children's personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are achieving well and making **good progress**.

Commentary

31. The children have settled well into the daily routines, enjoy coming to school and are happy and eager to learn. Most are on course to exceed the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. All the children, including those with special educational needs, have established good relationships with both their peers and adults, and they play together well. They share equipment and resources amicably, taking turns in their use and offering advice and support to one another. As a result, their social skills, emotional development, personal hygiene, self-confidence and self-esteem are being well established. The staff place a great emphasis on reinforcing socially acceptable behaviour and respect for one another as they go about their work. A better planned provision and resources for the outdoor classroom environment would take the children's achievement in this area of learning to even higher levels.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

The provision for the children's communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are making good gains in their speaking and listening skills, and in their reading
- There is a lack of role-play activities to stimulate and foster reading and independent writing in order to further improve their levels of achievement

Commentary

32. A significant proportion of the children is likely to exceed the early learning goals in their spoken English and in their ability to listen well. Most are on course to achieve the goals set for reading by the end of the reception year, but their writing skills are not as good as they should be. Overall, the children are making satisfactory progress, but could achieve more.
33. Lively reading of the stories and good questioning by the adults promotes new vocabulary and captivates the children interest. They are eager to state their own views, opinions and feelings. The adults encourage the children to speak slowly and clearly, and in most cases the children express themselves in a grammatically correct manner. However, there are missed opportunities to further extend this through a range of role-play activities.
34. Good attention is given to early reading skills. Books are shared with adults daily and also taken home. The children know that the picture conveys meaning and that we read from left to right, and the more able children can point to individual words confidently and competently. They clearly enjoy books and love to sit quietly on their own browsing for sustained lengths of time.
35. The early writing skills are being suitably developed in the group activity where children write their news. However, most are still at the early stage of mark-making and forming shapes. The more able children are beginning to create letter strings and form letters although in most cases they are not yet consistent in shape and size. A greater range of opportunities to write independently would further improve both the imaginative and creative elements of writing.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the children's mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is well used to support mathematical learning.
- The introductory sessions in mathematics are far too long and do not leave enough time for the children to actively engage in either individual or group activities.

Commentary

36. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals in mathematics by the end of the Reception year and their progress is satisfactory. Small group activities, such as rolling dice and recognising the numbers displayed, are very productive and the children achieve well. They also practise number bonds, sorting activities and recognition of shape by working co-operatively in pairs at the computer. Good interaction by the teacher supports this aspect of their mathematical learning. However, the introductory sessions for mathematics are far too long and on one occasion the children sat fairly inactively for 50 minutes. After what was a very good start to the lesson sequencing the numbers on the interactive whiteboard, their attention span wavered and they became restless. The introduction of shapes in the same lesson also became unproductive, despite the fact that the materials were relevant and exciting. It was evident from their books that many children are still not forming the numbers correctly and their errors have not always been addressed. There are insufficient mathematical displays and a lack of opportunities for the children to develop their mathematical learning in the outdoor learning environment.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Overall, the provision for the children's knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are taught basic computer skills very well
- There is a lack of interactive display to promote enquiry, exploration and discovery in the children's scientific, historical and geographical knowledge and understanding.
- There is a lack of resources to support this area of learning.

Commentary

37. Most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals, but their attainment is not as high as it could be because there are insufficient resources to stimulate the children's curiosity about the world around them. Taken overall, however, their progress is satisfactory. In one science lesson, for example, a story was used well to introduce the activities, and the children quickly realised that there is a wide range of fabrics to suit different purposes. The teacher asked searching questions and the answers given by the children indicated that they grasped this concept well. However, the subsequent activities provided for the children were dull and unimaginative. Furthermore, there were insufficient displays or books to support the current work on fabrics, and a lack of imaginative or creative subsidiary activities to challenge and captivate the children's curiosity by having them identify the type and texture of various materials. There was no evidence of any historical or geographical work, but this is planned to take place during the course of the year.

