

INSPECTION REPORT

BOOTHVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121931

Headteacher: Miss S Roan (Acting)

Lead inspector: Mr G.R. Logan

Dates of inspection: 22 – 25 November 2004

Inspection number: 266455

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Community
Age range of pupils: 3 – 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 612

School address: Booth Lane North
Northampton
Northamptonshire

Postcode: NN3 6JG

Telephone number: 01604 491545
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mr A Wood

Date of previous inspection: 19/04/1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Boothville Primary School is located in a residential suburb of Northampton, but serves a socially diverse community. Although most housing locally is privately-owned, pupils come from a much wider area, with a significant proportion who live in social housing. Together with the other schools in the town, Boothville is undergoing reorganization from a three-form entry lower school (age three to nine) to a two-form entry full primary. The first group of Year 6 pupils was established in September 2004. This is a much larger primary school than most. There are 532 pupils in the main school and 80 children in the nursery who attend part-time. Almost nine-tenths of pupils in the main school are from White European backgrounds, with a small number of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds including those with an Asian heritage, Black-British heritage and mixed-race or other family background. No pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. A below-average proportion of pupils (12 per cent) have special educational needs, mainly for moderate learning difficulties. Five of these have statements of special educational need. The school experiences a low level of pupil mobility, with around five per cent of pupils leaving or joining the school at other than the expected points. The proportion of pupils receiving free school meals, 17 per cent at present, is similar to the national average (18 per cent). When they enter the nursery, most children have social and language skills that are around the average. The school gained an Artsmark Gold Award in 2004. The headteacher is on secondment to the local education authority for the current academic year.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11810	Mr G Logan	Lead inspector	Mathematics Physical education
9163	Mr G Humphrey	Lay inspector	
28320	Mr R Willey	Team inspector	Science Geography History English as an additional language
30439	Mr M Heyes	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology Religious education Special educational needs
22113	Mrs A King	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology Music Areas of learning in the Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an increasingly effective school. It has a very supportive, caring ethos and successfully includes all pupils. At present it provides a satisfactory education. Foundation Stage provision is good. While standards remain satisfactory at Year 2, older pupils now benefit from effective teaching and achievement is improving. **The school provides satisfactory value for money.**

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The acting headteacher provides good leadership and has a clear focus on raising standards.
- Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good.
- Pupils have very good attitudes and behave very well. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The quality of teaching is a strength in the Foundation Stage and in Years 3 to 6.
- The school's support for the creative and performing arts and for sport is a significant strength.
- Attendance is poor. This adversely affects pupils' learning.
- The pace of learning is not brisk enough in Years 1 and 2. Standards could be raised further.
- Assessment systems, though broadly satisfactory, need further development.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently, particularly in science. Worksheets continue to be overused and inhibit pupils' achievement.
- The role of subject leaders remains underdeveloped.
- The school is under-resourced for teaching information and communication technology (ICT); ICT could be used more extensively to support learning across the curriculum.

The majority of the issues identified in 1999, including the quality of provision in Reception, subject documentation, job descriptions, school development planning, teacher appraisal, health and safety issues and the length of the school day, have been tackled successfully. Some aspects, however, such as assessment, the use of worksheets, the match of work to pupils' needs and opportunities for subject leaders to monitor work in their subjects have only been a focus for attention more recently and there is still further work to do. Standards by the end of Year 2 remain average and broadly similar to those at the last inspection, with little movement in higher level attainment. However, the high quality of several effective new staff is having a significant impact on the overall quality of teaching and on the standards attained by the older pupils. In addition, the school has very successfully managed the transition arrangements to full primary status. Overall, progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	C	C	C	D

writing	B	B	C	C
mathematics	C	C	C	C

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those with similar percentages of pupils eligible for free school meals*

Most children enter nursery with broadly average social and language skills. Provision in the Foundation Stage is a significant strength and almost all children in Reception are likely to reach the goals set for the end of the Reception year, with some exceeding the expected level. Standards in Year 2 have, over time, been stable, though better in most years in writing than in reading or mathematics. Overall, standards are similar at present to those reported in 1999. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher level was below average in 2004. Standards in Year 2 currently are average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is only satisfactory because the teaching provides insufficient pace and challenge to raise standards further. While standards in English, mathematics and science in Year 6 are also average, pupils' achievement is improving rapidly as a result of the high expectations of staff and the rigour and impact of skilled subject focused teaching. Pupils' literacy skills are used satisfactorily in literacy tasks, but remain under-developed across the curriculum because of the continued overuse of worksheets. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are average overall, although the use of ICT in other subjects is patchy. Standards in most other subjects are similar to those normally found but are above average in art and design in Year 2 and well above average in Year 6. Standards in music and physical education are above average in Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the additional support they receive.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very good. These factors contribute significantly to their learning. **Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Relationships and behaviour are very good. Punctuality is satisfactory, but attendance is poor, principally because of the very high level of holiday absence during term-time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning are good. However, teaching is strongest for pupils in Years 3 to 6, leading to improved progress. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils. Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall although there is a need for further development. Pupils are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their work. They have a mature approach and work well, although independent learning is constrained at times when teachers are over-directive. Planning to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs is good. Learning support staff are effective. The curriculum is satisfactory in the main school. Pupils have access to a good extra-curricular programme. They receive very good care and support. Good induction procedures help new children to settle quickly. Child protection procedures are good. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The school has a good partnership with parents. There are good links with the community and satisfactory links with other schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. However, the acting headteacher is providing good leadership and, together with her senior management team, is very focused on raising standards. She has a clear view of the changes necessary. Some subject leaders are effective; few, however, have had the opportunity to monitor teaching or standards. In some respects, the school evaluates its work satisfactorily, but there has, in the past, been too little priority given to raising standards. Governors are very supportive of the school, but need a clearer view of its performance and a greater readiness to hold staff to account. The strategic leadership framework of the school needs to be improved. Financial management is satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met fully. School administration is efficient.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents are happy with the school. They are pleased with the standards achieved and feel that the school is well led. The level of parental involvement is good. Pupils enjoy school. They work hard, enjoy their friends and participate eagerly in the opportunities provided. They relate well to their teachers and appreciate the support they receive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Take steps, as a matter of urgency, to improve pupils' poor attendance.
- Standards in Years 1 and 2 are not as high as they might be; the school still needs to build on the good start children have in the Foundation Stage.
- The level of challenge for potential higher attaining pupils, particularly in science, is inconsistent. The overuse of worksheets continues to inhibit pupils' achievement, particularly those of higher attainment.
- Further development of assessment procedures is needed.
- Develop further the resources for ICT and its use in subjects across the curriculum. Improve the leadership of ICT.
- The role of curriculum subject leaders remains underdeveloped.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievement **is satisfactory** overall. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' achievement is improving in Years 3 to 6 as a result of more rigorous teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Foundation Stage provision is good. Children achieve well.
- Standards are above average in the creative, expressive arts and sport.
- Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because of the focused support they receive.
- The pace of learning is not brisk enough in Years 1 and 2. Standards, currently average, could be raised further.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not challenged sufficiently, particularly in science. Worksheets continue to be overused and inhibit pupils' achievement.

