

INSPECTION REPORT

THE BLUECOAT PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stamford, Lincolnshire

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120399

Headteacher: Mr T Howley

Lead inspector: Mr C D Loizou

Dates of inspection: 6 – 8 June 2005

Inspection number: 268043

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	264
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Rev R Mackrill
Date of previous inspection:	22 March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The Bluecoat Primary School is a community infant and junior school in the town of Stamford in Lincolnshire. The school, which is above average in size, has 239 boys and girls on roll (full-time equivalent), this includes 50 part-time three-year-old children in the Nursery. The Nursery serves all schools in the Stamford area and approximately half of the children in the Nursery join the school's Reception class each year when they are four years of age. The children's attainment on entry to the school is well below average overall. Most of the pupils are from British white backgrounds. Less than five per cent of the pupils are of mixed white and black Caribbean or of Asian (Indian) heritage. Seven per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is well above average (35 per cent) with seven per cent of the pupils having a Statement of Special Educational Need, which is well above average. The school accommodates an extensive range of community and extended services which include family support and learning programmes, adult education and community user groups. The recent development of a Children's Centre based in the Foundation Stage is adding another dimension to the school's strong commitment to its community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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21235	Marjorie Graham	Team inspector	English Art and design Design and technology
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

The school provides a **satisfactory standard of education** and gives satisfactory value for money. The leadership and management of the school and the quality of teaching are satisfactory. Standards and achievement are uneven across the school but most pupils achieve satisfactorily and, by the time they leave the school, attain below average standards in English, mathematics and science.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils of average ability could do better
- The provision for science is unsatisfactory
- The achievement and progress by children in the Nursery is very good
- The pupils with special educational needs are supported well and make good progress
- The headteacher and staff do not monitor the quality of teaching and learning rigorously enough
- Although the teaching is satisfactory there is room for improvement, particularly in the way teachers use assessment to plan future learning
- The pupils try hard, enjoy school and behave well. The school successfully promotes their personal development and well-being. Attendance is good
- There are very good links with the local community and good links with parents

The school has made satisfactory progress since it was last inspected but there is a mixed picture. Standards are rising at a faster rate than the national trend by Year 6 but have declined by Year 2. Satisfactory progress has been made in addressing some key issues from the last inspection, but all aspects of the science curriculum are still not being taught effectively enough. There have been improvements to the role of subject co-ordinators but the monitoring of pupils' work is not rigorous enough. There have been good improvements to art and design and design and technology.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	All schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	C	E	D	C
Mathematics	C	E	D	D
Science	D	C	D	E

*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.*

Overall, pupils **achieve satisfactorily** and those with special educational needs achieve well. However, achievement of those pupils of average ability varies and is unsatisfactory overall. The children enter the Nursery and Reception years with well below average attainment. They make good progress and reach the expected levels in their personal, social and physical development. Most children will not reach the nationally agreed early learning goals in the other for areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. The school's results in the 2004 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 were well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. When compared with similar schools, standards were also well below average. Currently, standards in Year 2 remain well below average because many pupils of average ability are underachieving. More able pupils in

Years 3 to 6 make satisfactory progress and this has led to an increasing proportion of them achieving the higher levels in English and mathematics. Consequently, standards by the end of Year 6 are rising. This has come about because the school has improved the achievement of more able pupils. Currently standards in Year 6 are similar to those in 2004 and remain below average in English, mathematics and science. Although standards are rising by Year 6 in English and mathematics they should be higher and are constrained by the lack of challenge for pupils of average ability. The standards in science by the end of Year 2 and 6 should be higher and are limited by the lack of challenge in some aspects of science teaching. Standards in other subjects are at the expected levels.

The pupils' **personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good**. They have good attitudes to school and their behaviour is good. There are very good relationships across the school. Attendance rates are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The school provides a satisfactory education. The teaching is satisfactory and there is very good teaching in the Nursery. Teachers and learning support assistants successfully plan work that meets the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent and could be better. There is variability in the way teachers make use of assessment in planning lessons resulting in work that does not match the different levels of pupils' ability. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent. The pupils' targets for learning do not provide them with a clear understanding of the next stages of their learning. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology to learning in other subjects. Accommodation and resources are good.

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum, enhanced by a good range of enrichment activities. The care and welfare of the pupils are very good. The school benefits from good links with parents and very good links with the community. Links with other schools are good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher provides satisfactory leadership and ensures that the school is inclusive and plays an important part in the community it serves. Effective measures have raised standards by the end of Year 6. However, the monitoring of teaching and learning is not rigorous enough, resulting in uneven progress and achievement. Governance is satisfactory and meets all statutory requirements. Governors have a good understanding of the school and its community. Management is satisfactory overall, and it is good in the Foundation Stage. The school has established a clear set of priorities but these are not sufficiently linked to improving the pupils' achievements.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The school has a strong relationship with parents. Parents and their children have positive views of the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about school and value their friendships. They like their teachers very much and feel well cared for. Communication between school and home is very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the achievement of average attaining pupils
- Improve the quality of the provision for science
- Improve the quality of learning by ensuring assessment is used more effectively to match work to the varying abilities of the pupils
- Improve the leadership and management of the school by monitoring learning and teaching more rigorously

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

The inspection confirms that the pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall. Standards in English, mathematics and science are below average by the end of Year 6 and well below average by the end of Year 2. Standards are rising in English and mathematics by the end Year 6.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The performance of pupils in Year 6 in the national tests show improving standards but standards are declining in Year 2
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress
- The average attaining pupils do not always do as well as they should
- The children in the Nursery make very good progress because the teaching is very good
- Standards in science are too low

Commentary

1. The children's attainment when they first join the Nursery and Reception class covers a broad range, but overall is well below average, particularly in the area of language and mathematical development. Good teaching and an effective Foundation Stage curriculum mean that the children make good progress in all areas of learning. The teachers' planning is good and ensures that all areas of the curriculum are given sufficient coverage and that the work is well matched to the children's level of ability and maturity. In personal, emotional and social development and in their physical development the children reach the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. However, due to the low base from which they start, few are likely to attain the expected levels in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.
2. The 2004 National Curriculum test results show that by the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment was well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The trend of improvement over the past five years is below the national trend. When compared with similar schools attainment was also well below average.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	14.0 (13.5)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	12.7 (12.9)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	13.9 (12.9)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 39 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

3. Inspection evidence shows that in the current Year 2, standards are still well below average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Although the majority of pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment on entry to the school, the evidence in their books and discussions with the pupils, together with the evidence gained from the observations of lessons, indicates that there is a lack of challenge for many pupils of average ability not only in Years 1 and 2 but also in Years 3 to 6.

