

INSPECTION REPORT

HOPPING HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Northampton

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121927

Headteacher: Mrs V Newton

Lead inspector: Ian Knight

Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th June 2005

Inspection number: 267070

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 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	350 full time, 75 children attend the Nursery part time
School address:	Pendle Road Duston Northampton Northamptonshire
Postcode:	NN5 6DT
Telephone number:	01604 751625
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Wright
Date of previous inspection:	30 th November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Hopping Hill Primary School is a large primary school serving the Duston area of Northampton. Until two years ago it was a lower school with pupils up to age 9, but it then changed character and is now a primary school. The current group of Year 6 pupils is the first such group the school has had. In September 2004, a Designated Special Provision for children with speech and language difficulties was opened, and it currently provides for five children in the Nursery. Almost all pupils are white British. A few are of Bangladeshi, Black Caribbean, Black African or mixed backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, including those with a statement of special need, is about average. The needs identified include moderate and severe learning difficulties, social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, speech and communication difficulties, physical difficulties and hearing impairment. The socio-economic background of the pupils has changed since the last inspection, with some 40 per cent of pupils now coming from areas of significant social disadvantage. The attainment of pupils on entry has fallen and is now average overall, although a significant minority of pupils arrive with communication and language skills at a lower level than normally expected.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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27058	Kathleen Cannon	<i>Team inspector</i>	Religious education Modern foreign languages
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a good school. Good teaching and learning, based on a good curriculum, ensure that pupils achieve well. Children in the Foundation Stage, and in the Designated Special Provision for pupils with speech and language difficulties (DSP), achieve very well. Pupils show good attitudes and behaviour. The headteacher provides very good leadership, supported well by other staff. The school is managed well. This is achieved at a cost within the average range, ensuring that the school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Staff really care about children, and ceaselessly promote their confidence, self-esteem and independence.
- Children in the Foundation Stage get a flying start to their education because of the very good provision.
- Teaching throughout the school is good. However, the proportion of very good teaching is not consistently high across the school.
- Children in the DSP achieve very well because the programmes they follow are tailored closely to their needs.
- The headteacher's very clear vision for the school has enabled the transition from a lower school to a primary school to be achieved smoothly.
- The highest attaining pupils are not consistently challenged to achieve their very best.

At the time of the last inspection, the school was a lower school and pupils left at the end of Year 4. The local authority has reorganised its system, and the school has changed to a primary school over the last four years. This is the first year the school has had a Year 6 group in the school. The DSP opened only last September. The school has made good progress in establishing itself in its new form. In addition, the key issues raised in the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The overall quality of teaching has improved, and achievement has been maintained, despite the need to review most areas of the school's work during this time of transition. The school has made good progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Achievement in the school is good. Achievement is already satisfactory in Years 5 and 6, even though these are the first pupils the school has had in this age range. Pupils in the DSP achieve very well because they have carefully tailored programmes of work. Other pupils with special educational needs (SEN) also achieve well. However, the most able pupils do not consistently have work that is closely matched to their needs and, consequently, they achieve only satisfactorily. Children in the Foundation Stage are on course to attain all of the Early Learning Goals, and to exceed them in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy. In Year 2, standards are in line with expectations in reading, writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT), and above expectations in religious education. Standards are also above expectations in religious education in Year 6, and in line with expectations in the other subjects noted above. The other subjects were not a focus of this inspection, and no secure judgements about standards and achievement can be made.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are progressing very well. Pupils have good attitudes to work and behave well. Children in the Foundation Stage have very good attitudes and behaviour. Attendance is good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, especially in terms of their respect for others, and for their appreciation of their own and others' cultural traditions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are also good.

Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage and in the DSP, giving pupils a firm foundation to their learning. In the rest of the school, teaching is good, although the proportion of very good teaching is not consistent across the school. Very good relationships between adults and pupils mean that pupils want to learn and to please their teachers; this ensures that lessons proceed in an atmosphere of quiet industry. Learning support assistants and nursery nurses are used well, especially in Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, to provide support and encouragement to those who need a little extra help. Planning generally includes a range of tasks to meet the needs of different groups in the class, but this is less consistent for the most able. The quality of marking in the school is especially good, and this gives pupils a good understanding of how they are doing. However, this is not always translated into clear targets for improvement, nor to enable individuals to know what to do to get better.

The curriculum is good, and very good in the Foundation Stage. It is enhanced very well by clubs, visits and visitors to the school. Accommodation and resources are good. The school ensures pupils' care, welfare, health and safety well. It provides good support, advice and guidance, and involves pupils well in the school's work, valuing and acting on their views to good effect. Good links are maintained with parents and the community. The links with other schools are very good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed well. The headteacher provides very good leadership which has enabled the school to maintain its distinctive ethos during a time of considerable change. Other key staff provide good leadership in support of the headteacher, sharing her vision and values. The school is managed well. Governance of the school is good. All statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents and pupils alike are very satisfied with the school. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy coming to school, and feel that the teaching is good. A few have some concerns about behaviour and bullying, though these were found by the inspection team to be unfounded. Pupils said that lessons are interesting, and that although they are expected to work hard they get help when they need it.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school to reach that of the best.
- Ensure that tasks planned for the most able challenge them consistently.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement in Years 1 to 4 is good, and for pupils in Years 5 and 6 it is satisfactory. Children in the Foundation Stage and the DSP achieve very well. Standards are in line with expectations in most subjects in Years 2 and 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage because of the very good provision there.
- Good achievement continues in Years 1 to 4.
- The school's successful transition from a lower school to primary status has been managed well, and pupils in Years 5 and 6 are already achieving satisfactorily.
- Pupils in the newly constituted DSP achieve very well.
- The highest attaining pupils, whilst achieving satisfactorily, are not always challenged beyond their comfort zone.

Commentary

1. In the National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 in 2004, the latest for which national comparisons are available, standards in the school were below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. If the comparison is restricted only to those schools with a similar intake, based on the uptake of free school meals, a similar picture is painted in reading and writing, but standards in mathematics are now well below average. This was largely because few pupils gained the higher Level 3. The school's analysis shows that this group of pupils was weaker in mathematics on entry, and that this year group had a higher than average proportion of pupils within it with SEN. These assertions are confirmed by the inspection team. The preliminary results for the 2005 tests show a significant improvement in mathematics, especially in terms of those gaining the higher Level 3. Recent results have not improved in line with the national picture in reading and mathematics. There is clear evidence, however, that the school's intake has changed considerably over that time, and attainment on entry to the school is now lower than it was at the time of the last inspection. There are no tests in the other core subject, science, but teachers' own assessments in 2004 showed standards to be below average, with similar results in 2005.

2. The table summarises the standards in the school in 2004. One 'point' represents approximately the progress expected in one term. The expected Level 2 is represented by 15 points and the higher Level 3 is represented by 21 points.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	15.3 (16.0)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	14.6 (14.8)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.4 (16.5)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 55 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

3. The school was originally a lower school, taking pupils only up to Year 4. The local authority took the decision to reorganise its provision, and this has resulted in Hopping Hill becoming a primary school, taking pupils to Year 6. This year the school had its full complement of year groups for the first time, so no National Curriculum test results for 2004 for pupils in Year 6 are currently

available for comparison. Of course, test results only ever give part of the picture; at best, they refer to a few subjects in only two year groups. In particular, they give few clues about *achievement*; that is, are pupils doing as well as they should? Inspection evidence can answer some of these questions.

