

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **GRETTON PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Gretton, Nr Corby

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121823

Headteacher: Mr J Sockett

Reporting inspector: A C Davies  
3639

Dates of inspection: 18-20<sup>th</sup> February 2002

Inspection number: 194696

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kirby Road  
Gretton  
Corby  
Northants

Postcode: NN17 3DB

Telephone number: 01536 770366

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend G Wise

Date of previous inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3639	A C Davies	Registered inspector	English Art and Design Design and Technology	How high are standards? <i>The school's results and pupils' achievements</i> How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9214	J Garland	Lay inspector		How high are standards? <i>Pupils' Attitudes, Values and Personal Development</i> How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
16761	M Hemmings	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Music Physical education Equal opportunities Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to their pupils?
27677	D Davenport	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education	How well does the school care for its pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is situated in a pleasant, rural village approximately 5 miles from Corby in Northamptonshire. It has 76 boys and girls, aged between 4 and 11. Very few pupils are known to be entitled to school meals free of charge and most come from homes where there is a high priority given to education. All pupils' main language is English. The number of pupils on the special educational needs register is below the national average and one has a statement. There are four classes in the school and the headteacher teaches for half of the week. When they first start school the majority of children have acquired personal and academic skills that are in advance of those expected for their age.

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

The school has a number of strengths but these are outweighed by the serious weaknesses that exist relating to the standards attained by older pupils, particularly the most able. The school's leadership has not been able to deal effectively with raising standards in mathematics and there are shortcomings in teaching and learning for 7 to 11 year olds. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

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

- Pupils learn to read well and enjoy books.
- Children in their reception year make good progress because the teaching is interesting and challenging.
- Behaviour, both in and out of lessons, is good throughout the school.
- Relationships at all levels are good and there is a pleasant and well-ordered atmosphere throughout the school.
- Pupils are attentive listeners and pay good attention, especially during the first part of the lessons.

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

- Leadership is unsatisfactory because there is a failure to take effective action on issues identified for improvement.
- Teachers' subject knowledge in mathematics and science is insecure resulting in the progress older pupils make being unsatisfactory.
- More able pupils in Years 3 to 6 are underachieving because there is insufficient challenge being provided for them.
- Much of the work in the science, geography and history relies too heavily on low-level worksheets, copying up text and colouring in.
- Pupils are not being helped to understand what they need to do next in order to improve their work.

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

*In accordance with section 13 (7) of the Schools Inspections Act 1996, I am of the opinion, and HMCI agrees, that special measures are required in relation to this school.*



## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997 and it has not improved as much as it should have done since that time. There has been a failure to deal effectively with many of the main issues raised in the previous report. Standards in mathematics, in particular, have not improved. The amount of unsatisfactory teaching has increased and in Years 3 to 6 pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. However, younger pupils benefit from teaching that is now having a more positive impact on their learning.

### STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	C	E
mathematics	E	E	E	E*
science	C	E	D	E

**Key**

well above average      A

above average            B

average                    C

below average            D

well below average      E

According to the National Curriculum tests for the past few years the standards attained by 11-year-olds match the national average in English but are well below average in mathematics and below average in science. This shows that there is a great deal of underachievement happening when taking account of schools in similar circumstances. Too many bright, older pupils are not attaining the higher levels in national tests. The achievement of 11-year-old boys is well below that of girls. The national test results for 7-year-olds give a very different picture with very good achievement evident in reading.

Children start school displaying personal and academic skills that are better than expected for their age. During their time in the reception class they make good progress. Many children are therefore exceeding the learning goals in each of the six areas of learning at the end of their reception year. There are particular strengths in communication, language and literacy. As they move through the school satisfactory progress is made in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2 pupils are attaining well in reading, with test results showing that many are reading at levels two years in advance of their own age. The position is not as strong for writing and mathematics but National Curriculum test results have been good for a number of years.

The main concerns relate to what is happening in Years 3 to 6. Pupils lose ground during these years. In mathematics and science achievement is unsatisfactory overall and poor for more able pupils. There is a distinct lack of challenge for these pupils who often end up doing exactly the same work as others in their class. In mathematics, the pace of the mental and oral part of the lesson is too slow resulting in a significant amount of underachievement. Pupils' good standards in reading are helping them to attain slightly better in English but there is evidence of underachievement in writing, particularly amongst the more able pupils. In other subjects, far too much of the work relies too heavily on completing low-quality worksheets and on a vast amount of colouring in. Pupils with special educational needs make

satisfactory progress because they are well supported in lessons. However, day-to-day planning does not adequately address their individual needs.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Although pupils display positive attitudes to school there are times when older pupils are rather reluctant to put up their hands to answer questions. Younger pupils are very enthusiastic and clearly enjoy learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are polite, courteous and well behaved. Lunchtimes are orderly times when pupils communicate sensibly to each other.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Relationships at all levels are good. However, there are few opportunities provided to enable pupils to take on additional responsibility and be independent.
Attendance	Good. This is above the national average. However, too many parents take their children on holiday during term time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is good in the reception class, satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory in Years 3 to 6. The reception teacher is very effective in helping children to move on their learning. She is challenging children and making them think for themselves. This has the effect of helping them make good progress towards the early learning goals. This is in contrast to the teaching seen in many of the lessons for older pupils. In these lessons there is a distinct lack of challenge for more able pupils and too frequently work is not planned to take account of the range of abilities in each class.

The teaching of English is satisfactory and better than it is for mathematics and science, where it is unsatisfactory. Teachers throughout the school are more confident in teaching literacy skills and this is helping standards in reading to be good. However, some teachers lack confidence in teaching mathematics and science, resulting in achievement being unsatisfactory for older pupils. There is good use of learning support assistants through the school. This is helping to make a good impact on the learning for those pupils who need more time to complete tasks or who sometimes require special support.

Pupils are not provided with enough information to help them understand what they need to next to improve their work. Work is marked regularly but it is not constructive enough and there are no formal targets being set for pupils to help them move on. Teachers do not make appropriate use of assessment information to help to plan future work. In too many lessons the pupils are expected to complete worksheets that are not challenging their thinking, copy out chunks of texts or colour in

pictures. There is not enough use made of the literacy and numeracy skills that are taught in English and mathematics lessons in other subjects.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Unsatisfactory. The National Curriculum is covered in full. However, too much of the work in history, geography and religious education relies on low-level worksheets, copying up text and colouring in. The literacy and numeracy skills are not having a sufficient impact on the rest of the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. Good quality support provided by classroom assistants helps these pupils improve their learning. When this support is not available the planning does not fully take account of their individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. There are many opportunities for pupils to reflect and music makes a strong contribution to spiritual development. The good behaviour is indicative of appropriate consideration being given to moral values. There is limited provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils have good understanding of multi-faith issues but are not helped to increase their awareness of living in a multi-cultural society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has insecure procedures to help track the progress pupils are making. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory and do not help teachers move on pupils' learning. Pupils are well known to all staff and there is care taken to ensure that they feel secure.

The communication between school and home is unsatisfactory and a cause for concern for many parents. The arrangements for reporting to parents on the progress made by their children is not appropriate because future targets are not made clear.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The headteacher is a very committed individual who cares deeply about his school. He recognises where there are deficiencies in the school's work but is not effective in taking the necessary action to deal with the serious issues. This leads to standards in mathematics being unsatisfactory and too many older pupils underachieving.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Many of the governors are fairly new to their role and are only just beginning to appreciate what they can be doing to support the school's management and leadership. They are aware of the need to raise

	standards but know that there is much work to be done.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are weaknesses in this aspect of the school's work. Too many serious concerns have remained for too long. There are limited procedures in place for dealing with these issues and too frequently the reason for low standards has not been thoroughly evaluated.
The strategic use of resources	Classroom assistants are being used effectively to help improve the progress made by pupils who need specific help. However, the impact of spending on standards and quality of education is not being rigorously checked.

The school has had difficulties in recruiting teachers and the number of applicants they attract for teaching posts is very disappointing. The accommodation is cramped although small class sizes ensure that classrooms are of an adequate size. The range of learning resources is good, especially since the creation of the library and computer suite.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The headteacher is kind and caring.</li> <li>• Pupils are well mannered and polite.</li> <li>• That their contribution to school is valued when it comes to helping with improving the building, for example, library and toilets.</li> <li>• The school ethos is positive.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standards in mathematics.</li> <li>• Levels of communication to parents.</li> <li>• Homework arrangements.</li> <li>• Information about the progress their children make.</li> <li>• Children spending less time colouring in.</li> </ul>

The parents are right to be concerned about standards in mathematics and the amount of time that pupils are spending colouring-in. Communication to parents about the progress their children make needs to be improved but homework arrangements are now broadly adequate. The positive points made are well-founded and accurate.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