Consequently, pupils of average ability should do better. In Year 6, in 2004, the national test results were below the national average in English, mathematics and science. The results for 2004 were higher than in previous years and, over time, the overall rate of improvement has been faster than the national trend. When compared with similar schools, the results were average in English, below average in mathematics and well below average in science. The leadership of the school targeted more able pupils in an effort to raise standards. This was successful and the percentage of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was above average in English and mathematics.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.6 (25.4)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	26.3 (25.5)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	27.5 (28.6)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 44 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

4. Inspection evidence confirms that standards are rising steadily in English and mathematics by the time the pupils leave the school but they should be higher in science. The majority of pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6 but the inconsistent use of assessment in planning work in some classes leads to slower progress particularly for those pupils of average ability. The school places a high priority on the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills but the pupils' workbooks are not checked often enough by subject leaders and this also contributes to underachievement in some classes. Overall, the progress of pupils of all abilities could be tracked more carefully to ensure that they are making sufficient progress.
5. Standards in science across the school are below those expected because the pupils are not being provided with enough opportunities to engage in challenging investigations and experiments, so they do not develop the skills of scientific enquiry as well as they should. The inspection evidence in pupils' workbooks confirms what the national test results show, which is that science standards ought to be higher.
6. Among other subjects, standards have risen in information and communication technology and are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6, due largely to improvements to resources, teaching and organisation. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus and standards are also in line with what is expected in art and design, design and technology and physical education. The standards in art and design and design and technology have improved well since the last inspection.
7. The inclusive ethos of the school helps those pupils with special educational needs and the small number of pupils at an early stage of acquiring English to good levels of achievement. They are very well supported by the adults that work with them and, as a result, are included in all activities. Learning support assistants are very skilled at supporting these pupils and are well deployed to monitor their progress and help them towards their learning targets. Planning takes good account of their specific needs and the teachers ensure that these pupils receive the additional help they need in lessons. The teaching assistants have a significant impact on the achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have positive attitudes. Behaviour is good. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance is good and punctuality is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are interested in school life and the range of activities provided
- Relationships between children and adults are very good thus establishing a good learning environment
- The school’s action to promote attendance is very good
- The school sets high expectations for pupils’ conduct and works to achieve them

Commentary

8. The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The attendance rate has improved significantly since the last inspection and is now above the national average. The unauthorised absence is caused by a small, but significant, number of identified persistent families. The school works very hard to promote good attendance and rigorously follows up all absences. Most parents support their child’s attendance at school well.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.8	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.

9. Most pupils are very happy to come to school and are eager to learn. They are attentive, co-operative and collaborate well with each other. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and are respectful and considerate to those pupils who have special educational needs. They are polite and respectful to adults and pupils of all ages are welcoming to visitors. Where pupils are offered opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, acting as pupil librarians, they respond in a mature and responsible manner. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
10. The school places a high priority on the pupils’ personal development. This starts straight away in the Nursery. From the moment they begin school, pupils learn to work together in harmony, share resources, assist each other in groups and take care of their own belongings and those of the school. Pupils are taught the principles that enable them to distinguish right from wrong. Self-knowledge and spiritual awareness is promoted through assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons. Younger pupils are given the opportunity to discuss and reflect on important issues in circle time. Different faiths and religions are taught in religious education lessons. Pupils are provided with many experiences to stimulate their imagination and to develop their appreciation of the diversity of cultures within our society today. The pupils are introduced to art and design and music and this enhances their creative and cultural development well. Good use is made of visitors, for example, a local sculptor for these subjects. The pupils learn to be aware of others less fortunate than themselves through support to various charities.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There is a sound curriculum with good provision for pupils who have special educational needs. The school cares very well for all pupils and good links with parents and the very good links with the community support the quality of education.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but assessments of the pupils' prior learning are not used well enough by some teachers when planning the next stages of learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching in the Nursery is very good
- The support for pupils with special educational needs is good and they achieve well
- There are inconsistencies in the way pupils' work is marked
- There are too few opportunities to develop writing skills in other subjects and there is an overuse of mundane worksheets in science

Commentary

11. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory but it is uneven across the school ranging from unsatisfactory to excellent so that progress and achievement varies from class to class. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory overall. Teachers have recently begun to group pupils by ability for English and mathematics and this is having a positive impact on the standards attained. This can be seen in the determined efforts to raise the performance of the more able older pupils and has increased the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 by the time they leave the school. The inspection of the pupils' workbooks reveals that it is a minority of teachers who demand high standards and plan work that challenges all pupils. Learning in these classes is good and the pupils make good progress. In other classes expectations of what the pupils can achieve are frequently not high enough, particularly for the pupils of average ability. The school has introduced target setting in English and mathematics so that teachers can plan their lessons to take account of the identified weaknesses in the assessments. This approach has not been embedded in all classes as yet, although great care is taken by some teachers to plan tasks in lessons at different levels of difficulty to challenge all pupils.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 46 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2 (4%)	7 (15%)	14 (30%)	22 (48%)	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.

12. The teaching of science is too inconsistent across the school to ensure that the pupils make consistent gains in their knowledge and understanding of scientific principles. In some classes the over-use of worksheets limits opportunities for the pupils to make suggestions or draw conclusions for themselves. In some lessons, the outcomes and learning objectives are too prescribed by teachers leaving little scope for the pupils to

think for themselves. Due to a lack of sharp monitoring, particularly of pupils' recorded work, the quality of teaching and learning is uneven across the school. The school has prioritised the raising standards in English and mathematics and this has led to an improvement in standards by the end of Year 6 because of some effective teaching targeted in particular at more able pupils. However, this has not been reflected in science where standards remain too low.

13. At the time of the last inspection pupils were found to be making unsatisfactory progress in the creative areas of the curriculum, but particularly so in art and design. This has now improved well because of the increased emphasis on the creative curriculum. This has helped to broaden the curriculum with teachers and learning support assistants offering good enrichment and opportunities for the pupils to explore topics and projects with enjoyment and creativity.
14. The quality of the teachers' marking of pupils' work varies from class to class. In some examples the pupils are provided with a clear indication of what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve but in too many classes this is not the case. In some cases, teachers do not make sufficient use of writing activities to promote learning in subjects such as history and geography and there are too few opportunities identified in their planning to make effective use of independent and extended forms of writing because worksheets are used too much, for example in science where pupils fill in boxes or colour in pictures. This has the effect of inhibiting the pupils' learning and does little to promote independent and extended forms of writing in other subjects.
15. The quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is good overall. The children have a good start to their education in the Nursery class. The very good teaching and planning and careful assessments ensure that the children make rapid progress in the Nursery. The children's independent learning is well promoted through enquiry, exploration and imaginative play. Progress is not as quick in the Reception class as the teaching does not always challenge the children in the same way it does in the Nursery.
16. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Work is planned very carefully to meet their needs and the pupils are supported particularly well by learning support assistants. All members of the learning support staff are deployed very well to meet pupil needs, enabling them to take a full part in lessons and make good progress towards their personal targets. In lessons observed during the inspection the learning support assistants were very clear about what the pupils were to learn and they made sure that they succeeded in meeting learning objectives. The contribution of the pupils is valued and staff encourage them to participate fully in whole-class sessions.

The curriculum

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum that meets statutory requirements. It is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities. Accommodation and resources are good overall.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good inclusion and provision for personal development is good.
- Provision for special educational needs pupils is good.
- There is insufficient development of the curriculum based on rigorous monitoring of pupils' learning needs.

- Planning within mixed-year classes does not always address the learning needs of different ability or age groups.
- All pupils benefit from the good range of clubs, trips and visitors.