38. The children sustain their efforts over considerable lengths of time when working with construction toys and making models. They work collaboratively to good effect, sharing their work with each other and take on board suggestions and ideas from each other. More thought-provoking questioning by the staff when children are working at their activities, for example in the sand and water tray, would promote exploration, enquiry and discovery to a higher level.

39. There is a very good approach to the development of the children's computer skills and as a result they are confident in handling the mouse efficiently and following the instructions on the screen. They co-operate and take turns to control the programmes. For instance, they help each other to work out simple mathematical sorting games very well, and consequently they are achieving highly in this area of learning.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the children's physical development is **broadly satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are insufficient resources available to develop the children's larger physical movements.

Commentary

40. The provision for the children's physical development is just sufficient to ensure that they achieve the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. Consequently, their attainment is not as high as it could be, and overall their progress is only just satisfactory. The staff and children work well together to promote the development of fine movement and mobility skills in the classroom and the hall is used well for more formal physical education programmes. The outdoor climbing apparatus is used at lunchtime and playtimes. The children use a suitable

range of tools, equipment and materials successfully, such as scissors or the 'mouse' with the computer. However, the children's access to other tools and equipment, such as paint brushes and malleable materials, during their free choice time is very restricted. Similarly, when children went to a writing table or to the shop during the inspection the resources were so limited and uninspiring that they stayed there very briefly. On these occasions, it was evident that the children needed help with their pencil control and grip to improve the formation of letters and numbers. At present, the staff give insufficient attention to the development of these manipulative skills as they move around the set activities. Similarly, there are insufficient planned opportunities for the children to extend their physical activities outdoors, for example, there are no wheeled toys available. Overall, there is an imbalance in the range of opportunities for physical development made available to the children, both indoors and outdoors.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

The provision for the children's creative development is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of songs to support other areas of the curriculum.
- There are insufficient resources to stimulate role-play and the provision for the pupils' artistic development is restricted.

Commentary

41. Most children are broadly on course to achieve the early learning goals in their creative development, but they are not achieving as well as they might. Taken overall their progress is just satisfactory. The provision and available resources lack the necessary stimuli to support creative learning. The role-play area is unattractive and poorly equipped. It is insufficient to inspire the imaginative play and enrich spoken English and use of subject-specific vocabulary. Very few children were seen in the role-play area during the inspection. They have inadequate access to malleable materials such as playdough and clay, and the little art work displayed was very teacher-directed. Nevertheless, the children enjoy making models, and select and use materials well. They can weave paper in and out of card confidently and competently. The activity had been planned to be extended outside but the inclement weather meant that this could not take place. However, the staff failed to adapt the plans as an indoor activity to further challenge and extend the learning in other ways. Consequently, it became a redundant activity for most of the week.

42. Music plays an important role and the children have good experiences in singing and playing of instruments. The use of songs to support other work, for example mathematics, is very good. The children sing their number sequences confidently and clearly enjoy the experience. There is also good emphasis on the use of nursery rhymes and simple songs to support language and literacy development.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in reading, spoken English and listening skills are good.
- Literary text is used effectively to develop the pupils' language awareness
- The pupils with special education needs achieve well because their needs are very precisely identified.