Commentary

1. Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is around the average for their age. As a result of the good quality experience in the nursery and reception classes, the great majority of children achieve standards that match those expected for their age. Overall, children have a good start in the Foundation Stage and enter the main school well-prepared.
2. Until 2003, Boothville was a first school, catering for pupils up to the end of Year 4. The current Year 6 is the first cohort to have moved through the school. For this reason, there is no performance data reflecting pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6. In the national tests in 2004, standards in Year 2 were average in reading, writing and mathematics in relation to all schools nationally. Standards were below average in reading and average in writing and mathematics in relation to similar schools. In most of the last five years, writing has been the strongest of the three elements, with standards being above average in all years but 2004. The proportion of pupils achieving the challenging Level 3 was average overall in 2003, but below average overall in 2004.
3. On the evidence available, standards in the 2004 tests were broadly identical to those reported in the 1999 inspection. At that time, pupils were seen to be making satisfactory, if unremarkable, progress in Years 1 and 2. Little has changed in the intervening period. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is only satisfactory because the teaching provides insufficient pace and challenge to raise standards further. The teaching in Year 1, in particular, is not building upon pupils' good start in the Foundation Stage as effectively as it might and some of the impetus in pupils' learning is lost. In addition, the excessive use of worksheets is a constraint upon

progress and inhibits the development of independence and the extension of the potential higher attaining pupils. As a result, while almost all pupils achieve the expected level, not enough achieve at the higher level. To an extent, the school has recognized this issue by implementing setting by attainment in the teaching of mathematics in the current Year 2 and also providing an enrichment group for Year 1 pupils. However, this has not tackled the root cause which lies in the teaching.

4. The picture in Years 3 to 6 is different. Here, the arrival of a significant number of new staff in the last two years, many of them highly experienced and with significant specialist skills, has given energy to the teaching. Expectations are high and the teaching has considerable pace. Although achievement remains broadly satisfactory, there is every indication that this is improving rapidly and is likely to show through in significantly improved standards. The use of specialist teaching and grouping of pupils by prior attainment in literacy and numeracy is contributing significantly to the improving standards. There was no evidence during the inspection of any significant difference between the performance of girls and boys.
5. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly in Years 3 to 6. They make good progress and achieve well in relation to targets set for them. Pupils work hard to achieve their personal development targets. There are no pupils identified as having English as an additional language. The very few pupils from minority ethnic groups achieve similarly to the others.
6. The school has begun formally to identify pupils considered to be gifted or talented, but has yet to identify a member of staff to oversee their needs. Given the breadth of opportunities which the school provides, covering a wide range of creative and sporting activities, the school is well-placed to support such pupils.

Foundation Stage

7. Foundation Stage provision is good. Children benefit from good induction procedures and settle well into school routines. They have a good start in the nursery. Good teaching, very good planning and good assessment procedures ensure that children make good progress and achieve well. Almost all children in the current reception class are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all areas. Provision in all areas of learning is good. By the end of reception, children are well-prepared for the work of the main school.

Years 1 and 2

8. Current standards in Year 2 are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Underlying literacy skills are satisfactory but, while used effectively in literacy lessons, are not fully developed in other subjects because of the over-use of copied worksheets – an area for criticism at the last inspection also. Pupils have satisfactory skills in ICT by the end of Year 2, but too few opportunities to use these in other subjects. Standards are similar to those normally found in other subjects, other than art and design where standards are above average.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.6 (16.2)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	14.7 (15.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.6 (16.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 81 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

Years 3 to 6

9. Currently, standards in Year 6 are average in English, mathematics and science. Achievement for these pupils has been satisfactory. The current Year 5 has a higher proportion of pupils of higher attainment and is particularly well-placed to benefit from the strong teaching at the top of the school. The likelihood is that these pupils will achieve particularly well in their remaining time in the school. Standards in Year 6 are similar to those normally found in most of the other subjects, but are above average in physical education and music and well above average in art and design. The support for the creative and performing arts and the staff expertise which underpins this are significant strengths of the provision. Skills in ICT are similar to those normally found. Pupils need more access to computers if ICT is to make a greater contribution to learning across the curriculum. The school is likely to achieve its targets in 2005.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils, attitudes, values and other personal qualities are **very good**. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Attendance is **poor**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good relationships and a strong school ethos ensure that pupils have very good attitudes to school, their work and each other.
- Teachers set high expectations and pupils respond very positively.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility and contribute to the work of the school.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.
- Attendance is poor because authorised absence is far too high.

Commentary

10. Pupils' attitudes towards school are very good. They enjoy school and find the work challenging and interesting and demonstrate a good work ethic. The positive findings at the previous inspection have been successfully maintained and in many respects further strengthened during the transformation from a lower school to a full primary. Attendance, however, is poor and authorised absence far too high because the school is too tolerant towards those parents who condone their children's absence.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	8.9
National data	5.1

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

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

11. Behaviour is very good and the implementation of the school's behaviour policy is consistent and successful. There have been two temporary exclusions in the past year. Pupils demonstrate care and consideration towards each other and are courteous and polite towards adults. Pupils say the school is friendly and welcoming and that they like their teachers and trust them. They say that teachers and other members of staff are good at dealing with any poor behaviour such as bullying, or where someone demonstrates a lack of consideration for others, and such issues are dealt with in a just and fair way.

Exclusions

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	357	2	0
White – Irish	2	0	0
White – any other White background	5	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	10	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	3	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	10	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	6	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	2	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	2	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	9	0	0
Black or Black British – African	6	0	0

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

12. Pupils are encouraged to take on many responsibilities around the school. School councillors take their responsibilities seriously and have an influence on the life and work of the school. Older pupils develop their leadership skills by helping with the organisation of sporting and other extra curricular activities. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The spiritual ethos of the school is well established. Pupils are given many opportunities to explore their own values, feelings and emotions through literacy, religious education, art, music and the performing arts. Personal values are strongly promoted through the personal, social and health education programme.

13. The school provides a very clear moral code with a strong commitment towards the principles of equality, inclusion and diversity. There is a strong sense of community within the school and this is demonstrated by the way pupils support each other both at work and at play. There are good opportunities for pupils to explore and experience their own and other cultures. For example, pupils' work and classroom displays clearly demonstrate their enthusiasm and interest in ancient Egypt and the traditional lifestyles in India. Although there are relatively few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds, the general awareness of the multicultural nature of many communities in Britain is well developed. Pupils are learning to act according to their own principles and to challenge such issues as injustice and discrimination.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. The curriculum is **satisfactory**, with good extra-curricular provision. Pupils are cared for very well. The partnership with parents is good.

Teaching and learning

Teaching is **good** overall. In most lessons, particularly in Years 3 to 6, pupils are challenged and learn well. Assessment procedures are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall, although there are variations in quality across the school. Using staff to teach their specialist subjects is having a very positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- The excessive use of worksheets inhibits pupils' progress, particularly in the development of their literacy skills.
- Teaching assistants support pupils with special educational needs well.
- Pupils are increasingly encouraged to evaluate their own work and act as independent learners.
- Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, but there is further work to be done, particularly in the foundation subjects.

Commentary

14. At the 1999 inspection, teaching was satisfactory overall, with significant strengths in the nursery. One-sixth of the teaching was very good and four per cent was unsatisfactory. Although the school has undergone significant expansion in the last two years and the number of staff has increased significantly, the quality of teaching at present represents a marked improvement on that reported in 1999.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection In 74 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0 (0%)	22 (30%)	40 (54%)	12 (16%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

15. In the Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are good and children achieve well as a result of the challenging teaching. Staff have a very good understanding of the areas of learning and work well in partnership with parents to support children's learning. Planning is very good, taking good account of individual needs. The high ratio of adults to children is a particular strength. There is a good balance between child-initiated learning and activities planned by staff. Assessment systems in the Foundation Stage are good.
16. Teaching is good overall across the main school, though with some variations by phase. Overall, teaching in well over four-fifths of lessons was good or better, leading to good achievement. Within that, teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory overall, although the basic skills are generally taught well. In Years 3 to 6, nine-tenths of teaching is at least good. This is a very high figure. The strength in Years 3

to 6 largely reflects the deployment of a significant group of particularly able staff, many of whom were recently appointed as the school has grown. The rigour of approach and high expectations of several of these staff is having a very positive effect on the school and they are promoting pupils' learning very effectively. Currently, the lowest proportion of good or better teaching is in Year 1, where some lessons lack pace and challenge. In Years 1 and 2 as a whole, staff are not building as effectively as they might on the competence and enthusiasm of children when they leave the Foundation Stage. The excessive use of worksheets, for example, in the lower part of the school, particularly in Year 1, constrains pupils' progress and their achievement. Where pupils are challenged more effectively, and this is the case in the great majority of lessons in Years 3 to 6, then achievement improves significantly. Pupils are well-motivated and show an increasing capacity to work independently or collaboratively. This encourages them to be more self-sufficient in their learning.