- 1 The standards attained by 11-year-olds for the past few years have not been high enough and there is a significant amount of underachievement amongst older, more able pupils in particular. This is very pronounced in mathematics. The attainment of 7-year-olds, for a number of years, shows a different picture with National Curriculum test results in reading being very impressive. Throughout the school pupils are good listeners and are able to express themselves eloquently and with confidence. One of the main issues is that many of the problems identified at the time of the previous inspection still remain. This is the case in relation to attainment in mathematics and, to a lesser extent, the achievement of more able pupils.
- 2 Although the small numbers taking the National Curriculum tests for 7 and 11-year-olds require us to be very cautious about making sweeping judgements about standards there are, none-the-less, some telling statistics that give us important information. The national test results for 11-year olds show that the school's results in mathematics have been well below the national average for three years. When comparing these results with similar schools they have been in the bottom 5 per cent for the past two years. In science, comparisons to similar schools reveal that the school's results are well below average. In English, pupils have not achieved as well as they could between the ages of 7 and 11 and results are below those of similar schools. The examination of pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 indicates that progress is unsatisfactory and that there is a great deal of underachievement amongst more able pupils. The achievement of 11-year-old boys has been well below that of girls for some years. The position is unlikely change when taking account of the present Year 6.
- 3 The national test results for 7-year-olds give a very different picture with very good achievement evident in reading. For the past two years pupils' attainment in reading has been in the top 5 per cent nationally. In writing, the school's results have been either well above or above average for the past four years. Similarly, the mathematics results have been well above average for the past two years. Although 7-year-old girls are attaining better than boys in reading and writing the difference is no greater than that noted nationally. In mathematics and science the attainment of boys and girls is similar. The present Year 2 pupils are likely to maintain the position attained by other 7-year-olds in the past few years. When taking account of this good position it makes the standards attained by 11-year-olds very disappointing. Over a four-year period, the national test results show that, on average, 7-year-old pupils at the school are more than a full term in advance of average 7-year-olds nationally. However, by the time they are 11, the average attainment for pupils at the school is two terms below the national average. This shows that successive groups of pupils have been losing considerable ground through the Year 3 to 6 age range.
- 4 When children start school the majority display a good level of confidence and can communicate well. During their time in the reception class they build on this and make good progress. They participate eagerly in any oral sessions and use a wide-ranging vocabulary. They express themselves well and are good listeners. They work at a demanding pace and all pupils achieve well. Many children are therefore exceeding the learning goals in each of the six areas of learning at the end of their reception year, with particular strengths in communication, language and literacy.

- 5 As they move through Years 1 and 2 they develop a good appreciation of books and learn to read with expression and enjoyment. The vast majority are reading at levels that exceed their chronological age by the time they are 7. Indeed, many are reading at a level that is two years in advance of that expected for their age. Although the position is not as strong for writing, mathematics and science standards are none-the-less good overall as is indicated by the national tests for 7-year-olds. Pupils use a good range of descriptive phrases and select well-chosen phrases to bring their stories to life. They are less secure in the use of punctuation but their reading is having a good influence on their writing with pupils using the ideas that they have read about in their own work. Most deal well with mental and oral mathematics and can add, subtract and multiply numbers quickly in their heads. They can explain how they have arrived at answers and are good listeners taking time to listen to their peers as well as the adults who work with them.
- 6 In Years 3 to 6, the school is not able to build on this sound foundation and there is underachievement amongst the older pupils, especially the more able. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not maintain the good progress evident earlier in the school. In English, although pupils continue to read with confidence, expression and enjoyment their written work lacks the depth expected when taking account of what they are achieving at the age of 7. This mainly surrounds the descriptions used with very few examples of more able pupils regularly using similes or metaphors in their writing. This is partly as a result of lack of direction with pupils not being provided with the necessary information to help them improve their work. Marking, for example, is thorough but does not give pupils the necessary information to help them improve. There is also a distinct lack of use of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. Too often work in science, geography, history and religious education amounts to copying out extracts, colouring in worksheets or comprehension exercises. In mathematics, the progress made by older pupils is very disappointing. The lack of challenge for more able pupils and the lack of an appropriate pace during the mental and oral part of the lessons contribute to this. Very few pupils have attained the higher levels in the national tests for the past few years, yet there is little evidence of improvement. Insecurity in teachers' subject knowledge is contributing to low standards in mathematics and science. Pupils do not use their numeracy skills appropriately in other subjects, as there is limited requirement for them to do so. In science, most pupils are able to attain the expected level for their age but relatively few are moving on beyond this, resulting in standards being well below those of similar schools and in progress being unsatisfactory. Another contributory factor is that although the school does have an adequate system to help track the progress made by pupils, it is not using the system to help improve standards. It is therefore difficult for individual teachers to know exactly what needs to be done next to help improve standards.
- 7 There is far too much reliance on completing low-quality worksheets in other subjects. This greatly reduces the progress they make and does not help pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the subject they are studying. The examination of pupils' work in a range of subjects, over time, shows serious deficiencies in the range of work completed and in the quality produced. Standards are also unsatisfactory in information and communication technology with limited impact of this subject across the curriculum despite pockets of good examples in geography. When taking account of the fact that many pupils have computers at home the progress they make in information and communication technology is disappointing.
- 8 One of the main concerns relates to the school's inability to ensure that it is an inclusive school. This is highlighted by the continued gap that exists in the achievement of older boys and girls and in the inability to challenge the more able pupils sufficiently. Older boys have

been underachieving for many years although at the age of 7 there is very little comparative difference in the attainment of boys and girls. The underachievement of older, more able pupils is a serious concern and one that is not being addressed appropriately. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they are well supported in lessons. However, day-to-day planning does not always adequately address their individual needs.

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

- 9 The vast majority of pupils enjoy school and have a positive attitude to learning. They have satisfactory attitudes to school and in most lessons show good enthusiasm for learning. However, there are times when older pupils in Years 5 and 6 are a little reluctant to answer questions posed to them even when they know the answers. This occurred in English, science, mathematics and geography lessons. This contrasts greatly to pupils' attitudes elsewhere when they are keen to put up their hands and to be fully involved in the question and answer sessions. All pupils listen appropriately to teachers and show a respectful interest when others are talking.
- 10 Pupils behave well in class and in the playground, and move from place to place in school in an ordered and good-natured fashion. They have a clear understanding as to what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate behaviour. This is the case both inside and outside the classrooms. Pupils display a good level of self-discipline and maturity. They quietly amuse themselves with games and activities when the weather is wet. They are pleasant to their teachers and behave well at lunchtimes. In assembly, the youngest pupils were able to think of occasions where they or their classmates had been kind to others who might be lonely or upset. The pupils did not feel that bullying was an issue and that boys and girls got on well. Parents also feel that bullying is not an issue at the school. They are aware of the impact of their actions on others and nearly always respect each other's point of view. No pupils has ever been excluded from the school
- 11 Pupils have few opportunities, as they get older, to take responsibility, apart from some organisational tasks, which are provided for them. There are not enough occasions when pupils can work responsibly and develop research skills and the habit of individual responsibility for their work. There are limited mechanisms provided for pupils to express their views and few occasions when they can work independently. This results in a certain reluctance to make contributions orally in lessons and an underdeveloped sense of maturity and responsibility to equip them for the next stage of education. Pupils have little idea about the levels at which they are working and how they can improve their work.
- 12 Pupils' attendance is good. At 95.6 per cent it is above the national average, with no unauthorised absences. However, several parents take their children on holidays during term time.

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

- 13 The quality of teaching and learning is good for children up to the age of 5, satisfactory for pupils In Years 1 and 2 and unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching is good in Class 4, which includes all children of reception age, but is too frequently unsatisfactory for pupils aged 7 to 11. However, not all lessons are unsatisfactory for this age group with examples of good teaching making a positive impact on pupils' learning in music and geography. The teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory with the teaching of the basic skills of reading being positive. When taking account of the previous inspection, the quality of teaching

for the youngest age group has been maintained. However, there are unsatisfactory aspects associated with the teaching of the oldest pupils. The teachers' subject knowledge is not as good. In addition, the use made of assessment to plan effectively remains a concern that was highlighted at the time of the previous inspection.

- 14 The teaching for children in the reception class is good mainly because the adults working with these young children are clear about what they want them to achieve in each lesson. In addition, the way in which a very stimulating and well-organised environment has been set up adds to the quality of learning that is taking place. The work for these young children is well planned and makes a positive contribution to their learning. The teacher and classroom assistant form a good partnership with each knowing and understanding each other's role. In literacy and numeracy sessions, in particular, the learning is challenging and stimulating. This results in more able children making good progress as well as children who need additional support receiving the necessary help, as needed. In one numeracy lesson, where the teaching was very good, the way in which children were required to think deeply about the patterns of numbers in a 'non-conventional' way highlighted the demands made on them. The teacher successfully worked at getting children to understand that there are occasions when the pattern associated with number does not always follow the expected sequence. She talked about shoe sizes moving from size 13 to 1 and of clocks moving from 12 o'clock to 1 o'clock. During this lesson she helps children to use correct mathematical language and they begin to appreciate the difference between such terms as 'longest' and 'tallest'. She introduces a creative element by getting children to consider the different sizes of their own feet and to match them to a range of shoes she has bought into the classroom, which includes ballet shoes and mountain walking shoes. She then gets children to match these shoes to a range of 'make-believe' feet. This captures their interest and helps to move their learning on.
- 15 In Class 4 (reception/ Year1) there is an expectation that children work at a brisk pace. There is full participation with 'no hiding place' for those who may be reluctant to get fully involved. The management of children is very effective with the teacher using the skills of the classroom support to very good effect to organise a range of activities that matches the needs of individuals. The teacher deals very effectively with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy resulting in children being well on the road to becoming proficient readers by the time they leave the reception class. Similarly, she has a very good understanding of how to generate an interest in number amongst the children. She uses mental and oral strategies in creative ways making the learning interesting and relevant for the children. She gives high priority to practical activities and the resources used. She has thought carefully about achieving the correct balance between learning from direct experience and learning from listening to the teacher. There is appropriate priority given to reading, listening and speaking. This helps many children to exceed the learning goal for communication, language and literacy by the time they finish their reception year.
- 16 In Class 3 (Years 1/2), the teaching of reading is a strength, ensuring that standards in reading are good throughout the school. There is good use of support staff and learning resources to ensure that learning is stimulating and motivating. The weaknesses surround the planning. The planning does not always make it clear what it is that pupils are going to learn and there is limited evaluation of the planning happening, which results in the pupils' progress being hampered. This together with ineffective use of assessment information to guide future planning and the lack of an appropriate target setting system is not helping pupils to have a clear understanding about what they need to do improve their work.
- 17 The teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory for pupils In Years 1 and 2. In Class 3, which is made up of Year 1 and 2 pupils, the teacher has appropriate subject knowledge and



