

INSPECTION REPORT

GLAPTHORN C OF E LOWER SCHOOL

Oundle

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121973

Headteacher: Miss K Joyce

Lead inspector: Mr M Thompson

Dates of inspection: 16th – 18th May 2005

Inspection number: 266869

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	69
School address:	Glaphorn Nr Oundle Peterborough
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Geoff Delany
Date of previous inspection:	23 rd June 2003

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Glaphorn C of E Lower School is situated two miles to the north of Oundle. It is a very small village school in which pupils are grouped into three mixed-age classes. The pupils are drawn from a very wide area: few live in the village. All pupils are white, and almost all are of British heritage. They are admitted at the start of the Reception year in the September following their fourth birthday. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is about average, and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. Those listed as having special needs have speech and communication or moderate learning difficulties. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school varies considerably from year to year. Taken as a whole, it is about average, while the home circumstances of many pupils are above average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25372	Mike Thompson	<i>Lead inspector</i>	Special educational needs Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology Physical education
9388	Anthony Mundy	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
26292	Helen Mundy	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation Stage Curriculum English Geography History Music Personal, social and health education and citizenship Religious education

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	4
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	7
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	11
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS	13
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Glaphthorn Lower School is an improving school, previously judged to have serious weaknesses but now providing a **satisfactory standard of education** for its pupils. This improvement has been brought about by the dynamic leadership of the headteacher, good governance, and better teaching in Years 3 and 4. In addition, parents are very supportive and their children are keen to learn. Although costs are relatively high, they are not untypical of very small schools. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Overall, pupils achieve well, and standards are above average in English and mathematics at the end of Year 4.
- The headteacher and governors provide clear educational direction for the school.
- There is not enough consistently good quality teaching.
- Relationships at all levels are excellent. Pupils are very well behaved and keen to learn.
- The oldest higher-attaining pupils in the mixed-age classes are not always provided with suitably challenging work, particularly in Year 2.
- The school enriches the curriculum very effectively through a wide range of out-of-class activities.
- Day-to-day planning needs to be improved in the Reception year.
- All members of staff know the pupils very well and take very good care of them.
- Pupils benefit from the very good partnership between the school and their parents, and the school's good links with the local community.

The school has made good progress since its last inspection. The key to this progress has been the significant improvement in the quality of leadership. Overall, the issues for improvement from the 2003 inspection have been dealt with satisfactorily. The good standards previously reported in English and mathematics have been maintained, while standards of pupils' personal development have improved, as have rates of attendance. The serious weaknesses in teaching in Years 3 and 4 have been successfully addressed, and improvements are being made in assessment throughout the school. The construction of a spacious new hall has considerably improved facilities for physical education, as well as providing room for other activities such as music.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Owing to the small size of the school, few pupils are tested each year. The grades reported, therefore, need to be treated with some caution since variations in the performance of just one or two pupils can disproportionately affect the overall grading. In 2004, the results for Year 2 relate to the performance of just 16 pupils. In writing, for example, the success or failure of just two pupils to achieve the nationally expected level could have affected the school's performance by one grade. In 2003, when the school's performance in mathematics was in the highest five per cent nationally, the group of pupils tested was even smaller.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
reading	A	A	A	A
writing	A	A	C	D
mathematics	A*	A*	B	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.

Inspection findings are that from an average starting point, **pupils achieve well** and make good progress overall as they move through the school. They generally achieve well in the Reception year, and in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 and 4. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In all year groups, pupils with special educational needs (SEN) do as well as could reasonably be expected. By the end of the Reception year, standards are above average in relation to the goals expected for the early stages of children's personal and social development, communication, language and literacy and mathematical development. Standards of physical development are satisfactory. Although no overall judgement could be made about standards in creative development or knowledge and understanding of the world, children's attainment in many elements of these areas of learning is average. The standards of work seen in Year 2 are average in English, mathematics and science. In Year 4, standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science. No judgements could be made in other subjects. Overall, pupils' **personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is very good**. Particularly noteworthy are the very good standards of pupils' moral development and their excellent social skills. Their attitudes towards learning and their behaviour are very good. Attendance is good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers are good at encouraging their pupils and ensuring that everyone is included in lessons. They manage pupils' behaviour very well, and create a good climate for learning in their lessons. Skilled teaching assistants provide good quality help for pupils who have difficulty in keeping up with others in their class. However, in English, mathematics and science, teachers' expectations of the more able pupils are not consistently high enough, particularly in Year 2. A scrutiny of pupils' books showed that there is often very little difference between the tasks set for these pupils and those of average attainment. Assessment is satisfactory overall. However, teachers' marking of pupils' work does not result in noticeable improvements. Corrections are either done by the teachers themselves or pupils do not act on teachers' suggestions to make their written work better. Systems for assessing pupils are good in English and mathematics, and good use is made of data about pupils' progress to help plan future work. In other subjects, assessment is not as well developed. Overall, the curriculum is satisfactory, and it is enriched by a very good range of additional activities. However, schemes of work are incomplete in some subjects. In addition, daily planning for activities in the Reception year, particularly in the afternoon sessions, and in the outdoor learning area, needs to have more clearly defined targets for children's learning. The school provides very well for the care, welfare and safety of its pupils. Relationships with parents are very good. Links with local schools and the community are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the **leadership and management of the school are good**. The leadership of the school provided by the headteacher is good, as is her leadership of the subjects and areas of learning for which she has specific responsibility. The leadership skills of other members of the teaching staff have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. Governance is effective, and the school is satisfactorily managed. All legal requirements are properly met, with the exception of a minor omission in the information provided for parents in the governors' annual report.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils' views of the school are overwhelmingly positive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The school has already identified subjects of the curriculum that require improvement, and some progress has already been made. The same is true of the school's use of data for the assessment of pupils, and the upgrading of the skills of subject co-ordinators. As a result of the progress made, these aspects are not included in the further improvements needed, which are to:

- Ensure that there is more good quality teaching throughout the school, by continuing to focus on the specific professional development needs of the staff.
- Ensure that teachers provide consistently good levels of challenge for higher-attaining pupils.
- Improve the quality of day-to-day planning for the Reception year.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Overall, pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. Boys and girls generally achieve equally well, and pupils with SEN achieve satisfactorily in all age groups. Taken as a whole, standards in Reception are average in relation to the goals expected of children of this age. By the end of Year 2, standards are average in English, mathematics and science. In Year 4, standards are above average in English and mathematics and average in science.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards of speaking and listening are generally above average throughout the school. Standards of writing are above average in Year 4.
- Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are generally good at using and applying their skills in mathematics.
- Pupils in Years 1 and 2 do not make enough progress in developing their skills of scientific enquiry.

