

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Hinckley, Leicestershire

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120134

Acting Headteacher: Mr C Meadows

Lead inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole

Dates of inspection: 7th – 10th March 2005

Inspection number: 267880

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: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 292

School address: Station Road
Hinckley
Leicestershire
Postcode: LE10 1AW

Telephone number: 01455 637477
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of Mr D Thorpe
governors:

Date of previous 11th January 1999
inspection:

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Located close to the centre of Hinckley, this bigger than average primary schools has 292 pupils (157 girls and 135 boys) on roll, almost all of whom are from white UK heritage backgrounds. Six pupils have English as an additional language and their main languages are Panjabi, Marathi and Bengali. Socio-economically, the area in which pupils live is about average. An average percentage of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs including those with statements is below the national average. Attainment on admission is about average and pupils represent the full range of abilities. Almost all pupils benefit from some preschool education experience. The school is popular in the area and is oversubscribed. There have been several changes in staffing in recent months with two acting headteachers since the start of the academic year. A new permanent headteacher has been appointed from April 2005. The school is part of the Leadership Development Strategy and was given an Achievement Award in 2003.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Lead inspector	English as additional language; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Personal, social and health education and citizenship; Physical education.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector	
27100	Trevor Davies	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Art and design; Design and technology; Music.
20596	Martin Lester	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Science; Geography; History; Religious education.

The inspection contractor was :

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Although the school provides an acceptable standard of education it has serious weaknesses. By the end of Year 6 the standards attained in national tests in English, mathematics and science are well above average. Achievement is satisfactory overall but unsatisfactory for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are substantial weaknesses in leadership and management. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The oldest pupils attain high standards in national tests in English, mathematics and science
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress because they are taught well
- Many important aspects of leadership and management are weak
- The school's strategic planning has several substantial flaws
- Some important aspects of teaching need improvement
- Assessment and tracking of pupils' performance are unsatisfactory
- Parental support is good

Improvement since the last inspection in January 1999 has been unsatisfactory. There has been good improvement in national test results in Year 6. Leadership and management have paid insufficient attention to improving teaching and learning, the provision for pupils with special educational needs and curriculum development. Subject leaders have not been empowered to face up to challenges and self evaluation is too generous. There have been some recent improvements but the potential for further development is uncertain and the school is in a vulnerable position.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			Similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	A	A	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	C
Science	A	A*	A*	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The school has maintained well above average standards in national tests in English and mathematics for several years and results in science are among the highest five per cent of schools. Standards have risen faster than the national trend. These high standards have been achieved through an overemphasis on developing basic skills, repetitive work and too much coaching for national tests. Inspection evidence shows that **the achievement of most pupils is satisfactory** and that standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 6. Test results for Year 2 pupils in 2004 in reading and writing were well above average and above average in mathematics when compared nationally and with similar schools. The trend in performance in the Year 2 tests is in line with the national trend, although there was a dip in 2003. Inspection evidence shows that

standards in reading, writing and mathematics are average. Teachers tend to overestimate pupils' performance. The school usually meets its targets.

Achievement in the Foundation Stage is good and by the end of the reception year most pupils attain the expected goals for their age in the areas of learning and exceed them in personal, social and emotional development. Pupils' rate of progress is at its best in the reception year. Progress through Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory but pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory gains because the provision is poorly managed. More able pupils improve satisfactorily. Standards in ICT, geography, religious education, physical education and music are average.

The school makes **satisfactory provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**. Pupils have mostly positive attitudes to learning and relationships between pupils are good. There are strained relationships between some staff and pupils. Behaviour is satisfactory. There have been no exclusions. Attendance is above average and pupils are punctual.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, varying between unsatisfactory and very good. Teaching and the curriculum in the Foundation Stage are good; staff have a secure understanding of the needs of pupils, plan well and introduce new and challenging ideas effectively. There are pockets of good support for pupils with special educational needs but the overall provision is poor and teaching lacks consistency. Teaching of English and mathematics is satisfactory. ICT is not taught well enough. Most pupils work hard, listen well and settle to tasks but there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their initiative in learning. There are good and better lessons, which include effective questioning, positive and affirming class control and focused marking which guides pupils on how to improve. Support is deployed effectively by teachers. In about half of the lessons seen the pace of learning was too slow resulting in low productivity. Some teachers do not expect enough of the pupils and this results in untidy work. Class control is not always as good as it should be. Assessment is weak and pupils are unsure of their targets; some teachers do not have a secure understanding of the levels at which their pupils are working. The satisfactory curriculum meets requirements. Some enrichment activities such as the "geography day" add to the pupils' enjoyment. The school's resources and accommodation are satisfactory, although space is at a premium and poses problems for some aspects of physical education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school has a legacy of unsatisfactory leadership and management. The acting headteacher has brought a sharper focus to school improvement but much remains to be done to improve subject leadership and the provision for special educational needs. Self-evaluation has lacked accuracy and there has been little development of teachers in middle management positions. The school's strategic plans are not clearly prioritised. Management is unsatisfactory as it has lacked rigour in improving the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. Governance is unsatisfactory. Statutory requirements for collective worship are not met. Funds are used appropriately and financial systems are effective. Satisfactory use is made of best value principles when purchasing supplies and services.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Most parents are satisfied with the school but a significant group have justifiable concerns about the progress made by pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils are mostly positive about school but do not like ICT and many feel that some teachers are unfair.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Ensuring that the school is inclusive and has a sharply focused strategic plan, better subject leadership and more rigorous curriculum development
- Raise pupils' expectations, accelerate the pace of lessons and provide more opportunities for pupils to work independently
- Improve the leadership of, and provision for, pupils with special educational needs
- Improve the quality, accuracy and use of assessment
- Ensure that statutory requirements for collective worship are met

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects

Achievement is satisfactory overall. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Progress is satisfactory for most pupils.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Results of national tests at the end of Year 6 have been well above average for several years
- Pupils in the Foundation Stage make good progress and achieve well
- Pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress

Commentary

1. Pupils start school with average levels of attainment. There is a wide spread of abilities. Most pupils have benefited from some pre-school educational experience and are used to working and communicating with others. The staff in the Foundation Stage make good provision for the pupils and teach effectively. As a result, the pupils achieve well in all of the areas of learning. By the end of the reception year most pupils attain the expected goals for their age in all of the areas of learning. They make substantial gains in their personal, social and emotional development and are prepared very well for the next stage of their education. Most pupils have a secure grasp of early reading, writing and mathematical skills and understand much about the world around them. They are physically active and well coordinated. Their creative development includes competence in using a variety of media and communicating imaginatively through role play.
2. Boys and girls in Years 1 to 6 build steadily on what they have learned in the reception classes and achieve satisfactorily. However, pupils with special educational needs make unsatisfactory progress. Their individual education plans are vague and provide insufficient guidance for staff on meeting targets. More able pupils make satisfactory progress but could be stretched more in subjects such as religious education and geography.