17. A key strength in the teaching of the older pupils in particular, is the introduction of highly-skilled subject teaching, where staff, including some of those new to the school who have brought with them significant subject expertise, teach a subject to pupils across the year group. It is little surprise that the proportion of good or very good teaching is highest in subjects such as art and design, music and physical education which benefit from being taught by those with subject strengths.
18. Planning is good overall and well-focused, in the core subjects, on individual needs. Clear objectives are set for learning. While pupils' literacy skills are developed effectively within literacy sessions, their use across the curriculum is less evident, largely because of the number of worksheets used. Some modest use is made of ICT to support learning across subjects and to develop the skills which pupils learn in ICT lessons, but the lack of access to computers at present is a significant constraint upon further development. Mathematical skills are used satisfactorily in other subjects.
19. Teachers' methods are chosen well to assist pupils in gaining knowledge and developing understanding. However, too often in science, activities are too teacher-directed and this affects pupils' learning. The use of homework to support pupils' achievement is good. It is set consistently and makes a good contribution to learning.
20. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and supported in lessons. This was clearly demonstrated in a Year 5 religious education lesson, when pupils were learning about the importance of prayer in the Muslim faith. The identification of pupils with special needs is effective and information on Individual Educational Plans is clearly communicated between all teaching staff, to ensure that pupils' learning is supported well. The support given by teaching assistants is effective. Good relationships within classrooms play an important role in the good progress these pupils make.
21. The school currently has no pupils on roll who are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The school makes good use of local education authority funding to support learning for pupils from ethnic minority groups and monitors their progress. The co-ordinator works very closely with the learning support assistant who has the responsibility for supporting these pupils within the classrooms. They form a good team and have actively

raised the profile of these pupils. An action plan gives priority to involving parents from ethnic minorities directly in the work of the school.

22. Though good in the Foundation Stage, assessment procedures are satisfactory at best in the main school, with further work needed. Progress is tracked in writing and numeracy every half- term. Although this was an issue at the last inspection, the school has made fairly slow progress in dealing with the matter. While reasonable progress has been made in mathematics, the picture is more patchy elsewhere, particularly in ICT and religious education. There are, however, instances of individual teachers establishing rigorous systems for their own use. Tracking systems are not yet fully computerized and this makes analysis of data unnecessarily time-consuming. There is evidence of some individual target-setting in mathematics and literacy in Years 3 to 6. The use made of information to support planning of work which is appropriately matched to pupils' needs is satisfactory overall. The school recognises that further work is needed, particularly in the non-core subjects. The quality of marking of pupils' work is variable across the school. There is some very good practice in Years 3 to 6. The school has made good progress in encouraging pupils to evaluate their own work – self-evaluation strategies were used in several lessons, including numeracy, art and design, religious education and physical education.

The curriculum

The Foundation Stage curriculum provides a good range of learning opportunities. The curriculum for Years 1 to 6 is **satisfactory** and provides pupils with wide ranging learning activities. The school is well-staffed, with effective support assistants. Accommodation and resources are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are strengths in the planning and delivery of art, music and physical education.
- Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- The range of enrichment activities is good.
- Teachers are well-qualified and effective, with appropriate skills and experience.
- Good use is made of teaching assistants across all curricular areas.

Commentary

23. The curriculum includes all expected subjects and has been regularly reviewed and updated. The issue of the length of the school day in Years 3 to 6, raised at the last inspection, has been dealt with and now meets national recommendations. There are strengths in the provision and delivery of art and design, music and physical education. This enhances pupils' learning opportunities. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. The programme is closely linked to work in circle time and religious education, and issues of pupils growing up and being aware of dangers around them. This was evident in a Year 2 lesson, when pupils were learning how to solve problems and make friends. The ethos of the school is very inclusive, with all pupils valued and supported academically and personally, within a secure and caring school environment.
24. There is a good range of enrichment activities across the school. These include gardening club, ocarinas, steel band, computer club, French club, choir, recorders, country dancing, chess and a range of sporting clubs. These activities are run by teaching staff and are well attended by pupils. The school also takes part in local tournaments, festivals and sporting fixtures with other schools locally. Pupils in Year 6 have access to an annual residential trip. There are good sporting links with Saints rugby club and with Northampton Town Football Club.
25. Visitors into school enhance the curriculum. These have included an historian and musician, storyteller, artist in residence, theatre group, the neighbourhood warden, the NSPCC and an adviser for drug abuse and sex education. Pupils have had opportunities to develop their interest in subjects such as history, geography and science by participating in visits to local places of interest. These include Abington Park Museum and Church, the Butterfly Farm, Northampton Town Historical Sites and Museum, the Space Centre and Discovery Centre at Milton Keynes.
26. The provision for special educational needs is good. Work is carefully matched to pupils' needs and is supported through targeted group withdrawal and support of groups and individuals in lessons. This was seen in a Year 3 under-achiever set English lesson, when three teaching assistants helped different pupils with special needs to identify clues with which to answer questions from a text. Links are being forged with the local secondary school to ensure that all pupils make a positive start when they transfer at the end of Year 6.
27. The school has an effective team of suitably qualified teachers whose skills and experience match the demands of the curriculum well. This includes providing pupils with specialist teaching in different subject areas, such as physical education

and music. There is also a good team of teaching assistants in the school. These members of staff have benefited from a good level of training and, in consequence they work well alongside teachers, and provide good support for pupils in lessons. The accommodation is adequate for the demands of the curriculum, and the number of pupils. The displays in classrooms and corridors create a pleasant environment for pupils to learn in. The quality of resources is satisfactory. These are effectively managed and used well in lessons.

Care, guidance and support

The pastoral care, welfare, support and guidance provided by the school are **very good**. Relationships are **very good** throughout the school. Pupils trust all staff and know that they will respond positively to their concerns and opinions.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Welfare support and pastoral care are very good.
- There is a high level of mutual trust and respect between pupils and staff.
- Arrangements for child protection, health and safety are very good.
- Considerable value is placed on pupils' views and opinions.

Commentary

28. The welfare, pastoral care and guidance provided by the school are very good. Pupils' personal and academic development is monitored and the guidance provided is matched very well to individual needs. Staff know pupils well and provide an environment in which everyone is encouraged to work hard and achieve their best. Health and safety procedures are rigorous and effective and much improved since the previous inspection when some concerns regarding health and safety procedures were reported. There is good provision for first aid. Pupils are well supervised and taught to use school equipment safely and exercise care for themselves and others.
29. There is an effective personal, social and health education programme. Pupils are taught to observe high standards of personal hygiene and the school is cleaned and maintained to a high standard. The headteacher is the child protection officer and staff are well trained and able to exercise their child protection responsibilities with vigilance and care. There are well established links with all relevant external agencies involved in meeting the needs of vulnerable families and for dealing with child protection issues. After school care is available for those families who require it.
30. The relationships and mutual trust between pupils and staff are very good. Pupils express with confidence that, when they have concerns or need to seek help or guidance, staff will listen and respond to their needs. Pupils' views and opinions are sought through the school council and appropriate action taken. There are good arrangements for welcoming and supporting pupils when they first enter the school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has achieved a **good** partnership with parents. They have positive views and value the education and pastoral care the school provides. The engagement with the local community and involvement in community activities is **good**. Links with other schools and colleges are **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good partnership between the school and parents.
- Parents have positive views about the school.
- Links with the local community are good.