Commentary

17. The school values the contributions of all pupils regardless of their ability or background and has a clear commitment to inclusion. The pupils with special educational needs, including those with physical, emotional and learning difficulties, are well integrated into all aspects of school life. Good attention is given to pupils with a special educational needs statement by the well-qualified and caring team of specialist learning support assistants. The quality of individual education plans for pupils with specific learning needs is good and parents, teachers, learning support assistants and pupils help set targets and monitor progress. Parents and pupils are involved every term with reviewing this progress alongside teachers and support staff. The school has very close links with the educational psychologist and support for parents, pupils and members of staff is further enhanced by the very good liaison with other agencies such as the speech and language specialists. There is particularly good support for pupils who have physical difficulties.
18. The needs of all individuals are met through good quality personal, social and health education which permeates all aspects of the curriculum. Sex, relationships and drug issues are taught through the science and citizenship programmes with expert help from the school nurse.
19. The school has adopted national guidelines to provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets all statutory requirements. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. The curriculum in Years 1 to 6 is satisfactory overall with a good religious education curriculum. However, there is no rigorous monitoring of subject delivery within the present organisation. There are some new and improving development in information and communication technology to promote and organise a more exciting and interesting curriculum. Other than in science, design and technology and information and communication technology, there are few planned subject links so pupils have limited opportunity to transfer, practise and reinforce skills learnt in different subjects across the curriculum. In the Nursery, the creative and scientific curriculum is very good with many opportunities provided for the children to explore, observe and gain practical first-hand experiences. Although evident in the Reception year these areas are not as strong or effective as those seen in the Nursery.
20. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are organised into mixed-age classes. In some lessons the learning needs of different ability and age groups of pupils are not being identified through planning based on rigorous marking and assessment procedures. Much planning is taken from published material and not adapted in any way to meet the needs of the particular group of pupils being taught. This particularly affects standards in science and other foundation subjects. In English and mathematics lessons, however, where pupils are put into ability sets, tasks are not always matched to the abilities of the pupils even though the spread of age and academic ability is still wide. In Years 5 and 6, the match of tasks to the abilities of the pupils in English and mathematics is more consistently sharper, resulting in improved standards and achievement because more able pupils are provided with challenging work.
21. There is a good transition programme between the primary and the nearby secondary school to enable pupils to move smoothly into their next stage of education. The school's learning mentor communicates between the schools to ensure information about specific pupils is clearly understood.
22. There are good opportunities for curriculum enrichment through visits and extra curricular activities. The pupils have opportunities to play football, netball and rounders

whilst a national champion helps coach table tennis. Other school clubs offered to the pupils include gymnastics, cooking, information and communication technology, sewing, religious education and a homework club. These cater for all age groups of pupils in the school and are very popular. There is a residential trip each year for the older pupils, which is highly effective in developing pupils' learning experiences as well as their independent and social skills. A good range of more local visits and visitors is also in place.

23. There are sufficient members of staff to meet the needs of the curriculum. The good quality of the co-operation between teachers and support staff plays a significant part in establishing a secure and supportive learning environment. Accommodation is safe and attractive; the building is being adapted well to meet the needs of disabled pupils. Resources for learning are good and well used by the teaching and support staff.

Care, guidance and support

The pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Provision for support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. Involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school's arrangements for ensuring health and safety are very good
- Relationships between children and adults are very good
- The school has very good induction arrangements for pupils coming into the Nursery

Commentary

24. The school provides very effective care for its pupils. All members of staff are very approachable, caring and committed to the pupils in their charge. Learning support assistants provide very good pastoral support to pupils. Supervision at breaks and lunchtimes is alert and vigilant. All staff consistently demonstrate a very good knowledge of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures. Arrangements for first-aid and dealing with minor injuries are very good.
25. Every pupil has a very good and trusting relationship with one or more adult in the school. Teachers listen to pupils and value their opinions and ideas. Through a series of consultation assemblies and personal, social and health education lessons, the school offers pupils very good opportunities to have input into the day-to-day running of the school. This is appreciated by the pupils who say they like school and what it offers.
26. The school's child protection procedures are securely in place and are fully understood by all members of staff. The governing body and headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously. All the required checks and inspections, including comprehensive risk assessments, are regularly carried out and properly recorded. Consequently, the pupils work and play in a safe environment.
27. Pupils with special educational needs are supported very well across the school. This has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. However, academic support for all the pupils in the school, although well intentioned, is not based on rigorous evaluation and assessment. For example, not all of the pupils' work is marked. Average attaining pupils are therefore not always achieving as well as they could which has an adverse effect on the standards they achieve.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are good. Links with the community are very good. Links with other schools and colleges are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school provides very good information for parents
- The school fully involves parents through seeking, valuing and acting on their views
- Mechanisms for the transfer of pupils to secondary education are very good

Commentary

28. The majority of parents have a good opinion of the school are pleased with most aspects of it. The headteacher and all members of staff are available and approachable to parents. Parents feel welcome and appreciate that they play an important part in the life of the school and in their children's education. A group of parents willingly help in classrooms, around the school and by accompanying the pupils on out of school trips. The parent support group is very well supported and has raised considerable funds for the school.
29. The provision of information about all aspects of school life is very good. The school prospectus is attractive and informative. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish a comprehensive annual report. The parents receive very good day-to-day information in the way of monthly newsletters and regular letters about specific events and activities. Parents are given an informative annual progress report that clearly states the progress their children are making and sets targets for future improvement. This is supplemented by a useful interim report in the spring term. Parents are offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation evenings throughout the year.
30. Parents are regularly consulted and their views are valued and acted upon. The parent participation group meets regularly and has worked on important issues such as the home-school agreement and the prospectus. The school supports parents' further education, for example, by hosting family learning (Teddy Bluecoat) courses and early learning groups. This is appreciated by the parents.
31. The school uses the community very well. Pupils are taken on appropriate trips and are exposed to wide range of visitors that enrich the curriculum and support their personal development. There are strong links with the local church. The pupils raise considerable funds for local, national and international charities thus raising their awareness of others less fortunate than themselves.
32. The school has a strong commitment to parents and the local community. This is evident in the development of the Children's Centre on the school site which is due to open shortly. The school has significant partnerships with local agencies, for example, Grantham Excellence in Clusters, which has provided the learning mentor system that supports attainment, attendance, behavioural and emotional issues for individuals and groups of pupils. In partnership with the YMCA the school hosts a before and after school care facility.

33. The school has a good relationship with the main receiving secondary school. The very good mechanisms for the transfer of pupils ensures that they have a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership, management and governance of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide satisfactory leadership.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a positive climate for learning which is fostered by the leadership but there are inconsistencies reflecting some shortcomings in the way the school's work is monitored
- The analysis and review of targets by staff and governors are not always sharp enough to ensure that the pupils reach their learning targets
- The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to running an equitable and inclusive school, in which every pupil matters

Commentary

34. The headteacher's energy and genuine concern for the needs of all the pupils is supported well by staff, governors and parents. As a result, the teachers and support staff are keen to improve further the quality of education provided for the pupils. There is a strong focus on providing very good care and support for pupils through enrichment activities, for example, in the creative and expressive arts as well as outdoor education and work in the community. This is reinforced through close working partnerships with other schools, organisations and the local community. The headteacher, governors and senior staff have analysed assessment data about the pupils' performance in national tests to adapt the way pupils are grouped in lessons and this has had a positive impact on more able pupils where this targeting has been most effective in raising standards by Year 6. However, the monitoring and support provided for the pupils' academic achievements are not sharp enough to sustain a rise in standards consistently across the school. Nor has there been a rigorous analysis of teaching and learning across the school to ensure that average attaining pupils make enough progress in every class. This is also evident in the inconsistencies in teachers' marking of pupils' work where the monitoring by senior staff and subject co-ordinators has been lax.
35. The leadership in the Nursery is very good and the management of the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) is good overall. In the rest of the school, the analysis of assessment information and the monitoring of lessons enables the headteacher and senior staff to appraise what the school is doing well but pupils' work is not being trawled, analysed or corrected systematically by teachers and senior staff resulting in uneven achievement across the school.
36. The strong emphasis on the pupils' welfare and the provision made for pupils with special educational needs are positive aspects of the leadership and management of the school. In this way the headteacher and staff have earned the respect of governors and parents who rightly value what they provide for the pupils.
37. The measures for making teaching even better are contributing well to the rising standards in Years 3 to 6 but standards by Year 2 have declined, particularly in key areas such as writing, mathematics and science. This is due to some extent to staffing difficulties and in particular to less effective teaching and the use of assessment to

ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged. The lack of rigorous monitoring accounts for these differences, particularly when they relate to lapses in, for example, identifying the lack of teachers' marking in workbooks. Subject co-ordinators are given time to monitor lessons and work with other staff and some of this is having a positive impact, for example, on the quality of teaching in English and mathematics but this has been less effective in science because science has not been a school focus. Subject co-ordinators communicate regularly with staff and provide appropriate support or advise on staff training. Overall, the measures adopted by the school to keep the staff up to date with curriculum initiatives or to improve teachers' subject knowledge, have been satisfactory with some notable strengths, for example, in art and design, design and technology and in information and communication technology. Consequently, standards in these subjects have improved as has the quality of teaching and learning.