Commentary

1. Most children start school with average skills overall, and consolidate and broaden these in the Reception class. This is achieved because the class is extremely small, and children receive a great deal of individual attention. The teacher converses regularly with each child and, by doing so, helps to broaden children's vocabulary. Counting skills are similarly developed through frequent opportunities for children to work alongside their teacher. The children's social development is enhanced by the very good individual care given to them. The good standards of personal development provide the foundation for the very good behaviour and excellent relationships between pupils, which are evident throughout the school.

2. Following an inspection in June 2003, in which the school was judged to have serious weaknesses, a number of improvements needed to be made in leadership, teaching, the curriculum, and the assessment of pupils. A subsequent check on the school's progress in March 2004 acknowledged that reasonable gains had been made in addressing these weaknesses and in eliminating pupils' underachievement. Inspection judgements confirm this.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	18.1 (17.9)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	15.0 (15.9)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	17.3 (18.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 16 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. Overall, inspection findings broadly reflect the results of the most recent national tests in Year 2. However, the standards of reading observed during the inspection are not as high as the test results of previous years suggest. This is partially explained by the lower overall attainment of the current group of pupils in Year 2 in comparison with last year's, but also by weaknesses in the management of pupils' reading in this class. The headteacher feels that the 2004 results are an accurate reflection of the attainment of that group of pupils, and that the apparently lower attainment in writing, for example, is due to changes in the way in which the tests were administered, together with improvements in the accuracy of the teacher's assessments. In addition, the number of pupils taking the tests varies from year to year, and is often small; the performance of each individual has a large impact on the average points score for the year group.

4. The school's focus on promoting pupils' skills in speaking and listening helps to consolidate the good quality of their speech. This is achieved through the introduction of time for pupils to discuss ideas during the course of lessons. In Year 4, pupils' good technical skills as readers, their good vocabulary, and their good understanding of what they are reading are reflected in the above average standards of writing. However, there are weaknesses in pupils' wider performance in reading, such as their ability to use dictionaries quickly.

5. The weaknesses in Years 3 and 4 in pupils' ability to work independently, reported at the time of the last inspection, are being successfully addressed in mathematics. Throughout the school, learning in this subject is underpinned by a good emphasis on practical activities. Similarly, in science, pupils in Years 3 and 4 are regularly challenged through investigations and by the good emphasis placed on using scientific principles such as 'fair testing'. However, in Years 1 and 2, science activities are too closely directed by the teacher. As a result, pupils are not given enough opportunities to work in a truly independent way, and their skills in formulating and expressing their results in writing are not promoted. This method of working particularly inhibits the performance of the higher-attaining pupils in this class.

6. Pupils make satisfactory use of their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) to help them in their work in other subjects. Owing to the lack of evidence, no secure judgements can be made about achievement in most of the non-core¹ subjects.

7. The school's success in addressing the serious weakness of underachievement in Years 3 and 4 has been due largely to the headteacher's impact on the quality of teaching in this class. She works closely with her 'job-share' partner in planning lessons. An intensive programme of in-service training, and support from the local authority, has brought about significant improvements in the skills of all the staff.

8. The good ratio of adults to pupils throughout the school enables regular help to be given to individual pupils and small groups of pupils with SEN. The effective help provided by the school's classroom assistants helps these pupils to play a full part in lessons and to achieve satisfactorily overall.

9. The very good attitudes which pupils show towards their work, underpinned by the very good support given by their parents, also have a positive impact on their achievement. This is evident in, for example, the dialogue between parents and teachers in pupils' home/school books. In addition, pupils' mature response to their teachers' very high expectations of behaviour, and the excellent relationships between all members of the school community, result in a very good climate for learning.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour, and excellent social development contribute significantly to their achievements. Standards in each of these aspects have been maintained or improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils are eager to do their best in lessons and in other activities.
- Relationships are excellent at all levels.
- Pupils of widely differing ages enjoy working and playing together.
- Attendance is good.

¹ The non-core subjects are subjects other than English, mathematics and science.

Commentary

10. Pupils of all ages and levels of attainment come happily to school. In lessons, they listen attentively to their teachers and are keen to answer questions and join discussions. On starting school, children settle quickly in the Reception class and make good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Behaviour in all classes and in the open areas of the school is always at least very good, and is often excellent. At lunchtimes, in fine weather, pupils relish eating their packed meals picnic-style in the playground, often in mixed-age groups. Pupils' attitudes in extra-curricular activities are very good. For instance, during an after-school choir session, pupils of all ages sang clearly, tunefully and enthusiastically.

11. All adults in the school are very good role models for courteous and thoughtful behaviour. Pupils are encouraged to consider the welfare of others, and always to do what is right rather than what is expedient. They have no concerns about bullying. Records indicate that no pupil has ever been excluded from school.

12. Pupils are involved in a variety of everyday duties in their classrooms, and as representatives elected to the school council. Council elections are formally constituted, and candidates actively canvass for votes. The council has unusually wide responsibilities, promoting pupils' views on a variety of topics and raising and spending hundreds of pounds each year. Council meetings are guided by adults and minuted, although older pupils are clearly capable of learning some of the necessary committee management skills. Each term, pupils publish a high quality newsletter for parents and friends of the school. An editorial committee collates articles and photographs and, with minimal intervention by adults, controls the publishing process. Pupils in all year groups contribute to the school's recycling and garden-development projects. Many of these activities are very advanced for pupils in Years 1 – 4, and contribute significantly to their personal development.

13. Pupils' spiritual development is good. They are given regular opportunities to reflect on their own achievements and on the needs of others. Following the Asian tsunami, for example, pupils in the class for Years 3 and 4 were moved to write prayers conveying their sorrow and hope. All pupils respond generously to the perceived hardships of others. For instance, they sponsor the education of a village child in India, and collect enthusiastically for local and national charities in the UK. A Church of England minister is a frequent and welcome visitor, and groups of pupils regularly visit the churches in his jurisdiction.

14. Pupils have reasonable understanding of their own cultural heritage through their work in history and geography, and activities such as the local May celebrations. However, they have very limited understanding or experience of other cultures, although occasional visitors introduce specific Jewish and Asian festivals. Few artifacts or displays acknowledge the diversity of society outside the local area, and no links are established with children or schools in developed or developing countries.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (94.6%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2%	School data	0.2%
National data	5.1%	National data	0.4%

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year (2003/4).