4. Children enter the Nursery with standards that are about average, although a significant minority arrive with low attainment. This represents a decline since the previous inspection. Because of the very good provision, children attain the Early Learning Goals in all areas, and exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development and in the area of communication, language and literacy. The adult team in the Foundation Stage seizes all opportunities to develop these areas, with the result that children achieve very well overall.

5. Good achievement continues in Years 1 to 4. The school's past as a lower school means that it has considerable experience and expertise with pupils of this age. In Year 2, standards are in line with expectations in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT. Standards are above the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus in religious education because of the good and knowledgeable teaching that pupils receive. Most pupils are challenged well in lessons, and this leads to the good achievement. However, the most able are not consistently challenged beyond their comfort zone, and their achievement is satisfactory as a result.

6. The school has managed the transition to primary status effectively. Schemes of work have been amended, and new staff have joined the school to cater for Years 5 and 6. This has been a time of considerable upheaval for these pupils: for example, pupils in Year 6 have, unusually, been the oldest in the school for three years. The good job the school has done to ensure they get the best deal they can means that pupils in Years 5 and 6 are already achieving satisfactorily. Standards in Year 6 in English, mathematics, science and ICT are in line with expectations, and standards in religious education are above expectations. In Years 5 and 6 achievement in these areas is satisfactory. However, planning does not consistently challenge the highest attainers. For example, in science the proportion of pupils working within the higher Level 5 is below that which would normally be expected.

7. The majority of pupils with SEN achieve well in relation to their prior attainment because, during many lessons, these pupils are well supported by the learning support assistants. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils with SEN did not do as well as their peers. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are very well supported by the adults who are designated to help them. As a result, all pupils with SEN take part in all activities and achieve well.

8. Pupils in the DSP achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment because they consistently receive very good quality support from the visiting speech therapist and the nursery nurse who works with them. In addition, all other adults who work in the Nursery support them very well when they join in activities involving all the children; this is because they are all very aware of their individual needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

9. Pupils' attitudes to school and their behaviour are good overall. Their personal development is very good, and is supported by very good moral and cultural education and effective spiritual and social education. Pupils' attendance and punctuality are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children get a flying start to school in the Nursery and Reception classes, and they quickly develop very good attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour throughout the school are good, and they want to take part in the school's many stimulating activities.
- The school's high expectations for behaviour raise pupils' self-esteem, and allow them to build very good relationships.

- Pupils' very good personal development improves their independence and maturity significantly.
- The attendance and punctuality of most pupils are above average.

Commentary

10. The staff's empathy with the children enables those new to the Nursery to rapidly gain confidence and independence. The children make friends easily, work together well, and learn to share resources. In the Reception class their progress is consolidated, and their attitudes and behaviour remain consistently very good. They are attentive to their teachers and show happiness in 'having a go' at the many stimulating activities on offer. Throughout the Foundation Stage, very good relationships are to the fore, and children's progress in achieving the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development is very good, with the result that they are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

11. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are eager to come to school and they enjoy the work and activities. Their attitudes are consistently good and, when teaching is strong, pupils want to try hard and respond well to teachers' questions. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 often show very good attitudes to work. Pupils with the potential for challenging behaviour are excited by the tasks on offer, and present little threat to the calm atmosphere of classrooms. Pupils are willing to take responsibility for classroom and whole-school duties. They enthusiastically participate in clubs and activities, and enjoy singing in assemblies.

12. The school has very high expectations for pupils' behaviour, which is consistently good in all classes. It is often very good in Years 3 and 4. Challenging behaviour is seldom an issue, as most teachers are very skilled in behaviour strategies and many lessons flow briskly and with flair. Around the school, pupils are generally calm and well ordered, and good behaviour is the norm. The pupil questionnaire shows that pupils have real respect for the school, and for most pupils it is a haven of security and belonging. Pupils successfully build very good relationships with the staff and each other. They trust the headteacher and staff, and confide their personal anxieties, and pupils with problems are confident in seeking out an adult with whom to have a calming conversation. They learn tolerance for each other, and most pupils relax and play safely together without bullying or harassment being significant issues. The school has not excluded any pupils during the last three years.

13. Pupils with SEN respond positively to the support they receive and, as a result, develop good attitudes to learning. The children in the DSP behave very well and quickly develop very good relationships with all adults who work with them in the Nursery.

14. Pupils' very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural education successfully supports the school's underlying aims for building their self-esteem, confidence and independence in preparation for the next school. Good personal, social and health education (PSHE) is backed by colourful displays, which challenge pupils to think about their place in the school and the modern world. Collective worship meets statutory requirements, and pupils learn about and have respect for the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths. Thought-provoking science lessons stimulate pupils' knowledge of the world about them, and assemblies encourage pupils to consider events in their life such as 'growing up and moving on', or the importance of the family. From the Nursery onwards, pupils learn the difference between right and wrong and have a very good awareness of the behaviour boundaries, so that self-discipline is strong. The school's ethos is developing pupils' self-esteem and confidence within the context of teamwork. The school is competitive in inter-school competitions. Pupils take responsibility through the school council and the playground buddy system. Behaviour rewards promote very good relationships, and lunchtimes are happy, social occasions where pupils can mix easily with each other. Pupils have a strong awareness of their own communities, through a wide range of visitors and visits. They benefit from contact with the local church. Pupils are experiencing a range of other cultures from the few pupils from minority ethnic communities in the school, and from their classroom studies of a range of contrasting countries.

15. Despite a small decline in attendance since the last inspection, it remains above the national average. The school and parents combine well together to ensure that unauthorised absence and in-term holidays are kept to a minimum. The school's attendance procedures are thorough and motivating for pupils. The education welfare officer is effectively involved with the very few pupils with poor attendance. Lessons begin on time, and the punctuality of pupils is a distinctive feature of the school.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.6	School data	0
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Teaching and learning are good. The school provides a good curriculum, enhanced very well by many other activities. Pupils are well cared for, and provision for their welfare, health and safety is good. The school maintains good links with parents and the community and very good links with other schools.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage and in the DSP, and good elsewhere. Good assessment procedures are in use and the data they provide is used soundly to meet pupils' needs. Very good marking of pupils' work means they have a good understanding of how well they are doing, but clear targets for improvements are not always provided.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good because staff really understand the needs of young learners.
- Teaching in the DSP is very good.
- Learning support assistants and nursery nurses make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Lessons take place in an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust.
- The proportion of very good teaching is not consistently high across the whole school.
- Marking of completed work is very good, so that pupils have a clear idea of how well they are doing.
- The use of targets to help pupils know what they need to do next to improve is not rigorous enough.
- Planned tasks do not always closely match the needs of the higher attaining pupils.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 47 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	11 (23%)	25 (53%)	9 (19%)	1 (2%)	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.

16. Children in the Foundation Stage get a flying start to their education. Half of all the very good or better lessons observed were seen there. They reflect a strong team spirit between teachers and other adults, and a very good understanding of the curriculum and the needs of young learners. The curriculum is very well designed with these needs in mind, and all adults share the same vision of how a good Foundation Stage should be conducted. Rigorous assessment procedures are used

very well to track individuals and to plan work around their needs. Learning support assistants are deployed outstandingly well to ensure that all children get the most out of the very well planned activities on offer.