3. In 2004, the national test results and comparisons with schools in similar contexts showed that standards were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics by the end of Year 2. There has been some variation from year to year in the test results due to the variations in the cohorts, particularly in the number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group. Inspection evidence shows that standards in reading, writing, mathematics and science are average in this year's Year 2. It also indicates that teachers tend to overestimate the pupils' capabilities and grade their work too highly. This is because assessment and tracking systems are weak.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	17.0 (15.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	16.3 (14.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	16.8 (16.4)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 43 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. The standards attained in national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection. This improvement has been achieved through an overemphasis on basic skills and constant repetition of facts which have led to an unbalanced curriculum and stilted teaching and learning, especially in science. Standards in 2004, compared to the national picture, were well above average in English and mathematics and among the top five per cent of schools in science. Comparisons with schools in similar contexts show that standards were well above average in science, above average in English and average in mathematics. The rate of improvement has been generally above the national trend. Although the results are impressive, an analysis of pupils' work and discussions with them show that standards in English, mathematics and science in this year's Year 6 are not as high, although they are above average. There are weaknesses in some aspects of these subjects which clearly show that pupils' levels of understanding are not as high as their performance in national tests indicates. For example, pupils have a good bank of facts and figures but find it difficult to explain some scientific and mathematical principles and processes with real understanding. The school sets appropriate targets for performance in national tests and meets them.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.0 (28.8)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.8 (28.7)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	31.9 (31.8)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 42 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

5. Standards attained in ICT, religious education, geography, music and physical education are average. Pupils do not like ICT because it is not taught well and they have insufficient opportunity to explore and investigate. In the humanities, pupils have average levels of knowledge but opportunities to apply their literacy skills are limited by a stilted curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Most pupils have good attitudes to their learning. They enjoy school life and the majority respond well to the sound spiritual, moral, social and cultural values promoted by the school. Their behaviour and overall personal development are satisfactory. Punctuality and attendance are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in the Foundation Stage have good attitudes to school; they behave and achieve well
- Pupils are polite and friendly towards adults
- Relationships between pupils and some teachers are strained
- The behaviour of some pupils in the playground is ill-disciplined and too boisterous at times

Commentary

6. Provision for spiritual and cultural development has improved since the last inspection and now makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' good attitudes to school. There is a satisfactory range of opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness through their lessons and assemblies. Examples of pupils' artwork emulating famous artists, for example, the designs of William Morris, are displayed around the school, as is work showing interesting patterns and symmetry. Opportunities are provided for pupils to enjoy visits to the theatre and also to listen to musical recitals in the adjacent church. Pupils feel valued when others listen to their contributions in lessons and assemblies, although this type of interaction is not always actively or sufficiently encouraged in some classes. Pupils have gained an insight into the beliefs that govern other's lives through their visits to a range of places of worship. This promotes understanding and tolerance. Cultural development overall is promoted through the study of literature, music and art, supplemented with interesting visitors and visits to such places as France for older pupils.
7. Although most pupils behave sensibly, because there are inconsistencies in the way in which staff promote moral and social values, some pupils, primarily in Years 3 to 6, are unsure of the boundaries of acceptable behaviour. This is particularly evident at playtimes and lunchtimes when over exuberant and physical behaviour often results in collisions which sometimes cause injury. Other instances of unnecessary pushing and shoving were observed while pupils queued for lunch and also when walking to and from assembly. A significant proportion of pupils who completed a questionnaire prior to the inspection think that pupils do not behave well. There are concerns about bullying, although the majority know that it is important to tell someone if they are unhappy and consider that most cases are dealt with effectively. When lessons are insufficiently challenging and interesting, standards of behaviour deteriorate and pupils do not learn enough. Over half of the pupils who filled in the questionnaire think that their lessons are neither interesting nor fun. Most pupils develop strong friendships with their schoolmates; they collaborate constructively in lessons and are proud of the performance of their sports teams, particularly the very successful swimmers. Through the school council pupils are involved in decision making and empowered to initiate change. This effectively develops a sense of responsibility and a growth in self-confidence.
8. During their time in the Foundation Stage, the pupils achieve well in their personal, social and emotional development. They settle happily into the routines of the

classroom and enjoy the good range of interesting activities provided for them. They respond with enthusiasm and try hard to please their teachers.

Attendance

- Attendance has been consistently above that found in most primary schools for several years. Parents take their responsibility to ensure the regular attendance of their children and to advise the school of reasons for absence seriously.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	4.4	School data	0.4
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.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education, including the curriculum, is satisfactory.

Teaching and learning

In the lessons seen teaching and learning were predominantly satisfactory. Assessment lacks a sufficiently sharp edge.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good
- The teaching of ICT is unsatisfactory
- Too many lessons are slow paced and rely on a limited range of teaching strategies
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and use their initiative

Commentary

- In the reception classes the teaching is effective and stimulates in pupils a desire to learn, meets the needs of individuals of all abilities and has improved since the previous inspection. There is a good balance of activities and staff intervene well to move learning on through well focused questions and suggestions. Support staff are deployed effectively and resources used to stimulate thinking, such as in outdoor play when the pupils made a road, established safety rules and insisted that everyone obeyed them. The teaching of communication, language and literacy and mathematical development is good as much of the learning is practical and includes focused discussion and clear objectives. The staff observe the pupils perceptively and record their progress accurately. They use this information to plan the next steps in learning.
- Teaching in the school varies between unsatisfactory and very good. This lack of consistency leads to peaks and troughs in the pupils' development of skills, knowledge and understanding. Teaching in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall but there has been insufficient improvement since the previous inspection. Assessment is especially weak. Teachers' are often inaccurate in identifying the levels at which pupils are working and therefore the targets set are too general. This means that pupils are not always clear about what they need to do next to improve. There is an inadequate system of tracking pupils' performance and in some cases marking is not done. There are some examples of useful practice but these are ad hoc and there is little consistency between teachers.

In most cases the pupils find marking helpful and say that it guides them on how to improve but few are aware of personal targets.