15. Attendance is good, and is slightly above the national average for primary schools. Percentage comparisons with other schools are unflattering because Glapthorn School is very small and therefore the extended absence of a single pupil profoundly affects the whole-school figure. Additionally, pupils at Glapthorne are of Reception, Infant or Lower Junior age, and tend to be more susceptible to common illnesses than older pupils.

16. Procedures for ensuring regular and prompt attendance are very good. Attendance is monitored day by day, and occasional unexplained absences are immediately investigated. Parents understand the importance of regular attendance, and many travel considerable distances to bring their children punctually to school each day.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory. The school provides very good quality care for its pupils, and has a very good partnership with parents, but it needs to improve further the quality of teachers' assessments of their pupils' work.

Teaching and learning

The school satisfactorily meets the needs of pupils through its teaching.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers ensure that all their pupils take a full part in lessons; they are generally good at encouraging their pupils, and in making their lessons interesting.
- Potentially higher-attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged in Year 2.
- Systems for assessing pupils' work are good in English and mathematics but need to be developed further in other subjects.
- Skilled teaching assistants provide good quality help for pupils.
- Teachers create a good working atmosphere in their lessons.

Commentary

17. Overall, the serious weaknesses in teaching and assessment reported at the time of the last inspection have been satisfactorily addressed. Taken as a whole, the quality of teaching is similar to that reported at the time of the previous inspection. It is better in Years 3 and 4, but not as good as it was in Reception and Years 1 and 2. The weaknesses in assessment throughout the school are being addressed.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 12 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	0	2	9	1	0	0

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

18. In the Reception class, teaching is satisfactory overall, with some consistently good features. The teacher has attended numerous courses to improve her understanding of the Foundation Stage. The inspection confirms that she is diligently applying her knowledge to improve her teaching and understanding. The assessment of children in this class is satisfactory overall. The teacher writes daily observations of children's progress and conscientiously marks their written work, but sometimes fails to identify important points for development. At set intervals during the year she makes formal assessments of strengths and weaknesses in all areas. However, assessment procedures are not yet linked closely enough to daily planning.

19. Throughout the school, teachers are generally good at including all pupils in lessons. They do this through clear and interesting explanations, good use of interactive whiteboards², and targeting individual pupils with questions to keep them alert. In addition, teachers' use of pupils as 'talking partners' not only helps to promote skills in speaking and listening but also helps to focus pupils on the task in hand. A further good feature of teaching in most lessons is the good balance achieved between time allotted for direct instruction and time provided for pupils to work individually or in

² These are large boards on which the screen display from a computer is projected. The technology enables the user to control the images on screen by touching it.

groups on the activities set for them. In all lessons, teachers manage their pupils very well and create a good climate for learning. The effective learning that takes place is also due to the very good behaviour of the pupils, and the high quality of the relationships between teachers and pupils. This occurs because the teachers are good role models, command the respect of their pupils and know them very well. Overall, the best teaching is found in mathematics in Years 3 and 4 and, even though no lessons were seen, evidence from a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that the teaching of science in this class is consistently good.

20. The work in pupils' books also shows that, in English and mathematics, the few potentially higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 are frequently given very similar tasks to those set for pupils of average attainment. In this year group, activities in science are almost invariably the same for all pupils, regardless of prior attainment. The single example of unsatisfactory teaching occurred in this class. It was due to inadequate planning, and a failure to recognise and to plan for the range of ability within the group. As a result, a number of pupils failed to achieve well or to fulfil their potential.

21. Learning is satisfactory overall. Pupils enjoy their learning; they are confident to ask questions and contribute to what is going on, and are keen to talk about what they are doing.

22. The good quality help provided by skilled classroom assistants helps pupils with SEN to play a full part in lessons. For example, during a mathematics lesson on the properties of shapes in Years 3 and 4, the sensitive support given by a classroom assistant enabled the pupils assigned to her to successfully contribute to the introductory session. Then, during the time allocated for the pupils to work on their tasks, she ensured that all pupils in her group understood clearly what they had to do, and skilfully gave guidance without over-directing their efforts. On another occasion, a classroom assistant provided good teaching when working with a small group of pupils from Years 1 and 2 who had been withdrawn from class for intensive support in developing their early reading skills. She used her voice well to keep the pupils interested, explained tasks clearly, and showed good technique when successfully helping a pupil who found the task to be particularly challenging.

23. Teachers' day-to-day assessment of their pupils through observations and questioning in lessons is satisfactory. Pupils' work is regularly marked, but in mathematics and English the teachers' marking is generally ineffective in that pupils do not appear to improve their work as a result of it. However, in both of these subjects, a good feature of assessment is the use of targets set for pupils. In mathematics, for example, pupils evaluate their own performance against the targets which are inserted in their books. These evaluations are then confirmed by the teachers.

24. Assessment in the non-core subjects is satisfactory in that the requirement for teachers to make an annual 'best fit' judgement about pupils' attainment is met. However, assessment in some of these subjects, such as art and design and PE, does not yet record pupils' gains in learning in a continuous way.

The curriculum

The curriculum is satisfactory and is enriched through a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Overall, the quality and quantity of learning resources available to pupils are satisfactory, and the school's accommodation is good. These aspects have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has improved significantly, and now complies with legal requirements.
- Schemes of work and assessment procedures are not fully implemented in all subjects.
- The provision for developing pupils' skills as young citizens is excellent.

Commentary

25. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Although children have regular access to activities which cover all of the areas of learning, day-to-day planning is inadequate in four of these areas: personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development. The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4 is also satisfactory, and weekly teaching time now meets national guidelines. The school adequately implements the national strategies of literacy and numeracy, and teachers have increasing expertise in these subjects.

26. At the time of the previous inspection, planning for ICT and PE did not meet national requirements, and coverage of the curriculum in geography was scant. These weaknesses have been satisfactorily addressed. In art and design, and music, schemes of work are still being developed. However, in these subjects the progressive development of pupils' skills from Year 1 to Year 4 is assured because the subject co-ordinators for art and music teach both classes. All teaching staff are trained to use the recently installed interactive whiteboards, and their expertise is increasingly shared by pupils.