17. Teachers are very aware of the pupils with SEN in their classes. Pupils who have individual education plans (IEPs) are well supported by the learning support assistants in many lessons and as a result achieve well. Although planning is usually well matched to pupils' individual needs, occasionally it is not. On these few occasions, pupils do not do as well as they could do, and achieve too little during the lesson.

18. The quality of teaching for the five children in the DSP is very good. The visiting speech therapist and the nursery nurse who oversees what they do during their time in school support these children very effectively. All activities are very well planned to meet the needs of each child, and resources are used interestingly to promote learning. For example, the nursery nurse gave very good quality support as she worked with one child who was cutting up pieces of bread. No opportunities were missed to develop cutting skills, social skills or language development. As a result, learning was very good. The child began to copy what he heard and to use words such as 'snip', 'white' and 'brown' as he cut up the slices of white and brown bread. Relationships between all adults who work in the Nursery and the children are very good. Although still young, these children know that they need to listen and look and concentrate on what they are doing, and they all respond very well to this challenge.

19. As noted above, learning support assistants and nursery nurses make an outstanding contribution to learning in the Foundation Stage and in the DSP. Elsewhere in the school, they also make a valuable contribution, sitting alongside diffident pupils, discreetly paraphrasing the teacher's words, and acting as an audience for those who lack the confidence to speak in front of the whole class. In group tasks, they make effective use of open questioning and constantly work to help pupils improve and make the best possible progress.

20. The atmosphere in the majority of lessons is one of calm industry. This is because the school is successful in building very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults; the pupils really want to please their teachers. As a result, teachers can concentrate on their principal role: to teach! Learning proceeds at a good pace without time being lost dealing with behavioural issues, and pupils make good progress as a result.

21. The school was previously a lower school, and it continues to have particular expertise in the teaching of pupils up to Year 4, with good proportions of lessons being judged as good or very good. This generates the good achievement in Years 1 to 4. The school has had to change considerably over the last few years as it has amended the curriculum to include Years 5 and 6 and has taken on new staff. The difficult task of expanding in this way whilst maintaining the essential ethos of the former school has been managed effectively. The level of effectiveness is currently under review in the school. Because of this transitional period, not as much very good teaching was observed in Years 5 and 6 as in Years 1 to 4, and this means that pupils here currently achieve satisfactorily rather than well. Having successfully integrated Years 5 and 6 into the school's social ethos, it is necessary to ensure that their achievement matches that of the rest of the school, and that pupils experience more lessons that are good or very good, as occurs elsewhere in the school.

22. A very good feature of teaching is the use of positive marking that makes clear how well the pupil is doing. The marking is evaluative and gives clear pointers as to what the next step might be. It recognises pupils' achievements whilst at the same time reinforcing any areas that need extra work. This enables pupils to have a good idea of how well they are progressing. However, although there is some use of targets, for example in English books, these are not used rigorously enough, nor referred to consistently enough to ensure that pupils have a real idea of their potential and what they need to do to achieve it.

23. Lessons are generally well planned and meet the needs of most pupils. However, in a few lessons, the work presented to the highest attainers was not challenging enough for them to make the best possible progress. As a result, in a few lessons these pupils did not work to capacity, and made less progress than they could have done.

The curriculum

The school provides a curriculum which is good overall, and of sufficient breadth and balance to meet the needs of the pupils and the requirements of the National Curriculum. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. There are also very good opportunities for enrichment of the curriculum through the use of visits and visitors, and a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are very good in the Foundation Stage, and good overall in the rest of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good and improving links between subjects make learning more interesting and relevant to pupils.
- A good match of teachers and support staff to the needs of pupils helps to promote good learning and to the very good relationships between pupils and staff.
- The school makes very good provision for extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors.
- Accommodation in the Foundation Stage is very good, but it is no better than satisfactory in the rest of the school.

Commentary

24. The curriculum overall is good, and meets the needs of all pupils in all areas of the National Curriculum, religious education, and PSHE.

25. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. There is a very good balance of exciting and interesting activities available to children, chosen and directed by the teachers, by other adults or by the children themselves. As a result, children learn at a good rate and achieve well in most areas of learning, and very well in some.

26. The school has built well on its programme of themes or topics to promote the efficient and effective use of links between subjects. The recent transition to primary school status has meant that the school has had to review provision for pupils in the 'new' Years 5 and 6. The co-ordinators for this review have worked hard and successfully to hone the curriculum to pupils' needs, and to plan for economic use of time and content in its organisation. This helps to make the teaching more interesting and relevant to the pupils, and they draw on skills learnt in one subject to enhance their learning in others. Good examples are in Key Stage 2, where pupils used art as a vehicle for displaying historical themes to do with the Ancient Egyptians, and to make attractive jewellery in the style of the Egyptian Pharaohs.

27. The provision for pupils with SEN is good and enables them to achieve well. Pupils with specific difficulties receive very good quality support from the adults who work with them, which enables them to take part in all curricular opportunities and also to achieve well. The procedure for identifying and assessing pupils with SEN is good, and all pupils have IEPs with individual targets. However, the targets on these plans are sometimes not specific enough, and this makes the rate of progress difficult to measure. These targets could be promoted more during lessons and in the marking of pupils' work. Reviews are completed regularly, and parents are appropriately informed.

28. The provision for the pupils in the DSP is very good. All adults who work in the Nursery are very aware of the individual needs of children and, as a result, they are very well integrated into all activities. The visiting speech therapist and the nursery nurse who works closely with the children develop a carefully tailored curriculum to suit each child's individual needs. Consequently, these children achieve very well, in particular in relation to developing their speech and language skills.

29. The committed team of able teachers in the school is well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Learning support assistants and nursery nurses have clearly defined roles, work well with teachers and have a good effect on pupils' learning. Indeed, it is noticeable how well learning support assistants take part in lessons, such as being active in physical education lessons, or leading groups of pupils in science or design and technology investigations.

30. A broad range of well planned visits and visitors supports the curriculum very well across the school. Visits include a recent, and first, residential visit by Year 6 pupils to the Norfolk coast, and visits by pupils from various age groups to local museums, for example, to enhance learning about space and space travel, the Second World War, and Tudor life. Evidence of pupils' work seen in the school confirms the value of such visits to their learning. Similarly, visits to the school by specialists, such as in dance or art, add a further dimension to curricular provision. The curriculum is also enhanced, and most parents agree, by a very good range of extra-curricular and sporting activities. Notably, in addition to the more usual activities that are normally expected and enjoyed, such as an art club, computer club and a choir, the school provides more unusual activities, such as golf, gardening and African drumming. There is even a family swimming club to which parents are invited.

31. The accommodation and resources for the Foundation Stage are very good since they ideally provide for the full range of learning areas, and children have plenty of space and equipment to learn both co-operatively and independently. The resources in the rest of the school are good, but although the accommodation is used efficiently it is only satisfactory overall. This is because access to different parts of the school is restricted at times; for example when there are classes in the hall. Some of the restriction is brought about by the increase in pupil numbers as the school grew to primary status. Current planning for extensions to the building includes better access throughout.