uses the literacy strategy to good effect to help pupils' reading. Pupils' listening skills are developed appropriately with opportunities for them to be engaged in discussions and in explaining events. However, the mental and oral part of the numeracy lesson tends to be too slow and lacks the pace normally associated with this part of the lesson. Good use of the classroom assistant in the same lesson does ensure that pupils have a great deal of direct teaching. The lack of a range of appropriate tasks for Year 2 pupils results in a lack of challenge for the more able on occasions. This is mostly noticed in mathematics lessons. The teaching of music is good for this age group with a specialist teacher helping pupils to develop further their listening skills. Pupils are taught techniques and are helped to understand the difference between long and short notes and their impact on the piece of music.

- 18 In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is unsatisfactory overall but there are examples of good teaching evident. The teaching is generally better for Years 3 and 4, with more demands being made on their information and communication technology skills, reading and number recall. The teaching of English is satisfactory for 7 to 11-year-olds but there are weaknesses in the development of more able pupils' writing. The strengths relate to the teaching of reading and the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. However, pupils are not helped to improve their descriptive work by using imagery, similes or metaphors. The teaching of mathematics and science is unsatisfactory. The main reason is directly related to a lack of teacher confidence in the subjects resulting in inappropriate challenge for more able pupils in particular. The pace of the mental and oral work is far too slow and the amount of work expected from pupils is often not made clear. The end part of the lesson in mathematics (plenary) is weak and fails to help to consolidate the learning that has taken place. The lack of appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop practical investigations in science together with too much of the recording depending on low-quality worksheets is hindering pupils' learning.
- 19 There are, however, examples where the teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. In one Year 3/4 religious education lesson, for example, the teacher successfully uses his own knowledge to help capture pupils' interest in a lesson about symbols and signs. The pupils are very enthusiastic and come up with some very good ideas, which emphasises how well they are able to communicate. The same teacher working with the same age group is equally as successful in a geography lesson. He uses his voice very effectively to capture the pupils' interest and generates a strong sense of engagement in the lesson. Pupils are able to talk about their own involvement in local area projects such as cleaning up derelict land. In an art and design lesson, taken by a part-time teacher, there is evidence of pupils being able to develop their creativity by designing and making beds for familiar characters such as, Harry Potter or Charlie from the Chocolate Factory. The pupils have thought deeply about their ideas and the interesting range of beds produced shows how they have been stimulated by this task.
- 20 The same issues as mentioned for Years 1 and 2 relate to planning. The learning objectives are not clear enough and there is limited evaluation of the planning so that progression in pupils' learning is not guaranteed. There is also ineffective use of assessment to help consider future planning needs. The pupils' learning is hindered by the weak marking which does not make it clear exactly what pupils need to work on next. The lack of an appropriate target setting system for the pupils adds to the inappropriate pace of learning.
- 21 As with science, there are too many occasions when worksheets are used indiscriminately to record work in geography, history and religious education. Many of the worksheets require pupils to colour in pictures or to copy out chunks of texts. The pupils are therefore not required to make the most of their literacy or numeracy skills. The scrutiny of pupils' work over time reveals that not enough attention is given to checking on what pupils need to do to move on their

learning at an acceptable pace. Although many lessons are generally satisfactory or better the examination of this work shows that the progress pupils make is unsatisfactory.

- 22 The teaching for pupils with special needs is satisfactory because of the impact of support staff. However, when they are working without direct support there are too many occasions when these pupils are doing the same work as others in their class. The issue again surrounds the planning with insufficient attention given to the pupils' individual needs. The lack of attention to the needs of different groups of pupils is disappointing considering that there are only a few occasions when pupils work in groups of more than 20, indeed they frequently work in groups of less than 15.

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

- 23 The curricular and other opportunities offered to reception children are good, enabling all of them access to a wide range of exciting and challenging learning experiences. The teachers and other adults working with reception children provide a stimulating learning environment for the children in their care, leading to them making good academic progress and being well prepared for the programmes of study of the National Curriculum, as they enter Year 1. The curriculum for pupils aged 5 to 11 meets all the statutory requirements, including the demands of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. However, the strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills are not successful in enabling pupils to practice and refine them in their work in subjects other than English and mathematics. There has been a higher profile given to mathematics since the last inspection, but the insecure subject knowledge shown by the teachers of older pupils means that this has not had a positive impact on standards.
- 24 The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is unsatisfactory. Pupils do not have enough time on computers to develop their skills and, as a result, they are attaining standards that are below that expected for their age. Too much of the work in history, geography and religious education relies on low-level worksheets, copying up text and colouring in. There are swimming lessons provided for pupils in the juniors and, usually, by the time that they leave school, all of them can swim a minimum of 25 metres. The lack of appropriate internal space for pupils to be involved in physical education activities restricts this part of the curriculum. The provision for music is good and enables pupils to achieve high standards in their singing and playing of the recorder.
- 25 There is no policy or formal procedures, to promote the pupils' personal, social and health education, and consequently there is only limited development of this aspect of the curriculum. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take on increased responsibilities as they pass through the school. The pupils are helped to develop good attitudes towards healthy eating and how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, as part of their work in science. This aspect is supported by visits from the school nurse, who also plays an important role in the provision for sex education for older pupils. However, the school does not enable pupils to gain an appropriate awareness of the dangers of the misuse of drugs. The pupils' social development is promoted by them being able to take part in a variety of extra-curricular activities, in which they learn how to work together as part of a team.
- 26 The school is not successful in ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the curriculum, as the provision for more able pupils is unsatisfactory. Much of the work given to them lacks appropriate challenge and, as a result, they do not make the progress and achieve the

standards of which they are capable. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory, with good quality support provided by classroom assistants helping these pupils to improve their learning. When this support is not available, the planning does not fully take account of their individual needs. There have been improvements made in the medium term procedures since the last inspection, especially in English and mathematics, so that teachers have clearer information about the key learning objectives and skills to be taught. However, these objectives are not always successfully incorporated in day-to-day planning, especially for older pupils and, as a result, there is a marked lack of challenge for more able pupils and too often, work is not planned to take account of the range of abilities of pupils in the class. These deficiencies hinder the school's ability to be an inclusive learning place.

- 27 The provision for extra curricular activities is satisfactory, and pupils can take part in clubs that include netball, rounders, football, bell-ringing, dance and cricket. The school makes use of the local environment and various educational visits to enrich the curriculum by providing further learning experiences. There have also been visits from theatre groups to develop the pupils' creative interests.
- 28 There are links with the community that make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Representatives from local churches lead assemblies in school, which deepens pupils' understanding of religious education issues and promotes their spiritual development. Players from Gretton's cricket club and Corby rugby club come into school to coach pupils and to develop their skills in aspects of these sports. A local resident comes into school on a weekly basis to lead a bell-ringing club and each year pupils take part in a musical performance in the village hall. There are secure links with the nearby secondary school that successfully prepares pupils in Year 6 for when they transfer there.
- 29 The pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory and is enhanced by the work of representatives from local churches who come into school to lead assemblies and to work with pupils. The acts of collective worship are used well in this aspect of pupils' development, as was seen in an assembly led by the headteacher on the theme of 'needing time on your own'. There was effective use of music to heighten the mood of spirituality, and pupils had opportunity for quiet, personal reflection when saying a prayer. There is a lack of planned opportunities in most subjects to develop spiritual awareness.
- 30 Moral and social themes feature in many aspects of the curriculum and enable pupils to make satisfactory progress in these elements of their development. They are encouraged to develop good moral values, including a clear understanding of the difference between right and wrong, through the behaviour code and the examples set by teachers. The staff work hard to promote a sense of fairness among pupils and to encourage them to be tolerant of each other. The pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to work and play together, with respect and tolerance. They are encouraged to listen to, and respect, the opinions of others, as was seen during the introductions and round up sessions of most lessons. Pupils are given opportunity to work collaboratively, in pairs and small groups, and this plays an important part in developing their social skills. The range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils, also supports the development of their personal and social skills as they learn how to work together as part of a team. There are limited opportunities for pupils to take on increased responsibilities as they pass through the school.
- 31 The development of pupils' cultural education is unsatisfactory, as the school is not successfully preparing them for life in multi-cultural Britain. There is insufficient emphasis

placed on developing their understanding and tolerance of other people's religious convictions and cultural traditions.