Commentary

43. At the end of Year 2, and to a lesser extent Year 6, standards have fluctuated over the last three years. This reflects some turbulence in staffing and the influence of small cohorts on overall results. At the time of the inspection, there were clear indications that standards in reading and speaking and listening are being maintained and that the pupils are making good progress in writing. This is because the teachers have reached common agreements to ensure that the skilful use of text enhances the pupils' awareness of the quality of language. They also provide the pupils with opportunities to engage in a wide range of writing in different styles and for different purposes. Work in a variety of subjects is regularly recorded in written form.
44. Many pupils speak well and use an interesting vocabulary. In a class of younger pupils, for example, a child referred to "one considerate thing..." when referring to some help received by the wolf, which, in the text had been referred to as "one decent thing". An older group acted out a story from the Caribbean, successfully adapting the vocabulary of the written tale for their dramatised version. In discussion, the good relationships evident in all classes ensured that the pupils listened courteously to each other's points of view and responded appropriately.
45. There is a well-established reading culture in the school. It was recognised that book stocks were inadequate to stimulate the development of higher order reading skills. The issue is being regularly addressed, and the pupils now have access to a wider range of suitable books as well as to taped stories and factual material on the Internet. The oldest pupils resort naturally to the Internet, for example, to find information and broaden their knowledge of topics in history and science. The younger pupils are developing their phonic skills well to read unfamiliar words. There is room now to enhance the reading culture further by improving the way books are displayed in the library and in classrooms, and by providing rolling displays of books on a range of different topics.
46. The standards of attainment in writing are average. However, the pupils are making significant strides forward in raising their writing to a higher level. This is because the teaching of writing is now much more closely linked to the development of reading. The teachers introduce the pupils to various types of writing, for example narrative and explicative, so that their awareness of style and purpose develops well over time. The younger pupils have made good progress since September and now structure and organise their writing more appropriately. They are also developing editing skills that they employ to correct their basic errors, for example, of punctuation.
47. Phonic skills are consistently taught in order to develop both reading and spelling, but nevertheless they are still areas of difficulty for some pupils. The teachers are effectively improving the pupils' sentence structure by regularly modelling sentences. The oldest pupils are beginning to acquire a critical approach to their writing. This is because they have ample

opportunities to discuss the work of authors and analyse how they achieve different effects. This was very evident in the Year 5/6 class where the pupils were discussing how different points of view were expressed in a novel by Helen Cresswell. Their awareness of paragraphing is also becoming more secure and they readily resort to their peers to share evaluations of their work. The pupils now have individual targets for writing. However, at present the marking of work does not link to these targets sufficiently to provide a record of progress. Nevertheless, the exchanges between the teachers and the pupils as they work are helpful in raising awareness of where work needs to be redrafted.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

48. The implementation of the literacy strategy is now having a clear and beneficial influence on standards of work. The oldest pupils, in particular, appear to enjoy the process of writing and do so very readily in all subjects. The basic skills of punctuation, grammar and spelling are generally well applied across the curriculum, but the marking of work in all subjects is not sufficiently well focussed on improvement. The standards of handwriting and the presentation of work are good.

MATHEMATICS

The provision for mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching is very good in Years 3 to 6.
- Individual pupils are being challenged, and as a result are achieving well.
- Very good subject leadership is sustaining the improvements made over the course of time.
- The use of mathematics in other areas of the curriculum is good.

Commentary

49. Over the past three years, the standards in mathematics at the end of Year 2 have fallen below the national average. However, caution must be exercised when interpreting these results because of the very small cohorts. For instance, there were only eight pupils in Year 2 last year. This year the cohort is somewhat larger, and the inspection evidence indicates that these pupils are on course to achieve average standards at the end of this year with a small proportion likely to achieve the higher level 3. Over the same period of time, standards have been above average by the end of Year 6. However, most of the nine pupils in the present Year 6 cohort are working at the national average, but there are clear indications that a small proportion are likely to reach the higher level 5.

50. The lessons comprise lively mental warm-up activities, challenging tasks and good concluding plenary sessions to establish how well the pupils understand the mathematical concepts and to make sure that they achieve well. For example, in the Year 5/6 class, the teacher provided mental starters in the four rules of number. The activity was timed and both boys and girls worked at a rapid pace using number squares to help them. They found this a challenging but exciting activity. All lessons are carefully planned and explained to the teaching assistants. However, there is a need to sharpen the focus in the plenary sessions across the whole school so that this process aids the planning of subsequent lessons.