Care, guidance and support

The school is effective in caring for pupils' welfare and health and safety. It provides them with good support and guidance, and involves them effectively in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school is effective in nurturing pupils; as a result, they are included in, and they enjoy, the many stimulating activities that are on offer.
- Outside agencies support the school well in the implementation of its effective support, guidance, and welfare procedures.
- The staff's very thorough knowledge of all pupils helps to ensure that they achieve their potential.
- Pupils settle very well into the school family, quickly make friends, and enjoy learning.
- Pupils realise that their ideas are important and that their contributions will make a difference to school life.

Commentary

32. The care of pupils has been maintained as a strong feature of the school since the last inspection. The school is well resourced, which greatly contributes to the achievement of all pupils, including the few with physical disabilities. The experienced headteacher is very dedicated to her welfare and pastoral duties, and all the staff are committed to providing a stable and caring environment for all pupils, irrespective of their background in the local community. The headteacher

is committed to an open door policy for pupils, and staff have a very good knowledge of all pupils, and know the names of every one. All staff realise that they often need to help parents in order to ensure that children are effectively supported. Parents approve of the school's efforts to care for their children and the support they receive. All pupils with SEN are well cared for and receive good quality support in lessons. External agencies are used well to support their needs. Those with specific SEN, including those in the DSP, are very well cared for. They are sensitively supported very well during their time in school, and this enables them to achieve well. All adults who work with these older pupils, and with the younger children in the Nursery, are extremely aware of their personal and social needs as well as their learning difficulties.

33. Pupils' first experience of the school's culture of high expectations for their care is through the very good behaviour procedures. These are never oppressive. They emphasise praise and expectation, and motivate pupils through the 'Child of the Day' award and the 'Silver Trophy' award. Staff act as very good role models, and they have a positive impact on all pupils, including those with behavioural problems. Procedures to ensure that pupils attend school are good, and known problem families are telephoned on the first day of their children's absence. The headteacher and staff give the highest priority to the pastoral care of all pupils. All staff are at ease in the company of their pupils, and pupils feel totally secure that they can trust their teachers and other adults to listen with a sympathetic ear to their problems and anxieties. Pupils talk easily about their feeling of happiness in the school and the fun of learning in a safe environment where they have firm friends.

34. The headteacher and governors have a sufficient range of updated and well developed policies, which are put into practice effectively and well supported by staff training. However, the school would benefit from all responsible named governors being more closely associated with their allocated areas of responsibility. The school receives good support from outside professional agencies for attendance, child protection, and health promotion issues, including sex education. The community police regularly attend the school.

35. Health and safety procedures are effective under the critical guidance of the headteacher. Activity risk assessments are in place, and the disability audit team review the school annually. The school is safe, though it is difficult to analyse minor accidents since the school does not have centralised records. Medical procedures are satisfactory and there are enough trained first aiders on the site. Child protection procedures are good, and conform to local education authority (LEA) guidelines. All staff receive annual awareness training, and the experienced headteacher has a very good understanding of gaining help from local agencies. The school ensures that pupils are able to protect themselves, for example through displaying the Childline telephone number. The school is mindful of the potential risks to pupils and ensures a careful handover of pupils at the end of the school day.

36. The arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in academic subjects are good. Teachers identify pupils with SEN and they develop good IEPs with pupils and parents. The tracking of the personal development of vulnerable pupils is thorough. There is good feedback and discussion of issues between the teachers and the headteacher at internal staff meetings, and this is well supported by analyses of vulnerable pupils' needs. However, the collection of personal development information for other pupils relies on the individual teacher and is more informal.

37. The induction of pupils new to the school is very effective. Pupils and parents are made to feel welcome throughout the school, and they are soon knowledgeable about school routines. In the Foundation Stage, staff undertake home visits. A few pupils join the school later in the year, and the staff are very caring with both pupils and parents so as to involve them in school life quickly and sensitively. Older pupils act as buddies and link the newcomers to new friends. Parents appreciate the school's efforts in giving their child a successful fresh start when there have been problems at another school.

38. The school treats pupils with respect, and most pupils feel that teachers listen to them and that they are treated fairly. The school council discusses meaningful issues with the governing body and staff. The 'playground friends' are a developing force in reducing aggressive behaviour in the playground by involving pupils in interesting activities. Older pupils have an awareness of their

group academic targets and are starting to believe that they can influence their performance through the teachers' very good marking of work.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Overall, parents are very satisfied with the school. The school has good links with parents. It has good links with the local community and very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The great majority of parents are very satisfied with the school and value the staff's commitment and fairness.
- The headteacher and staff try hard to involve parents in the life of the school and ensure their support.
- All pupils benefit greatly from the school's good links with the community.
- The school has very good relationships with other primary and local secondary schools, and these assists the education of the pupils.

Commentary

39. The experienced headteacher gives a very high priority to the school's relationships with parents and is aware that the school now serves a more diverse community than was the case at the last inspection. She is mindful that some parents have problems in their disadvantaged community, and that some may have had poor experiences of education in the past, or feel challenged by their own lack of skills. Parents are very satisfied with the school and have adjusted well to the change to primary school status. They are especially appreciative of the commitment of the headteacher and teachers, and of the fact that their children are happy at school. They appreciate the good start that their children make in their school lives. Complaints are minimal and parental problems are frequently anticipated by the headteacher and effectively dealt with. The inspection team agrees with the parents' favourable view of the school.

40. The aims of the school, and its daily actions, make it obvious that it wants parents to be fully involved. The school works hard to maintain good links, but parental responses vary greatly. Most parents have signed the home/school agreement, and parents support the school well through their children's good attendance and punctuality. There is a small group of parent helpers, and four enthusiastic parent governors are in place and serving the school well. Most parents attend progress evenings, but other initiatives, including information evenings, have been poorly attended. The friends' association raises valuable funds. The school tries hard to communicate effectively with parents. The prospectus and annual governors' report contain all essential information and represent the school's character well. They are written in a straightforward and accessible style. Annual reports to parents give informative statements of what children can do in all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. They do not, however, contain a review of past academic targets, although they do state targets for the future in key subjects. Written feedback from parents is sought, but pupils are not used to contributing to their reports. Most parents feel comfortable with the verbal feedback opportunities they have with the school on their children's progress.

41. Although most parents feel that their role as a parent is valued and respected, it has not yet been converted into a significant partnership in the case of a few parents. Despite the school's good efforts to date, some parents are content to be passive partners with the school and are not a positive force in their children's education. Some parents' contributions to homework are limited both in quality and quantity. The school continues to seek the views of parents through a bi-annual questionnaire, but the headteacher realises she will gain greater feedback from more reticent parents through talking to them and having an open-door policy.

42. Parents of all pupils with SEN are kept well informed and are made welcome into school at all times. The children in the DSP have home/school diaries, which provide daily links between the

school and home. These are particularly useful because most of these children travel to school by taxi. There are very good links between the school and the local special school.

43. Links with the local community have developed well. They benefit pupils both inside and outside the classroom and give them a sense of identity and pride in their community. The school uses the local area well to extend the life experiences of the pupils. Relationships with the local church are strong, and the vicar is a governor of the school. Elderly neighbours attend the school every month, and the school has a significant relationship with the residential home for the elderly. The school is well used by community organisations, including professional sports groups who give the pupils free coaching.