12. A particular weakness is caused by poor leadership and management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs. Individual members of staff, including classroom assistants, work hard to meet these pupils' needs and there are pockets of good practice. However, there is too much inconsistency and no check is kept on progress. The individual education plans are especially bland and offer little guidance to staff.
13. There is solid teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics, and pupils make satisfactory gains in learning in these subjects. The use of setting works adequately although in some sets too little attention is given to challenging pupils of different abilities. For example, the oldest pupils in the top set in mathematics are all expected to do the same work and yet there is a wide spread of ability. Teaching of these more able pupils is barely satisfactory and it is mainly the hard work of the pupils and support from their parents through homework which enables them to make progress. Conversely, less able mathematicians in Year 5 benefit from very good teaching of mathematics because new ideas are introduced in small steps, carefully explained and there are opportunities to practise and to receive individual guidance. The teaching of science is satisfactory. Although test results are high the teaching tends to be mechanical and repetitious and is too heavily based on promoting factual knowledge rather than understanding. Pupils often become bored and disruptive in these lessons, which sometimes last for two hours. The teaching of basic skills in ICT in the suite is unsatisfactory and most of the lessons are unproductive; pupils say they do not like this subject because they have insufficient opportunities to move beyond basic skills. Conversely, in lessons in classrooms teachers make satisfactory use of computers to support learning.
14. Pace is a problem in many lessons as teachers take too long over explanations and this leads to limited opportunity for the pupils to work independently and to have sufficient time to produce good quantities of work. Learning objectives are shared with pupils but in most lessons pupils are required to write out the objectives before starting work. This means that some pupils lose interest from the start and little is achieved.
15. Some good and very good lessons were seen. These were characterised by a real understanding of the needs of the different groups in the classes and high expectations of what the pupils can achieve. In a mathematics lesson in Year 1 and 2 the teacher provided a brisk introduction and set well focused targets with the result that the pupils quickly became engaged, worked hard and made rapid progress. Some teachers relate well to the pupils and show kindness and warmth so that their style of behaviour management is positive and affirming. In these classes pupils respond eagerly and work hard. In some classes in Years 3 to 6 the teachers are too strict and pupils perceive them as unfair. Homework is used well in Years 3 to 6 to reinforce learning and pupils value it. Pupils mostly enjoy school and work hard although their presentation of work could be better. In the best lessons the teachers bring learning to life by using everyday examples and anecdotes, sharing something of themselves. Flexibility of styles and encouragement of pupils' thinking and independence was seen in some aspects of the geography teaching and pupils were enthralled and engaged as they toured the school to take temperatures in different rooms. This practical approach to learning is not sufficiently widespread.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 43 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0(0%)	3(7%)	15(35%)	22(51%)	3(7%)	0(0%)	0(0%)

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

The curriculum

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and is satisfactory. There are satisfactory opportunities for enrichment. The school's accommodation is barely adequate. Levels of staffing are satisfactory and there are adequate resources in most subjects.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Foundation Stage curriculum is good
- Links between subjects are not well established
- The provision for special educational needs is poor

Commentary

16. Staff in the Foundation Stage have a good understanding of the areas of learning and the links between them and plan an effective curriculum which meets the needs of the pupils. There is a good balance between indoor and outdoor activity, although the outdoor resources and accommodation are limited by space. Staff are well trained and experienced and have benefited from good guidance by the coordinator for the Foundation Stage in improving the provision since the previous inspection.
17. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 have satisfactory opportunities to study each of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education, although the time given to subjects varies widely and there is an overemphasis on a knowledge based approach. Insufficient thought has been given to forging links with other subjects and to applying skills learned in English and mathematics to the pupils' work across the curriculum. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory. The geography and history days contribute satisfactorily to pupils' understanding of these subjects and are used to develop links with literacy and numeracy, but some of this work is at a superficial level. Planning varies in quality between subjects and year groups. There is a lack of consistency and clear identification of key skills, knowledge and understanding in much of the planning and the lack of sharp assessment means that teaching is sometimes at a mundane level and does not challenge pupils' thinking. This is especially the case in ICT.
18. The school provides satisfactorily for the pupils' personal, social and health education. There is an appropriate programme to develop pupils' awareness of the positive and harmful effects of drugs. Growth and relationship education is covered and pupils are aware of issues such as healthy lifestyle and eating. The pupils value the opportunity to be involved in decision making through the school council.
19. There is a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities, including some opportunities for sport. The pupils are especially successful in swimming and have recently won the local gala. The teaching of French and a residential visit to France also provide cultural and social opportunities. Specifically designated days to study history or geography are greeted with pleasure by the pupils and provide a different range of opportunities and styles of learning. However, curriculum innovation lags behind many schools and the impact of subject leaders has been slight.

20. The school's policy to promote equal opportunities is compromised by the poor provision for pupils with special educational needs. Although the school prides itself on being inclusive, pupils with learning difficulties sometimes do not have their needs met. The paperwork is of unsatisfactory quality and limited guidance to staff, together with lack of real involvement of parents, means that opportunities are lost and pupils suffer. Individual members of staff do compensate for these shortcomings by providing support and guidance but there is no cohesive and effective plan and this is a serious weakness.
21. The school has adequate levels of staffing. Recent staff changes and turbulence have been managed satisfactorily. Staff are suitably qualified and trained although they did not receive the official training for ICT used by most schools. There are weaknesses in subject leadership which illustrate the need for training. There have been some imaginative and creative solutions to the problems of space on the site. The accommodation is mostly satisfactory although the lack of a playing field and small and cluttered hall hamper some opportunities for physical education. The school has adequate resources for most subjects. Recent improvements for ICT are contributing to raising standards but more resources and training are needed. The school's library is poor with few books and many of them are in unsatisfactory condition. The library is seldom used for research.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes satisfactory provision for the personal care and welfare of pupils. Because of the weaknesses in the systems for assessment and the poor provision for pupils with special educational needs, the support, advice and guidance for each pupil is unsatisfactory overall. Pupils are involved well in the decision making process in the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The procedures to ensure the health and safety of the school environment have improved since the last inspection and are now good
- Personal and academic support and guidance in the Foundation Stage are good
- The induction procedures for parents and pupils joining the school are good
- Ineffective procedures fail to regulate playground behaviour

Commentary

22. There is a good awareness of health and safety issues and regular checks of the premises are carried out to ensure that the school is a healthy and safe environment. Good risk assessments are completed and recorded for visits out of school. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Fire drills are carried out regularly and there is good provision for first aid. The acting headteacher is responsible for child protection issues and has a good awareness of this aspect of care. Staff follow recognised guidelines and the school has a constructive relationship with outside agencies. Pupils learn about the benefits of good hygiene and a healthy diet through their science lessons, and older pupils are given basic information about relationships and drugs. They learn about aspects of personal safety during their personal, social and health education lessons. Supervision during the mid-day break is satisfactory, but organisation of the playground is not.
23. The pupils in the Foundation Stage and most pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good relationship with their teachers and other adults who work with them. They know that their teachers will help them if they are unhappy. Relationships between pupils and

their teachers in the rest of the school are more variable and several pupils comment that they would confide in another member of staff, not their teacher, if they were worried about something. Because the systems for assessment are inconsistent and often poor, the academic needs of pupils of all abilities are not effectively met. The good induction procedures enable parents to be confident that their children will be cared for.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has a good partnership with most parents and with the community. Links with other schools are satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many parents have positive views about the work of the school
- The school provides a good range of information to enable parents to be involved in the learning of their children
- Parents of children with special educational needs are not as involved as they should be in the decisions that effect their children