Commentary

31. The school has achieved a good working partnership with parents and this has been maintained well since the previous inspection. Parents express high levels of satisfaction with the quality of education and care provided by the school. Effective two way communication between the school and parents ensures that their views are noted and acted upon and any concerns dealt with effectively. There is a regular flow of information about school activities, the curriculum and cross curriculum topics, plus occasional workshops to empower those parents who like to participate in and support their children's learning. The use of homework to support learning is now consistent and good use is made of the homework diaries to enable parents to track the work that is set and communicate with class teachers. This is a particular area of improvement since the last inspection.
32. The annual reports provide an overview of pupils' personal and academic development with an indication of progress, effort and attainment. The weakness in the current style of reporting is the absence of guidance for parents on how to help their children improve their performance. The formal consultation evenings are well attended. There is an active and supportive parent teacher association that organises regular fund raising and other social events. A number of parents volunteer to help with educational visits and some of the extra-curricular activities. The school has established good links with the wider community and draws upon these links to enhance the curriculum and contribute to assemblies and other school activities. The school premises are used by local youth groups, for rehearsals by a local opera company and for Ismaili Prayer meetings. The school choir and country dancing group perform frequently at a number of local venues.
33. There are satisfactory links with other schools and colleges. Due to the reorganisation of all local schools from lower, middle and upper schools to primary and secondary schools the established links between schools are undergoing a period of review and change. The links with other primary schools are developing well. Links with local colleges are well established. Plans are in place to support the first cohort of Year 6 pupils when they transfer to the secondary phase at the end of the current academic year but it is not possible to evaluate the quality of this process until it has been put to the test.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

School governance is **satisfactory**. The leadership of the acting headteacher and key staff is **good**. The acting headteacher's management of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The acting headteacher has a clear vision for the school's development which she has shared with colleagues and has the skills and determination to effect it.
- The acting headteacher is well supported by an acting deputy headteacher and the leader of early years (Nursery to Year 2).
- Overall, management of the school is satisfactory but subject leaders do not have the clear overviews of their subjects that would allow them to develop provision and raise standards.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good because resources to support pupils are adequate and well managed.

- The Governing Body is very supportive. However, they share rather than shape the vision for the school. The strategic leadership framework now needs to be improved to ensure that it is more rigorously focused on raising standards.

Commentary

34. The acting headteacher has been in post since September. She has a high profile around the school and is accessible to both adults and pupils. Her inclusive style of leadership has enabled all to share a vision for the school that is clear and attainable. She recognises and values the talents and range of professional expertise of her colleagues and is encouraging them to use and develop their skills in order to enrich the curriculum and raise standards. This has promoted a good ethos and climate for learning within the school. She is supported well by the acting deputy headteacher and early years' leader. Together with year group leaders they form a well-motivated team. The co-ordination of the Foundation Stage is effective.
35. The day to day running of the school is orderly and purposeful. New staff, whether newly qualified teachers or appointed from other schools, are well supported and feel valued and cared for. The criticism of the previous inspection regarding performance management has been successfully tackled. However, the school's improvement plan, although a comprehensive and lengthy document, is insufficiently focused on raising standards and unclear about the route by which many of the targets will be achieved. The newly established management team collects and disseminates information well. It is working hard to improve the quality and range of data that is available to them in order to monitor standards and identify areas for development more effectively. Their target is to computerise as much data as possible by the end of the school year. High on the acting headteacher's list of priorities is providing opportunities for subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning across their subjects in order to raise standards. She is also targeting the achievement of greater consistency in teaching and marking policies across the school.
36. The leadership and management of special educational needs is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is part-time, working one days a week in school, in a purely administrative role. She ensures that the Code of Practice is followed in school, and undertakes the role of keeping all records up to date, including pupils' Individual Educational Plans. She liaises closely with class teachers and teaching assistants.
37. Governance of the school is satisfactory. Governors have had challenging decisions to make about provision for the school as a result of the change from lower to primary school status during which they have tackled difficult issues such as the appointment of staff from closing middle schools. They have adjusted well and are meeting their statutory responsibilities. The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's strengths but is less aware of its weaknesses. The high focus on provision in recent years has resulted in little attention being given to raising standards. The changing composition of the governing body has also influenced the effectiveness of their monitoring. The newly installed chair of the curriculum committee, for example, recognises the limitations in his knowledge in this area of the school's work. Whilst totally committed to supporting the school, the governing body is not challenging it sufficiently in a way that would raise standards.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,277,962
Total expenditure	1,300,198
Expenditure per pupil	2,125

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	120,490
Balance carried forward to the next	98,254

38. School finances are managed well. The headteacher, bursar, chair of governors, chair of finance and the governors on the finance committee are all closely involved in financial planning and management. The transformation from a lower to an all through primary school has been closely monitored and controlled and the currently higher than average carry forward balances are allocated for specific projects linked to this reorganisation. The school is facing a further period of reorganisation as it downsizes from a three form entry to a two form entry school and there is an urgent need for more formal strategic financial planning to cover the next four years and to help manage expenditure against a significant reduction in income year-on-year. All purchases are made in accordance with best value principles. The school's financial and administrative staff perform their roles in a very efficient and effective way.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

The provision in the Foundation Stage of learning is **good**. Overall attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception is average. Children have a broad range of abilities, they make good progress and achieve well.

- Teaching and learning are consistently good.
 - Provision for the children's creative development is very good.
 - Relationships are very good and staff participate very well with children in their play.
 - Children behave well and are learning to share and take turns.
39. The children spend at least three terms in the Nursery. Depending on their age, they may have up to five terms before they transfer to Reception. Both year groups are accommodated in the Foundation Stage unit, which is a fairly recent addition to the school. This re-structured and organised unit is a significant strength. The improvements include access between classrooms, a well-resourced outdoor area, and there are plans to provide a covered play area. The curriculum is now organised as a two-year rolling programme of topics, with improved use of resources in technology to support children's learning. Both Nursery and Reception children are based in the three main areas - two Reception classes and the Nursery. Staff have worked extremely hard to create a learning environment which is suitable for the children, with an interesting range of activities, including effective use of the outdoor space. The children have good opportunities to work in their own class base for some sessions, and also to play together in the Nursery and Reception classes. The previous report was critical of the provision for children in the Reception year. Much has been accomplished since then, with considerable improvements. Progress has been good.
40. Teaching and learning are good. The staff are very well-informed, plan very well together, and interact very well with the children in their work and play. The children achieve well, learn quickly in lessons and those identified as having special educational needs progress well alongside their peers. A very cohesive approach to learning has been created, with effective methods, and sessions which are well-paced to offer a good degree of challenge and extend the children's thinking. Staff are deployed appropriately. This is particularly effective in the Nursery. In the Reception year, opportunities are sometimes missed for teaching assistants to be proactive and work with the children during whole group sessions, as they tend to be involved in preparation. However, the procedures for assessment are good. Staff make regular observations of children's progress and use this information to plan the next steps in their learning, based on what the children already know and understand. The unit is well-co-ordinated and good use is made of resources, which are very well-presented. Relationships are very good and children generally behave well. There is an effective partnership with parents and carers, who receive good quality information, based on their individual child's 'learning journey', about progress and attainment.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff support children's social skills very well.
- Good behaviour is promoted well.
- Children's independence is developing well.

Commentary

41. The children achieve well and make good progress because teaching and learning are good. Sessions for personal, social and emotional development are very well-organised. The staff are very skilled, especially in the Nursery, to promote children's social skills and help them to share fairly and take turns. The staff develop children's confidence and self esteem, respecting their contributions and offering praise and encouragement. Independence is promoted effectively. Children have access to a good range of materials and implements to develop their creativity, and this also has a beneficial effect on their increasing independence. When children are involved in activities which they have chosen or initiated themselves, their concentration is good - for example, children use the interactive whiteboard independently and persevere at their task. Good behaviour is promoted and there are good links to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development - for example, through studies of different cultures and traditions, such as Diwali and the Chinese New Year.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision for communication, language and literacy is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The approach to teaching children about letter sounds is thorough and effective.
- Staff interact very well in the children's role-play to develop skills in language.
- Children's skills in forming letters correctly are still developing.