51. In Year 2, the teacher challenged the pupils with well-focused tasks to develop their skills of adding more than two numbers. The pupils worked at speed and could confidently explain the methods that they used. One pupil said; ' I would add $7+3=10+9=19$ '. Another child accurately added $11+15+17$, changing it competently to $17+10+5+10+1$. In the Year 3 / 4 class the

teacher paid very good attention to the planning for lower attaining pupils to help them to begin to understand single step mathematical problems. When they understood how to calculate the answers, they were further helped individually by the teaching assistant. As a result, they were making very good gains in their learning and achieving well. After some very good teaching on structured approaches to problem solving, the more able pupils were given quite demanding word problems to solve. Using a range of methods and considerable thought, eventually they arrived at the right answers.

52. There has been a significant improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. Throughout the school, the teaching is generally good and often very good. The teachers and the teaching assistants are knowledgeable and confident in their presentation of the curriculum. They structure the work well and manage the different year groups within the class effectively. Their knowledge and analysis of their pupils' progress through tests and observation helps to ensure that each pupil achieves well. The procedures for assessment have improved since the last inspection. However, a more focussed and systematic approach to marking would help to make clear to the pupils how they can achieve their targets and raise their work to a higher standard. It would also be helpful if some time was set aside for the pupils to correct errors or complete a piece of work.

53. A combination of very good subject leadership and appropriate professional development has sustained standards so that individual pupils achieve well in line with their capabilities.

Mathematics across the curriculum

54. Taken overall, the school creates very good opportunities for the pupils to use their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in design and technology they read scales and measurements in food preparation and in science they frequently use graphs and charts to display their observations and findings from experiments.

SCIENCE

The provision for science is **good**. It is **very good** in Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils generally achieve well, and some of the oldest pupils produce work of a very high standard.
- The lesson activities are interesting and stimulate the pupils' curiosity.
- There is an appropriate emphasis on investigative work.
- The recording of work in science is done well.

Commentary

55. In 2003, many pupils reached above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. No pupils failed to reach the average expected for their age. This is because the activities are very interesting and the pupils have the necessary social skills to work collaboratively on investigative tasks.

56. The science curriculum is very well organised to ensure that the work in the mixed age classes is skilfully pitched at a level that takes account of earlier learning. The teaching assistants provide valuable support to ensure that the pupils understand what they have to do. They use their questioning skills well to move the learning forward. The younger pupils engage readily in discussion that broadens their understanding as they embark upon investigative work. This was evident when the pupils in Year 2 were discussing how to classify items and learning to use

the correct scientific terms such as “intersection” and “set”. The youngest pupils have covered a wide range of topics, the outcomes of which were neatly recorded in a variety of ways, including bar charts, tables and labelled diagrams. Their recorded work on friction reflects their curiosity and engagement with the task whilst carrying out investigations.

57. The very good relationships in the older classes have a positive effect on the pace and standards of work by the end of Year 6. The pupils are using their speaking skills well to plan investigations and to reach conclusions when co-operating on a practical task. For example, in a very well planned and organised lesson on seed dispersal and nutrients, the pupils discussed their observations animatedly. Working in a group with the teacher, they were motivated to ask spontaneous questions and then quite naturally moved to the computerised microscope to extend their knowledge and understanding of pollination. They are acquiring a sound understanding of the concept of fair testing before recording their findings. An attractive large display of the components of a plant provided an arresting focus around which the pupils clustered while they produced individual versions as a record in their books. Their enthusiasm for the work was evident from the effort they all made to record their work in a visually attractive and organised way.

58. This good, and often very good, teaching draws purposefully on the teachers’ secure subject knowledge, and the skilful organisation of the lessons sustains the pupils’ interest and involvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

The provision for ICT is **satisfactory** at Years 1 to 2 and **good** in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- ICT is used widely to enhance the pupils’ learning and achievement.
- The resources are good.
- The teaching in Years 3 to 6 is based on good subject knowledge.