Commentary

24. Most parents have positive views about the school. A significant number, however, do not feel well informed about progress. Although the end of year reports are very brief, because these are normally supplemented with a more detailed report on English, mathematics and science at the end of the spring term, the overall quality of the information provided is good. Consultation evenings have been arranged three times a year and pupils' targets are shared with parents. Parents are aware that teachers are available by appointment should they want more information, and any immediate and relevant information is exchanged at the beginning and end of the day. Parents of children with special educational needs are not kept well informed about the progress of their children.
25. The quality and quantity of information the school provides for parents is good overall. There are regular newsletters for parents, together with letters about specific activities and visits. Information about what the pupils will be learning is provided and this includes ideas of how parents can support this learning at home. Homework journals are used as a method of communication between teachers and parents, although a few parents commented that their questions and comments did not always elicit a response. Most parents help their children at home with their homework and there is general agreement from both parents and pupils that this is purposeful and about right in quantity. A group of parents help regularly in school and others willingly give their time for special events, for example, the geography day. The Friends of St. Mary's committee organise a range of successful activities which are widely supported. By timing the Christmas Fair to coincide with turning on the lights in the town centre, large numbers of hot dogs are sold and funds boosted as a result. The school has good procedures to deal with parents' concerns and complaints, although the concerns of parents of pupils with special educational needs have not been resolved. The school consults parents about school development from time to time.
26. The school has good links with the adjacent church and other places of worship in the local area. A beneficial link with a large company based in the local area has been established. Pupils visit local amenities and specialists come into school in support of

the curriculum. The transfer of pupils to secondary education is managed well. Educational links with other schools are satisfactory.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Leadership has paid too little attention to improving the quality of teaching, learning and the curriculum. There have been some recent improvements in leadership and management, especially in raising staff morale. Governance is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs is poor
- Curriculum leaders have a limited grasp of standards and progress in their subjects
- The use of data to guide and influence teaching is unsatisfactory
- Policies and practices are implemented inconsistently

Commentary

27. The school has been through recent changes in leadership and management and these have helped to bring some improvements, for example, in the quality of provision for ICT. Much remains to be done to accelerate change so that the quality of education improves and the serious weaknesses are tackled. Since the previous inspection test results at the end of Year 6 have improved and have been raised to at least the level they were immediately prior to that inspection. However, curriculum development has been unsatisfactory, there remains too much mediocre and unsatisfactory teaching and middle managers have not been empowered to develop the subjects and other aspects of the school's provision. The leadership and management of the provision for special educational needs are poor and result in largely unsatisfactory progress by these pupils and substantial and justifiable frustration and disquiet on behalf of parents.
28. The school's self evaluation and identification of its strengths and weaknesses is a significant weakness. Overestimation of the school's strengths, based on flimsy evidence and sometimes flawed data, has led to some complacency. The school prides itself on the test results attained. However, not all pupils have benefited from the attention they deserve as the school has focussed very narrowly on the improvement of results.
29. The governors are supportive and strong advocates of the school but their roles in monitoring and evaluating the school's work and ensuring that all statutory requirements are met have not been as sharp as it should have been. They have made recent gains in confidence through support from the acting headteacher and, through the process of appointing a new headteacher, have begun to understand the need to tackle wider issues affecting the school. Their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses has been hampered by lack of well focused information. The governors have been involved in overseeing the school's many business plans but the lack of real and focused targets in these plans and the inherent weaknesses they contain, as well as the sheer quantity of paperwork, have led to lack of understanding about central priorities. Although there are policies for equal opportunities, racial equality and disability, the school does not meet statutory requirements for collective worship.
30. Strategic planning until very recently has not been focused enough and this has led to a lack of development. Subject leaders are mostly unclear about how to use these plans to improve the quality of education of the pupils because they lack sharp

timescales, measurable success criteria and are not well prioritised. In contrast, with much sharper priorities and clear lines of responsibility, the acting headteacher has enabled staff and governors to make real progress in improving the provision for ICT. The school needs to urgently review and sharpen up its priorities.

31. Subject leaders have limited experience of monitoring and evaluating the work in their subjects and many lack an accurate understanding of the standards achieved by the pupils. The exception has been the leadership and management of the Foundation Stage which has successfully improved the provision since the previous inspection and provides well for the children. In Years 1 to 6, ineffective delegation, lack of opportunity and accountability of staff have led to a mundane curriculum and an often lack-lustre approach to teaching. Data analysis has been used to identify the attainment of pupils but this information has not been readily available to staff. The school's approach to tracking pupils' progress and linking it to performance in national tests has been poor.
32. The school has moved from having a large surplus to a small deficit, which is being managed with the help of the LEA. Funds are used appropriately and financial systems are sufficiently robust. Funds to support the provision for pupils with special educational needs are not used well enough. The governors make suitable use of the principles of best value when purchasing supplies and services and look for a range of options. A success has been the rigour in which they have used criteria for the appointment of the new headteacher. However, there is insufficient challenge within the school about the curriculum and how it could be developed to more effectively stimulate learning.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	699,928
Total expenditure	713,682
Expenditure per pupil	2,302

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	85,665
Balance carried forward to the next	76,088

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

33. Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. At the time of the previous inspection the activities provided for the pupils were too closely focused upon the subjects of the National Curriculum rather than the areas of learning for children of this age. Children enter the Reception classes in September, at the start of the school year in which they will be five. All benefit from three terms of schooling in these classes, but the children with birthdays after 28th February next initially attend part time during the autumn term. Attainment on entry varies but is average overall. Progress and achievement in the Foundation Stage are good, and by the end of the reception year most pupils attain the expected goals for their age in all the areas of learning and exceed them in personal, social and emotional development.
34. Good induction procedures and a supportive environment enable the children to settle happily into the daily routines and to form positive relationships with each other and the adults who work with them. The curriculum is carefully planned to provide a range of interesting, challenging and relevant activities that link together the areas of learning in a meaningful way. During the inspection this was evidenced on many occasions as the children followed a topic on 'spring'. There is a good balance of well structured activities led by the adults and opportunities for the children to explore and investigate. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good. All adults share high aspirations for the development of each child and provide positive role models through what they say and do. This enables children to learn in a creative, well focused and caring environment. All aspects of progress are monitored carefully, thereby enabling staff to plan work that meets the individual needs of all, including those with special educational needs. Consequently, the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. The accommodation has been improved imaginatively but the outdoor learning environment is very small, nevertheless it is used creatively. Effective links have been established with parents who comment favourably on the provision in these classes.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good; teachers have high expectations and the children respond most positively
- There are well-established routines and the children achieve very well
- Very secure relationships with the staff enable children to become confident learners

Commentary

35. The Reception area offers a calm, well-organised learning environment. All members of staff use praise and encouragement well, rewarding effort and promoting confidence and self-esteem. The children respond well to the consistent routines and high expectations and have very positive attitudes to their learning. The positive attitudes modelled by the adults support the growing understanding among children of the

needs, views and feelings of others. Children behave well and they are eager to participate in the wide range of exciting activities. Most are confident in making choices and concentrate well on their chosen activity. The children work and play well both individually and as part of a group or the class. They are beginning to take responsibility and are well aware of the safety issues linked to moving around the building, for example, when making the long journey to and from the school hall. The children are keen and interested in their work, generally persevere with tasks and clear away and tidy up well after activities. They are happy in the company of each other and enjoy hearing the adults praise individuals and groups for good effort and achievement. The children show a well developed sense of personal hygiene, for example they are able to dress and undress themselves before and after physical education lessons and they know that it is important to wash their hands before eating and after visiting the toilet.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children listen very well and are confident in speaking to adults and to each other
- The good teaching provides a wide range of stimulating experiences to enhance children's reading and writing skills
- The teachers offer regular opportunities for the children to use language and to try out their ideas