38. The governors are very committed to the school and have a good working knowledge of the school and its place in the community. The governors and headteacher have improved resources, particularly fiction and non-fiction books and those for the creative curriculum and information and communication technology. The school improvement plan clearly shows what the school wants to improve, the steps it proposes to take and who, including governors, will be responsible for ensuring that targets are met. There is a well-expressed vision for the school over the next few years but the tasks facing the school in the future are to sharpen the way it monitors and assesses the performance of its pupils.
39. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is well managed. The special educational needs co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and trains the learning support assistants well. The school and the special educational needs co-ordinator have built up very good relationships with many outside agencies. This benefits the staff, pupils and their families in terms of training and support.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	715,010	Balance from previous year	8
Total expenditure	681,808	Balance carried forward to the next	33,210
Expenditure per pupil	2,384		

40. The financial management and administrative support of the school are good. Efficient use is made of the funds available to the school and the governors and members of the senior staff are beginning to successfully deal with some difficult staffing issues facing the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

41. Taken overall, the provision for and the teaching of the children aged three to five is **good**. There are 50 part-time children in the Nursery and 19 children in the Reception class. The teaching is very good in the Nursery and satisfactory in Reception. Very few children have had any experiences of pre-school education before they start part-time at the Nursery. The attainment on entry to school is well below that expected nationally and the children's spoken English skills are very low. Despite the very good start to their learning in the Nursery and the steady progress made in Reception, few children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in most areas of learning by the time they enter Year 1. The children make very good progress in the Nursery because the planned learning challenges the children intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally. The learning environment for the four year olds in the Reception area requires further improvement and does not match the high quality provision seen in the Nursery. Very good use is made of both the indoor and outdoor classroom in the Nursery. The outdoor learning environment for the Reception children is inadequate and the indoor space requires further resources and to be used more imaginatively to fully meet the needs of the Reception class curriculum.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Nursery and Reception children have a very positive start to school life
- The quality of teaching is very good in both the Nursery and the Reception class
- The children have established good relationships with each other and with adults

Commentary

42. This area of learning is the major focus of the teaching and by the end of the Reception year the children are likely to achieve the national early learning goals. The children are happy, confident and secure in coming to school. The children separate from their parents and carers very well. The children are making very good progress and this is because the staff works well together, showing a very good caring and sensitive approach to the children's individual needs.
43. The children are developing a very good awareness of the needs and feelings of each other. The staff place a great importance on helping the children to establish relationships with adults outside the family. They encourage children to listen to each other, to take turns and share fairly. There are good opportunities to develop independence when children put on their own outdoor clothes and helping to tidy away the resources used. The routines enable the children to show greater co-operation and opportunities to play together. Most of the children are lively, keen and enthusiastic as they concentrate on their tasks. Their behaviour is very good and their social skills, self-confidence and self-esteem are being well established. Consequently they are well prepared in their personal, social and emotional development as they enter Year 1.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are confident in their communication with adults and with each other
- The children are making good gains in their speaking and listening skills, and in their reading
- Children enjoy sharing books
- There is a lack of independent activities to stimulate and foster writing in the Reception class

Commentary

44. Although the children communicate well with each other and with adults their spoken English when they first start school is poor. As they move through the Nursery and Reception class they make good gains in their language skills. The very good adult interaction as the children go about their work makes a significant contribution to engaging and fostering talk between children. The children develop the ability to listen well and they make good progress in following instructions. Stories are a source of pleasure. The children enjoy listening to stories and this promotes new vocabulary. For example, when telling the story of Jack and the Beanstalk the Nursery teacher became 'Jack' and this really captivated their interest. The children were able to follow the story-line much more effectively and spontaneously asked perceptive questions of 'Jack'.
45. Good attention is given to reading and the children are making good gains in their early reading skills. Books are shared with adults daily and also taken home. The staff in the Nursery teach the basic skills of reading well and the children learn that pictures convey meaning, and that words are followed from left to right. Reception children can point to individual words confidently and competently with the support of an adult. They clearly enjoy books and a few more able children are beginning to distinguish between a fiction and non-fiction text well. The staff use rhymes and song to develop the children's understanding of initial sounds well. For example, the children confidently made the initial 's' sound of words such as, 'slither', 'soft', 'slimy' when studying mini-beasts. There are excellent opportunities in the Nursery for the children to develop their writing skills through role-play activities such as at the 'pizza' house, in the 'home' or at the writing table where there are a wide range of tools, equipment and different types of paper. Most of the children however, are still at the early stages of writing and forming letter shapes. In the Nursery the provision for developing early writing skills is stimulating and imaginative. In the Reception class, although there is good emphasis on forming letters correctly, there is a lack of creative stimuli to support the children's writing development. They have too few opportunities to try to write the words for themselves instead of just watching the teacher write.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children have good mathematical opportunities in the Nursery
- The Reception class introductory sessions are too long and the tasks set are unexciting

Commentary

46. The children start school with low level mathematical skills and few are likely to reach the expected goals by the time they enter Year 1. However, they make steady and consistent gains in their learning as they have good opportunities in the Nursery to explore mathematics through a wide range of activities such as, role-play, water and sand play and counting activities. Members of staff support learning well as the children 'pay' for their 'pizza' at the restaurant. Most of the children are working steadily towards the expected age-related levels and achieve well through these activities. Two children were seen for example, counting the five cones as they placed them around the bicycles in correct sequence confidently and competently. This matching of number to objects is very productive and the children achieve well. Further good teaching using mathematical vocabulary and role-modelling the children's responses in sentences ensures that the children in the Nursery are acquiring the names and recognition of simple shapes as they make their pizza. In the Reception class, all the children are keen to learn and interested in mathematics. Most count reliably and can sequence numbers confidently to ten but many are not always secure and confident in sequencing and counting numbers beyond 20. The children are taught mathematical vocabulary and other skills in introductory class sessions but at times the sessions are far too long, too slow in pace and the children become restless and progress is restricted. The follow up tasks observed were dull and lacked challenge and the children spent too much time colouring instead of engaging in mathematical exploration, enquiry and discovery.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good resources are used to support the children's scientific knowledge and understanding
- There is a good emphasis placed on the teaching of basic computer skills

Commentary

47. All children are being challenged by handling equipment and materials to promote enquiry and investigation skills. From a well below average knowledge base on entry to the Nursery they make good gains in their learning and achieve well but most children are not likely to meet the expected national goals on entry to Year 1. Through well-planned activities they are discovering and developing a heightened awareness of, for example, the different types of mini-beasts. Visits out into the community successfully enhance their understanding of the world in which they live. The visit to the 'Pizza House' by the Nursery children stimulated a wider knowledge and understanding of a real life experience of work in a large kitchen. They had the opportunity to make the dough, put on the different toppings, watch it cook and then eat their own pizza. In the Reception class through looking at and handling snails the children are beginning to understand terms such as, hard and soft and identify features, patterns and shapes using good scientific language. The children are excited and happy to touch, feel and remain in awe of the experience. They have a good understanding of the need to care and respect the creatures. The use of construction toys, play-dough and cutting and sticking activities in the Nursery extend learning but these activities are not sufficiently extended in the Reception to build upon the very good Nursery experiences. The teaching of basic computer skills in the Reception class is good.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The children are making good gains in both the finer and larger physical movements