44. The school has built very good links with other schools. The on-site pre-school has a very good relationship with the Nursery. The very strong links with the excellence cluster of primary schools help in the development of staff, educational ideas and the sharing of resources. The link with a local special school enables two disabled pupils to spend two days a week in the school. Since gaining pupils in Year 6, the school has developed very good relationships with local secondary schools through the Northampton Town Learning Partnership. The links enable pupils to take part in drama, art and music organised at a regional level. Pupils transfer to the secondary schools safe in the knowledge that their needs have been thoroughly communicated to their new teachers, and that they will have a good start in their new surroundings

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is led and managed well overall. The headteacher provides very good personal leadership, supported well by her colleagues. The school is managed well. Governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good leadership from the headteacher, supported by other staff, has enabled the smooth transition from a lower school to a primary school, with an attached DSP.
- The governing body is well informed and has helped to carry out its duties well through the innovative use of staff/governor workshops.
- The school reviews its own work effectively but does not yet make the most efficient use of the data collected.
- Financial planning is effectively supporting the planned future development of the school.

Commentary

45. At the time of the last inspection, the school was a well established lower school, and the leadership of the headteacher was described as very good. Since then, the school has had to address significant change. The nature of the school's intake has changed to a more disadvantaged one, and children now arrive in the Nursery with fewer social and communication skills than was previously the case. The school has successfully addressed this by reviewing and modifying the curriculum on offer and has thus ensured that provision for these children is very good and will give them a flying start to their education. Alongside the changes in the intake, the school itself has changed character to become a primary school. The entire process has taken some four years and the school has been fully involved throughout that process. The necessary changes to curricula, the introduction of new levels of responsibility for older pupils, and the induction of new staff to the school has been managed effectively, aided by the headteacher's very clear vision of how a school should be, a vision shared by all members of the school community. As a result, although some review is needed to ensure that the two 'new' year groups, Years 5 and 6, achieve as well as all others in the school, this transition has been managed well. In addition to these major changes, the school became the host to the DSP in September. The introduction of this and its absorption into the school's ethos has similarly been managed well. The nursery nurse who manages the DSP is a very good practitioner who is very aware of the specific curriculum that is

needed for these children. All adults in the Nursery work very well together to achieve this. In addition, they are very well supported by the visiting speech therapist. This consistent approach to learning, which has only recently been established, enables these children with speech and language difficulties to integrate very well into all activities offered in the Nursery and results in their achieving very well.

46. Of course, one person alone cannot achieve the smooth management of change single-handedly. The school thought carefully about how its management structure could best reflect its changed situation. As a result, assistant headteachers were appointed to support the headteacher and her deputy in this process. They have clear responsibilities and share the same vision for the school. Delegation has been real and effective. Subject leaders have taken a positive stance to ensure continuity of the curriculum in their areas of responsibility. The leadership and management of SEN are good. The co-ordinator is a good teacher who has a clear idea of how pupils with difficulties learn. She has clear systems in place that all adults who work with pupils with SEN clearly understand. As a result, the day-to-day procedures run smoothly. She is aware that the next step is to develop an effective monitoring system to show how well pupils with SEN achieve in all areas of the curriculum.

47. The governing body knows the school well and has a good view of its strategic development. It, too, has been closely involved in the management of change. It does not have the usual committee structure but works very closely alongside staff in staff/governor workshops. These regular meetings are the conduit through which the governors gain most information about the school, as well as contributing to its development. The prioritisation of the school improvement plan takes place largely in this forum, as does challenge about the school's work. One positive outcome is the good relationships and mutual respect evident between staff and governors. This enables governors to visit the school and join in and monitor lessons in a very natural and informal way, whilst maintaining their duty to understand the school's strengths and weaknesses and shape its direction.

48. Senior managers and subject leaders regularly check the quality of the school's work through an analysis of completed work and, less frequently, by visits to lessons, which are carried out by the headteacher and her deputy. These activities result in perceptive written reports of high quality, addressed to the individuals concerned and, in more general terms, to the staff as a whole. Data from assessments on pupils is collected and pupils' progress can be identified. However, the rigorous identification of apparent underachievement from this data is not as well developed and is a factor in the lack of challenge for higher attainers that was seen in some lessons.

49. The headteacher and the chair of governors have a good understanding of the school's financial position. They have a long-defined strategy to operate the school with two classes for each year group and not to implement mixed-age classes, despite the unfavourable pupil admission number. They have been cautious and prudent in their budgeting of school staff and resources to the number of pupils. However, they have been purposeful in maintaining extra pupils in each year group, and consequently gaining extra income and accumulating large and increasing financial reserves for the building of classrooms to replace the present temporary buildings. The school improvement plan is well resourced, and pupils' education has been enhanced whilst this dual strategy has been pursued. The school applies the principles of best value well to support the dual strategy, but these are mostly practised through the efforts of the headteacher and chair of governors. The costs of educating each pupil are below the national average for schools, and the costs of specific areas are also below national averages, as a result of the experienced headteacher's recruitment strategies. Extra income has been generated through the headteacher's ability to gain grants or train college students.

50. When the pupils' good achievements and good standards, the good quality of education, the good leadership and management of the school, the good improvement secured since the last inspection, and the very good ethos of the school are all considered against the cost of educating each pupil, the school gives good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,003,000
Total expenditure	883,466
Expenditure per pupil	2,381

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	224,540
Balance carried forward to the next	344,074

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. When they start in the Nursery, soon after they are three, they are thoroughly assessed, and detailed records show that individual learning is carefully tracked. Attainment overall is average at this point, but there is a significant minority whose attainment is poor or below average. Most children enter the Reception classes with attainment that is above what is normally expected in most areas of learning. They achieve well in four of the six areas of learning, and very well in two of them. This is the result of the very good organisation, very good teaching and the monitoring of children's progress and of their learning needs, through the Nursery and Reception classes. This information is very well used to plan challenging and enjoyable activities. Impressive features of the Foundation Stage are the high quality and effectiveness of the adult team.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well and become self-confident, because the adults create a calm, secure environment, continually providing for all children to take responsibility for their own actions.
- The Foundation Stage staff expect and achieve very good behaviour from the children.
- The wide range of interesting activities, and the close attention that all staff give to the children, ensures that their interpersonal skills develop well.

Commentary

51. Children start Nursery with a wide range of personal, social and emotional skills, with several at levels below average, so that they require more staff support than would normally be expected. The very good relationships, skilful teamwork and quiet, but expectant, manner of the staff ensure that there is a peaceful atmosphere in the Nursery and the two Reception classes. This has a calming effect on all the children, because they are keen to engage in the wide range of activities devised to help them to learn. Staff know and fully understand their responsibilities, and daily routines are very well established. Children move around the classrooms and outdoor areas with increasing confidence and purpose, and learn from the other children and the very good staff role models. Children in both Nursery and Reception work in focused groups, led by either their teacher or support staff, and these groups become more formalised as children get older. Their attitudes and behaviour are invariably very good in such situations because the staff successfully engage them in interesting conversation that relates to their experiences. For example, 'snack time' in the Nursery is always a pleasant occasion when children in small groups sit together and chat with each other and the adult who accompanies them.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good gains in their literacy skills because the carefully planned and organised tasks are suitably challenging for their abilities.
- The very good, consistent emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills results in very good achievement in this aspect of learning.