Commentary

36. Children achieve well in this area of learning and attain the early learning goals by the end of the reception year. They show a good ability to listen to each other and their teachers both in small groups and as a whole class, for example when gathered together for snack time. Most speak clearly and confidently both in more formal situations and when engaged in role play. They enjoy listening to stories and rhymes and also concentrate very well. The teachers plan activities in which the children express and develop their ideas, knowledge and understanding. During the inspection, for instance, the children accurately heard and said initial sounds in words and matched them with sound dominoes. They enjoy writing for different purposes and apply their knowledge of letter sounds to write simple regular words correctly. When looking at where they live the children were very keen to write their address on postcards to send to their homes. The use of interesting and accurate vocabulary by the teachers encourages the children to develop their own vocabulary and to use it appropriately. When labelling their drawings of daffodils they used scientific vocabulary and frequently identified several letters in each word from their knowledge of letter sounds.
37. The children enjoy looking at books and handle them carefully. The teachers choose texts appropriately and read them to the children with good expression and emphasis. This helps the children to appreciate the story and provides a good model for their own reading. Across the Reception classes children are recognising words in familiar texts and are reading at the level expected for children of their ability. This area of learning is led and managed effectively.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Mathematical learning is linked well to practical everyday situations and taught effectively
- Learning is enhanced because it is well integrated into other areas of the curriculum
- Mathematical development is well managed

Commentary

38. Children achieve well in this area of learning and attain the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. They are given many opportunities to consolidate and use their knowledge of numbers, shapes and measures in a wide range of activities. When moving between numbered stations in an outdoor physical education lesson they successfully add two one digit numbers in order to identify the next station. During snack times the teachers often develop the children's understanding of concepts such as the days of the week and identifying and recording the different drinks being consumed. Such links consolidate and extend their understanding well, for example most children can count reliably up to ten everyday objects and recognise the numerals 1 to 9. Good links with learning in other areas include activities such as the recognition of two digit numbers linked to their house number. When studying plants the children accurately compare the size of items using appropriate vocabulary and when arranging equipment use everyday words to describe position.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The activities planned by the teachers are exciting and engaging for the children because the teaching is good
- The children have a good understanding of basic scientific enquiry and their immediate locality
- This areas of learning is led and managed effectively

Commentary

39. The children achieve well in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world and attain average standards for their age. They enjoy finding out about the immediate locality and applied themselves with great enthusiasm to the activities provide during the whole school geography day. They show a good understanding of their own addresses, including house number and street name, and almost all of them know the town in which they live, with several knowing the county and the country. When developing the outdoor marked road area into an imaginary town they accurately identified a range of well known local buildings to be visited as they travelled around the roads.

40. The children show a keen sense of enquiry and during the inspection this was applied to good effect as they investigated flowers and planted seeds. The children used an appropriate scientific vocabulary as they named the various parts of the plant and explained the growth cycle. When planting seeds they showed a good understanding of the basic conditions needed to support growth such as light and water. They

carefully used a microscope to examine seeds, shooting tomatoes and sunflowers. The teachers carefully organised these sessions so as to allow the children to link their learning from other areas. One group competently used an art program on the computer to produce daffodil pictures whilst another group drew and labelled a daffodil.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching of physical development builds the children' confidence, skills and co-ordination
- Opportunities to develop physical skills are linked effectively across the curriculum
- The enclosed outside learning area is very small and somewhat restrictive

Commentary

41. By the end of the reception year most children attain the early learning goals in physical development. They achieve well benefiting from regularly planned physical education lessons, including swimming, and show the ability to move confidently and imaginatively with control and coordination. Children use small equipment such as beanbags and quoits effectively in throwing, catching and aiming activities both individually and with a partner. When moving on the playground most children run, walk, skip, hop and jump with good control and show awareness of space and others.
42. The application of physical skills to other areas of learning consolidates these skills and also support learning in other areas. In work on 'spring' the children developed effectively a series of movements to represent the growth of a plant with the help of a musical stimulus. Similarly, as part of the geography day they developed the outdoor marked road area into an imaginary town and carefully controlled their vehicles as they rode around the roads visiting different buildings. The children also have good opportunities to develop their manipulative skills. In the classroom most children handle paint brushes, scissors and pencils with good levels of dexterity because the carefully planned activities enhance their coordination. Children identified as needing additional help are given very good support and encouragement.
43. The enclosed outside learning area is very small and does not readily provide opportunities for the full range of relevant outdoor activities. The teachers endeavour to overcome these limitations by providing regular opportunities for learning outside using the school playgrounds. The range of large apparatus provided for these sessions is somewhat limited due to the restrictions of the site. Nevertheless, the provision has improved since the previous inspection when there were no opportunities to use large wheeled toys and there was no enclosed outdoor area.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are encouraged to explore and experiment when working with different materials

- The teachers provide a good range of activities in this area of learning
- Teaching and learning are good

Commentary

44. Children achieve well in creative development because the teachers provide stimulating experiences for all to enjoy. Standards are average by the end of the reception year. The children's ability to listen and respond imaginatively to music was applied effectively when they were involved in a dance lesson linked to the spring topic. The outdoor marked road area provided an effective focal point for work across the curriculum around the theme of our town. The children developed this area imaginatively into a town and carefully controlled their vehicles as they rode around the roads insisting that all pedestrians used the Zebra crossings and that all vehicles obeyed the traffic lights. Wall displays and play spaces provide evidence that children have wide range of opportunities to develop their creative and imaginative ideas. They are encouraged to experiment when mixing paints, making pictures and using modelling materials. The children have well developed observation skills and make good attempts at drawing what they see. They apply their good fine motor skills to use a variety of tools to good effect when engaged in making pictures and models. 'Pupils' throughout!

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Attainment in national tests was well above average in last year's Year 6
- Standards in English are average at the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6
- Procedures for assessment and the tracking of progress are unsatisfactory
- The standard of handwriting and presentation of work is below expectation
- There is a lack of challenge for pupils with special educational needs
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory

45. The school has achieved well above average standards in national test results in English since the last inspection. The most recent results continue to show that reading and writing are well above average by the end of Year 2 and these results are maintained at the end of Year 6. However, inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 2 standards are average, and that teachers tend to overestimate pupil performance. In Years 5 and 6, an over-emphasis on coaching for the national tests has produced good test results, but standards in the present Year 6 are not as high as in last year's tests.

46. Most pupils have positive attitudes and, as they progress through the school, they acquire good literacy skills, including speaking and listening, and can read fluently. They make satisfactory progress in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are provided with a wide range of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills and this helps to develop their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress overall in Years 3 to 6. Most pupils read fluently and with confidence, having access to a range of graded fiction books located in each classroom. Reading, spelling and other literacy skills are generally good, although

higher ability pupils are not challenged enough. There is some satisfactory literacy support for lower achieving pupils. Regular homework is set for older pupils and this helps to consolidate basic skills.