Commentary

48. The children have good opportunities to handle both small and large apparatus and equipment in the Nursery and this has ensured that by the end of the Reception year the children's attainment meets the national age-related expectation. Outside on the large apparatus or in the hall, the staff maintain a balance between safety and the encouragement of independence. The children are more confident in their larger movements such as, wheeled toys or climbing on or under apparatus but continue to need considerable practice with the finer movements. Many still have difficulty in handling scissors and their eye-hand co-ordination still requires support when managing pencil skills and when colouring in a picture. The children throughout the Nursery and Reception classes receive good support and show perseverance in their attempts to succeed. They are helped when it is appropriate to do so.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Overall provision is **satisfactory**. Provision in creative development is very good in the Nursery but unsatisfactory in the Reception class.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the Nursery, the staff make very good use of role-play activities to support learning
- In the Reception class the current learning environment lacks creativity, imagination and flair to support this aspect of learning

Commentary

49. In the Nursery the teachers' very effective planning is developing the early skills that are necessary to extend the children's ability to express their thoughts, ideas and emotions. Most children like to draw and have opportunity for free painting. The use of a wide variety of paints and different size and range of brushes is good. This helps to further improve the skills and techniques. The children obviously enjoy activities. This high quality work is not extended through to the Reception class. At present, the activities in the Reception class are too teacher-directed and controlled for example, sticking already cut out circles onto a ladybird. This leaves little scope for the children to be independently creative for themselves. The tasks are low level and not moving the basic skills forward to improve the individual's capabilities. There is currently no role-play area in the Reception class or readily accessible paints or a graphics or writing area to extend learning across the curriculum.
50. The strongest feature of the creative area of learning in the Nursery and a significant strength of the school is the way in which adults participate sensitively, but unobtrusively in the children's role-play. Firm relationships with adults are well established and their high levels of interaction promote and extend the learning amongst the children themselves. The areas provided for this are well equipped and

attractively set out. As a result, they inspire the children's imaginative play. The planned activities centre on the children's everyday experiences and the materials provided allow the children to enrich their vocabulary. For example, the children through their imaginative play have quickly begun to understand the real-life function of a restaurant and they develop an understanding of the role of a chef. A music area was frequently visited by the children in the outdoor learning environment and they had good opportunities to explore sound, listen to a range of music, or sing along to taped songs as a collaborative activity. There was a high level of enjoyment and enthusiasm for learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well below the national average by the end of Year 2 and below average by the end of Year 6
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall but some of the pupils of average ability underachieve
- Teaching is satisfactory but there are limited opportunities provided for pupils to use their literacy skills in other subjects
- The management of the subject is satisfactory
- There are weaknesses in the use of assessment and the marking of pupils' work

Commentary

51. Standards are well below average in Year 2 and this is a decline since the last inspection. Average ability pupils are not achieving as well as they should which is why standards overall have declined. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels has also declined. The standards are rising by the end of Year 6 due largely to the better performance of more able pupils. Standards could be higher if the expectations of what pupils of average ability could achieve were high enough in all classes.
52. The Foundation Stage children make good progress but they enter Year 1 performing below the national expectations in communication, language and literacy. Standards in speaking and listening are below average by the end of Year 2 and average in Year 6. The higher attaining Year 6 pupils have well-developed speaking skills and use interesting language with complex sentences. Most of the pupils think carefully when they answer questions, explain their point of view and some justify their answers and opinions in a mature way. This was evident in a very good lesson where the pupils were creating power point presentations of the scripts for their version of parts of 'The Hobbit'. They worked co-operatively in analysing their own work and the techniques they could employ to stimulate the interest of their audience. Some were able to evaluate the work of their classmates thoughtfully and sensitively and some were able to accept suggestions as positive encouragement to improve the work.

53. Standards in reading are well below average by the end of Year 2 and below average in Year 6. In Year 1 the pupils are introduced to a progressive reading programme supported by the systematic teaching of phonic skills. By the end of Year 2, some pupils read accurately with increasing fluency and all enjoy books and stories. By the end of Year 6, many pupils are independent and enthusiastic readers who explain why certain books appeal to them. They use books and computer programs for research and to support their work in other subjects. The home-school reading logs act as a record of books read but do not always provide parents with information about progress or suggestions about how the children can be supported with any difficulties and with guidance for the next stage.
54. The National Literacy Strategy has influenced the organisation of lessons and had a positive impact on the development of the pupils' knowledge of grammatical structures and the processes of writing in different styles for different purposes. By the end of Year 2 standards in writing and spelling are well below average. The higher attaining pupils develop their ideas into a sequence of punctuated sentences and begin to use connecting words effectively to join ideas and to create sustained writing. By Year 6 standards in writing are below average but some pupils organise their writing well and edit it to clarify their thoughts. They write narrative, arguments, factual pieces and poetry. The excessive use of work sheets in some classes limits the pupils' opportunities to develop their independent and extended writing.
55. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress and attain standards that reflect their individual targets. These pupils benefit from a balance of whole class teaching, small group work and individual attention to their areas of difficulty. The school has used effectively the National Literacy Strategy intervention programmes such as the Early, Additional and Further Literacy Support materials and methods.
56. The pupils have positive attitudes to their learning, are well behaved and try to do their best. During discussions, they are attentive, make relevant contributions and respect the ideas and opinions of others. They are clear about the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour. The subject makes a good contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they begin to understand the power of words to create moods and atmosphere, to pose questions, create arguments and encourage empathy.
57. Evidence from the pupils' work over time indicates that teaching is satisfactory although some good teaching was observed during the inspection. All the teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the subject and they explain to the pupils what they want them to learn. The teaching is successful where lessons are organised well, presented imaginatively and the work is stimulating and suitably challenging for all ability levels. In the good lessons the teachers use their questioning skills effectively to establish the pupils' understanding and then use the answers effectively to support and extend the learning. At the end of lessons the pupils are usually given opportunities to talk about what they have been doing but opportunities are missed to involve them in discussing their learning.
58. The satisfactory provision is due to the efforts of individual teachers who try to know the pupils well and gather information about their strengths and weaknesses. Where the teachers have sound knowledge of what the pupils know, understand and can do they use this to ensure that pupils of all abilities are challenged and supported appropriately. This good practice is not evident throughout the school and assessment is not being used effectively to inform individual targets and consequently some of the average ability pupils underachieve. The use of assessment to plan the pupils' work is inconsistent and the pupils' learning targets are not precise enough and not linked to

National Curriculum levels. Target setting is not embedded across the school and some teachers do not ensure that the work set in reading and writing is targeted at the right level to help individual pupils to improve. Pupils do not know how well they are doing and are not helped to understand the levels of their learning because they are not involved in the evaluation of their own work. The quality of teachers' marking is also variable and evidence from the pupils' books shows that some work is not marked at all, some marking offers praise but too few teachers use marking to give the pupils advice about how they might improve or identify for them the next steps for their learning.