Commentary

52. Most children start Nursery with average levels of attainment in this area of learning, but there is a significant proportion with low attainment. Activities are very well planned to stimulate excitement, interest and communication, so that most children soon play happily together. For example, Nursery children plan together and build high structures from building blocks.

53. The teachers, learning support assistants and nursery nurses across the Foundation Stage are skilled in questioning to draw out and extend children's vocabulary and speaking skills. The result is that by the time they enter Year 1 most children's speaking is capable and confident to a level above that normally seen. Large and small group times led by staff in the Nursery are valuable occasions for building children's speaking and listening skills. The 'Three Bears' theme at the time of the inspection was a very good vehicle in this respect. Children not only learnt through fascinating role play, using glove puppets or improvising the story on a stage, but also listened to the story whilst following it in picture books, and recorded the story themselves. Children in Reception achieve well because the staff build on and develop the work done in the Nursery, using methods similar to those employed there. At the same time, they extend the children with challenging work in learning the basics of reading. Regular small-group sessions in matching written letters to sounds successfully build on children's reading skills. By the time they enter Year 1, most children have the basics of reading. They can write recognisable letters and numbers, and some copy write or write simple words independently and legibly.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children make good progress and achieve well because of the staff's very good knowledge of the subject and their skill in teaching it.
- Children's progress is enhanced by the good use of time and resources.

Commentary

54. Most children achieve the goals expected for their age by the time they leave Reception. Children in the Nursery regularly count and compare. For example, when singing action songs about the 'Three Bears, they learned about different sizes through using words such as 'huge', 'big', 'small' and 'tiny'. They know, and use correctly, the names of shapes such as a square and a circle when sticking such shapes onto a teddy, and they can measure out the quantities of the constituents for making porridge. In planning the day's activities, staff in the Nursery take into account the need for children to learn across many disciplines, including the mathematical area. Consequently, they regularly refer to mathematical learning during other activities, such as kneading, shaping and cutting play dough when pretending to make bread. During specific numeracy lessons, children in the Reception classes are continually well motivated by lively teaching, and this helps them to concentrate and learn well. For example, when learning about odd

and even numbers, children counted out loud, whispering the odd numbers and shouting the even ones. They moved on to successfully count in 2s to 10. Such activities, and the efficient use of time through linking one area of learning with others, ensure that children learn that number is an interesting part of everyday life. For example, links with the Reception theme on 'minibeasts' fascinated children as they counted the segments on insects.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A wide range of activities and experiences stimulate interest and curiosity.
- Children are confident when using computers.
- The school provides very good opportunities for imaginative role-play.
- Many visits stimulate learning.

Commentary

55. Children achieve well across the Foundation Stage, and most attain the standard expected of children of this age when they leave the Reception class. This is because the teachers skilfully stimulate children's learning by providing many activities and experiences for them to enjoy. Children show curiosity in the world around them, such as when Nursery children independently explored the range of sounds made by a simple wooden xylophone, or when Reception children made trucks with turning wheels for their chosen 'minibeast'. Children in both year groups use computers regularly and show good mouse control, for example when they look for and banish the 'spider in the kitchen'. Reception children use a digital camera to record their finished models, and learn that information can be stored. Visits to places such as a launderette, the local church, a supermarket and a post office (to post the postcards they have painted) increase pupils' knowledge of the world around them. Whole-day joint workshops between the Nursery and Reception, such as to celebrate Diwali, Chinese New Year and May Day, contribute much to children's early understanding of different cultural activities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good balance between formal and informal physical activities and experiences.

Commentary

56. Provision for both the Nursery and the Reception classes is strongly enhanced by the extensive and well equipped outside covered areas. These well used areas have much to do with children achieving very well and attaining above what is normally expected of them by the time they reach Year 1. Children in the Nursery play confidently on a wide range of wheeled toys, climbing equipment and on the stage. They use gardening tools to dig and rake real soil. Indoors, their fine manipulative skills are further developed by the closely supervised sewing of teddies that they have filled from a choice of materials with different textures, such as dried grass, rice or pasta. Similar activities take place in Reception, but these children also learn very well when they have specific formal

lessons in this area of learning. For example, a very good lesson used the story of the 'Very Hungry Caterpillar' to build children's physical, spatial and imaginative skills through dance sequences which they initiated and practised to a good standard.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's creativity is developed well through a stimulating range of activities.

Commentary

57. Teaching and learning is never less than good in this area of learning, with the result that children make good progress, and most attain more than is normally expected by the end of the Reception year. Children regularly explore media and materials, participate in music, and develop their imagination and creativity through using equipment to produce, for example, good quality paintings of a visiting nurse, a policeman and a fire engine. The very good opportunities for role-play help the children to act out and enhance stories they have heard, such as 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears', or to invent stories of their own. This supports the development of their thinking skills and encourages them to work and play independently. In both the Nursery and Reception, inspectors saw individuals quietly taking time out to investigate for themselves, for example to build models from kits, to draw quietly, or to compose stories for themselves in sand and water.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

58. **French** was not a focus of this inspection, and no secure judgements about provision can be made. The school is participating in a local authority pilot scheme to introduce French into local primary schools. Year 6 pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average for their age. Their written work is less advanced. The school has extended this provision by offering Year 5 pupils the opportunity to explore the geography, customs and culture of France as a preparation to learning the language in Year 6. The co-ordination, planning and teaching are managed by the local authority specialist adviser.

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils show positive attitudes to lessons and work hard.
- Pupils have good opportunities to use their developing literacy skills in other areas of the curriculum.
- In most parts of the school, pupils achieve well because of good teaching.

Commentary

59. The results of the 2004 national tests indicate below average standards for reading and average standards for writing at the end of Year 2. In Years 2 and 6, inspection evidence shows that standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are now average. Most pupils achieve well, including those with SEN. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils

with SEN did not do as well as their peers. Achievement for the current Year 6 pupils is satisfactory overall. There are two reasons for this. Firstly, the teaching of English is inconsistent within the school, in particular across Key Stage 2. As a result, although achievement has been satisfactory or better for most pupils in Year 6, a few pupils have not achieved as well as they should have done. Secondly, the school has only recently acquired Years 5 and 6 and is still establishing its expectations for these two groups.

60. The quality of teaching varies throughout the school but it is good overall. The strengths in the teaching include well planned lessons, in which resources, such as interactive whiteboards, are used well to support learning. As a result, pupils have good opportunities to transfer skills they have been taught in ICT to promote their learning in literacy lessons. Learning support assistants contribute well, and often very well, to lessons, particularly when supporting pupils with SEN. Relationships between all adults and pupils are good, and all teachers value what pupils say. This results in most pupils speaking confidently, and eagerly taking part in class discussions. The need to listen carefully is emphasised in all lessons. Consequently, most pupils listen attentively to all information they are given. Pupils' previous work shows that occasionally pupils with SEN, who have difficulty in acquiring writing skills, are not given enough guidance to improve. Sometimes they are given activities that are slightly too difficult for them to finish. When this happens they do not do as well as they might if activities were more accurately matched to their needs. Pupils generally read with enjoyment and enthusiasm, and in writing activities they show positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are encouraged to read at home. However, the needs of the highest attainers are not always planned for effectively enough, with the result that they are not consistently challenged to a high enough extent.