27. In the Reception class, provision for children with SEN is satisfactory. These children receive individual attention, and good links are established with external professional agencies. The needs of pupils with SEN are satisfactorily met in Years 1 to 4, where skilled classroom assistants help them to follow the same curriculum as others and to achieve satisfactorily through sensitive and supportive guidance. When withdrawn from lessons for short sessions of intensive help, these pupils achieve well. However, the school's expectations do not appear to be high enough in this respect, since once identified as needing additional help these pupils tend to remain on the school's 'register'.

28. The number of teachers and classroom assistants is sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum. Accommodation has been greatly improved by the addition of a large assembly hall, and the quality and quantity of resources for learning have been improved, particularly in science, ICT and PE.

29. The school offers a very good range of activities to enrich the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 4. During the short period of the inspection, pupils enjoyed after-school sessions for sport and the choir, and lunchtime recorder clubs in addition to individual instrumental tuition. During the week before the inspection, the oldest pupils had taken part in a residential trip to York, which added much interest to their studies in history. The school's participation in a local music festival and competitive sporting activities against other schools also help broaden pupils' experiences.

30. In 2003, the school purchased a scheme to support the teaching and learning of personal, social and health education (PSHE). Although the subject is timetabled daily in each class, pupils do not consolidate their learning by writing about relevant topics. However, the way in which the school develops pupils' social skills as young citizens, for example through their involvement in the school council, is excellent.

Care, guidance and support

The school provides very good care for all pupils, and good guidance to improve their academic work. Pupils have excellent opportunities to express their views and to influence school life. Standards in each of these aspects have improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very secure and confident in school.
- Adults listen carefully to pupils' opinions, and often respond positively to their suggestions.
- Pupils have very good, trusting relationships with all adults.
- Staff have not recently been updated in child protection procedures.

Commentary

31. Pupils of all ages receive a warm welcome when starting at Glapthorn. They flourish in a clean and carefully maintained environment, where the implementation of good policies for health and safety, child protection and behaviour management sustains high standards of welfare.

32. The headteacher is responsible for child protection. She is conscientious, experienced and alert to possible issues, but neither she nor most of the staff have received recent training. Governors and staff have not yet agreed a written policy on the restraint of pupils, and have not established a recording system for incidents of restraint. The school has good procedures for verifying that current and prospective staff are not prohibited from working with children.

33. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid, and all are caring and sympathetic to injured and distressed pupils. Short-term medication is stored safely, and dosages given to pupils are carefully recorded. Very good playground supervision ensures pupils' safety at break and lunchtimes.

34. Teachers and other adults have good knowledge of pupils' academic development, and very good knowledge of their personal development. In 'circle time'³ sessions, pupils are encouraged to express their views clearly, and to listen attentively to the views of others. All relationships are excellent, and pupils confidently ask for help with academic or personal difficulties. Pupils' individual good work or effort is rewarded with team points, and the highest scoring team each week holds a coveted silver challenge cup. Each half term, exceptional individual achievement is acknowledged by governors' awards. One pupil in each year group is nominated for an award, and names are formally inscribed in a book displayed in the school's entrance hall.

35. All pupils are fully involved in the life of the school. They complete an annual questionnaire on a variety of topics, and staff immediately review their ideas and suggestions. The school council meets regularly, and is exceptionally influential. Pupils of all ages know that the council discusses their concerns, and promotes their ideas for the school's development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's very good relationships with parents, and good links with the community and other schools, contribute significantly to pupils' achievements. Standards in each of these aspects have been maintained or improved since the previous inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents show great interest in the life and work of the school, and are fully informed about their children's education.
- The school has good links with the village community.

Commentary

36. Parents' views aired at the pre-inspection meeting were very positive, and were reinforced by the exceptionally high levels of satisfaction expressed through the pre-inspection questionnaire. Inspection evidence confirms that parents are very supportive of the school's activities. They have excellent relationships with staff, and make valued contributions to their children's learning. Each morning, before registration, parents are welcome to come into the classrooms to work with their children. These informal sessions add an extra dimension to the home/school partnership.

³ Circle Time is an activity in which pupils, seated in a circle, take turns to speak while others listen to what they have to say.

37. Parents help regularly in classrooms, and school clubs are encouraged to use their special skills and interests to broaden the curriculum. The parents and friends association (FOGS) is very active, and supports the parent/school/community relationship by organising an annual programme of social and fund-raising events. Recent purchases by FOGS include books, science equipment, and construction materials for the 'Garden of Memories'. The association maintains a very good relationship with the governing body.

38. Parents receive very good information through weekly newsletters and the school's attractive website. The prospectus includes much useful advice for parents, additional to the information legally required. However, the 2004 governors' annual report to parents omits required information about arrangements for pupils with disabilities. Parents have easy, informal access to staff and, at three consultation meetings each year, are formally invited to discuss their children's progress. Teachers' annual written reports are satisfactory, clearly indicating pupils' standards and achievement and sometimes giving parents information about how their children's work can be improved.

39. Good links with the local community make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Although most school families are not local residents, the school is a focus of village life for a May festival and for other annual events. At Christmas, senior citizens are invited to the Nativity play. The school's outreach to the village, and visits from local representatives of the police and fire services, extend pupils' understanding of citizenship. Very good links with the parish church support pupils' spiritual and cultural development, and the minister is a regular and popular visitor. Pupils in all year groups visit local places of interest. Although pupils learn something of eastern religions, the school's multi-ethnic and multicultural links are weak, and international links are very weak.

40. Good links are established with partner schools in the local 'cluster', and with a public school in a nearby town. Glapthorn provides good support for high school students on work experience programmes, and for trainee teachers.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall, the quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher's leadership is good. The leadership provided by key members of staff is satisfactory overall, as is the management of the school. Governance is good. At all levels, there is a strong commitment to further improvement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's good leadership has brought about key improvements needed to address the underachievement of pupils in Years 3 and 4.
- Governors monitor the school's work carefully and are fully involved in shaping the direction of the school.
- The management skills of subject co-ordinators need to be improved.

Commentary

41. The headteacher enjoys the full confidence of parents. Since her appointment, the serious weaknesses in leadership, including unsatisfactory school self-evaluation and the lack of clear direction, have been successfully addressed. The result is that a secure platform for the school's future progress has been established. The headteacher is a good role model for staff and, with the effective support of the governing body, has been the driving force behind the improvements made throughout the school. The headteacher knows the pupils and their families very well, and is always available to parents. She has created a good staff team in which all members work well together for the benefit of the pupils. The staff team's clear commitment to promoting pupils' personal and social skills and the inclusion of all pupils contributes strongly to the school's very good ethos. Through her careful monitoring, the headteacher has a very good understanding of the strengths to be shared and weaknesses that need to be addressed.