59. The management of the subject is satisfactory overall but the subject leader does not have a clear and well evidenced picture of either standards or the quality of education being provided across the school. She has had opportunities to check the quality of teaching and learning by observing lessons but she does not look at teachers' plans or the pupils' books or analyse the results of the internal and national tests.
60. The school's resources are good, with a suitable collection of reading scheme and other fiction books. There is a good range of reference books and the size and location of the library provides the pupils with opportunities for independent research or browsing. Throughout the school, the pupils make satisfactory use of information and communication technology for research and by word processing to enhance their written work.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

61. The pupils have some opportunities to use their literacy skills to support work in other subjects. Their skills in speaking and listening are used across the curriculum in support of discussions in class sessions and in groups. They are encouraged to retrieve and collate information from a range of sources to support their studies but opportunities are missed to use and develop their writing skills in the other subjects as the excessive use of work sheets inhibits the development of the skills of independent and extended writing

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards by the end of Year 6 are below average and improving but standards by Year 2 are too low
- Pupils with special educational needs do well and make good progress
- In relation to their attainment on entry the pupils make satisfactory progress but pupils of average ability could do better
- The teaching, although satisfactory varies in quality across the school and assessment is not used well enough by some teachers in planning pupils' work

Commentary

62. Improvement in mathematics since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards are rising and although below average by the end of Year 6 the overall achievement by pupils is satisfactory. The percentage of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in the most recent national tests was a considerable improvement on the results in the previous year. Current standards in Year 6 show that the school is well placed to

continue its improving trend in test results. However, the rate of improvement could be quicker. Too many pupils of average ability are underachieving in a number of classes across the school and this is preventing the overall attainment from improving more rapidly. Although teaching and learning are satisfactory overall the inspection of the pupils' workbooks indicates that inconsistent use is made of assessment by some teachers in planning of their lessons resulting in the setting of inappropriate levels of work for pupils. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 are particularly affected and staffing problems have also contributed to the present underachievement and standards that are too low by the end of Year 2.

63. There is some strong teaching. In most of the lessons seen teachers did well in capturing and keeping the interest of the majority of pupils, including those who find concentrating difficult. This they often achieved by using a wide range of strategies including skilful use of resources, good questioning and by making learning interesting. This was clearly evident in a very effective lesson for more able Year 5 and 6 pupils where they enjoyed investigating codes associated with a version of 'Maths Scrabble' and using different methods of multiplication. However, the pace and challenge that was apparent in this lesson was not always evident in other mathematics lessons across the school. Although teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, the pace and content of lessons does not allow some pupils to press on and achieve higher levels. This has the effect of stifling the pupils, particularly those of average ability. In most lessons there was confident and purposeful delivery with sharp mental and oral mathematics to motivate the pupils but then the main tasks became too mundane and work was not always well matched to the needs and abilities of all the pupils. Teachers and learning support assistants are good at explaining mathematical ideas to pupils but the tasks set are not always demanding enough. For example, in the lessons seen for pupils in Years 1 to 4, the learning objectives were appropriate for most groups of pupils but those of average ability were not always being challenged to work out number patterns or calculations for themselves. Too much direction was given so that the tasks became repetitive and only served to reinforce what the pupils already knew. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported and procedures for assessing and monitoring their progress are effective.
64. Subject leadership is satisfactory overall but monitoring activities have focused on teaching with not enough emphasis on learning. The leadership of the school and key staff are not inspecting pupils' workbooks or focusing sufficiently on how well teachers assess pupils and then use the assessments to plan the next stage of learning. Some work is marked at a cursory level with little to inform the pupils how best they can improve. The inspection of the pupils' work revealed that learning targets are often too general and not sharply focused on the next steps in learning. This contributes to the uneven achievement of the pupils across the school and particularly to those in years 1 and 2 where standards have slipped over the last few years.

Mathematics across the curriculum

65. The pupils use their mathematical knowledge and skills in other subjects, such as geography, science and design and technology. For example, they can plot reference points on maps or grids using their understanding of axes and co-ordinates and can record information researched in science using graphs, tables and simple matrices. The pupils' understanding of numeracy is applied well when computers are used to develop an understanding of spreadsheets in Years 3 to 6 and younger pupils use simple graphs when collating information about their favourite foods. Overall, the use of mathematics in other subjects is satisfactory and it is good in some topics because the pupils apply their mathematical skills in projects such as in science, where the pupils

collate information about different animals and mini-beasts to sort and classify their characteristics.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **unsatisfactory**. There has been insufficient progress since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils enjoy investigating and collaborate well
- Standards are below average by Year 6 and well below average by Year 2
- Planning does not take account of different abilities or age groups
- Assessment and quality marking is not rigorous enough to monitor progress and set challenging targets
- There are good links with design and technology

Commentary

66. Standards remain below the national average for eleven-year-olds and well below for seven-year-olds. The quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils are satisfactory largely due to teachers closely following a published scheme of work which ensures all areas of study are being covered.
67. When there are opportunities for practical work, pupils are enthusiastic. They cooperate well, respect the materials they are using and carry out the investigation with care and accuracy. The activities are set up by staff, however, and pupils are rarely able to devise their own tests or methods of collecting data. Members of staff have secure knowledge about what they are teaching but often the learning objective or new concept is not sharply brought out during the lesson.
68. Planning is satisfactory in terms of coverage. The science unit planning sheets are taught over a two-year rolling programme and all elements are clearly addressed. The planning documents, however, are not adapted to meet the needs of the varying abilities of pupils. Inspection evidence obtained during the observation of lessons and from the scrutiny of the pupils' work reveals that too often insufficient account is taken of the two-year age span within classes, or that pupils have different levels of ability. This is particularly evident in Years 1 and 2 where no Year 2 pupils have access to any Level 3 elements of the National Curriculum and consequently cannot attain that higher level. The majority of planning is not sufficiently matched to the pupils' needs or adapted to challenge, excite and motivate all the different groups.
69. Teachers' marking and assessment procedures vary in quality and often do not provide teachers with accurate information to adapt their planning and set appropriate targets. Teachers keep records of areas of study where pupils achieve well or similarly below average. These are useful when writing reports to parents. However, they are not linked to National Curriculum levels and are not used to set different levels of work for different ability groups. Progress between Year 2 and Year 6 is not monitored well enough and so ambitious targets for attainment, particularly which stretch the pupils of average ability, are not in place. Marking varies from class to class and frequently does not provide pupils with advice on how they can improve their work.
70. Most recording is on worksheets and often pupils are wasting much time in mundane cutting out and sticking activities and generally find these boring, repetitive and

uninspiring. All pupils have the same sheets regardless of ability. Whilst the majority of pupils complete these sheets to a satisfactory standard, independent recording skills are not being developed. Pupils are not able to devise their own methods of recording or charting data. Many of the answers to be filled in are copied from the board. Extended writing skills are not promoted and information and communication technology is not being fully used to extend pupils options. Many of the worksheets used are poorly stuck into books making it hard for the children to take pride in their work.

71. There are good links between science and design and technology. Pupils enjoy the practical work when they test different materials for making shelters, the suitability of shoes they have made or the strength of a range of structures. This work is of a good standard. It extends the learning of science and raises the pupils' awareness of the use of materials within the environment.
72. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory as the priorities for school improvement now focus on raising science standards. The school has identified the key areas for improvement having analysed which aspects of the science curriculum the pupils underachieve in. This is beginning to have an impact on standards by the end of Year 6 in particular with enough good and satisfactory teaching observed that demonstrates that the school has the capacity to improve science provision and raise standards further. The subject co-ordinator has built up a good range of resources to enable all pupils to take part in practical investigation. For example all pupils were able to have their own thermometer when measuring the temperature of different bowls of water. A very realistic rock pool was set up in a classroom. This really thrilled the pupils in Years 1 and 2 and encouraged much conversation. Plans to extend the pond into an ambitious environmental classroom area are very exciting. However, these positive aspects of science leadership are not being followed by sharp monitoring. The co-ordinator does not monitor closely the delivery of science either through observation in the classroom or the scrutiny of books and this is an area that the school recognises as in need of development. Science is enhanced through outside visits to places such as Clipsham Woods.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been good improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved and are now in line with those expected by the end of Years 2 and Year 6
- Teachers and support staff are using ICT to support learning well but this is not as evident in science
- Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 make good use of ICT to present and organise information

Commentary

73. Standards are in line with national expectations by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. The school has improved its ICT resources well and now has a special ICT room that is well equipped. In addition to this, teachers and pupils use a broader range of computer resources and programs and this has had a significant impact on motivating the pupils, particularly in helping them to see at first hand simulations that reinforce their learning in subjects such as mathematics and to a lesser extent in science which is an area for further development.