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

- 32 The school mostly provides a happy, caring and supportive environment for its pupils. Relationships between pupils and all members of the school staff are good and pupils feel secure. Visits and shared activities help to ease the transition from pre-school to reception and there are appropriate procedures in place to ensure that the children settle quickly into their new routines. School liaises with the local secondary school and visits are arranged for Year 6 pupils to assist transition.
- 33 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Their needs are identified early and appropriate targets are set in their individual education plans. These are reviewed regularly and updated to take account of their rate of progress. The good quality support provided by classroom assistants helps these pupils to improve their learning. However when this support is not available the teachers' planning does not fully take account of the individual needs. Statements for special educational needs are reviewed annually in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 34 Although the school does carry out some work on personal development, mainly through curriculum areas, there is a lack of a structured personal and social development programme. This means that there is insufficient guidance given to pupils on dealing with situations as they move through the school, for example, there is no 'school council' or 'circle time'. Teaching about health education is limited and there is insufficient teaching about the dangers of drugs. Very few visits and no residential experiences are arranged which would further enhance pupils' personal and social development. Good care is provided for pupils at lunchtimes and playtimes and there are appropriate procedures in place for recording playground accidents and for informing parents when these happen. The school has two first aiders who deal appropriately with situations as they arise. Governors on the 'health and safety' committee carry out regular inspections of the school premises. However the school's procedures for child protection do not meet statutory requirements. Although the school has adopted the guidance document of the local education authority it has not fulfilled the statutory recommendations to develop its own detailed policy. All staff need to be fully aware of the procedures to adopt should they have concerns about any child in their care.
- 35 The school places good emphasis on positive behaviour. There are appropriate systems in place to promote this, for example, teachers' good use of praise in lessons and stickers awarded during assembly for 'Maths Wizards' and 'Star Writers'. The school's anti-bullying policy ensures that all staff are able to deal quickly with any instances should they occur.
- 36 Attendance through the school is good and above the national average. However too many parents take their children on holiday during term time. There have been no exclusions in the past year.
- 37 Procedures for monitoring and assessing pupils' progress are unsatisfactory. Whilst there is some analysis of tests results these are not used effectively to inform teachers' planning or improve pupils' performance. Procedures to help track individual pupils' progress are insecure. Teachers' planning does not always take into account the different ages and abilities of pupils within the class or set targets to take their learning forward. Marking throughout the school is

ineffective as there are few encouraging comments or advice on how to improve their work. Assessment procedures for children in the Foundation Stage of Learning are good.

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

- 38 Too many parents have reservations about communication between school and home. Most parents nevertheless acknowledge various strong points, which include their children being happy at school and parents approve of the range of experiences provided for them. They praise the caring ethos and the advantages of a small school.
- 39 Parents revealed on the questionnaire that they do not feel well enough informed about the curriculum or the progress their children make. Forty per cent of the replies complained that they are not adequately informed and 40 per cent that the school does not work closely with parents. Many parents work and some feel that they have not been well enough involved in their children's time in school. Several were unclear about the school's approach to matters such as bullying and whether there was a policy. A few parents said that, despite the school's invitation to 'come in and discuss any difficulties', individual problems had not been addressed to their satisfaction. The school has recognised some of these concerns and has arranged an extra meeting for the parents with the teachers in the spring term this year.
- 40 The school brochure is welcoming and explains school procedures but has few useful details about the curriculum. The governors' annual report lacks information on staff professional development. Reports indicate good knowledge of pupils' attitudes and behaviour in this small school, with teachers understanding their pupils well. However, there is not enough information in reports about academic progress, whether this is adequate for the pupils concerned, and there is a lack of targets for improvement in which parents can become involved.
- 41 Parents are involved in helping the school wherever they can. They read regularly with their children. The school benefits from their practical help, for instance they have been involved in setting up the new library area, raising money for books and cataloguing them on the school's computer. Parents with specialist skills, for example in sport, have offered their expertise for various activities.

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

- 42 The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are unsatisfactory. The headteacher is a hard-working and caring individual. However, despite his ability to accurately assess issues that need attention he is less successful in dealing with the issues and therefore standards are not improving at the rate they should. This broadly matches the position reported at the time of the previous inspection. There are also concerns about quality assurance, which has resulted in some work of low quality being produced, accepted and not checked. This was apparent when examining work that had been completed over time. The significant amount of coloured-in worksheets was one area that exemplified this issue.
- 43 The headteacher gives a high priority to supporting staff at a pastoral level. This does not always help to support their professional needs. The headteacher is able to give staff clear direction in terms of the way pupils are to be treated. This has resulted in a very positive atmosphere existing in school where pupils are valued and given time. However, there is less

clarity about what pupils should be achieving. This has resulted in the attainment and achievement of older pupils not being good enough.

- 44 There are appropriate systems in place to help analyse national test results. However, deeper analysis in helping gain greater clarity about the progress being made is not as evident. The low standards for 11-year-olds have been explained away by focusing on the few pupils who missed gaining the expected level by two or three marks. There has not been enough attention given to successive low standards in mathematics especially since this was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection. Although there are appropriate strategies in place for analysing the data there is a failure to deal effectively with the issues raised by the analysis. The lack of focus on the attainment of different groups of pupils is not helping the school to be truly inclusive. This is exemplified by the assertions made by the headteacher in the pre-inspection information which states that pupils achieve well.
- 45 The issues are not dissimilar when it comes to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. The deficiencies in the teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 have been noted by the headteacher but there has been limited focus on improving the position. The headteacher's style does not lend itself to being assertive and he does not have appropriate strategies to deal with weaknesses. There is limited strategic placement of staff. For example, the test results and the previous inspection report make it clear that there are problems with the progress being made by the oldest group. Yet they are the ones taught by the long-term temporary teacher. There are few guidelines provided related to the need to focus on progress in mathematics, for instance. This aspect of the school's leadership is therefore unsatisfactory. The targets that teachers have within the performance management arrangements fail to focus sufficiently on the need to improve the progress made by more able pupils. The curriculum is not rigorously monitored. On a long-term, too much work is being repeated and, on a short-term, there is insufficient attention given to evaluating the planning and using this information to plan the next areas of learning.
- 46 All staff have been involved in the development of the school improvement plan. However, the plan does not deal with the major issues associated with standards. For example, the achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is not as explicit an issue as it needs to be. The main problem relates to the lack of information about the progress pupils are making in relation to the levels they need to be attaining. This is hindering the school's ability to develop appropriate action to deal with school improvement.
- 47 The governors are fulfilling their statutory duties but they are not having as full an impact on the work of the school as they should. They are able to talk about the school's strengths and accurately identify the positive aspects to the school's ethos and community. However, they are not as secure when it comes to identifying what they need to do to improve standards. They are aware that national test results have not been good for 11-year-olds but tended to think that if a few pupils had achieved slightly better then the picture would be very different. They do recognise how they could enhance their role to support the school's work and were quick to suggest ways in which they could increase their involvement. This indicates their eagerness to be more fully involved. The main problem relates to the quality of information they have been working on. They need to be more challenging so as to be able to be more effective in their support of the school.
- 48 The governors have prioritised keeping four classes and have used funds to ensure this remains the case for as long as it is possible. Pupils are therefore taught in relatively small groups and this should provide a platform for helping all pupils to achieve well. At present,

there is not a secure link made between the school's spending and checking that it is having an impact on raising standards or on improving the achievement of pupils. The formal procedures to help governors make these links are not in place and more needs to be done to help governors set out cost effectiveness procedures as they agree their spending decisions. The school is not able to guarantee best value at the moment because it is not challenging itself enough in its management procedures. When taking account of the overall achievement of pupils and the amount of money spent per pupil the school is not giving satisfactory value for money.

- 49 The creation of a new school library offers the school much needed additional space for helping pupils to research. The computer suite has also been set up in this area and will eventually provide an appropriate resource for this aspect of the school's work. At present, everything is relatively new but the planned developments give every confidence that work in information and communication technology will be enhanced as a result of the new resources and setting.
- 50 In a school with relatively few members of staff it is difficult for each subject to be given an appropriate amount of co-ordination. The present setting sees much depending on the headteacher and one other member of staff. Although they are keen and dedicated they are not able to have an as much impact on the work throughout the school as they would wish. The mathematics co-ordinator, for example, has good procedures in place but as yet is able to have only limited influence on the work of colleagues who are teaching in other parts of the school.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 In order to deal with the serious issues raised in this inspection the governors, headteacher, staff and local education authority need to work together to:

- **Improve the leadership and management by taking more effective action to deal with identified weaknesses.** (Paragraphs 8, 25, 26, 42-46, 50, 74, 80, 85, 96, 102, 105 and 117)
- **Improve the mathematical and scientific subject knowledge of teachers who work with older pupils.** (Paragraphs 6, 13, 17, 18, 23, 78, 83 and 84)
- **Accurately identify the needs of more able pupils' and provide more appropriately for them in all lessons.** (Paragraphs 1, 2, 6, 8, 18, 26, 64, 70, 76, 78, 81, 84 and 92)
- **Improve the quality of pupils' work by: reducing the amount that is copied up from worksheets; that involve colouring in or rely on low-level worksheets.** (Paragraphs 6,7, 21, 24, 83, 95, 100 and 116)
- **Help pupils improve their work by sharing with them exactly what it is they need to do in order to improve. This will require improved marking and giving greater consideration to a target setting system that helps this to happen.** (Paragraphs 6, 16, 20, 37, 40, 73, 85 and 101)