Commentary

59. The pupils achieve satisfactorily by the end of Year 2. They attain good standards and achieve well by the end of Year 6. The younger pupils can carry out simple word processing tasks to record their work and can also embellish it by using different colours, fonts and pictorial images. They are adept at giving instructions for changing images and for creating patterns with colour. They concentrated well as they skilfully dragged across the screen items that Barnaby Bear needed for a journey. They use ICT appropriately to record and read data in conjunction with their learning in mathematics and have also had opportunities to control a programmable toy.

60. The teaching and learning are good because the planning across the school ensures that later learning builds on what the pupils have learned at an earlier stage. This represents a steady improvement since the previous inspection. The pupils achieve well in developing their word processing skills and have also successfully used a range of other programs, such as Excel, to input and manipulate information. The teachers’ good knowledge of available programs and how they can be used to enhance learning, for example in science and history, ensures that the computers are in regular use and provide a natural source of relevant information. During a lesson about seed dispersal, the pupils used a computer-driven microscope to observe how pollen had settled on a variety of seeds. The quality of the accompanying discussion was high as they determined how to use the microscope and search for information to extend their knowledge of the topic. During a discussion in Year 6, a group of pupils enthusiastically tackled a proposed “challenge” involving the exchange of e-mails with a source in Vietnam that would

provide them with a problem-solving challenge. The teachers and teaching assistants have a good understanding of how to move the teaching on and ensure that all the pupils are engaged in ICT activities. There is a real enthusiasm for the use of ICT within the school.

ICT across the curriculum

61. ICT is now used regularly and with discrimination to support learning in many subjects across the curriculum. For example, the oldest pupils have successfully used an art program to produce attractive, colourful, abstract images. They have researched information about the universe and about topics in history. After a residential visit shared with other local schools, the pupils maintained contact via e-mail.

HUMANITIES

No teaching was observed in **history**, but the teachers' planning and the records of work for the autumn term were scrutinised. The recorded work indicates a high level of interest in the subject and an understanding of different ways of recording historical information. Some extended pieces of writing, such as an empathetic report of a sailor's experiences en route to 16th century South America, also provided evidence of good use of literacy skills.

Geography

From the limited observations made during the inspection, the provision for geography is **satisfactory in Years 1 and 2**. It is **good in Years 3 to 6**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Work on the local environment excites the pupils' interest.
- The teachers' good questioning techniques enable all pupils to make a contribution.
 - Activities are well timed so that interest is sustained.

Commentary

62. Standards in geography are average, but the pupils' achievement over time is good throughout the school. The younger pupils are acquiring a sound knowledge of different parts of the world and an understanding that weather affects the way people live. They are learning to use their mathematical skills to interpret a range of information satisfactorily, for example, about features of their local area. This also provides good opportunities for the exercise of their speaking and listening skills, and contributes well to the good standards they achieve. This includes the pupils with special educational needs.

63. The topics selected for study in Years 3 to 6 are thoroughly taught, and interesting resources, such as a variety of maps and photographs, are used to foster the pupils' observation skills. During a lesson on the water cycle, for instance, a good range of photographs of flooding on the school premises sparked a lively discussion about its causes and broadened into a debate about how an irregular puddle might be measured and represented to scale on squared paper.

64. The good teaching gives rise to interesting discussion among the pupils and stimulates them to observe geographical phenomena in their local area. The planning of work over two years has been reviewed in order to ensure greater continuity in the learning.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

No teaching was observed in either art and design or physical education so no judgements about provision can be made. In **art and design** an examination of the planned learning over the course of the year indicates that the school has improved the teaching of art skills since the last inspection. The work seen indicates that the curriculum is fully covered and, as they move through the school, the pupils' skills are increasingly developed in areas such as drawing, use of colour, perspective and sculpture through a wide range of natural and man made materials. Discussion with the pupils reveals their high level of interest and above average levels of attainment in the subject. In **physical education**, the teachers' planning is well structured to cover all aspects of the subject, including swimming and sporting activities. Records are kept of individual pupil's progress. The information available all suggests that the subject leadership in both art and design and physical education is good.