Commentary

42. Teaching and learning are good as the staff have clear ideas about objectives for children's learning and support this work effectively. Children's achievement and progress in communication, language and literacy are good. There are very good role-play opportunities, which staff support very well. There are areas set aside for children to share books and to write, make marks and draw. They use these effectively. Some children can identify simple words and several are beginning to understand that print and writing has meaning. The very good size of the Nursery area lends itself to a good range and variety of activities, such as a 'toy shop' and the staff interact very well with children's role-play to develop their skills in language. Good practice is offered for children to learn about the sounds letters make in words, which is ensuring they make good progress. Writing is encouraged and children's skills are emerging, although some are still less secure in forming letters correctly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision for mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good opportunities are provided for children to explore the properties of two and three-dimensional shapes.

- Children have good opportunities to count and make comparisons.
- Some opportunities for children to record their numerical calculations are missed.

Commentary

43. Children make good progress, achieve well and teaching is good. Mathematical development is well-supported through planned activities linked to other areas of learning - for example, using positional language of 'over', 'under' and 'through' in physical development. There are good opportunities for the children to explore two and three-dimensional shapes - for instance, when they design and make their own models. Children have good opportunities for counting and making comparisons. Staff use incidental activities successfully to reinforce this type of work, although some of the youngest children are not secure in counting accurately. Sometimes opportunities for the children to record their calculations are missed. However, there is a good range of experiences for children to solve simple problems - for example, using sand and water to measure and make comparisons.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

Provision for knowledge and understanding of the world is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good emphasis is given to promoting children's learning through interesting topic work.
- Children produce very good work in designing and making models.
- Good use of computers and other technology to support children's learning.

Commentary

44. The staff provide a good programme of activities for children to develop their ideas about the environment. Teaching and learning are good and as a result children achieve well and make good progress. Children's knowledge and understanding of the world is very well-reinforced through designing and making models, and in exploring manufactured objects to compare similarities and differences. There is very good emphasis on this area of learning through topic work, with good use of computers and other technology to support children's learning. Children have good opportunities to explore the environment and use the outdoor area in their play. This is well-resourced to help them to develop their ideas.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

The provision for physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A very good range of activities is provided to develop hand control.
- The children can explore the space available to them and move around confidently.
- There are good experiences for the children to develop bodily control and co-ordination.

Commentary

45. Children are achieving well and are making good progress, through the good range of activities the staff provide. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Staff use the good range of equipment to promote children's physical skills and confidence in their abilities. Resources are appropriate for the youngest children, but there is no age-appropriate climbing frame outdoors for the Reception children. However, children can use the equipment in the school hall to practise and develop their skills in climbing, balancing and jumping. Children's hand control is very well-supported, with a very good range of activities to develop their small hand muscles and they use the keyboard, mouse and interactive whiteboard confidently and competently. Children can explore the space in the unit, negotiating obstacles and other children as they move around confidently. There are good opportunities for them to develop bodily control and co-ordination.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision for creative development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Creative work is very well-promoted in both year groups.
- There is access to a very good range of materials and media for the children to self-select enhances their learning very well.
- There is very good encouragement for the children to develop their creativity and imaginative ideas.

Commentary

46. Teaching and learning are very good. Children achieve very well and make very good progress. Creative work is very well-promoted in the Foundation Stage, with access to a very good range of materials and media for children to use in art work and making models. Creative work is developing very well. Some children have immature skills in hand control and initial drawings are not particularly detailed. However, the very good provision of an interesting, attractive and inviting range of resources and learning experiences enhances children's skills in this area of learning very well. Children are learning to explore sound and make music, using the interesting range of musical instruments properly. They are able to sing in tune and have a good repertoire of songs they know well.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership by the subject leader is strong and effective.

- Standards in Years 1 and 2, particularly for the pupils of higher attainment, are not high enough.
- Teaching staff have secure subject knowledge.
- Questioning is used well in lessons to help take pupils' learning forward.
- Class based computers are not used sufficiently to reinforce pupils' learning in dedicated ICT lessons.
- Too much use is made of photo-copied sheets. This prevents pupils' writing and working independently, particularly the pupils of higher attainment.

Commentary

47. Standards in Years 2 and 6 are average. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, were achieving well in the lessons observed, although achievement in Years 1 and 2 is less brisk than in Years 3 to 6. The subject leader provides strong and effective leadership. The subject leader has a clear overview and an awareness of where the subject needs to be improved to drive standards up. This is reflected in the improvements already implemented. These include setting classes by ability from Years 3 to 6, and having a clear focus on improving standards in reading and writing in Years 5 and 6. She is aware that whole school assessment procedures will need to be refined to improve the tracking and monitoring of pupils' achievements. The subject leader is aware that standards in Years 1 and 2 are not high enough, and will undertake an analysis of next year's statutory tests at Year 2 and 6 to identify strengths and weaknesses, particularly in the challenge and expectation for the pupils of higher attainment. She intends to introduce a moderated file of pupils' work to assist with teachers' marking and assessment, and help her when she monitors planning and teaching to help create a consistent approach in the delivery of the subject across the school. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory.
48. Standards in speaking and listening are average in Years 2 and 6. The positive and supportive atmosphere found in classrooms encourages pupils to share their thoughts and ideas and findings. This was seen in a Year 2 religious education lesson, when pupils could explain and give reasons for the difference between the 'old' and 'new' testament. Personal, social and health education lessons and circle time are used effectively to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. By Year 6 pupils have gained sufficient confidence to use a range of vocabulary and expression when they speak in formal or informal situations. This was seen in a Year 6 middle set lesson, when pupils could confidently identify direct and indirect speech from a newspaper report.
49. Standards in reading are average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' progress in reading is regularly recorded, and this information is used well to plan future reading tasks. The school encourages pupils to take books home to read. All teachers give a considerable amount of time to developing pupils' reading skills during the school day. In Years 5 and 6 a computerised system of recording pupils' progress in their reading, and particularly how well they have understood a text is having a positive effect on how pupils view reading and books. The subject leader intends to introduce this system across the school.

50. Standards in writing are average in Years 2 and 6. There is clear focus to improve writing in Years 5 and 6, and the subject leader intends to introduce a writing focus across all year groups. Year 2 higher attaining pupils can write legibly using full stops and capital letters, with most spellings generally correct. Lower attaining pupils have difficulty writing in sentences, with some poorly-formed letters, and have difficulty writing on the line when finishing a sentence. Year 2 pupils have written for different purposes, such as writing instructions for making an aeroplane, or writing a story about 'A friendly Dog and Cat'. This is built on as pupils move into Years 3 to 6. By Year 6 pupils can write for different purposes across the curriculum. For example, they can write an historical narrative on Florence Nightingale and creatively about 'The Mummy's Curse'. Higher attaining pupils can use paragraphs and correct punctuation in their written work. Lower attaining pupils need some help to order their thoughts into a written piece of work, and make simple spelling mistakes when writing a piece of text.
51. The overall quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons is good. In the lessons judged to be of good quality or better the teachers plan effectively to ensure that all pupils are included with activities that are well matched to their needs. This was demonstrated in a Year 3 top set lesson on spelling words using mnemonics, when the teacher planned work for different groups with different levels of prior attainment. In the satisfactory lessons, there was no planning of challenging tasks for the pupils of higher attainment. There was also an over-directive style of teaching, which includes the use of photocopied worksheets. These inhibit pupils from working and writing independently. The specific needs of pupils with special educational needs are well met, and as a result they achieve well in lessons. The organisation and working partnership of all teachers and teaching assistants ensures that there is an inclusive atmosphere, which helps pupils overcome problems they may encounter. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson, when the teaching assistant helped different pupils sequence events from a text into the correct order. Although the computer suite and laptop computers in Years 5 to 6 are used to support pupils' learning, there are missed opportunities for pupils to consolidate skills learnt on class-based computers.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