52 As well as these key issues the school also needs to deal with the following points:

- Ensure that the person nominated as the school's child protection co-ordinator is given opportunities to feedback important points to the rest of the staff. (Paragraph 34)
- Governors need to have greater clarity about the impact of their spending decisions on standards achieved. (Paragraphs 47 and 48)
- The school needs to consider how they can promote the multi-cultural needs of pupils. (Paragraphs 31 and 90)
- Seek ways of improving communication with parents. (Paragraphs 38, 39 and 40)



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	26
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	59

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	1	12	9	3	1	0
Percentage	0	4	46	35	11	4	0

*The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]*

### *Information about the school's pupils*

#### **Pupils on the school's roll**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		76
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		2

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Special educational needs**

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		17

#### **English as an additional language**

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

#### **Pupil mobility in the last school year**

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

%
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#### **Unauthorised absence**

%
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School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

School data	0.2
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	3	4	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	2	3
	Girls	4	4	4
	Total	7	6	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (100)	86 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	2	3	3
	Girls	4	3	4
	Total	6	6	7
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (100)	86 (100)	100 (100)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	2	5
	Girls	5	4	6
	Total	8	6	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	73 (80)	55 (50)	100 (75)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	6	5	6
	Total	9	8	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (84)	73 (65)	91 (89)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	68
Any other minority ethnic group	

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.96
Average class size	19

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

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	45

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	n/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	n/a
Total number of education support staff	n/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	n/a
Number of pupils per FTE adult	n/a

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1.5
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	209,664
Total expenditure	199,697
Expenditure per pupil	2,295
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,920
Balance carried forward to next year	27,887

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	79
Number of questionnaires returned	36

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

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	34	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	43	51	0	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	46	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	46	17	3	0
The teaching is good.	46	43	3	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	34	23	17	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	43	40	11	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	43	17	11	6	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	34	26	14	3
The school is well led and managed.	43	42	9	6	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	54	3	0	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	3	40	17	23	17

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

- 53 Children aged up to 5 are taught in a reception class, which also has 8 Year 1 pupils within it. Currently there are 11 children in the reception year.
- 54 A nationally approved baseline assessment shows that the attainment of most of the children is above that expected for their age as they start school. Children have particularly good skills in communication, language and literacy. By the time they enter Year 1 most children will have exceeded the requirements of the early learning goals in all six areas of learning. The children's good achievement is a direct result of the good teaching, challenging work and the stimulating learning environment, which ensures a good start to their education and is a strength of the school.
- 55 Most children transfer from the 'Chirpy Chicks' pre-school group, which is situated within the school premises. Visits and shared activities during the year help to ease the transition from pre-school to reception and there are appropriate induction procedures in place to ensure that the children settle quickly into their new routines.

### **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**

- 56 Teaching is good and appropriate emphasis is placed on providing a wide range of well-planned activities to develop this aspect of learning. As a result the children achieve well and by the time they leave the reception stage the majority will have exceeded the early learning goal. The children settle quickly into school life where a happy and secure atmosphere is created for them within the classroom. They learn to play amicably with others, to share resources and to co-operate with adults and each other. They are able to undress themselves for physical education activities with minimal help and look after their own personal hygiene. The children's attitudes to lessons are very positive and they carefully follow the instructions given by the adults working with them. Adults have high expectations of children's behaviour, which are well met. The staff provide appropriate opportunities for the children to become increasingly independent. For example, they ensure children are fully involved in classroom tasks, in tidying up activities and in putting out physical education apparatus safely.

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

- 57 The children make good progress in this area of learning and the majority exceed the requirements of the early learning goal by the time they leave reception. Teaching is good with aspects of the National Literacy Strategy being introduced appropriately. The teacher and the support staff place a great deal of importance on teaching the basic skills of reading and writing and in giving the children many planned opportunities to talk about their work and personal experiences. Speaking and listening skills are well developed. The children listen attentively to stories and respond well, talking enthusiastically about what they liked and disliked and expressing themselves clearly. By careful questioning and good use of text, for example, The 'Elves and the Shoemaker', the teacher extends the children's ideas and vocabulary very effectively. When choosing a book they hold it the right way, understand that words and pictures carry meaning and are aware that print is read from left to right. The children enjoy books and handle them with care. They recognise and read their own name, the names of familiar objects within the classroom and key words within stories. They are

beginning to associate sounds with patterns, words and letters and to read familiar words with increasing accuracy. The children enjoy mark making and basic writing experiences and confidently use a range of implements for drawing, scribbling and writing. They write their first names accurately and make good attempts at writing independently using initial sounds with which they are familiar.

## **Mathematics**

- 58 The children make good progress in their mathematical development and achieve beyond the level expected by the end of the reception year. Where appropriate the relevant sections of the National Numeracy Strategy are introduced. Teaching is good and well planned activities such as the counting and sorting of objects and sequencing of patterns together with practical activities for measuring and shape work, all contribute effectively to the children's mathematical progress. By counting, ordering and adding together children show a good understanding of numbers up to 10, which they consolidate through number rhymes. They recognise and count coins accurately up to 10p and know the names of common regular shapes such as circle, square and triangle. Well-planned practical activities encourage children to estimate and measure everyday objects using non-standard measures and record their findings accurately. This, together with sand and water activities, effectively develops children's mathematical language as they are encouraged to use terms such as 'more than', 'less than', 'biggest', 'smallest', 'full', 'empty'. Children are provided with practical and creative tasks, which motivate them. In one lesson, the children were asked to match cut out feet sizes with a range of different sized shoes such as a ballet, mountain walking and roller skates. During this session the pupils had to think carefully about their measurement and to consider the reasons as to why people may wear the shoes that were presented to them.

## **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

- 59 Again children achieve well in this area of learning and most have exceeded the early learning goal as they enter Year 1. Teaching is good with activities planned to stimulate the children's curiosity, to develop their powers of observation and encourage them to ask questions. Children learn about sound as they explore musical instruments and listen to a variety of sounds as they walk around the locality, recording their findings appropriately. Construction kits are used effectively by the children to form levers and pivots. They also create observational drawings of moving levers. In a science lesson about animals the teacher's skilful questioning enhanced children's literacy skills as they talked enthusiastically and knowledgeably about different skins, colours and sizes of a range of animals and made comparisons. Children gain a sense of times past as they listen to stories of famous people, for example, Florence Nightingale and sequence pictures from babies to grandparents. Their geographical knowledge is developed through activities such as walking around the local area and noting what they see on their way to school. The stimulating activities presented to the children result in their concentrating well on their work and showing a great deal of interest and enjoyment in their practical activities. They work well, share resources and readily help each other.

## **Physical Development**

- 60 Children achieve well in this area of learning and the majority exceed the early learning goal when they leave reception. Effective teaching ensures that children have good opportunities to develop their manipulative skills by using scissors, holding pencils and brushes, threading, rolling, completing jigsaws and using small construction apparatus. They successfully build and



construct models and use appropriate tools and methods when assembling and joining materials, for example, when sticking various materials onto a sock to make a puppet. In a physical education lesson in the hall, the children demonstrated well, several different ways of moving for example, walking, running, skipping. Their awareness and control of their own and each other's space is developing well. Children work well in a group and show interest and enjoyment in their work. The school has only recently had access made from the reception room to the playground so opportunities for children to have structured, outdoor play have been very limited. There are very few suitable toys available and sand and water play activities are also limited due to the constraints of space within the classroom. However the purchase of large play equipment and the erection of a canopy are priorities on the School Development Plan. The school makes good use, weather permitting, of the swings, balancing bars, wooden bridge and stepping stones in the 'orchard'.

### **Creative Development**

- 61 The majority of children exceed the standards expected by the age of five in this area of learning. They have opportunities to draw, paint and make objects from a variety of media. Their work is often related to other curriculum areas as, for example, they use paints to make footprints and different paper shapes to enhance learning in mathematics. Children make observational drawings of moving levers, draw pastel portraits of famous people and design and make pancakes from a variety of media, including foam. Children express themselves through role play activities and participate well in musical activities as they sing and play percussion instruments.

### **Teaching, Learning and the Curriculum**

- 62 The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is always good with some very good teaching being seen. The teacher and classroom assistants work effectively together to create a very caring and secure environment. They form good relationships with the children and have high expectations of their behaviour to which the children respond well. The teacher's enthusiasm, particularly in literacy and numeracy lessons, is having a positive effect on children's learning. The effective planning and good understanding of how children of this age learn create a happy, stimulating atmosphere in which children work and play well together and make good gains in their learning. Children feel secure in developing their learning through the constructive praise they receive from the teacher and classroom assistants.
- 63 The curriculum is well planned to effectively cover all areas of learning, and particular emphasis is placed on communication, language and literacy and on mathematics. Detailed weekly plans show what work is to be covered and what skills the children are expected to learn through the well structured activities. Weekly learning objectives displayed in the classroom provide an effective focus for the children: Future planning is based on the regular evaluations of what children have achieved. This good quality planning has a positive effect on the standards that the children achieve. Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are thorough and enable the staff to monitor effectively the progress that each individual child makes in all six areas of learning. Initial baseline assessment is carried out appropriately and the information from this is used to plan subsequent learning experiences. There are good arrangements at the end of the year to transfer the relevant information about children's attainment and achievement to the next teacher.