42. At the time of the last inspection, the leadership and management roles of other teachers were judged to be underdeveloped, and in many cases ineffective. A great deal of effort has been put into improving the subject knowledge and skills of co-ordinators, and the leadership which they provide is now satisfactory overall. However, the school recognises that more needs to be done to improve the way in which they fulfil their roles as managers. For example, monitoring by co-ordinators does not yet focus enough on pupils' achievement. This largely occurs because work to improve the quality of assessment in subjects other than English and mathematics is either incomplete or only recently in place. Consequently, the actions of co-ordinators are not yet informed by rigorous evaluation of the data produced. Nonetheless, co-ordinators now make valuable contributions to the school improvement plan through the detailed action plans which they produce for their areas of responsibility. Leadership and management are good in the Foundation Stage, where the headteacher and Reception class teacher are joint co-ordinators. They fully understand the importance of the Reception class to whole-school standards, and are working hard to improve teaching and learning. The school's provision for SEN is satisfactorily led and managed.

43. The serious weaknesses in the quality of governance have also been addressed. Governance of the school is now good, and the chair of governors provides good leadership of the governing body. Governors visit regularly, and successfully fulfil their role as 'critical friend' to the school through their monitoring of its work. Many are closely connected with the school through their families, and know it well through their day-to-day contact and participation in social and fund-raising events. Governors receive detailed reports from the headteacher, and they meet regularly in committees, and as a full governing body, to oversee the work of the school and to evaluate progress. Teaching staff give detailed presentations about their areas of responsibility to help keep governors fully informed. Governors effectively use information gathered from their monitoring in their discussions. They apply principles of 'best value' satisfactorily when making decisions, and ensure that legal requirements are properly met.

44. School administration is efficient. It ensures that teachers are able to focus on their professional duties and are not diverted from their work by clerical or organisational tasks. The school administrator knows pupils and their families very well, deals competently with day-to-day queries, and contributes strongly to the smooth running of the school.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	*265,970.00	Balance from previous year	18,550.00
Total expenditure	235,019.00	Balance carried forward to the next	30,951.00
Expenditure per pupil	3,406.00		

**NB: the total income figure includes the balance from the previous year.*

45. The information above shows that the amount of funding brought forward into the 2005-6 financial year is unacceptably high, and well in excess of the national 'benchmark' of five per cent. However, documentation provided by the school, confirmed by discussions with the headteacher and governors, shows that the school's finances are carefully monitored. Governors are provided with regular statements of income and expenditure to help them fulfil their responsibilities properly. The increase in the 'carry forward' figure occurred for reasons which could not have been anticipated, including a reduction in costs because of changes in staffing, and a late increase in school's income from the local authority. Even though unit costs are higher than average, they are not untypical of very small schools, and therefore the school gives satisfactory value for money.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Overall, provision for children in the Reception Year is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Children respond to a stimulating learning environment.
- Teaching is good in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and ICT.
- Imaginative play is very good.
- Day-to-day planning for personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development needs to be further developed.

Commentary

46. At the time of the inspection, there were seven children in the Reception year group. Their teacher, a graduate who is working towards a formal teaching qualification, was appointed during the spring term. In a short time, she has significantly improved provision by introducing a variety of activities which encourage children to learn through play. Additionally, she has developed the outdoor area to include activities linked to all areas of learning. However, many of these activities are inadequately planned, and learning outcomes are rarely defined. The Reception teacher and the headteacher are working closely together to improve provision.

47. The current group of Reception children entered the school with attainment close to what is found nationally. By the time they move to Year 1, some of these children are likely to achieve all of the Early Learning Goals. Achievement is good overall.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Commentary

48. Overall, standards in this area of learning are good, and children achieve well. Children enjoy school. They have very good attitudes to learning and quickly respond to established routines. Their behaviour is always very good, although some of the activities prepared for them are mundane and unrelated to the 'Stepping Stones' and Early Learning Goals. The weakness in these activities is that they do not always challenge children to solve problems and think for themselves. Relationships are excellent. Children share resources amicably during activities, and wait patiently for their turns. During the inspection, they waited with suitable gravity in the 'Reception area' of their pet hospital, nursing 'sick pets' while the teacher, as receptionist, assessed the need for clinical intervention! All Foundation Stage children have good understanding of right and wrong. They participate fully in whole-school assemblies, and have good understanding of the Christian faith. However, few of the available resources are linked to other faiths and cultures.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Commentary

49. Standards in this area of learning are good, and children achieve well. Teaching is also good. Children's speaking and listening skills are above average because the teacher ensures that they understand advanced vocabulary. For instance, a child of average attainment described a toy snake he was carrying as '*a black mamba - found in the desert, and very poisonous*'. Children's reading skills are good: they know many words by sight, and are encouraged to use their knowledge of the sounds made by letters and blends of letters to help identify common words. Good activities encourage 'pretend' writing. When writing, children apply their knowledge of letter sounds to improve their spellings. They form letters correctly, but some do not hold their pencils in a comfortable grip. Work prepared for higher-attaining children is not always matched to their needs.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Commentary

50. Teaching is good. Mathematical development is well integrated with other areas of learning. For instance, children of average attainment successfully compared the lengths of bandages in their 'hospital', and the teacher introduced the concept of *longer* and *shorter*. They count objects accurately to 10, and confidently identify numbers to 15. While higher-attaining children show their abilities by recognising many numbers to 100, planning for this area of learning generally does not include enough specific activities to challenge this group. Children's mathematical language is good. For example, they understand concepts such as *heavier* and *lighter*, and a child with SEN was seen to accurately follow spoken instructions to program a robotic toy to move forwards and backwards. Children's knowledge of shapes is not as good as their knowledge of other aspects of this area of learning. Although they recognise simple two-dimensional shapes, they are often unclear about the properties of these shapes. Overall, standards in this area of learning are good, and children achieve well.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

51. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, it was not possible for all elements of this area of learning to be seen, and so no overall judgement about standards or provision can be made. Day-to-day learning is often unplanned, but much incidental learning occurs during activities. During the inspection, a parent-helper supervised children making carriers to transport their animals to the pets' hospital. She asked many good questions to stimulate their learning, but the session was inhibited by inadequate resources and insufficient written guidance. Consequently, all children used similar joining materials, and all outcomes were similar. In some areas, children's knowledge is good. For example, higher-attaining children understand that a torch will not work unless fitted with a functioning battery and bulb. The teacher makes good use of her expertise in ICT to develop children's skills. During the inspection, they confidently used a mathematics program and the interactive whiteboard. When using a robotic toy, a child of average attainment related the way in which the toy was controlled when describing how an electric wheelchair might be used.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

52. Standards in this area are average and children achieve satisfactorily. However, there is not enough evidence for an overall judgement about provision to be made. During the inspection, in a short physical activity session, children demonstrated good listening skills as they moved in response to music. They interpreted slow music gracefully, and showed good awareness of the movements of others when the tempo increased. Children have ready access to the outdoor area, and the teacher makes very good use of the limited space available. All children have good awareness of issues relating to personal safety. For instance, they know that medicines must be locked in a cabinet, and that adults retain the key. Children of all attainments show good fine motor skills when using equipment such as scissors. However, activities are not planned to extend these skills.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

53. There was not enough evidence for an overall judgement to be made on standards or provision for creative development. The class timetable does not indicate when the various elements of this area of learning are to be taught. During the inspection, children were not seen to be working with paints, pastels, or similar media. Most artwork on display contains little original work by children. Planning does not show how skills are to be developed in creative activities, or how this area of learning links with other areas. Resources for imaginative play are very good. The teacher skillfully uses resources to stimulate children's involvement, and to accelerate their learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards have improved significantly in Years 3 and 4.
- Teachers allow time in all lessons to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- Teachers' reading records are inadequately detailed.
- Teachers' marking is not rigorous enough.
- Work provided for higher-attaining pupils is not always suited to their needs.

Commentary

54. Achievement in English is good. Standards are satisfactory at the end of Year 2, and are good at the end of Year 4. Standards in the class for pupils in Years 3 and 4 have improved significantly since the previous inspection.

55. Pupils' skills in speaking and listening are good overall. Pupils are articulate: they listen attentively and respond confidently to their peers, teachers and visitors. In all areas of the curriculum, teachers' encouragement of discussion with 'talking partners' stimulates learning and ensures that all pupils contribute fully to lessons. However, teachers do not always exploit pupils' skills in speaking and listening. For example, in a satisfactory lesson seen in the Years 3 and 4, the teacher read pupils' completed work aloud, even though the pupils themselves were clearly capable of expressively reading their own work.

56. Teachers assess reading standards to be satisfactory in Year 2. However, during the inspection, three pupils at various levels of attainment were chosen by the class teacher to read to an inspector. A higher-attaining pupil read fluently and with understanding, but pupils of average and below average attainment had difficulty in reading the books selected for them by their teacher. Teachers' reading records are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 4. The records do not diagnose children's individual reading difficulties, or indicate how their achievement might be improved. Home/school books are informative, and parents contribute to their children's reading development. However, reading skills would improve if parents and pupils received specific guidance on how to overcome weaknesses and develop identified strengths.

57. Standards of reading observed during the inspection were satisfactory in Year 4. When three pupils read their current books to an inspector, a pupil of below average attainment read hesitantly; pupils of average and higher attainment read fluently. However, none of these enthusiastic readers could name or talk about the work of more than one or two authors. Throughout the school, pupils' skills in using dictionaries need to be improved. Pupils struggle to locate the second or third letter in simple words, such as *tomato* or *giraffe*. Higher-attaining pupils understand the purpose of a thesaurus. The school library is attractively set out within a limited space. The stock is in very good condition, and the selections of fiction and reference books are closely matched to pupils' needs and interests.

58. Standards in writing are average in Year 2, and above average in Year 4. In Year 2, pupils are able to use their knowledge of letter sounds and blends to help in spelling the complex words that increase their writing fluency. Too often, though, their skills are underdeveloped because words and parts of sentences are drafted for them by adult helpers. Pupils of average attainment understand some technical vocabulary, such as 'connectives' and 'speech marks'.

59. In Years 1 and 2, pupils with SEN receive good quality help during the introduction to lessons, when the classroom assistants seated with them clarify the teacher's explanations and instructions. However, in a satisfactory lesson seen, the planned activity for lower-attaining and SEN pupils was not challenging enough, since it did not require them to attempt to write their own ideas for a story ending.

60. In Year 4, standards in writing have improved significantly since the previous inspection. Pupils now make good progress, and they fully understand their targets for improvement. Although much high-quality writing is on display, work in pupils' draft books is often poorly presented. The quality of handwriting in most books is inconsistent, and presentation is variable. When pupils write in their 'special books', standards of presentation are consistently good.

61. Teaching is sound overall. Teachers have good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. However, in introductory sessions for all year groups, pupils were gathered for too long in a confined space, seated on the carpet. Teachers have attended numerous courses to improve their knowledge of the subject, and many new ideas have been put into practice in a short time. Planning is satisfactory overall, but work set for higher-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 4 is sometimes very similar to work set for pupils of average attainment. Teachers' marking is satisfactory, following the criteria set out in a new policy. Although teachers mark conscientiously, many of their corrections are ignored by pupils, and basic mistakes are repeated. This aspect has not improved since the previous inspection.

62. Overall, assessment is good. Teachers regularly assess, annotate and match pupils' work to National Curriculum levels. Group targets are set and reviewed regularly, and all pupils work towards their targets. Although teachers evaluate the outcomes of planning, their planning documents do not indicate that information from assessment is used regularly to improve teaching and learning.

63. Leadership and management are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection, when they were judged to be unsatisfactory. The headteacher, who is the subject leader, has made many improvements in a relatively short time. For example, she has structured the writing activities of all year groups. Assessments show that pupils in Year 1 work with

increasing independence in all aspects of their writing, and are now much less reliant upon adult support.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

64. Although the quality and quantity of writing has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in history, geography and religious education, adult helpers sometimes draft sentences for pupils in Year 2 instead of encouraging them to use their own words. Some literacy lessons include references to other subjects. Pupils confidently use word-processing programs to embellish their work and to provide text for their informative regular magazine.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Improvements in teaching, assessment, and leadership have resulted in better achievement in Years 3 and 4.
- Higher-attaining pupils are not always challenged enough in Year 2.
- A good emphasis is placed on investigative learning.

Commentary

65. Overall, pupils achieve well. The satisfactory achievement of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and the good achievement in Years 3 and 4 reflect differences in the quality of teaching between the two classes.