52. The use and development of literacy skills is soundly developed. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged in subjects such as religious education and information and communication and technology. All classrooms have informative displays that contain specialised vocabulary within a particular subject such as science, mathematics and history. The development of writing skills in literacy lessons is well established, but is less well developed in other curriculum areas because of the over-use of photo-copied sheets, which prevent pupils writing independently, or for a variety of purposes and audiences.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good in Years 3 to 6. Grouping pupils according to their prior attainment is having a positive effect on standards.
- Not enough pupils achieve higher levels in mathematics at Year 2.
- There is some inconsistency in the approach to the recording of work. Too many worksheets are used in Years 1 and 2.
- The quality of presentation is variable across the school.
- The use of ICT to improve pupils' learning in mathematics could be improved.
- There are too few opportunities for the subject leader to monitor practice and outcomes across the school.

Commentary

53. Standards in mathematics are average in Years 2 and 6. Standards in Year 2 have been average in most recent years, with a broadly average proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 3 in most years. In 2004, that proportion was below the national average. Given the good start pupils have in the Foundation Stage, attainment by the end of Year 2, particularly by potential higher attainers, is less good than it should be. Although some good achievement was observed in lessons in Year 2, achievement overall in Years 1 and 2 remains satisfactory at present. Even though the school has recently introduced setting in Year 2, as well as a weekly enrichment class for higher attainers in Year 1 and lower attainers in Year 2, it remains too early for the benefits of this initiative to have come through. Crucially, however, the teaching in Year 1 is not as strong as elsewhere and some of the momentum from the Foundation Stage experience is lost. The heavy reliance on worksheets and limited opportunity for pupils to record independently significantly compromises the progress which can be made.
54. The current Year 6 is the first group to have gone through the school. While standards are average overall, this reflects in part the fact that the current Year 6 is not, overall, a particularly strong year group. Elsewhere, for example, in the current Year 5, standards are higher. Overall, standards are more secure in this phase than in Years 1 and 2. This is largely because of the more dynamic teaching of the older pupils, the brisk pace and the higher expectations evident in lessons. However, there are inconsistencies in provision which the school needs to tackle. There are too few opportunities for pupils to develop independence in recording of mathematical procedures in Year 1 and little more in Year 2 (other than for the highest attainers). Teachers in Year 3 place little emphasis upon the systematic recording of work, although opportunities for practical experience are good and pupils make progress because of the generally lively and effective teaching. By Year 4, there is a change of approach and significant ground to be made up in building pupils' competence in the systematic recording of work. This requires a lot of input by teachers in order to set pupils on the right track to be able to tackle the work expected in Years 5 and 6.
55. There is, at present, a satisfactory focus on securing basic numeracy skills throughout the school and there is evidence of some thorough work to reinforce basic understanding. Scrutiny of recorded work from Years 4 and 5 in the last school year show a very rigorous and thorough approach, reflecting both significant input and high expectations on the part of those teachers. The pace of learning, on the evidence of the lessons observed, is improving. Curriculum coverage is satisfactory. Teachers are working hard to provide pupils with practical tasks to develop their

understanding of key concepts. They now need to achieve a better balance between practical experience and the embedding of secure skills in independent recording.

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, but good, and sometimes very good, in Years 3 to 6. Current strengths include the careful planning of lessons and the increasingly accurate match of work to pupils' needs. Although pupils are placed in ability sets throughout, teachers are careful on most occasions to plan group work within each set, so that needs are met fully. Occasionally, as observed in one Year 6 lesson, teachers' expectations may be over-ambitious and require modification during the lesson. Teachers' judgements are underpinned by the more robust assessment structures which are now in place. There is a broadly effective system for recording pupils' progress in mathematics and this is working well. Additionally, some teachers have developed their own systems for monitoring and recording pupils' progress. There was a particularly good example of this in a Year 3 class, where the teacher's overview of her pupils' progress was extremely thorough. Individual target-setting has been implemented in Years 3 to 6, though better use is made of the system in some classes than others. Detailed assessment structures in mathematics are important where teachers are often dealing with pupils whom they do not teach in other subjects. Expectations overall are higher, although not enough importance is placed on the quality of presentation in Years 1 to 3 and the quality of marking is satisfactory at best in those years. Often there are too few developmental comments, so that pupils are not clear what they need to do to improve. Elsewhere in the school, those aspects are stronger and there is some very good marking in Years 4 and 5. Almost all teachers are highly-skilled in the management of pupils' behaviour. They receive good support from the well-prepared support staff. Teachers use language well and question pupils carefully to ensure that they understand. Although some teachers are now using whiteboards effectively, the use of computers by pupils to support their learning in mathematics has been spasmodic until recently. Homework arrangements are satisfactory across the school.
57. Co-ordination of mathematics is in transition at present and is satisfactory. While improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, there are still too many inconsistencies in approach across the school, with several staff taking an independent line. The subject leader has had few opportunities to monitor teaching and learning and this has contributed to the inconsistent practice which now exists. Resources are satisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

58. Pupils use mathematics to support their work in other subjects and there is evidence of this in science and in geography. They use graphs and tables as a means of recording data in science and practise their skills in measuring when they undertake practical tasks in design and technology. This is a satisfactory feature at present, though with scope for further development.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' good subject knowledge enables them to teach well.
- Learning is good because of the concentration on investigations and experiment in lessons.
- There is insufficient challenge for higher attaining pupils.
- The lack of opportunity for the subject leaders to monitor science teaching across the school restricts subject development.

Commentary

59. Throughout the school, pupils' attainment meets national standards and achievement is satisfactory. Too few pupils are currently working at the higher levels, however, mainly as a result of the overuse of worksheets in Years 1 and 2 and over-direction by teachers in the work of older pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make satisfactory progress.
60. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall, and consistently good in Years 3 to 6. Lessons are well-planned, and proceed at a good pace. Most lessons are based upon investigations and experiments that involve pupils directly in their learning. Activities are set that challenge pupils' thinking but insufficient opportunities are given for higher attaining pupils to work independently. Teachers create good opportunities for pupils to explain their findings and they use their good subject knowledge to question them effectively. This develops pupils' scientific thinking well, as does the emphasis on developing subject vocabulary. Good use is made of classroom assistants to support lower attaining pupils. By ensuring they concentrate upon the set task and guiding them with relevant questions they enable them to experience success. Good relationships between teachers and pupils as well as between the pupils themselves allow pupils to give wrong answers without fear of ridicule. Good use is made of praise to encourage pupils as was seen in a good Year 4 lesson about insulation. Marking of pupils' work, however, varies in quality. Sometimes affirming comments are made about good work but there are few remarks that explain how work could be improved.
61. Visits, such as that by pupils in Year 5 to the Space Centre, and workshops within school, such as that relating to sound are used to increase pupils' interest in the subject. Resources are good as a result of recent spending and they are used well to maintain pupils' interest in lessons. In a very good lesson about electricity with a Year 2 class, pupils were able to set up a variety of simple circuits before explaining why some worked and some did not. Pupils in a good Year 3 lesson were using a digital microscope to examine different materials when investigating which would make the best nappy. Good links are being made with mathematics and ICT to produce graphs to illustrate results of tests as in a Year 5 lesson about changing pulse rates.
62. A system for tracking pupils' progress was introduced two years ago. Assessment of pupils' progress is made at the end of each unit. For the last three years, the subject leader has been a class teacher in Reception. This has produced problems for interaction with the rest of the school. To address this, since September, a 'shadow' leader has been appointed who teaches in Year 5. This arrangement is working well. Neither, however, is given the opportunity to observe other staff teaching, talk to pupils or see planning on a regular basis so they cannot gain a proper overview of the subject. This is a constraint upon the management and development of the subject. Overall, improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching staff have secure subject knowledge, and use all the resources confidently.
- The dedicated teaching assistant is making a very effective contribution to all classes who use the computer suite.
- Purposeful questioning and intervention given to pupils by all adults either in the computer suite or in classrooms.
- The role of the subject leader is underdeveloped.
- The school lacks effective assessment procedures to help the subject leader undertake monitoring of standards and pupils' achievements.
- The computer-suite is too small and there are too few computers for the number of pupils.