## ENGLISH

- 64 The standards attained by 11-year-olds matches the national average with strengths in reading, speaking and listening and weaknesses surrounding the challenge provided for more able writers. When taking account of similar schools, the results in 2001 were well below average. This is in contrast to the standards attained by 7-year-olds in the national test for reading and writing. In reading, the results have been in the top 5 per cent nationally for the past two years and they are have been consistently above average in writing for the past four years. The overall position is that pupils are provided with a good start in reading and writing but this is not built upon sufficiently in writing between the ages of 7 and 11. However, pupils' speaking and listening is good throughout with satisfactory progress evident. The standards attained by girls are better than that of boys at the age of 7 but the difference matches that seen nationally. However, by the age of 11, girls are attaining much better than boys by a margin that significantly exceeds the national difference.
- 65 Standards are good for speaking and listening and pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. Pupils start school with communication skills that are better than for most children of their age. During their time in the reception class they build on this position and by the time they start Year 1 the vast majority are already good listeners and can communicate their thoughts and feelings confidently with good expression. In Class 3 (Years 1 and 2) they are encouraged to be involved in discussions where they learn about being patient and waiting for their turn and also to listen attentively to others in their class as well as the adults who work with them. The listening skills are well developed and this is seen at its best during whole school events, such as assemblies, when pupils listen carefully and participate eagerly when asked to do so. Pupils start to use more descriptive language as they move through the school and this is seen at its best when pupils are excited about the learning or when they are engaged in more creative ideas.
- 66 As they move into Classes 2 and 1, the good listening continues. The Year 3 and 4 pupils continue to be keen to offer ideas and suggestions and they are extending the vocabulary they use as they become older. However, in Years 5 and 6 there are times when there is a reluctance on behalf of pupils to put up their hands to answer questions that they know the answer to. During a geography lesson, for example, only two or three put up their hands in response to the question, 'What is the difference between Northampton and Northants?'. When speaking individually to pupils later in the lesson it was clear that many more pupils knew the answer than were prepared to put up their hands. By the age of 11 the vast majority of pupils are able to communicate at a very sophisticated level and with eloquence. They are able to engage adults with some confidence and are prepared to offer opinions based on their reading or on their general knowledge. Their range of vocabulary is good and this is used to good effect in their written work.
- 67 Reading is one of the school's strengths. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The staff successfully teach the basic skills and help pupils to become proficient readers from early on. The work starts in Class 1 with young children being introduced to a good range of texts and helped to enjoy reading for pleasure. By the time they start Year 1 the vast majority are already enjoying books and know that the text carries meaning. They can talk an adult through a book and use pictures and some key words to help them to do so. In Year 1 and 2 they learn to recognise a number of key words and to use appropriate skills to help them read unknown words. At the end of Year 2 many are reading at levels that are at least two years in advance of their chronological age. They are reading fluently, with expression and have already developed reading preferences.

- 68 Older pupils (Years 3 to 6) continue to enjoy reading but increasingly use books for the purpose of research. They are able to explain why they have chosen the books they read and most have already decided on likes and dislikes and many choose books because of the author's style. By the time they are in Year 6 few pupils have reading problems and most are able to talk at some length about the books they are reading now and of books they have read in the past. They have their favourites and many relate to characters from the books they read. Discussions with pupils reveal that some are beginning to draw upon their reading to form opinions. These opinions sometimes do not match their own parents' or other adults' views but they are none-the-less able to sustain a point of view even when challenged. Many pupils read at levels that are least two years in advance of their own age by the time they leave the school.
- 69 Pupils aged 5 to 7 make satisfactory progress in their writing but more able writers are not sustaining this as they move through Years 3 to 6. By the time they are 7, the more able pupils are using impressive descriptive phrases, such as, 'One bitterly, cold evening..' They are able to write a story and keep a good sequence, using well-chosen vocabulary. Their punctuation is not as good with occasional slips in the use of capital letters and full stops. They make good links between their reading and writing with pupils using their reading to help develop ideas for their own stories. The standards of handwriting is good as is their spelling where they make good attempts at spelling unknown words.
- 70 Year 4 pupils use a good vocabulary. They write in a clear and concise way using a wide range of adjectives. The most able are able to hold the reader's interest with creative and imaginative ideas being used to bring their writing to life. Punctuation is generally of a good standard with good attempts made to use speech marks correctly. However, by the time they are in Year 6 pupils don't seem to have built on this position. They are able to write stories from different viewpoints as are seen in the examples of pupils being reporters. Their sentence structure is good although some 'sloppy' punctuation takes away from the overall standard of writing. Stories are easy to read because they have a clear and well-organised structure. Adjectives tend to be sprinkled liberally through their writing, however, there are few examples of similes or metaphors being used. Overall, pupils do not make the progress expected considering where they were in Years 2 and 4. This is because there is a lack of information available to help them understand what they need to do to improve their work and they are involved in completing too many comprehension exercises. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and usually work at challenging levels when working in small groups with a classroom support assistant. When away from this support they are not provided for as effectively.
- 71 Although the teaching seen during the inspection was satisfactory the evidence from the scrutiny of work shows that the planning is not taking pupils' learning forward at the rate that it should. This combined with the marking, which is not giving enough information about what pupils need to do next, is resulting in more able pupils not making enough progress. The teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy but they are not ensuring that the skills pupils learn during the literacy lessons are being used in other subjects. The planning is drawn from the literacy strategy but short-term planning is not clear enough about what pupils are to do, learn and understand. This together with a limited use of assessment information adds to the hindrance of the progress made by some pupils.
- 72 Teachers are confident in helping pupils to read. They use a range of strategies to help pupils overcome difficulties according to their needs. They help to evoke a love for books which

means that most pupils talk about their favourite authors and of their favourite book types with enthusiasm. They also provide opportunities for pupils to talk and listen, which helps them to become mature at debating.

- 73 The pupils are not provided with targets to help them improve their written work. They are also not provided with enough information, through the marking, to improve. This is hindering their achievement, as they do not have sufficient knowledge of their own learning. Discussions with pupils revealed that they could not think of how they could improve their written work although relatively few are attaining the higher levels at the age of 11.
- 74 The management of the subject is unsatisfactory. The teachers are not provided with enough guidance on what needs to be done to improve standards or to improve their own teaching. The limited use of the tracking process to help focus on the progress of individuals is also limiting the teachers' knowledge of what needs to be done to help maximise pupils' progress. The improvement plan does not give sufficient attention to improving the writing of more able pupils.
- 75 There are adequate resources available and a good range of books for all age groups. The library is beginning to offer pupils the opportunity to carry out better research. At present information and communication technology is not having enough of an impact on the subject. However, the recently created computer suite offers more opportunities for pupils to use information technology more widely within the subject.

## **MATHEMATICS**

- 76 The results of the National Curriculum tests in 2001 for pupils aged 11 were well below the national average and very low compared to similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels was very low, in comparison to the national average. Results have been well below the national average for the past three years. Teacher assessment of pupil performance was considerably out of line with their test results in 2001. The attainment of boys in mathematics has been significantly lower than that for girls for the past three years. The attainment of the majority of pupils currently in Year 6 is below that expected nationally. Their achievement is unsatisfactory, given that their attainment was above the national average when they were 7. One of the most concerning areas is the underachievement of older, more able pupils. In contrast, the test results in 2001 for pupils aged 7 were well above both the national average and above average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the higher levels in 2001 was well above both the national average and the average for similar schools. The trend in the school's average National Curriculum points score for mathematics since 1998 has been one of improvement and is better than that seen nationally. Boys are performing better than girls in this age group. The majority of pupils currently in Year 2 are performing at the expected level for their age.
- 77 The quality of teaching for pupils aged 5 to 7 is good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. The clear explanations, given as the teachers are working through examples with the whole class, enable the pupils to build successfully on their challenging experiences in the reception class and become increasingly confident in using numbers. This was exemplified in a lesson for pupils in Year 1, delivered by the co-ordinator, in which good questioning and high expectation of pupils' performance made sure that they made effective progress in learning how to say and use number names, in order, in familiar contexts. Pupils are effectively taught how to use a range of resources, such as number lines and cubes, so that they are able to use

these resources confidently to support their learning. By the time they are 7, the pupils work confidently with numbers up to 100 and can work with two digit numbers using the operations of addition and subtraction. They quickly and accurately recognise pattern in number, for example, counting on in fives, and have a good knowledge of a range of simple mental strategies for working out their answers. Teachers work effectively with classroom assistants and their support has a positive impact on pupils' progress.

- 78 The quality of teaching for pupils aged 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory, and results in their failing to build successfully on their earlier work and, consequently, they are not able to achieve the standards of which they are capable. The teachers' lack of understanding as to how to effectively use the National Numeracy Strategy is having a negative impact on pupils' learning. Teachers lack sufficient subject knowledge and, as a result, are unable to effectively answer pupil questions or resolve mathematical misconceptions. This results in a slow pace to lessons, as was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 4, when the teacher became confused when showing pupils how to counting back in 3's, resulting in a pause in the lesson as she checked her lesson plan. The challenge for the more able pupils is poor, as was seen in a lesson for pupils in Year 6, on estimating the weight of a variety of objects. The activities were more suitable for 7-year-olds. By the end of Year 6, pupils know their multiplication tables and understand factors, multiples and negative numbers in addition to experience of an appropriate range of written methods for addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. However, they are very limited in their ability to apply their mathematical skills in real life situations or in other subjects. The more able pupils become frustrated with the lack of challenge and are demotivated by the time they reach Year 6, for example, 'I've finished my work, and so I'll just sit and wait for lunch'. The use of information and communication technology to enhance mathematical work is very underdeveloped throughout the school.
- 79 Pupils with special educational needs receive good help from the classroom support assistants, which enables them to make good progress. This progress is not maintained when they are working independently, due to the limited range of activities and a reliance on poor quality worksheets.
- 80 The curriculum lacks an appropriate balance, as there as there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their problem solving skills. Leadership is unsatisfactory, as the coordinator does not have sufficient opportunity to monitor the quality of teaching and learning through the school. The procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and the progress that they make are unsatisfactory, and cannot be used effectively to let pupils know what they need to do next to improve. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection, which is shown by the unacceptable attainment of pupils by the time that they are 11.