66. There are wide variations between the standards of work seen in different year groups, because of the disproportionate effect that the attainment of each individual pupil has on the group's overall performance. Standards have declined in Year 2, and are now average. This is because there are now proportionately more lower-attaining pupils in this year group than there were at the time of the last inspection. In Year 4, the above average standards have been sustained.

67. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 and 4 because the school is generally good at ensuring that they develop their skills in a logical and progressive way, and provides realisable challenges for pupils of different ages and stages of mathematical development within the mixed-age class. Throughout the school, there is a good emphasis placed on practical, investigative tasks to help reinforce understanding. The curriculum enables teachers to construct their lessons around a common theme before setting individual tasks of differing levels of complexity. This method of working means that the teacher's introduction is relevant to all pupils and that everyone can contribute to the plenary session, in which learning is reviewed at the end of the lesson. The curriculum also ensures that pupils periodically revisit different elements of the subject, but at a more advanced level. In this way, new learning is securely based on previous experience. A further important factor affecting achievement is that parents are interested in what their children are doing at school and support them in their learning at home.

68. Teaching is generally good in the class for pupils in Years 3 and 4, and satisfactory in the Year 1 and 2 class. In both classes, teachers make effective use of the potential of the interactive whiteboards to help pupils understand the concepts being taught. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher's use of the whiteboard helped illustrate the properties of a range of two-dimensional shapes. Teachers are also good at promoting pupils' skills in speaking and listening through the use of 'talking partners', as pupils are given time to discuss problems as an integral part of their mathematics lessons. Weaknesses in teaching are that there is a lack of

consistently high-level challenges for the small number of more able pupils in Year 2 and that, in both classes, teachers' marking of pupils' work does not always help them to improve. Corrections are sometimes not done, and in some cases alterations to incorrect answers are made by the teachers.

69. Pupils with SEN generally achieve well and make good progress in mathematics. They are well supported through tasks aimed at specific individual and group needs, as well as through the good work of teaching assistants, who are well prepared by teachers for their role in each lesson and are given a clear focus for their group. They help pupils to break tasks down into smaller challenges and to be successful learners.

70. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils are motivated to learn. They are aware of teachers' expectations and are interested in their learning.

71. The headteacher's good leadership and management of the subject have been instrumental in ensuring that there has been a good improvement in achievement in mathematics since the last inspection. She monitors and evaluates the quality of teaching and pupils' work throughout the school on a regular basis, and has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. The introduction of systems to track pupil's progress, and the regular assessment of pupils' attainment, have helped staff to focus well on individual needs. A particularly good feature of assessment is the target sheets which require pupils to first assess their own gains in learning before these are ratified by the teachers.

Mathematics across the curriculum

72. Pupils apply their mathematical skills satisfactorily in other subjects. For example, they use graphs and charts to record their findings in science, and they use their skills in measuring when planning and making their assignments in design and technology.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quantity and quality of resources available for pupils have improved significantly.
- A strong emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' understanding of scientific method.
- Higher-attaining pupils in Year 2 are not sufficiently challenged.

Commentary

73. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, no science lessons were seen. Judgements are based on a detailed scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work, discussions with pupils and staff, and an inspection of planning and assessment records. This inspection evidence shows that standards are not as high as those reported at the time of the last inspection, and are average in both Year 2 and Year 4.

74. Overall, pupils achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and achieve well in Years 3 and 4. There are some differences in attainment between boys and girls, but these appear to be attributable to individual differences and do not occur as a result of weaknesses in provision.

75. The curriculum is good. All required elements are covered, and throughout the school pupils carry out scientific investigations as a frequent and regular part of their work. A good emphasis is placed upon predicting the outcome of experiments, ensuring that tests are fair, using a range of methods to record findings, and evaluating and explaining the outcomes. However, differences in the way in which the subject is taught are shown clearly in pupils' books. Teaching is satisfactory in

the class for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and good in the Year 3 and 4 class. In Years 1 and 2, activities are too directed by the teacher. As a result, pupils within the same year group cover the topics in exactly the same way, and in many instances their answers are identical. Since activities are pitched at the middle ability range, the older, higher-attaining pupils make limited gains in learning. This method of working also restricts opportunities for all pupils to develop independent thinking and writing skills. Discussions with pupils in Years 3 and 4 confirmed evidence from a scrutiny of their books, which showed that pupils of all levels of attainment are suitably challenged in this class. For example, a theme about magnetic forces started with a 'stock-take', to determine pupils' prior knowledge, before being developed through opportunities for pupils to plan and conduct their own investigations.

76. Overall, there has been a good improvement in provision for science since the last inspection. The significant shortcomings in resources have been addressed, and the 'barely adequate' systems for assessing pupils have been replaced by a more structured approach to recording pupils' levels of attainment. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

No firm judgement can be made about provision in ICT because of the limited range of available evidence.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Resources are generally good, and are used satisfactorily.
- There have been good improvements in the curriculum and assessment.

Commentary

77. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, no lessons were seen. Evidence of pupils' previously completed work came from a number of different subjects, indicating the satisfactory integration of ICT with other areas of the curriculum. No overall judgements can be made about the standards attained by pupils. However, there is some evidence of satisfactory levels of attainment in pupils' use of word-processors and databases. Pupils also use the internet as a source of information about topics such as their history project on the Vikings. The only observations of ICT possible were those of pupils from Years 3 and 4 as they used individual programs to develop their skills in mathematics. These oldest pupils are confident and enthusiastic about the subject, and competently use computers to record their answers. They display good levels of skill in using the keyboard, and confidently manipulate images on screen by using the mouse. Discussions with pupils show that they are enthusiastic about their work in ICT, and that many bring a good range of skills from home.

78. Resources have been greatly improved in recent years. There is a very good ratio of pupils to computers, which are readily available in the classrooms.

79. The curriculum and systems for assessing pupils' progress have improved significantly since the last inspection. The school uses nationally recommended guidance to ensure that the National Curriculum programmes of study are now properly covered and has ensured that assessment procedures, previously judged to be ineffective, satisfactorily map out pupils' levels of attainment.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

80. Overall, satisfactory use is made of ICT to support learning in other subjects. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 used a database to record and present the results of a science investigation about the comparative stretchiness of different sorts of tights. Throughout the school, interactive whiteboards are used effectively by teachers to enhance pupils' learning.