Commentary

63. Inspection evidence reveals that at Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' are attaining standards that are in line with national expectations. Pupils enjoy using and working with computers and achieve well in lessons. The school follows a scheme of work that covers all strands of the curriculum. However, there are occasions when opportunities for using class based computers are missed to support pupils' learning, for instance in English lessons. The school has made satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
64. In all lessons seen when ICT was being used, all teaching staff displayed secure subject knowledge and used all the equipment well. Lessons are well planned, and include the very effective contribution of the dedicated teaching assistant in the suite. This was demonstrated in a Year 3 lesson in the suite, when the teaching assistant helped different groups of pupils overcome problems they had when producing a newsletter of a visit to Northampton, which included using text and photographs. Teaching staff also support pupils with effective questioning and intervention during lessons, which help pupils overcome any problems or misunderstanding. For example, in a Year 6 lesson using laptops, the teacher helped pupils of lower attainment use the correct function keys to put data on the popularity of different flavoured crisps, from a spreadsheet into a block graph using the cut and paste technique. When pupils are working with computers they treat them with respect, and allow other pupils to use them when they have completed their task.
65. Currently the leadership and management of the subject is unsatisfactory, and needs to be developed to allow the subject leader to undertake her role effectively. There have been no observations undertaken of colleagues teaching, and there are no whole school assessment procedures in place with which the subject leader can monitor and assess standards and lead the subject forward. The school has recognised that this needs to be tackled and the subject leader is now supported by a colleague who oversees work in Years 5 and 6. The size of the computer suite including the number of computers is too small for the number of pupils who use it, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 use laptop computers in classrooms as dedicated ICT lessons. All computers in school are net-linked and have appropriate safeguards in place when pupils' access the Internet.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

66. Although computers are used effectively in the suite and when Year 5 and 6 pupils use laptops in the classroom, there are missed opportunities to use class based computers consistently in lessons. The opportunity is, therefore, lost to reinforce what has been learnt previously in dedicated ICT lessons, and to help develop pupils' learning across all subject areas.

HUMANITIES

Geography alternates with history on the timetable so no teaching in the subject was seen during the inspection. No judgement can, therefore, be made on provision. However, work produced last year showed that attainment throughout the school is likely to be around the average and pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. As all pupils are set the same tasks, however, higher attaining pupils appear not to be sufficiently challenged. Marking is variable in standard and few comments are made on pupils' work to explain how it might be improved. The extensive use of worksheets in Years 1 and 2 prevents geography from being used to develop good presentation techniques or to develop pupils' literacy skills. Resources are satisfactory. Neither subject leader is given time to observe others teaching and they see planning for the lessons of other staff only twice a year. This means neither has a clear overview of the subject or of developments that may be needed.

History

Provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- History has a high profile and pupils have positive attitudes towards the subject.
- No release time is given to the subject leaders to monitor work.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support learning.

Commentary

67. History alternates with geography on the timetable and a good range of topics is covered by each class. There are good displays around the school ranging from Ancient Egypt to World War II. In Year 3, the school has developed an interesting unit of work that combines elements of both subjects by looking at maps of the town at various dates in the past as part of a local history topic.
68. The subject leaders recognise that although pupils produce a good volume of work, teachers currently spend more time teaching about people, events and dates than developing historical skills. As a result, standards are similar to those found in most schools. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily.
69. By contrast, the subject leader based in Year 5 was seen teaching a lesson designed to develop pupils' ability to ask effective historical questions. Having given them fifty questions to answer about a Big Mac box, he then asked them to think of questions

they could ask about the artefacts found in Tutankhamun's tomb. The pupils greatly enjoyed this approach. Both subject leaders are aware of the need to change to a skills based curriculum and are to lead training sessions with the rest of the staff. Development in the subject is currently limited, however, by the lack of release time for subject leaders to observe others teaching. This restricts their overview of the subject. Overall, however, both leadership and management are satisfactory at present.

70. The teaching seen was satisfactory overall. Teachers' subject knowledge is at least sound and pupils enjoy lessons. The good relationships between pupils and teachers underpin learning, enabling teachers to question pupils appropriately and ensure the inclusion of all. Pupils settle quickly to work and remain on task well. Higher attaining pupils, however, are not always sufficiently challenged as the tasks set in lessons are common to all pupils. Marking is regularly done but does not always inform pupils how they might improve their work.
71. Whilst some cross-curricular skills are being developed through history little use is made of ICT to support the subject. Pupils are sometimes asked to act the role of historical characters in lessons. This helps to develop their speaking and listening skills. Writing skills are also developed as work is recorded in a variety of formats including newspaper reports and diaries. However, worksheets are too often used by pupils in Years 1 and 2 to record their work.

Religious Education

The provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All teaching staff have secure subject knowledge and understanding to help provide pupils' with opportunities to learn about different world religions.
- Questioning and intervention techniques are a positive feature seen in all lessons.
- There is excessive use of photo-copied sheets, which restricts pupils from recording their own thoughts and feelings during lessons.
- There are no whole school assessment procedures to help the subject leader undertake her role effectively.

Commentary

72. Standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at Year 2 and Year 6, and pupils achieved well in lessons seen. Pupils learn about different world faiths such as Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism as they move through the school. There has been satisfactory improvement since the previous inspection.
73. The overall quality of teaching seen in lessons was good. It was characterised by secure subject knowledge and understanding, which results in pupils receiving learning opportunities that deepen their understanding of world religions. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson, when pupils' were learning about the importance of prayer in the Muslim day. The class teacher had a number of prayer mats, which she used well to indicate the symbolism in the Muslim faith. During lessons, teachers use effective questioning and intervention to help develop pupils' understanding about the theme being discussed. This was seen, for example, in a Year 3 lesson, when the teacher explained in great detail a Christian baptism, and how this can be traced back to John the Baptist and his first meeting with Jesus. This type of intervention has a positive effect on pupils' interest in the subject, and helps to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also builds on the work undertaken in personal, social and health education lessons, and from themes discussed in assemblies.
74. From the scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work, and during lessons observed, it is evident that there is an excessive emphasis on pupils completing photocopied sheets, rather than being allowed to record their own findings or thoughts from a learning activity. There are also lost opportunities for pupils to use class based computers during lessons to further develop their learning. Currently there are no whole school assessment procedures in place to help the subject leader monitor the subject effectively. She currently monitors planning on a termly basis, but has not seen any colleagues teach or undertaken a work scrutiny. As a result, while leadership of religious education is satisfactory, the role is still developing.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Design technology (DT) was sampled during the inspection and no firm judgement can be made on provision. However, from work seen the standard of pupils' work is likely to be appropriate for their age in Years 3 to 6 and there is evidence of some good design and model making in Year 2. DT is frequently linked with work in art and design, staff are enthusiastic about both subjects. As a result there is a good range and coverage within the curriculum. Some work is exceptional, for example in Year 4, the story boxes of 'The

Enormous Crocodile and 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' are of high quality, with good attention to detail and are very well-presented.