## SCIENCE

- 81 Only one lesson was seen for pupils aged 5 to 7 and this was with a small number of Year 1 pupils. It is not possible, therefore, to give an overall judgement on teaching for these pupils. However from a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation the attainment of pupils aged 5 to 7 is in line with that expected nationally and pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. The attainment of pupils aged 7 to 11 is below that expected nationally and their progress is unsatisfactory. This is because too few are attaining the higher levels..

- 82 By the age of 7 pupils have a sound scientific knowledge and are developing satisfactory skills for carrying out fair tests, for example, when investigating distances at which different sounds can be heard. Pupils grow plants from seeds, investigate parts of a plant and identify common trees by their leaf shapes. They record their work in a range of appropriate ways, for example, using charts and labelled diagrams. In the lesson seen the teaching was good. The teacher built on the pupils' own knowledge and prior learning, for example, hibernation as they sorted pictures of different animals. By careful questioning she extended the pupils' thinking as they named animals living in different environments around the school and in the village. Pupils listen carefully, talk enthusiastically about their tasks and work well together.
- 83 The quality of teaching in the Year 3/4 class is unsatisfactory. Although in the lesson observed teaching was satisfactory, a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that pupils' attainment is below that expected nationally for their age, particularly for the older more able pupils. This is because follow up work relies too heavily on photocopied worksheets, mainly at an inappropriate level for pupils within the class. They are unchallenging and sometimes repeat work done in a previous class. In some cases, Year 4 pupils complete worksheets which have Year 3 written on them. In the lesson seen pupils used garden plants and bulbs to study the roots and predict the function of the root system. A simple experiment using absorbent material was set up to verify this. The teacher encouraged the pupils to use the correct terminology, for example, 'absorb', 'evaporate', 'nutrients', 'anchor'. They were eager to share their ideas and enjoyed the practical activity. However good opportunities for pupils to record their findings from first hand experience were lost as they completed a printed worksheet which lacked challenge especially for the higher attainers.
- 84 The teaching for pupils in the Year 5/6 class is unsatisfactory. This results in some serious underachievement by Year 6 pupils who are not given sufficient appropriate opportunities to develop their practical investigative skills. The work does not match pupils' prior knowledge and this results in a lack of challenge, especially for the high attainers. This was seen as pupils worked in groups to investigate how the length, thickness and tension of a band changes sounds made. Many pupils were bored by the low level of challenge and the teacher's confusing explanations on 'taking readings' which led to some inappropriate behaviour.
- 85 Although the school development plan goes some way in recognising issues for development in this subject. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The school lacks an effective system of assessment to enable it to monitor the attainment and progress made by individual pupils. Consequently there is not enough information available to set targets to improve pupils' performance. The curriculum is unsatisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils aged 7 to 11 to be involved in effectively structured investigative activities. Planning is not checked effectively enough to ensure appropriate coverage of work matched to pupils' abilities. An over dependence on the use of worksheets, many inappropriate and unchallenging and copied text results in pupils having insufficient opportunities to devise their own ways of recording their work. Resources are satisfactory and school grounds used appropriately.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

- 86 Two lessons were seen during the inspection. One in Years 3 and 4 was a good one, with pupils focusing on designing and making a bed. The other was a satisfactory lesson in Years 5 and 6. However the evidence, as seen in the portfolio of work completed during the year, was disappointing and showed that the pupils' range of art work is too narrow. It also indicated that standards are unsatisfactory at the age of 7 and 11.

- 87 In Years 1 and 2 much of the work is of an unsatisfactory standard. However, there are pockets of better work seen. The examples of pupils' weaving, for instance, show that pupils have taken care over their work and have been encouraged to think about texture and colour as their work develops. However, in much of the other work there is a distinct lack of quality control with pupils being allowed to get away with sub-standard work, which sometimes involves colouring in with felt tipped pens. Some of the best work is in pencil when pupils have been working from first-hand experience. In the examples of self-portraits pupils show that they can draw in proportion and use tone to good effect.
- 88 Older pupils' work shows that they have improved their painting skills very little from the end of Year 2. The pupils are not able to show sufficient control to help use shade and texture appropriately to create landscapes or creative work. Again, the pencil drawing is the strongest feature of the work. In the lessons seen pupils clearly enjoy working in three-dimension. The creative ideas that have been put into the designing and making of the beds for famous characters are very impressive.
- 89 The lessons seen show that teachers have given careful consideration to what they want pupils to produce and that they have ensured that pupils are able to bring enough individual flair to their own work. The end products are likely to be of good quality although these have not been completed as yet.
- 90 There is only limited amount of time dedicated to art in the curriculum as a whole. There is not enough emphasis given to helping pupils develop their cultural awareness. The management of the subject is unsatisfactory with little time devoted to checking on the quality of work being produced and in helping teachers to develop their professional understanding. It is quite understandable that limited time has been given to the subject when everything else has taken priority and within a small context the limited attention given to the management of the subject is also reasonable. However, there needs to be more attention given to the quality of work produced.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

- 91 There is insufficient information available to allow a secure judgement to be made about standards and provision within this subject.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

- 92 Attainment for pupils aged 5 to 7 is in line with that expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. By the age of 11 attainment is below that expected nationally and pupils' progress is unsatisfactory. This is a decline in standards since the previous inspection when some Year 6 pupils were exceeding the national expectations.
- 93 Pupils aged 5 to 7 successfully learn about their immediate environment through the practical observation of it and by the age of 7 are familiar with features within their own locality. They are introduced to the concept of maps and how to plot features on them as they study the village. They recognise various features of their own homes, for example, 'semi-detached', 'terraced', and have an awareness of what a plan looks like recognising objects from a 'bird's

eye view'. Pupils are developing their knowledge of life in Africa as they compare everyday life there with their own, through a study of posters, artefacts and information books. Teaching in the Year 1/2 class is satisfactory. The teacher's thorough planning, clear explanations and good use of resources ensure that pupils extend their geographical knowledge as they successfully identify 'physical' and 'man made' features on an island. They listen attentively and are eager to answer questions but some become restless as the pace slows. They work well in pairs, discuss their ideas, share resources sensibly and behave well.

- 94 Teaching for pupils in the Year 3/4 class is unsatisfactory. Although in the lesson seen teaching was good, a scrutiny of pupils' work shows that standards in attainment for the older more able pupils in the class are unsatisfactory. There are insufficient opportunities for these pupils to extend their own literacy and research skills in follow up activities, which require only a minimal input from the pupils. In the good lesson seen pupils effectively build on their geographical skills as they prepare a presentation on the village. The teacher's good subject knowledge, clear explanations and effective use of a wide range of resources keeps the pupils well motivated and the good use of time ensure that pupils work as hard as they can. They respond well to the teacher's sense of humour and enjoy their work. Careful teacher questioning extends pupils' thinking skills as they compare and contrast advantages and disadvantages of various items in the village. They demonstrate a good local knowledge, showing a concern for the wildlife. Pupils work well together, sharing ideas, extending their note taking skills and using the computer to present their work.
- 95 Teaching in the Year 5/6 class is unsatisfactory. This is because the teacher's planning lacks detail and as pupils continue in their work on mountains, they are not clear about what they are to learn. They show a lack of enthusiasm for answering questions and are unable to draw on any previous knowledge of local features to explain the difference between the town of Northampton and the county of Northamptonshire. The pace of the lesson is too slow and questions do not sufficiently challenge pupils of this age. This results in some immature responses. Although there is a range of resources, to help pupils with their investigations into similarities and differences between various mountain ranges, their research skills are limited and this hinders their learning. Pupils do not apply themselves positively to their work and their attitude when working within a group is disappointing. This are examples of pupils using ICT to carry out research in geography.
- 96 Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. The monitoring of planning is not rigorous enough to ensure that curriculum content is suitably matched to pupils' ages and abilities. This is resulting in pupils' completing inappropriate, unchallenging worksheets or copying pieces of text rather than extending their own skills. There are no procedures in place to assess pupils' attainment and progress in order to inform future planning or set targets to improve performance. Resources are adequate and good use is made of the local environment to enhance pupils' learning.

## **HISTORY**

- 97 Due to the organisation of the school's timetable, no history lessons were seen during the inspection. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. A scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and school documentation indicates that pupils aged 5 to 7 reach the nationally expected levels for their age and make satisfactory progress. Standards for pupils in this age range have been maintained since the last inspection. However standards of attainment for pupils aged 7 to 11 have not been maintained and by the end of Year 6 pupils



are working at a level below that expected nationally. Standards have declined since the previous inspection and unsatisfactory progress has been made in this subject.