HUMANITIES

Religious education (RE)

81. No RE lessons were seen during the inspection, and not enough evidence is available for judgements to be made about standards or provision in the subject.

82. The school satisfactorily follows the locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils in all year groups learn about Christianity and some of the major world faiths. In general, pupils' awareness of the Christian faith is adequate, but their knowledge of other world faiths is not so secure.

83. A scrutiny of previously completed work showed that pupils in Year 2 have learned stories from the Old and New Testaments. They have written extensively about visiting a church and describe its features such as the cross, lectern, font and pews. When speaking to inspectors, pupils of average attainment knew the significance of, for example, the wafer and wine in the communion service, and they accurately recalled the story of the Good Samaritan. However, although they had previously written about the importance of the Torah in the Jewish religion, none of those interviewed could remember the scroll format used in a synagogue.

84. In discussion with inspectors, pupils of average attainment in Year 4 showed good knowledge of the Easter story. They knew that Muslims pray at '*a sort of temple*' and that Ramadan is a period of fast. Their workbooks include reasonable explanations of events in the Christian calendar such as Lent, the Last Supper and the crucifixion, and also detail of some parables.

85. Religious education (RE) makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils of all ages learn that death is an important adjunct to life, equally applicable to plants, animals and people. Guided by the headteacher, they understand that grieving helps the healing process. As part of this process they have planted commemorative bulbs in their 'Garden of Remembrance'.

86. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, and the co-ordinator is aware that some improvement is necessary.

Geography and history

87. As only one history and one geography lesson were seen, it is not possible to make judgements on standards and achievement, provision, or improvement since the last inspection. In the lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in history and unsatisfactory in geography.

88. In the satisfactory history lesson seen in Years 3 and 4, pupils enthusiastically recalled their recent residential trip to York, where they learned many facts about the Vikings, including how they traded and why they invaded Britain. A geography lesson in Years 1 and 2 was unsatisfactory because learning objectives were unclear and activities had little purpose. In neither lesson were adequate visual aids used by teachers to stimulate pupils' interest.

89. Throughout the school, the history and geography curricula are adequately linked with other subjects, including ICT, design and technology, and music. In a brief observation of a music lesson linked to the topic of Vikings, pupils created an original theme using their own forms of notation.

90. Leadership and management in history and geography are satisfactory. The co-ordinators are beginning to monitor all aspects of their subjects, and have clarified in the school improvement plan their proposed next steps for improvement.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Physical education (PE)

Provision in PE is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in swimming are above average.
- The school provides pupils with good indoor facilities and resources.

Commentary

91. No firm judgement can be made about the standards attained or pupils' achievement in PE because of the narrow range of activities seen during the course of the inspection.

92. Two lessons were observed, one for pupils in Years 1 and 2, and one for Years 3 and 4. However, both of these sessions took place indoors, and no outdoor activities or swimming were seen. In both lessons, pupils generally worked hard, and in movement, balance and use of space they showed levels of skill appropriate to their age. In the lesson for Years 1 and 2, pupils' satisfactory levels of co-ordination between hand and eye enabled them to use bats and balls with reasonable control. School data relating to swimming indicates that standards in this element of the subject have been sustained at the above average level reported at the time of the last inspection. Over the past few years, most pupils in Year 4 have achieved the standard of swimming expected nationally by the end of Year 6.

93. The quality of teaching was good in one of the two lessons seen and satisfactory in the other. Lessons are planned satisfactorily and run smoothly because of the high quality of relationships between teachers and their pupils, and the pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. Where teaching was good, the teacher's modelling of correct techniques, together with very clear explanations, helped pupils to make good progress in developing their skills. In one of the lessons, much better use could have been made of the presence of a classroom assistant; and in both sessions teachers' skills in assessing pupils' performance were underdeveloped.

94. With the completion of the spacious school hall and the provision of good quality large apparatus and small equipment, there has been a significant improvement in the school's facilities for PE. In addition, a good range of after-school activities helps to enrich the curriculum.

Art and design, design and technology and music

95. No judgements can be made about standards or the quality of provision in art and design, design and technology, or music, because no teaching was seen in any of these subjects and there was little evidence of pupils' previously completed work.

96. The few samples of work available in art and design were of average quality overall in terms of their composition, with higher-attaining pupils showing a very good sense of perspective and proportion and a good eye for detail. Discussions with pupils showed that they are given experience in using a reasonable range of media. In design and technology (DT), satisfactory emphasis is placed on the key elements of designing, making, and evaluating products. In Years 3 and 4, these range from food technology investigations on different types of sandwiches to the production of photograph frames. The only evidence of music was the satisfactory quality of pupils' singing in assemblies, and the good standard achieved by pupils attending an after-school session. There was little recorded evidence of pupils' previous work, such as composition; however, a scrutiny of planning confirmed that the required breadth of the curriculum is covered. The school's provision for art and music is enriched through after-school clubs for art, the choir, and lunchtime recorder clubs. Peripatetic instrumental tuition is provided for some pupils.

97. The school's provision in art and music does not make enough of a contribution to pupils' cultural development because there is no systematic approach to the development of pupils' skills in the appreciation of these subjects. Pupils interviewed had very little knowledge of famous artists, with the exception of Vincent Van Gogh and Claude Monet, and there is limited evidence of the development of pupils' knowledge of non-western art. Pupils also had little knowledge of famous composers.

98. The school complies with requirements for assessment in both art and DT in that pupils' progress is identified through 'best fit' judgements which are made and recorded by teachers at the end of each year. However, assessments in art are not securely based on records of pupils' progress in the development of key learning in these subjects. This situation occurs because work to map out what is to be expected of pupils in terms of their acquisition of skills is yet to be completed. In addition, there is no evidence to show that the 'best fit' assessments feed into the teachers' planning or help the pupils to know how they can improve.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

99. Pupils are very successfully learning to play a role as members of their school community, and they have a very good understanding of the needs of some sections of the wider community through their fund-raising activities. The school's new programme of work includes a wide range of topics. Although no lessons were seen, and no written work was available, discussion with pupils indicates that they have a very good understanding of moral and social issues affecting their own lives and the lives of others. They are well informed about the need for rules, and have a good grasp of the consequences of anti-social behaviour. They have an excellent understanding of citizenship related to school life. They conduct democratic elections for school council places and, as councillors, use their initiative very well in administering a monthly cash draw that raises hundreds of pounds each year for their discretionary expenditure.

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	3
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	3
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
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).