Art and design

Provision for art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good art work is being produced in Year 6, based on very good work from the previous year.
- Standards in art and design in Year 2 are good.
- Pupils achieve very well.
- Art makes a major contribution to the school's programme for creative arts.

Commentary

75. Standards in art and design in Year 6 are very good, and build very well on the high quality work covered in Year 5. Work produced in all year groups, including Year 2, is of good quality and well-presented and shows care and attention to detail. Pupils achieve very well and make very good progress, because many staff are very skilled in teaching art, and some also have specialist expertise and knowledge.
76. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, particularly in Years 4 and 5, as staff have particular strengths in imparting artistic skills and techniques. Pupils recognise the high level of expertise staff have. This means they pay good attention, listen to instructions and carry these out very well. They are also given very good opportunities to develop their creativity and apply the skills they have learned. From Year 3 onwards the pupils use sketchbooks to record the skills they are acquiring, practise these thoroughly and record their observations, especially of natural objects. This activity is developed very successfully and contributes to projects in art work. By Year 5, pupils are learning very effectively to be observant and to use sketchbooks to re-create manufacturers' designs and then develop their own designs. For example, in Year 5, pupils have made large three-dimensional models of flower heads, which are very attractive and distinctive. Work also includes close observational and detailed work on patterns and using information technology to produce accurate reproduction of textiles. The work produced in art and design on the history topic on the Victorians, focused on 'art nouveau', including stain glass techniques. The standard produced was extremely high, colourful and attractive and reflects the style of the times very well. Recent work in Year 4 work includes designs linked to the story of Diwali, which reinforces pupils' cultural development very well.
77. Art and design are very well-led, managed and co-ordinated through the school. There is very clear monitoring of pupils' work and planning, and schemes of work provide very good guidance for staff. Although no formal observations of lessons have been undertaken, art and design in Years 3, 4 and 5 is taught by specialists and in other year groups staff have good expertise. Art is well-resourced, there is a good emphasis on using textiles and the work of other artists to inspire pupils. The curriculum covers all of the required aspects of art effectively - for example, the quality of three-dimensional work is very good, especially in Years 4 to 6. The school has been successful in achieving a gold standard Artsmark; progress since the previous inspection has been very good.

Music

Provision for music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils sing tunefully, with good intonation.
- Staff are well-prepared and informed for music lessons.
- The subject leader has very good skills in music.

Commentary

78. Standards in music are above those normally found in Year 6. There are many opportunities for pupils to be involved in musical activities, such as the steel band, and all pupils are offered instruction in learning a musical instrument. It is not possible to come to a firm overall judgement on standards in Year 2 as no lessons were observed, but pupils generally can sing well, with good intonation and expression. There has been good progress in music since the previous inspection.
79. Teaching and learning in music are good overall. Some staff have good musical expertise. The subject leader is particularly skilled and those who are not music specialists make sure they are very well-prepared and have the necessary resources to teach music effectively. Information technology is used particularly well in some lessons to illustrate sound effects, ostinato and composition. Lessons observed in Years 4, 5 and 6 were well-planned, motivated the pupils effectively and kept them interested. There were good opportunities for pupils to be involved, participate and demonstrate their musical skills and what they had learned. Pupils are learning to sing in tune, in two and three parts to create rounds, to create their own rhythmic patterns and sound effects, and to recognise and understand graphic scores. Many are becoming increasingly conversant with musical terminology, for example, to denote beats and the values in musical notation.
80. Music and creativity feature strongly in the curriculum and there are regular performances by the different age groups. From Year 3, all pupils have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder if they wish, and there are opportunities for brass tuition. Younger pupils are learning to play the ocarina. The teaching of music is organised across year groups, which means staff skills are shared and learning benefits as a result. Music is generally well-resourced, with a good variety and range of instruments.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- For the older pupils in particular, teaching and learning are good, enabling these pupils to achieve well.
- The school makes very good use of the specialist skills of staff and this is having a very positive effect on standards.
- Standards in swimming are a strength.
- Pace is a weaker feature in some lessons, particularly for younger pupils.
- Opportunities for extra-curricular sporting activities have expanded significantly.
- The subject is very well led and managed.
- The school feels that there is further work to do on the teaching of gymnastics.

Commentary

81. Physical education is an emerging strength of the curriculum. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The school plans for a good breadth of provision, although only games and dance activities were observed in Years 3 to 6 and only

dance in Years 1 and 2. Standards in these elements of the curriculum are improving rapidly and while still similar to those normally found at the end of Year 2, are above the expected level at Year 6. In Years 3 to 6, pupils achieve well over time, particularly in games. The increasingly extensive programme of extra-curricular activities is enriching pupils' opportunities and promoting improved skills. Standards in swimming, on the evidence provided, are above average, with around 95 per cent of pupils achieving the expected standard (25 metres unaided) by the end of Year 6.

82. Dance has been a focus for development recently and the school is still trialling teaching material, following recent staff training. The lessons observed in Years 1 and 2, both in dance, while satisfactory, suffered from a lack of pace. The time allocated for both sessions was over-long and, in neither case, had staff been sufficiently selective in their choice of material. Pupils were engaged in unnecessarily repetitive rehearsal of simple movement sequences and their learning needed to move on more briskly.
83. The dance lessons observed in the upper part of the school were more tightly managed, though not all staff consider dance to be their strength. However, the strength of provision in Years 3 to 6 is the effective deployment of those staff, particularly recently-appointed staff, who have specialist skills in physical education and this is the key reason why the subject has made such good progress recently. Their impact is, currently, most marked in games provision. Two sessions were observed, one in soccer and the other in rugby skills. Here, the pace of teaching and learning was extremely brisk. No time was wasted and pupils were expected to respond promptly to instructions. Pupils generally achieved well. Both sessions were successful because of the high quality of the teaching, and the high expectations set. There was a good focus on health and safety issues. Overall, very good opportunities for all pupils to evaluate their work were created and these were used well. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well where necessary.
84. Teaching and learning are good overall. Planning is detailed and provides well for the range of needs in each class. Overall, teachers manage pupils well. Relationships are good and teachers have high expectations of their behaviour. In the best lessons, pupils are challenged throughout and respond very positively. The subject contributes effectively to their social development. Assessment procedures continue to evolve and are satisfactory overall, with an increasing emphasis on pupil self-evaluation.
85. The programme of additional sporting activities and clubs increasingly enriches the curriculum and has been considerably enhanced in the last year. The planned annual residential visit for Year 6 pupils will provide opportunities for outdoor and adventurous activities.
86. The subject leader has a very good overview of the subject and supports colleagues very well. She has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to move the subject on. Both leadership and management are very good. The school has good outdoor and indoor facilities for physical education and plans to enhance existing resources for gymnastics for the older pupils.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

87. Only a small number of PSHE sessions were observed. However, it is clear that the school provides a good curriculum to support the progressive development of pupils' personal and social development, their health education and their growing awareness of the opportunities and responsibilities of citizenship. These carefully-structured programmes are contributing well to the consistency of pupils' attitudes and behaviour across the school. Weekly sessions are used to explore either a half-termly focus, such as bullying, democracy or communication, or to deal with specific class or personal issues through 'circle time'. In these class discussions, pupils have good opportunities to share ideas and talk about their experiences and feelings in a supportive and secure environment. Pupils listen carefully to each other and express their own thoughts clearly. These sessions are particularly valuable at present as the school has grown and a number of new staff have joined the school. The current PSHE provision is closely integrated with the programme for religious education. Issues such as sex and relationships education (implemented for the first time in the current year) and drugs education are delivered either through a specific unit of work or as part of the science curriculum. The school promotes healthier eating, aiming to help pupils make sensible diet choices. Overall, most pupils are developing a good understanding of how their decisions affect their own and others' lives and learn how they can become responsible members of a community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	2
Attendance	6
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	4

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