- 98 Between the ages 5 and 7 pupils are helped to develop their understanding of time by listening to stories about the past and about how famous people contributed to change, for example, Florence Nightingale. They show knowledge of significant events in British history, for example, the Great Fire of London and know it was recorded in diary form. Pupils make comparisons between old and modern day toys and record their findings in words and pictures. However, although they use adjectives appropriately to describe Florence Nightingale and spelling and punctuation are used accurately, too few opportunities are given for pupils to write independently at some length with an over dependence on drawing and colouring activities.
- 99 Pupils in the Year 3/4 class make satisfactory progress as they learn about life in Ancient Greece. They show a knowledge and understanding of main events, people and changes that occurred and make comparisons between school life then and now. They write independently to record Greek myths, for example, Theseus and the Minotaur paying attention to accurate spelling and punctuation. Pupils make clay masks to depict Greek theatre but there are few opportunities for pupils to use their drawing skills as they colour in pre-drawn pictures.
- 100 Progress for pupils in the Year 5/6 class is unsatisfactory. Through the study of the Aztec civilisation pupils develop their knowledge of settlements, religious beliefs and everyday life and compare them with life today. However pupils are given too few opportunities to write independently at length or draw freely. There is limited evidence of pupils using factual resources and they do not have sufficient research skills to select and combine information from different sources. Standards in presentation are not good enough and there is too much reliance on colouring on pre-printed sheets, for example, of Aztec gods.
- 101 In all topics studied time lines are used to support pupils' sense of chronology and enhance their numeracy skills and maps are used to identify areas being studied. However many opportunities are lost in follow up activities to extend pupils' literacy skills. Insufficient use is made of information and communication technology and other sources to develop pupils' research skills. Marking is not used effectively to improve presentation or inform pupils of how well they are achieving.
- 102 Leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. Although the nationally produced scheme of work is being used to plan a suitable range of activities for pupils on a 2-year cycle, there is no monitoring of teaching or pupils' work to ensure it is being implemented satisfactorily. There are no procedures in place for assessing pupils' attainment or recording their progress. Consequently there is insufficient information to inform future planning or set targets to improve pupils' performance. Resources are adequate.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

- 103 There was limited opportunity to see direct teaching but all other evidence indicates that, by the age of 11, the attainment of most pupils is below average, which shows the school has made unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher has raised the profile of information communication technology (ICT) and the school now has a computer suite that can be used for whole class teaching of computer skills. However, the suite is not being used effectively and for much of the week the computers are not in use. This means that pupils are not being given enough time on computers to successfully develop their skills and

expertise in the subject. There is limited teacher demonstration to explain new skills or the effective use of questioning to reinforce revision. When pupils are given direct teaching, as was seen in a lesson in Year 1 on learning how to use a tape recorder, they make good progress. In this lesson, the pupils' showed positive attitudes to learning and collaborated well. They treated equipment carefully, showed a lot of interest and were well behaved.

- 104 There is little opportunity for pupils to learn how to use ICT to explore and solve problems in a range of subjects. They are limited in their ability to use ICT to organise and present their ideas, or to share and exchange information in a variety of ways. By the time that they are 11, most pupils can use computers for word processing and some information gathering, but lack appropriate expertise in other aspects of the subject. As a result, they are not able to effectively use computers as a means of enhancing the organisation and presentation of their ideas in English, mathematics, science, history, geography or art.
- 105 The curriculum offered to pupils is unsatisfactory, with important aspects of the subject, such as handling data, not being covered in enough depth. Leadership is satisfactory, with the headteacher having worked hard to improve resource provision since the last inspection. Assessment and record keeping procedures are not effective in tracking pupils' progress, or in letting pupils know what they need to do next to improve. There is adequate resource provision, both in terms of computers and associated software. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social development, as they are able to work cooperatively in pairs on computers.

## MUSIC

- 106 There was opportunity to see only limited aspects of the subject and, consequently, there is insufficient evidence on which to make a secure judgement on the overall standards that pupils attain by the time that they are 11. However, it is evident that pupils reach good standards in singing and in playing the recorder, and are confident when performing in front of an audience.
- 107 There is good quality specialist teaching throughout the school, provided by the former deputy headteacher who has good subject knowledge and expertise. She has high expectations of the pupils' performance and is able to give them stimulating and challenging work. This was evident in a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, when they were learning about which instruments made long or short sounds. They showed that they could recognise and name a variety of instruments and play them with confidence. In a lesson for Year 6 pupils, the teacher's expertise enabled them to make good progress in their ability to sing a round in two parts, when performing 'Frere Jacques'. During this lesson, the pupils showed that they could focus on control and diction when performing a song and use their voices expressively. They also showed good skills when playing recorders as an accompaniment to songs. In both lessons, the pupils showed that they could listen carefully and use a well-developed musical vocabulary to talk about the work they were doing.
- 108 In school assemblies, the pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment, and the music plays an important role in their spiritual development. Pupils are given opportunity to take part in a range of musical performances, such as at Christmas and end of term concerts. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' cultural development, as they are able to listen to and appreciate music from other countries. The leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory, as the co-ordinator does not have sufficient time to support colleagues to enable them to improve their own subject knowledge and expertise. Assessment and recording

keeping procedures are not effective in tracking pupils' progress, or in letting teachers know the standards that pupils are achieving. There has been an improvement in the planning arrangements since the last inspection and there is now a scheme of work that ensures continuity and progression in pupils' learning. There are sufficient resources to enable coverage of the requirements of the National Curriculum.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

- 109 As only two lessons were seen, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the standards achieved or the quality of teaching.
- 110 In a Year 1 gymnastics lesson pupils made good progress in learning how to use their hands and feet to travel in different directions, as a result of the teacher's effective explanation and use of pupil demonstration. She intervened well during the apparatus work, to show pupils how to improve the movements that they were making. The pupils showed an appropriate ability to move around the hall at different levels and with varying speed, and also had a satisfactory awareness of space and of other pupils. There was good support by the classroom assistant for a pupil who has a physical impairment, which enabled her to take full part in the lesson. In another good quality lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, taken by the head teacher, they made good progress in their ability to respond to music, by creating a sequence of movements on the theme of the Chinese tale of 'Pan Gu'. This owed much to the teacher's ability to effectively demonstrate the techniques that pupils could use in their dance movements. In both lessons, the attitudes of most pupils were positive, being well behaved and enthusiastic in their activities.
- 111 The curriculum is appropriate but leadership of the subject is unsatisfactory, as the coordinator does not have sufficient opportunity to check the quality of teaching and learning through the school. The procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and the progress that they make are unsatisfactory, and cannot be used effectively to let pupils know what they need to do next to improve. There are swimming lessons provided for pupils in the juniors and usually, by the time that they leave school, all of them can swim a minimum of 25 metres. Resources are satisfactory but the lack of space in the hall for pupils to be involved in physical education activities restricts this part of the curriculum. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' social development, as they are able to work co-operatively in pairs and in small groups. Pupils have access to a satisfactory range of extra curricular activities, including netball, rugby, football and cricket. Representatives from the Gretton's cricket club, Corby rugby club and Rushden and Diamonds football club coming into school to teach skills in these sports also enhance the provision.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- 112 As only one lesson was seen during the inspection it is not possible to make a judgement on the quality of teaching. However from a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and school documentation most pupils at the age of 7 and 11 are attaining the standards expected for their age in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and nationally agreed guidelines and are making satisfactory progress. Standards from the previous inspection have been maintained and all statutory requirements are met.

- 113 By the age of 7 pupils have a sound understanding of celebrations, for example, birthdays, Advent, Hannukah and Chinese New Year. They know about different places of worship and some of the symbols within them. Pupils are encouraged to express their own feelings and apply that knowledge to their own lives. For example, in the Year 1/2 class pupils express their feelings associated with special places and of being scared and write appropriate prayers about these. At age 11 pupils know about a range of other religions and beliefs as well as Christianity. They show a sound knowledge and understanding of celebrations in other religions, for example, Diwali, Eid and Chinese New Year.
- 114 In the Year 3/4 class lesson seen teaching was good. The teacher shows a good knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject. His good use of voice and humour really engage the pupils who, through careful questioning and personal experience, are able to reason the differences between signs and symbols. Pupils are given time to reflect on ways in which God should be represented, for example, an open hand with fragile butterfly to show gentleness. The teacher shows a good knowledge of individual pupils' needs as he circulates round the class offering support, praise and encouragement as appropriate. Pupils respond well to this and the lesson moves at a good pace.
- 115 Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. They are encouraged to reflect on the wonder of God's world as their attention is drawn to words in the hymn, for example, 'Who put the tree inside the acorn?'. The stories in the assemblies seen demonstrate a caring, Christian approach to life and the teachers act as good role models throughout the school.
- 116 Appropriate links are made to history through a study of the beliefs of Ancient Greece and the Aztecs. Information and communication technology is used by pupils to access the Internet to research the meaning of Christian symbols, for example, 'crown', 'tablets', 'cross'. However there are insufficient opportunities for pupils aged 7 to 11 to write independently or use reference materials to research information for themselves. Opportunities to enhance pupils' artistic abilities are missed because of an over reliance on prepared work sheets with drawings.
- 117 Leadership and management of this subject are unsatisfactory. Although the subject is taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus alongside the nationally agreed guidelines, the school development plan identifies further work to be done in this area. However there are no procedures in place to monitor and assess pupils' attainment and progress to inform future planning; and marking lacks comments to help pupils improve their work. Resources have been improved since the last inspection. Visits from the local vicar and to the local Church enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.