74. The teaching of basic skills is good because the computer room is a good facility and enables whole classes to receive intensive support which builds on previous learning. Standards are in line with national expectations because the pupils use their ICT skills well and apply these skills to other subjects. This is evident in word-processed extended forms of writing and numeracy work using spreadsheets and graphs. In lessons, the pupils are confident and adept at applying basic ICT skills; can often edit written work with confidence using spelling banks and can self-correct text by refining and editing. Year 6 pupils have gained a good knowledge of more advanced modelling skills and can refine and edit presentations by combining text and graphics. The pupils are less secure with the next step which is to produce their own hyperlinks so their presentations are more interactive. This is because the teachers' planning does not consider the need for more advanced work
75. The pupils enjoy their lessons and using the computers, digital cameras and the 'Roamer' (a programmable robotic device). Year 1 and 2 pupils were observed making satisfactory progress learning the basic skills using Roamers in the hall but the tasks were not always demanding enough to allow more able pupils the opportunity to program more complex instructions. Year 3 and 4 pupils were observed making good use of computers to improve their understanding of symmetry by experimenting with different lines of symmetry using a simulation program. The interactive whiteboard is usually used well in the computer room to present information graphically. Evidence from discussions with pupils and the inspection of their work displayed around the school shows that the pupils make satisfactory progress in editing sentences and improving punctuation using a word processor. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress and are well supported by learning support assistants.
76. There is satisfactory leadership and management of the subject and the co-ordinator is having a positive impact on the use of ICT. For example, as part of the school's close association with the national government agency BECTA (British Educational Communications and Technology Agency), the school has provided training for other schools and to share in the good practice evident at Bluecoat Primary School. Older pupils in Year 6 were also invited to submit multi-media presentations to the National Gallery two years ago as part of a national exhibition called 'Take One Picture Exhibition'. Resources are satisfactory and have been enhanced since the last inspection. They are increasingly being used to support the pupils' learning across a range of subjects. Teachers' planning follows national guidelines for the delivery of the National Curriculum and is satisfactory. However, in some lessons, the planning does not provide opportunities for some pupils to extend their knowledge and skills further. This tends to stifle opportunities for the pupils to experiment with ICT and to learn more challenging skills through trial and error. This is an area for development which is recognised by the school. It also indicates that there is still a need for more professional development so that all teachers have the confidence to provide tasks that better match the needs and abilities of the pupils.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. Information and communication technology is used satisfactorily in other subjects and the introduction of projectors in some classes has further harnessed the use of new technology in lessons. There is some good practice that enables the pupils to apply their ICT skills. In English, for example, the work pupils do involves editing and refining extended writing using word-processing skills, and in other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education, word-processed work is also evident and sometimes enhanced with graphics imported from data files or the Internet or pictures

using the school's digital camera. In mathematics, the computer is used well to project examples on the whiteboard and Year 5 and 6 pupils are making good progress using search engines to find and research information. Good use is made of the digital camera to support art and design, as when Year 5 and 6 pupils photographed each other to observe different postures as part of their work on 'People in Action'. The camera is used well to enhance the work pupils do when undertaking local visits or walks around the community. Teachers' planning across the curriculum is satisfactory and, as they become more confident and knowledgeable, they increasingly use ICT to enhance learning but there is insufficient use of ICT in science which is an area the school recognises it should improve.

HUMANITIES

78. One lesson was observed in geography and none in history. It is not possible to make judgements about provision, standards, achievement, teaching and learning in either subject. Inspection judgements are based on the one lesson observed, teachers' planning examination of pupils' work and discussion with pupils and teachers.
79. In the one lesson seen in **geography** in a Year 1 and 2 class, the quality of the teaching was very good because it engaged the children in practical activities of preparing Bertie Bear's case for a trip to the seaside, looking at the map to see where he was going and what he would need to look for when he arrived. These were good activities to develop the pupil's awareness of contrasting localities. Topics such as these captivate their interest and promote exploration, discovery and enquiry about features at a seaside. Information and communication technology was used well to support the learning in this lesson. It is evident that there has not been a high priority given to geography in Years 3 to 6 and in some lessons the work is over-reliant on a published scheme of work and worksheets. From the limited evidence available, the written work observed lacked creativity or imagination. In discussion with some pupils, there is some understanding of work studying contrasting localities both in the United Kingdom and India for example, but some pupils were unclear about how best to describe the differences. Recorded work is sometimes poorly presented, incomplete and left unmarked. The planned curriculum is broadly satisfactory and is suitably enhanced by visits out into the local community and further afield.
80. In **history** the written work seen in pupils' workbooks varied in quality with some that was of an unsatisfactory standard. Some displays, however, were interesting, such as the pupils' attempts to make Viking houses with mud on woven branches. When discussing history with pupils in Year 6, they displayed enthusiasm and could talk about Victorians knowledgeably. They described a Victorian day held in school and their visit to a Victorian prison cell. They also explained much of their homework which is an independent study of a historical period of their choice.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers use discussion very well to develop pupils thinking about different beliefs
- Written work is frequently left unmarked

Commentary

81. Pupils by the end of Year 6 achieve standards that are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus. The curriculum is suitably planned so that pupils have a clear understanding about the beliefs and key features of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism.
82. Where the teaching is of a very high quality the very good subject knowledge and use of high quality resources is effective. The pupils listen carefully, contributing their ideas sensitively and are very enthusiastic in their responses. They offer good ideas and reflect well on different points of view. The pupils are constantly challenged to think and reflect about their own ideas. For example, in Year 1 and 2 lesson the pupils were very confident about their knowledge of God as a divine being across different faiths. Furthermore, the very skilful and well planned story-telling enabled the children to understand the story of Jonah and the Whale and ask very perceptive questions. They became fully aware that this story appears in both the Torah and the Bible.
83. The term's planning and individual lessons are planned by one teacher to ensure continuity across the mixed age-range classes well. However, where the teaching was satisfactory these plans were so tightly followed and resulted in an awkward delivery of the lesson. There were missed opportunities for the pupils to discuss or extend their own thoughts, ideas and views. In some instances the tasks were not well matched to the needs of the pupils in the class. Consequently, the quality of learning was less effective than it could have been.
84. In discussion with the older pupils, they were confident in describing the local church and Lincoln Cathedral as a place of worship and some of the key features within it. There are some opportunities for the pupils to visit places of worship other than those of the Christian faith, for example, when pupils in Years 3 to 6 visited a synagogue.
85. The subject leader is confident about his subject and his class teaching is excellent. He has a clear understanding about how the subject should be developed throughout the school. He has devised his own action plan to meet the demands of the recently revised syllabus and has provided a good range of resources to support learning about other faiths. He supports colleagues knowledge and understanding of the subject well. As a result, there have been significant improvements since the last inspection. However, the leadership over all is satisfactory. This is because there is insufficient monitoring of the lessons and the leadership does not appear to be alert to the fact that books are left unmarked and some work left incomplete. This does not help to improve the pupil's literacy skills. Moreover, the work is not always matched to the assessment of the needs of individual pupils in order to raise attainment and pupil achievement to a higher level.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