47. Assessment procedures for English are ineffective and sometimes inaccurate. Work is not consistently matched to the needs of different groups of pupils. This means that individual pupils are often insufficiently challenged or supported and, therefore, do not make progress of which they are capable, particularly those with special educational needs. Individual education plans for this group of pupils are used inconsistently and reviewed irregularly. Targets for reading and writing are set by teachers and shared with pupils. However, because of weaknesses in pupils' assessment, these targets often lack focus and do not enable pupils to fully understand how they need to improve. Standards in handwriting and the presentation of work are not good enough because of insufficient emphasis on letter formation and emergent handwriting in Years 1 and 2 and an inconsistent commitment to the quality of handwriting and presentation in Years 3 to 6.
48. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall. Where it is good, pupils are well challenged and achieve well. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2 work was matched accurately to the wide age range and abilities of the pupils. The pupils used and understood the effectiveness of speech bubbles. All of the pupils were fully engaged in their learning and the more able used speech marks confidently in a written sentence. However, in other lessons observed, particularly with older pupils, much of the teaching lacked pace and was rather mechanical. While teaching covered all of the skills required for the national tests, teaching and learning was often uninspired and did not provide the breadth of experience, choice and quality to fully motivate pupils and raise achievement.
49. Pupils listen and participate well in lessons and develop good speaking and listening skills. By the time they reach the older classes in school they are generally secure in the mechanics of writing and show a good use of vocabulary. Writing skills are developed throughout the school and pupils learn a good range of styles, such as narrative, character studies and persuasive writing. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to the learning of the pupils in Years 1 and 2. An annual Book Week includes visiting storytellers and this helps to foster pupils' interest in books and reading
50. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory. There is a disparity between the school's perceived priorities for improvement within its strategic plan and those identified during the inspection. At present there is little evidence of rigorous, consistent and effective systems for evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, assessing, monitoring and tracking pupils' progress and raising achievement throughout the school as a whole. The school's library is poor and hampers opportunities for pupils to apply their reading skills to research.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

51. In some lessons there are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy skills to other subjects. During the geography day, pupils wrote letters to a family telling them how to recycle waste. In a Year 5 and 6 class, pupils produced a pamphlet incorporating the use of ICT to promote the newly opened Hinckley Town football stadium. However, there are limited opportunities, particularly for older pupils, to apply their literacy skills across the curriculum because of the proportion of time given to the

core subjects and revision work. Independent research is also hindered by the restrictions of the timetable and the library facilities available to the pupils.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In last year's national tests for Year 6 standards were well above average
- More able older pupils are not always challenged enough
- The teaching is satisfactory
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory

Commentary

52. Test results at the end of Year 6 in 2004 showed that pupils attained well above average levels. Given this cohort's performance at the end of Year 2 they made satisfactory progress. The level of performance over the last three years in mathematics has dipped slightly in the tests in Years 2 and 6. Inspection evidence shows that boys and girls perform equally well and that standards at the end of Year 2 are average and above average at the end of Year 6. Achievement is satisfactory. The difference between inspection findings and last year's test results is due to cohort variation and the difference in percentage of pupils with special educational needs. However, the constant repetition and cramming in Years 5 and 6 enables pupils to perform at a slightly better level than their work in books shows. Pupils with special educational needs generally make insufficient progress because in too many instances their particular needs are not met. Conversely the setting in Years 5 and 6 enables teachers to focus on less confident pupils and this aspect of support is good.
53. Pupils throughout the school have a secure grasp of number, shape, space and measures appropriate for their age. Their skills in data handling are average. Most pupils know basic mathematical vocabulary and use it effectively to help them to understand and solve problems. However, much of the teaching of older and brighter pupils is rather restrictive and few opportunities are given for the pupils to investigate and explore complex problems.
54. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and some good lessons were seen. Assessment is the weakest aspect of the teaching as few teachers have a secure grasp of the levels that their pupils are working. Marking is usually accurate and in the best instances good guidance is given to the pupils on how to improve. Lessons are planned using national guidance and most have a balance between direct teaching and opportunities for the pupils to practise. In Years 3 to 6 the work in classrooms is followed up well with homework. In Years 1 and 2 much of the work is practical and suitable use is made of apparatus to help pupils clarify new learning. Teachers deploy support staff effectively and when available their help often focuses on those with special educational needs. Teachers manage their classes effectively and behaviour in lessons is usually good. Occasionally pupils lose concentration if introductions are too long. The pace is mostly satisfactory and in the best lessons, such as with a low attaining set in Year 5, the teacher carefully structured learning so that pupils learned in small steps and grew in confidence because the examples were reviewed quickly and new tasks set. In some lessons pupils do not have time to complete sufficient work and often this is spoiled by untidy presentation.

55. The subject leader is currently absent from school and the subject is being maintained by two teachers. The main weakness in leadership and management is the lack of precise knowledge of the pupils' performance and the absence of a tracking system to monitor the pupils' progress. There has been insufficiently rigorous monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning which has led to inconsistencies in quality. Although attainment in national tests at the end of Year 6 has improved since the previous inspection, overall improvement in the provision has been unsatisfactory.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. The limited range of opportunities available in some subjects hampers the use of mathematics across the curriculum. Pupils use simple graphs and charts to record scientific information. They measure and label diagrams in design and technology and improve their awareness of pattern through their work in art and design on such artists as William Morris.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6
- The pupils perform very well in national tests at the end of Year 6
- Too much time, particularly in Year 6, is spent in revision for national tests
- Procedures for accurately identifying pupil progress are unsatisfactory
- The subject leader has a limited grasp of standards and progress across the school

Commentary

57. Science enjoys a very high profile within the school curriculum and receives a considerable allocation of time, particularly in Year 6. This has a positive impact upon standards attained in tests. The school has maintained well above average standards in National Curriculum assessments and tests for several years and standards in Year 6 are among the highest five per cent of schools. These results are also well above average in comparison with the results for similar schools. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Last year the girls performed relatively better than the boys, but considering the pupils' performance over the last three years there is no significant gender difference.
58. The high standards have been achieved through an overemphasis on gaining knowledge, repetitive work and a significant amount of coaching for national tests. This has been at the expense of the pupils' acquisition of scientific skills and understanding. Consequently, the standard of work recorded over time does not match the results in National Curriculum assessments and tests. Inspection evidence shows that pupils' progress is satisfactory overall and that standards are above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Inconsistency in the provision for pupils with special educational needs means that these pupils make unsatisfactory progress. There is an appropriate focus on investigative science, but too much time is spent on revising facts rather than developing understanding. Pupils across the school have well-developed observational skills and they discuss the outcomes of their investigations accurately and confidently using appropriate scientific vocabulary. They record their observations and measurements well and explain their findings. Most pupils understand the need for tests and investigations to be fair and as they move through the school carry them out

with only limited assistance. By the end of Year 6 most pupils make reasonable scientific predictions based on previous learning and evidence from experiments.

59. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, but varies from unsatisfactory to very good. The curriculum provision is satisfactory. When teaching is good or better lessons are planned to motivate and stimulate pupils' skills of investigation and arouse curiosity. These lessons provide a good balance between effective teacher demonstration and meaningful pupil investigation. Good classroom management, much encouragement and pertinent questioning arising from ongoing evaluation of learning results in pupils working hard and achieving well. A very good example of this was observed as a teacher skilfully made links with ICT as she used a laptop, microscope and interactive whiteboard to show magnified images of seeds. Consequently, the pupils' drew upon their skills of observation and measuring to grade seeds by size and then to interrogate non-fiction text to identify the average size of the corresponding plants. They concluded by investigating the relationship between seed and plant size. Similarly, pupils studying the conditions needed to support human life gained a good understanding of the effect of exercise and rest on their bodies when they measured their pulse before and after exercise. The practical activity brought the lesson to life as the pupils explored a scientific principle about breathing and practically investigated the theory. The excitement generated through this type of teaching is not found consistently throughout the school. When teaching is unsatisfactory the content of lessons is not matched closely enough to the abilities of all pupils and the pace of learning is too slow for many of them.
60. The subject leader has successfully raised the profile of science across the school. However, she has a limited grasp of standards and progress across the school. Although there is good assessment of pupils' progress in some classes, there is no consistent whole school approach that facilitates accurate identification of appropriate improvement targets for pupils of all abilities or the monitoring of progress towards them. This issue was also identified in the previous inspection report. The amount of time allocated to science throughout the year is considerable but the impact of this provision has not been evaluated effectively.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6
- Teaching in the ICT suite is unsatisfactory but teaching in the classrooms is satisfactory
- Subject leadership is unsatisfactory

Commentary

61. Pupils have an appropriate grasp of basic skills, aided by most having computers at home. Progress is satisfactory in applying skills but, because of unsatisfactory teaching of the basics, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Insufficient focussed support is given to pupils with special educational needs and they make unsatisfactory progress. Although subject leadership has been unsatisfactory for some time, recent initiatives by the acting headteacher and governing body have led to much improved resources. There is now a cohesive plan for improvement. The division of responsibilities for the subject in the past has led to lack of development. Resources have been replaced this term and more is being done to upgrade machines for use in

classrooms. Improvement since the previous inspection has been unsatisfactory but the school is now making satisfactory headway in developing the provision.

62. Pupils do not enjoy most aspects of the subject as they find the teaching tedious and uninspiring. In the ICT suite the pace of lessons is very slow and explanations are often unclear. The teacher does not clearly guide the pupils. For example, in two lessons the pupils were asked to use a spreadsheet to create a table for the 19 times table but were given no advice about the use of absolute cell values. This led to confusion and wasted at least half an hour. Pupils were frustrated and progress was limited. After the formula was shared with pupils they quickly achieved the task but they could have gone to do much more in the time available if the teacher had provided the information when it was needed. Teaching in classrooms is satisfactory and most staff plan activities which link with a variety of subjects. This is most successful in mathematics where the programs used fit with the topic being taught. Most teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject but missed out on the official training in the last few years because of a leadership decision not to participate. There is little use made of assessment to pinpoint pupils' strengths and weaknesses and to influence planning.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

63. Computers are used satisfactorily to some learning in some subjects. Most pupils have the basic skills to use the computer as a word processor although opportunities to do this are limited by insufficient resources and poor use of time in the ICT suite. In mathematics lessons staff make appropriate use of a variety of basic skill programs. Music lessons often include the use of keyboards and there are opportunities for pupils to carry out research in history and geography.

HUMANITIES

64. During the inspection, no lessons were seen in history. However, inspectors gathered evidence from pupils' work, by discussions with staff and pupils and through an analysis of the school's plans. There is a reasonable amount of recorded work in **history** and most of it is of a satisfactory standard. Although the subject is taught alternatively with geography, there are not significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and most are secure when talking about their work. The teachers endeavour to make good use of the school's central location in Hinckley in order to support the pupils' learning through visits to places of historical interest. In addition, whole school history days on topics such as the Victorians are organised in order to bring the subject to life. In Year 2, pupils have studied their local environment and London at the time of Charles II. They have an appropriate understanding of important people and events such as Samuel Pepys and the Great Fire of London. The pupils in Year 4 have a satisfactory grasp of the influence of the Romans on the development of Britain and also know that these islands have been invaded and settled many times. In Year 6 the pupils recall with some enthusiasm their work arising from a topic on the Victorians that included a Victorian school day re-enactment. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory as there is little assessment and effective monitoring.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teachers utilise the locally agreed syllabus to good effect

- The subject supports the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided and the pupils' progress and attainment is ineffective

Commentary

65. Throughout the school, the pupils' attainment is in line with the expectations of the agreed syllabus. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when attainment was judged to be below average. The school has responded appropriately to the issues raised at the time of the last inspection and now relates planning to the locally agreed syllabus and no longer places an undue reliance on the daily act of collective worship to teach religious education. Consequently, both the curriculum and the quality of teaching have improved. Although pupils make satisfactory progress overall, the provision for those with special educational needs is weak and these pupils do not make the progress they should.
66. The pupils know about various important religious traditions, beliefs and practices and have an appropriate understanding of the significance of ceremonies, clothing and meals and some of the signs and symbols of particular forms of worship. As the pupils move through the school they study the traditions of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. During the inspection pupils in Year 1 and 2 were studying the Easter story and they showed secure knowledge of the events of the resurrection and its significance for Christians. Year 5 and 6 pupils know something of the work of the Salvation Army and how this group's mission statement links with the teachings of Jesus as found in the Bible. This work provides reasonable links with subjects such as geography and history. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they reflect upon and make decisions about their personal responses to these meanings and values.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are planned satisfactorily and build on the pupils' previous knowledge and experiences. However, the teachers do not consistently make explicit the links between the intended learning and the activities provided. This results in some lack of pace in lessons as not all pupils are fully aware of the intended outcomes. Furthermore, work is not consistently set at an appropriate level in order to engage and challenge all pupils irrespective of their ability.
68. Subject leadership is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient focused monitoring and evaluation of the quality of education provided and of the pupils' progress and attainment. This issue was also identified in the last inspection report.

Geography

Provision in geography is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of both the local and more distant environment to support learning
- The pupils have opportunities to apply their learning from other subjects
- Subject leadership is unsatisfactory especially in monitoring and evaluating the quality of education provided and the pupils' progress and attainment

Commentary

69. Standards by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are in line with those expected nationally. The evidence from work completed over time shows that boys and girls of all ages

make satisfactory progress in developing their geographical knowledge, skills and understanding. This progress is frequently supported through the application of learning from other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 2 use some basic scientific knowledge when studying the seasons and weather patterns. This is developed appropriately in Year 4 when pupils apply their knowledge of measure, scales and graphs when studying climate and in particular when investigating temperature. In Year 6 the pupils apply their knowledge of coordinates when drawing plans and maps.