61. The arrangements for assessment are good. Information collected on individuals clearly shows how well they are doing. This information is used to plan activities and group pupils. Targets at present are doing little to raise standards. Although pupils have targets for either reading or writing, these are not referred to consistently enough in lessons. Marking is generally good and informs the pupils what they need to do to improve. However, reference to pupils' individual targets is inconsistent. Reading records, which teachers keep on individuals, indicate coverage of texts but are underdeveloped. The best ones clearly indicate what the pupils need to do to improve.

62. The co-ordinator has not been in post long, and has worked hard at focusing on developing 'paired talking' during literacy lessons. As a result of this, good examples were seen during the inspection of pupils sharing their thoughts and ideas with each other, and this occurred in many lessons across the curriculum. Planning is regularly monitored, but as yet the co-ordinator has not gained a clear idea of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school. Visitors, such as storytellers and theatre groups, are used well to enhance the development of speaking and listening. The pupils in Year 6 have recently used their thinking and writing skills to develop a set of questions to ask a Sikh visitor who is due to visit in the near future.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

63. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils in all classes to use language and literacy skills in other subjects. Literacy skills are promoted well. For example, in history the oldest pupils in the school wrote clear reports as they studied Ancient Egypt. In science, during a lesson for pupils in Year 4, pupils used their imagination to draw animals and then used their writing skills to neatly label their drawings.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and achievement are good.
- Mathematics is led well.
- Effective use is made of day-to-day assessment to raise standards.

Commentary

64. In this expanding and changing school, standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 are in line with national averages. Achievement for this group of pupils is satisfactory, because although pupils achieve well in lessons the school is still adjusting to having the two additional older classes. Pupils in the younger classes achieve well because of good teaching, and although standards appear to have declined over recent years the school has produced reliable evidence that the intake of the school has changed. Standards observed in the current Year 2 and initial indications from the most recent national tests suggest that this trend has now been reversed.

65. Teachers plan their work well and make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn in any particular lesson. At the end of lessons, learning is reviewed; in a good lesson in Year 2, pupils evaluated their own individual learning and understanding by a thumbs up or thumbs down sign. In the best lessons, pupils enjoy learning because it is fun. Playing Bingo was enjoyed in Year 3 while pupils practised addition facts. In Year 6, pupils became engrossed in working out the number of winning lines on noughts and crosses grids of various sizes. The most able then successfully tackled the challenge to produce an algebraic formula to cover a grid of any size. Teachers' questioning skills are good, so that in whole class sessions all pupils are challenged by targeted questions to individual pupils. Because relationships in the school are very good, pupils have the confidence to answer questions, knowing that their efforts will be valued by other pupils as well as by the teacher. The inclusion of pupils with special education needs within lessons is good and therefore they achieve well. However, planning does not consistently offer challenging enough activities for the most able pupils.

66. Closing sessions are used effectively to reinforce learning and form a basis for day-to-day assessment. In a Year 2 class, the teacher's assessment from the previous day formed the basis of group work for the lesson, so that pupils who lacked some understanding or had been away were given extra support while other pupils were given a range of tasks that matched their needs closely.

67. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject. The new co-ordinator, due to take it over next term, is enthusiastic and has very positive ideas for the development of the subject.

Mathematics across the curriculum

68. Mathematical skills are used well in other subjects. The school's 'theme' approach across the curriculum ensures that meaningful links are established. For example, younger pupils collect data on the eye colour of astronauts to produce pictograms on the computer, linking mathematics, ICT and science. Pupils in Year 6 draw graphs of temperature changes in geography.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In discussions with pupils, they show good knowledge and understanding of many aspects of the science curriculum.
- The principles of scientific investigation are developing well across the school.
- The good quality marking of pupils' work is having a positive effect on their pace of learning.
- The monitoring of science teaching and learning is neither regular nor rigorous enough to bring them to consistently high standards.
- Too few pupils reach the higher than expected levels of attainment.

Commentary

69. Teacher-assessed standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be above average at the previous inspection. In the 2004 assessments they slipped to well below average against those of all schools and of similar schools. There has been considerable progress since then, with the result that most pupils at the end of Year 2 achieve satisfactorily and reach standards in line with expectations. However, the proportion that attains the higher than expected Level 3 is lower than is normally found. Similarly, at the end of Year 6, most pupils achieve satisfactorily and reach the expected Level 4, but too few attain higher than this.

70. There is no doubt that standards across the school are improving. Pupils from at least Year 2 onwards take a real interest in the subject, and many talk excitedly about their work when they are conducting investigations. This was evident in a good Year 2 lesson on investigating changes in materials, where pupils planned and executed simple procedures to observe and discover how materials such as chocolate, an egg, and plastic change when heated by hot water. Similarly, in a good lesson in Year 3, pupils worked very productively in groups to find out the properties and special characteristics of magnets. Most pupils determined through observation and discussion that magnets attract some metals but not other materials. Because of lessons of this calibre, in which good investigative procedures are followed, pupils' understanding of science and its place in the world is increasing well.

71. Scrutiny of finished work shows that the quality of teachers' marking is good and has a positive effect on pupils' progress. This is because marking identifies what pupils have learned and what they need to do to improve. Consequently, pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 improved because the teachers expected, through their marking, that pupils would improve the way in which they record their work. Similarly, some pupils in Years 5 and 6 made good progress as their work became more incisive in its evaluations and explanations. The best marking sets targets and then reviews later whether the targets have been achieved.

72. Recently applied strategies to raise the overall levels of attainment have not had time to reach fruition fully. Moreover, this academic year is the first in which there has been a Year 6 group. Despite good preparation of the curriculum and planning of lessons, the quality of teaching is not consistently high enough for the school to fully match the expectations of the National Curriculum at the end of Year 6. Whilst part of the reason for this is the school's recent change to primary school status and all that that entails, another factor is that some teaching does not meet the predominantly high standards found in Years 3 and 4, for example. This is because the teachers' own knowledge is not secure enough to explain concepts clearly to pupils or to give them sufficiently clear guidance in their work. The school recognises this weakness and has plans in place for more frequent and specific observation and monitoring of lessons, for example to share amongst staff those strategies that are especially effective in helping pupils to learn. In this way, the school hopes to ensure that all pupils, especially the potentially highest attainers, reach their full potential.

73. The subject co-ordinator leads satisfactorily at present, but has managed the subject well over time. There are good resources, including in the local environment, and good plans are in place for speeding to higher levels of attainment for pupils across the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The resources in terms of both hardware and software have improved.
- The computer suite is too small to accommodate a whole class.
- Standards have risen because teaching is good and leadership of the subject is strong.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support subjects across the curriculum.

Commentary

74. The school has kept pace with national developments, and higher expectations for the subject are in place since the last inspection. Standards throughout the school are in line with national expectations and all pupils are confident in using ICT.