In **music**, two class lessons, one whole-school singing session and four individual tuition lessons were seen during the inspection. Taken overall, the standards observed in singing and instrumental playing were well above those expected nationally. The planned learning was clear and the teaching was brisk and extremely well focussed on the development of skills. This allowed the pupils to progress step by step throughout the sessions and make very good progress. As a result, the achievement of the pupils was very high by the end of the sessions. For example, the younger pupils learned to read the signs and symbols, and clap accurately a simple pattern. The older pupils, including those with special educational needs, had understood the concept of 'ostinati' and were able to put this into practice by playing the repeating rhythms on un-tuned instruments and with the use of the voice. The pupils are also able to sing clearly, hold the melody contour fairly accurately and keep a steady rhythm with due attention to note values. They clearly enjoy singing. The pupils who are learning to play instruments have a competent grasp of the basic elements of music and good control and mastery of their instruments. A significant strength of the provision for music is the fact that every teacher at this school is a competent musician and is able to ensure that music is maintained at a high standard.

Design and technology

The provision in design and technology is **good** in Years 1 and 2 and **very good** in Years 3 to 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Year 6, standards of work are well above the national average.
- The subject is effectively linked to other curriculum areas
- The quality of the planned learning is very good.

Commentary

65. In the Year 1 and 2 lesson, the standard achieved by the pupils was in line with what is expected. They are making good progress in their learning because the teaching, including that of the support staff, is good. The staff place an appropriate emphasis on the development of the skills of designing, making and evaluating in each set task, and on ensuring that attention is given to the safety of, and use of tools and equipment. This was evident, for example, when the pupils were exploring the different ways in which to cut, peel or scrape fruit and vegetables. It also links to the personal, social and health education programme as the pupils prepare healthy food. Good use was made of ICT by pupils in Year 1 to search independently for information about the different fruits, such as the mango, and to check the spelling.

66. The work seen in Years 3 and 4 indicates very good teaching and as a result the standards being achieved are well above average. The pupils had designed a lamp, then made it with

extreme care and with much pride in their achievement. They had been very critical and applied high standards in their evaluation of the outcomes. Furthermore, the work clearly linked into science and showed that the pupils had not only understood how to make a lamp but applied their knowledge of a circuit to light up the lamp confidently and competently. In discussion, the pupils demonstrated a very keen interest in the subject. This very good work is carried through into Year 5 and 6, for example, in food technology. For instance, in designing and making the packaging for biscuits that they had produced, there were very good cross-curricular links with mathematics, and their evaluations were a good example of 'writing for a purpose'. Their current work on cams is also of a very high standard. The pupils have a very clear understanding of the purpose of a cam and know the difference between linear and rotating motion. This is because the teaching is imaginative and inspirational and the teacher very convincingly answers the pupils' questions. The co-ordinator provides excellent leadership in the subject through her own practice and knowledge of the subject.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The planned learning has a beneficial influence on the pupils' spiritual, moral and social education.

Commentary

67. The school has a well developed programme of units of work that are carefully planned and co-ordinated within topics. Each class has a weekly session and during the inspection Year 1 and 2 pupils, for example, considered the notion of what is right and wrong based on a story they had heard. They were very confident in offering their own views and opinions, which showed a very good understanding of moral issues. Following an initial lesson with the teacher, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 had prepared questions to further their understanding about fair trading. They put these questions to a visitor to the school who is involved and experienced in this area of work. They listened carefully to what she had to say and were very interested and keen to ask further questions. In doing so, they were extending their knowledge to ensure that they had understood the issues.

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	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
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	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	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	3
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	3
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).