70. The school makes good use of its central location in Hinckley in order to support the pupils' learning. Teachers across the school visit the immediate locality in order to bring work on geography to life. Furthermore, pupils in Year 6 benefit from residential visits that further promote their knowledge and understanding. A visit to France has been organised for this year. In addition, whole school geography days enhance learning.
71. During the inspection a whole school local studies topic formed the basis of the work. Pupils considered human and physical features of the immediate locality as they identified positive and negative features, recycling and redevelopment opportunities. The quality of teaching observed was satisfactory overall and on occasions was good. When teaching was good the pupils were offered interesting and challenging practical activities that enabled the teachers to ask pertinent questions to support the pupils' progress. An example of active learning was the visit to Hinckley to identify the impact of litter and to consider how to reuse the rubbish to best effect. In other satisfactory lessons the learning intentions were relevant but the lack of different levels of work to meet the needs of all pupils meant that the pace of lessons and the subsequent learning was inconsistent. This project provided good support for the pupils' social and cultural development as they developed an understanding of environmental issues. Furthermore, it also provided good opportunities for the pupils to apply their learning from other subjects such as English, mathematics science and ICT. However, these opportunities were not developed to full effect in all lessons due to a lack of rigour in some of the planning.
72. Subject leadership is weak as there is insufficient attention paid to developing assessment and monitoring the teaching and learning. The curriculum covers basic requirements and topic days are used well but there is a lack of consistency between year groups in developing skills, knowledge and understanding.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

73. Inspectors observed two lessons in physical education, one in design and technology three in music but none in art and design. Other evidence includes discussions with pupils and staff, analysis of the pupils' work and scrutiny of displays and the teachers' planning. In the **design and technology** lesson observed, the quality of teaching was good. Pupils investigated different kinds of bread for taste and for nutrition as part of a unit on designing a sandwich with appropriate packaging and labelling. They generated and communicated ideas about their product, made decisions, for example, about what would provide a healthy option, and showed an appropriate understanding of the importance of including the nutritional value of the sandwich in the labelling. From an analysis of displays, photographs, discussions with pupils and other evidence, the school offers a satisfactory range of opportunities in this subject. Years 5 and 6 pupils have in the last year visited a complete control workshop in Birmingham for control technology. The school follows national guidelines for the scheme of work. Time constraints placed on the wider curriculum have raised concerns by the subject leader

about the school's ability to deliver the scheme of work effectively, an issue that the school ought to address. Assessment and monitoring procedures are not systematic and require much further development.

74. Although it is not possible to make a firm judgement about provision or standards in **art and design**, displays around the school indicate that the pupils are given the opportunity to experience different skills and work with different mediums. In Year 1 and 2 pupils display their creativity in drawing flowers using paint and pastels. They also create attractive woven paper patterns from observing the threads of cloth. Year 3 and 4 have recently focused on block printing and designing stencils, while Year 5 and 6 have studied and reproduced patterns in the style of William Morris, explored shading in colour and have created a roman style mosaic. The subject leader has identified that the scheme of work requires development to provide pupils with progressive skills development, greater freedom of choice and less prescription. Monitoring, evaluation and assessment of the art curriculum is weak and this has been identified by the school as an area for development.

Music

Provision in music is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve satisfactory standards by the end of Year 6
- Pupils enjoy music and demonstrate positive attitudes to learning.
- The quality of music teaching is good.
- Timetabling constraints limit opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills to a higher level, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

Commentary

75. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils have competent musical skills and appreciation and are working at average levels for their age by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Progress and achievement are satisfactory. In Year 1 and 2 pupils enjoy singing and begin to understand about sequences in music using long and short sounds, rhythm and pitch. Lessons in Year 3 to 6 are taught by the subject leader for music. Pupils are taught effectively to create musical ideas and composing skills, combining different musical elements and understanding how music is produced in different ways. Pupils generally are given the opportunity to develop their skills consistently, have a satisfactory knowledge of musical vocabulary and are taught about musical composers. Timetabling constraints limit the opportunities for pupils to develop their musical skills to a higher level.
76. The quality of teaching seen was good overall. In one very good Year 5 and 6 lesson pupils were encouraged to develop musical ideas using instruments such as a keyboard to create a melodic, rhythmic accompaniment. They collaborated well and were encouraged to work with tasks that matched their levels of ability. They understood aspects of composition and were able to perform their piece making choices from the full range of instruments available. In a Year 1 and 2 lesson, the pupils experimented with long and short sounds using a wide range of percussion instruments effectively. In all lessons observed the pupils enjoyed music and demonstrated positive attitudes.
77. The school uses a nationally published scheme of work for music. The subject leader monitors the progression and development of pupils' musical skills through regular meetings with the Year 1 and 2 teachers. Assessment requires further development

and the subject leader has identified this as a priority. The school has developed a wide range of different instruments, which are used both in lessons and by extra-curricular groups. The school has a choir, which sings in assemblies and the local community, particularly at Christmas in the local shopping centre and at homes for the elderly. There are also both descant and treble recorder and keyboard groups which practice at lunchtimes. Instrumental tuition is provided by Leicestershire Arts and a small number of pupils benefit from this. All Year Groups are involved in school performances each year, such as “Hosanna Rock” for Year 5 and 6. The school aims to involve as many pupils as possible in these productions, all in a singing, musical performing role.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Limited space and resources hamper some aspects of the pupils’ development
- Progress in swimming is good

Commentary

78. Boys and girls are equally successful in physical education. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in swimming because there is a regular programme of lessons for each year group. By the end of Year 6 almost all pupils swim competently and have good knowledge of water safety. The school swimming team successfully compete and recently won a local gala. The lessons seen involved dance and no gymnastics or games lessons were observed. Pupils attain appropriate standards for their age in dance and show appropriate levels of balance poise and movement. Pupils move with confidence and work together in improving their performance. They dance in a variety of styles.
79. The teaching is satisfactory overall and some good features were observed. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge and achieve a balance between developing new skills and refining previous learning. Much encouragement is given and pupils usually respond well although the oldest pupils tend to be rather unwilling. Most pupils work hard and apply good physical effort. Lessons are prepared well and account is taken of the limited space. Good attention is given to health and safety with suitable warm up and cooling down exercises. A good feature in the lessons seen was the way the teachers encouraged the pupils to demonstrate their sequences and explained why they had been chosen. This led to improvements in the work of other pupils.
80. The quality of the provision has been maintained since the previous inspection. The subject leader has a clear vision for the development of physical education and has carefully planned for improved resources and opportunities for the pupils. Assessment is still underdeveloped. Staff are given appropriate guidance to achieve consistency. The provision is enhanced by visits from coaches for basketball, football and rugby and the school runs some extra curricular activities such as cross country and netball.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

81. The school provides regular opportunities which enhance pupils’ personal, social and health development. In some classes there is a circle time when pupils share their ideas and feelings and this contributes well to their **personal, social and health**

education. The aspects of personal, social and health education are developed in a variety of ways. There are some links with science lessons where pupils learn about their bodies and healthy eating, and also opportunities for older pupils to focus specifically on elements of the subject such lessons in growth and relationships. Older pupils have the opportunity to learn about the physical and emotional changes associated with puberty.

82. Staff have appropriate knowledge of the subject and in the best lessons clearly identify the needs of the pupils and structure learning carefully. This was seen to good effect in Years 1 and 2 where the teacher showed a video, made at home by the boy's parents, to boost his self esteem and encourage the other pupils to appreciate his qualities. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and be involved in decision making through their contribution to the school council. They value these opportunity and feel that they make an impact. The school encourages an awareness of the environment through activities such as analysing litter around the locality and help the pupils to appreciate the importance they play in keeping the area clean and tidy.

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	5
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	5
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	4
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	4
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	4
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	5
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	4
The leadership and management of the school	5
The governance of the school	5
The leadership of the headteacher	5
The leadership of other key staff	5
The effectiveness of management	5

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