75. The computers in the Year 5 and 6 classrooms are not yet linked to the Internet, and therefore the opportunities for these pupils to use ICT for independent research are limited. Plans are well advanced for the addition of wireless laptops, and for the upgrading of the desktop computers in these outside classrooms. Pupils have no access to e-mail at the present time but this aspect of the curriculum is also due to be addressed very shortly, as soon as a completely safe system has been established.

76. Although the present computer suite is too small for a whole class, teachers manage their time well. Lessons are split into two so that pupils have a session in the computer suite and related work in the classroom within the same lesson. This system allows for the satisfactory development of skills.

77. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and their demonstrations of new techniques are clear. For example, during a lesson on spreadsheets, pupils in Year 5 worked with confidence, quickly understanding the use of formulae to add up amounts in columns. This was the result of good demonstration and questioning by the teacher, which ensured that all pupils had a good understanding before they started work. In Year 4, pupils based their work on branching databases on work in science on habitats. Good intervention by the teacher, while pupils built their own decision trees, quickly enabled pupils to realise the importance of phrasing questions carefully, and it also raised questions that they would need to research.

78. The leadership of the subject is strong. The co-ordinator has clear plans for the development of the subject and is successful in keeping up with ever-changing advances in hardware. She is very well aware that standards can be expected to rise year on year and therefore that expectations of pupils' achievement must rise. Assessments are made against the development of skills and also the outcome of planned tasks at the end of units.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

79. Teachers now have interactive white boards that are used effectively and with confidence in lessons where their use is appropriate. For example, in a numeracy lesson on probability, the board was used effectively to predict the likelihood of a hidden picture being a flower, given the initial

information that it was a plant. Further predictions followed as more information was revealed. During the inspection there was little evidence of pupils using the internet for independent research, as the two older classes do not have access to the internet in their classrooms at the moment.

HUMANITIES

80. **Geography** and **history** were not a focus of this inspection, and consequently secure judgements about standards, teaching and provision cannot be made. However, the work seen in books and on display is at the expected level in both subjects throughout the school. Year 6 showed that they had enjoyed and learnt a considerable amount from their residential visit to Norfolk. Their knowledge of erosion is good, and they know how this changes a coastline and how beaches are made. Pupils in Year 1 responded well to being in a 'Victorian classroom' for a lesson, sitting upright in rows and answering questions directed to them by their surname and 'Miss' or 'Mr'. Pupils enjoy both subjects and the enhancement by outside visits and visitors.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The good standard of teaching is reflected in pupils' learning.
- Daily assemblies provide very good support to religious education.
- The needs of higher and lower achieving pupils are not always well met.

Commentary

81. Pupils in all years achieve standards above the expected average for their age. This represents good progress overall. Pupils in Year 1 understand the important events of the Christian Calendar, and by the end of Year 2 some eight out of ten pupils are working above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. In Year 3, pupils show reverence for the Jewish Torah and know why it is sacred. By Year 4, pupils have a very good understanding of Islamic festivals such as Ramadan and Eid because the teacher made very good use of pupils' personal experiences that made learning relevant to everyone. By Year 6, they make good progress in their knowledge of other faiths. They clearly understand moral issues of right and wrong and develop a strong sense of values and life in a multicultural society.

82. Teaching and learning are good. Well-balanced lessons are structured to include a range of activities which reinforce pupils' learning. However, the needs of higher and lower achieving pupils are not always well met and this sometimes causes confusion. For example, one pupil found difficulty in distinguishing between the ark of Noah and the ark that houses the Torah. Teachers expect good behaviour, and pupils know and respond to the boundaries. Relationships are very good and pupils show respect and liking for their teachers. Teachers make very good use of available resources, such as inviting the vicar into lessons or encouraging an Islamic pupil to answer questions on her faith, including explaining the garments worn for Eid. Literacy skills are well promoted and pupils use a wide range of multicultural vocabulary. Where learning support assistants are present, they liaise well with the teacher and provide good in-class support. Pupils' written work is well marked with positive comments that indicate the teachers' very good knowledge of each member of the class.

83. The very high standard of daily assemblies strongly underlines moral, cultural and spiritual values, looking at family life, racist issues, and notable people such as Ghandi. Pupils' participate very well, singing hymns in a range of African and European languages. Pupils have time for reflection on the assembly theme before taking part in the daily act of collective worship.

84. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum is in line with the local authority Agreed Syllabus and fully meets statutory requirements. It is well monitored through lesson observations and sampling of pupils' work, which enables curricular development and target setting. Enrichment days for the celebration of various religious festivals strengthen pupils' knowledge and make learning fun. Resources include the effective use of computer technology and well planned visits to religious establishments. The school library has a good range of religious literature and storybooks.

85. Improvement since the last inspection is good. There is good improvement in the standard of work by Year 2 pupils. The smooth inclusion of Years 5 and 6 into the school has encouraged staff and pupils to develop greater maturity of approach to religious education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. Work in this area of learning was not a focus for this inspection, although one or two lessons were seen in each of art and design, design and technology and physical education. Apart from observing a singing lesson for all pupils from Year 3 to Year 6, no specific music lessons were seen. As a result, there is not enough evidence to make secure judgements about standards or achievement in these subjects.

87. Work in **art and design** and **design and technology** in displays around the school and in pupils' portfolios shows that these subjects play important roles in the curriculum as a whole. Staff ensure that skills are taught and built upon, both discretely in subjects and as part of learning in others. For instance, pupils in a good Year 1 lesson based on the scientific concepts of 'pushing' and 'pulling' forces, used and developed their drawing and water-colouring skills to depict Victorian toys that could be moved. The school makes good use of visiting artists, for example to help pupils when representing the animals of the jungle in the style of African art. Similarly, pupils in a good Year 3 design and technology lesson explored and experimented with pneumatics before applying these scientific principles to their own models of robots.

88. Whilst only one lesson was seen in **physical education**, the school timetables show that a good balance of time is given to teaching the subject. Pupils say that they enjoy physical education, and especially the opportunities for sports activities which the subject brings. Dance as an aspect of physical education plays an equally important role, and even pupils in Year 2 were skilled in their physical control and use of imagination when they co-operatively created, to music, sequences representing space flight. Besides regular lessons in music, there are good opportunities for pupils to learn to play instruments, should they wish to do so. Indeed, a recently arranged visit by a string ensemble has led to a greater interest by pupils in taking up an instrument. The very good music lesson seen, which used no instrumental accompaniment, ensured that all pupils in the Year 3 to 6 age range achieved very well in their singing skills, and they enjoyed the experience. By the end of the lesson, their ability to sing in complicated rounds with gusto and expression was greatly improved.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

89. This area was not a focus of the inspection and no secure judgements about standards and teaching can be made. The school makes good curricular provision through timetabled lessons and through cross-curricular themes. It has now decided to offer education in sex and relationships on a formal footing, and this meets requirements. 'Circle Time' lessons offer pupils the opportunity to discuss issues pertinent to them in a supportive atmosphere. In a lesson preceding a history trip for pupils in Year 3, pupils sensibly discussed the need for rules on the trip and suggested what these might be. There were some well considered responses to the question, 'What is your most

important rule?' Pupils in Year 6 were seen preparing for the future in high school as they reflected on the work they had completed in this school and made entries in their Records of Achievement. The encouragement of reflection, and the use of 'talking partners', was a strong feature of this lesson, which took place in a supportive atmosphere.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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