86. Two lessons were observed in music and one in design technology. It is not possible to make judgements about provision, standards, achievement, teaching and learning in these subjects. Inspection judgements are based on the two lessons observed, teachers' planning and examination of pupils' work and discussion with pupils and teachers.
87. In **design and technology** the pupils are given a range of experiences to develop their knowledge and their skills and to generate ideas and plan what to do next. They begin to understand how materials are used according to their properties and how an object's performance is related to its function in fulfilling a specific need. This is based on their experiences of working with a range of materials and they use models and pictures to

describe their designs but opportunities are missed for them to use their writing skills. The pupils are currently investigating packaging and shelters. Through 'disassembling' cartons and boxes and considering the features of a frame tent they further their understanding of the need to construct according to specific need. There is evidence to indicate that they understand how to distinguish between how well a product is made and how well it is designed. There are examples of this in the designing and making of shelters, objects with hinges, purses and slippers and the use of skills such as embroidery to enhance their work. This work is displayed well.

88. The art and design co-ordinator and the science co-ordinator share responsibility for leading and managing the subject. They make sure that there is a good range of resources to support each unit of work and this includes a range of visits and the expertise of visitors skilled in crafts. The co-ordinators' impact on raising standards has been satisfactory but, as with art and design, much more remains to be done in monitoring the quality of the teaching and the learning. Assessment is unsatisfactory with no system for recording the pupils' progress in the development of skills and techniques.
89. In the two lessons in **music** the staff followed a published scheme and the outcomes were broadly satisfactory in terms of pupil achievement and the progress made. In one of the lessons, there was a greater emphasis on the literacy aspects which was good, but the musical elements lacked the development and refining of skills. The children needed more time to practice and refine the vocal sounds in order to begin to sing words and sound together. In the other lesson the teacher kept firmly to the plan and although the children experienced a wide range of good musical vocabulary and were able to place this in context of the music they heard, the opportunity for them to imagine the sounds and the type of instruments used in the music was too teacher-directed and had to conform to those shown in the plan.
90. In community singing, the children sing tunefully and clearly enjoy the experience. They are able to keep a steady beat, the words are clear, and they follow the flow of the melody well. Pitch is mostly accurate. There are no opportunities at present for individual pupils to learn a pitched instrument. School performances, attendance at music festivals with other schools, and visiting musicians contribute well to the pupils' overall musical experiences. The subject is suitably well managed and the subject leader has a good grasp of the priorities needed to move the subject forward. The subject has been maintained at the same level as that reported at the last inspection

Art and Design

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory** and this is an improvement since the last inspection.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are provided with opportunities to work with a good range of materials

Commentary

91. The teachers give the pupils a range of experiences to develop their knowledge and their skills and to explore and develop their own ideas. Evidence from displays, sketch books and lessons indicates that by the end of Year 6 the standards are similar to those expected nationally and the pupils make satisfactory progress. The pupils investigate and use a variety of tools, techniques and media such as pencils, paints,

clay, weaving, printing and fabric collage to communicate their ideas. The pupils develop their observational skills by drawing and painting portraits, landscapes and buildings. They develop their knowledge of colour, texture, pattern, line, tone, shape and form and how to combine them in different ways. Their sketches demonstrate their understanding of proportion and perspective with an increasing attention to detail. The pupils are developing their knowledge of the possibilities and limitations of different types of paints and techniques. They understand that work in progress is important for artistic success and that lessons do not always result in a piece of finished work. They use their skills to illustrate their work in other subjects and interesting cross-curricular links such as the Viking collages help to support their learning. The work is displayed well so that the pupils know that their efforts are valued.

92. The teachers make appropriate use of art and design to promote the pupils' cultural development. Much of this is through studying the work of famous artists such as Van Gogh and Henri Rosseau and producing their own pictures and collages in their styles. A further positive aspect of the development of the work is the way that some teachers are encouraging the pupils to incorporate new technologies within their work. The current 'People in Action' work incorporates observational drawings with digital images to show that the photographer is an artist and how the impression of movement can be conveyed in still images.
93. The subject leader provides useful guidance and support for the staff and ensures that there is a good range of resources to support the subject. She has arranged for the pupils to benefit from the talents of visiting artists and enriched their experiences by organising a visit to the National Gallery with their work accepted for the 'Take One Picture' exhibition there. She has had a satisfactory impact on raising standards but there is much more to be done in monitoring the quality of the teaching and the learning. An area for development is the establishment of a system for assessing the pupils progressive acquisition of skills as there is currently no system for recording the development of the pupils' skills and techniques.

Physical education

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils experience a good range of activities, both in school time and out-of-school-hours, they enjoy lessons and work hard
- The pupils achieve standards in line with those expected for their age because the teaching is well organised but the balance of instruction and practice is not always consistent

Commentary

94. From the evidence of the three lessons observed, the inspection of planning, and from discussions with staff and pupils, standards are in line with national expectations and achievement is satisfactory overall. The planned curriculum ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met and residential and day visits are used effectively to provide wider outdoor adventure experiences. Swimming is taught to pupils throughout the school and is timetabled so that the pupils receive a sustained period of lessons during each term. Evidence from the school's records show that swimming standards are in line with those expected by the end of Year 6.
95. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Lessons are usually delivered at a good pace with activities that build up the pupils' confidence and skills as they learn the correct techniques

such as throwing, striking or receiving a ball in a range of outdoor games. The balance between time given to instruction by the teacher and practice by the pupils varies from class to class. In the good lesson seen, Year 1 and 2 pupils were given good opportunities to reinforce their bat and ball skills in the hall after receiving instructions from the teacher. In the two outdoor games lessons seen in Years 3 and 4, both satisfactory, one had good pace and pupils changed tasks as part of a carousel of activities that were well resourced and organised. In this lesson there was less time given to whole class or group instruction and too much time for the pupils to practice so they were not improving their performance because of a lack of instruction. In the second lesson observed the reverse was true. Here, Year 3 and 4 pupils spent too much time listening to the teachers' instructions and less time practising bat and ball skills.

96. The pupils responded well in all the lessons seen. A strength of the teaching is the teachers' knowledge and enthusiasm which is conveyed to the pupils. Lessons are well resourced and all the pupils have access to bats, balls, markers and other equipment.
97. Physical education has not been a whole school priority for some time but the co-ordinator's overview of standards and achievement across the school is secure. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and have ensured that there is a good range of resources and facilities available for all aspects of the subject. The curriculum guidelines ensure that all the elements of the curriculum, including swimming, are covered and that skills are taught and learned progressively as the pupils move through the school. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

98. The personal and social development of the pupils is good. No personal, social and health education lessons were seen during the inspection. Evidence from teachers' planning indicates that the school has developed a well-structured programme of units that are carefully planned using interesting topics and themes. Work is often linked to whole school themes, health, sex and relationships education as well as to assemblies and topics in religious education. In English lessons good use is made of illustrations, storybooks and the interactive whiteboard to help the pupils relate to real and imagined characters in order to express how they feel in the same situation. Lessons in other subjects provide many opportunities for the pupils to share ideas, to listen to others and to respect their point of view. Personal, social and health education lessons and those in most other subjects help to raise self-esteem and confidence especially when pupils speak to a group or the whole class. Good use is made of drama and role-play in some lessons to help the pupils relate to the views of others and to prompt questions. The close links the school has with the local church further enhances provision in this aspect of the school's work.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	5
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	4
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
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	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	4
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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