

INSPECTION REPORT

THE ST MICHAEL'S C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Thorpe-on-the-Hill, Lincoln

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120540

Headteacher: Mrs E. Jones

Lead inspector: Bernice Magson

Dates of inspection: 27th – 29th June 2005

Inspection number: 268097

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary
School category: Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils: Mixed
Number on roll: 146

School address: School Lane
Thorpe-on-the-Hill
Lincoln
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Appropriate authority: The governing body
Name of chair of governors: Mr R. Sheldon

Date of previous inspection: April 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a small rural primary school situated in the village of Thorpe-on-the-Hill, near to Lincoln. Pupil numbers are steadily increasing and, currently, there more girls than boys overall. Attainment on entry is above average. Most pupils are of white British origin and a small proportion is of mixed race. No pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. The numbers of pupils with special educational needs is above average and four pupils have formal statements for their special needs, which include dyslexia, speech and communication, physical, moderate learning difficulties, autism and behavioural problems. A very small number of children come from Traveller family backgrounds and two pupils are in public care. During the last two years there have been significant changes in staffing to accommodate increased pupil numbers and long-term staff absences.

The school shares its site with the playgroup and some facilities with community groups.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
18143	Bernice Magson	Lead inspector	English; religious education; design and technology; physical education; personal, social and health education and citizenship
32682	Ruth Wood	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology; geography; history; special educational needs
16892	Julia Elsley	Team inspector	Science; art and design; music; the Foundation Stage

The inspection contractor was :

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a **good school** providing a good quality of education for its pupils. Standards are well above average in Year 6. There is good teaching and learning and satisfactory leadership and management. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Pupils' attitudes, values and personal qualities are very good
- Pupils achieve well in the reception and Years 3 to 6
- In Years 1 and 2, progress in writing and mathematics is not good enough
- Teaching is good overall, with some innovative approaches, which have a positive impact on learning
- The headteacher is influential in promoting an effective range of curriculum developments
- Monitoring of standards, the curriculum and teaching and learning by subject coordinators and key staff is not as well developed as it should be
- Procedures to deal with parental grievances are unsatisfactory

There has been a good rate of improvement since the last inspection. Standards in English have remained high and, in 2004, test results by Year 6 were in the top five per cent of similar schools. Strategic plans to accommodate increased pupil numbers have been effective. Classrooms, a small library and a computer suite have been added and more staff have been appointed. The training needs of teachers and support staff have been addressed and subject expertise has increased. There remains room for improvement in the roles of subject coordinators and key staff in monitoring of standards, the curriculum and teaching and learning.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

The achievement of pupils is good overall. Care must be taken in interpreting national tests, as the numbers of pupils in each cohort is small and the performance of one or two pupils can affect results. Results in Year 6 are also influenced by the above numbers of pupils with special educational needs and higher than average levels of mobility. Nevertheless the rate of improvement in Year 6 is much greater than nationally, as high numbers of pupils attain the higher levels and strategies to support less able pupils are effective in raising their attainment. However, fewer pupils have attained the higher level in 2005 in English, although results match previous performances in mathematics and science. Inspectors found that, currently, standards in Year 6 are well above average in English and science, and above average in mathematics.

In Year 2 the rate of improvement is below the national trend and annually, there is a significant variation in performance. Currently, the achievement of pupils is satisfactory. Inspectors found that standards are above average in Year 2 in speaking and listening, and reading. Standards are average in mathematics and writing, although basic literacy and numeracy skills are not firmly embedded. The quality of presentation, handwriting and formation of numerals is below pupils' capabilities. There is evidence of recent improvements, although significant staff mobility and limited monitoring of standards, the curriculum and teaching and learning have restricted progress. Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and attain beyond the expected goals for their age by the end of reception, particularly in their personal, social and emotional development.

Pupils' personal qualities, including their **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good**. Relationships between pupils are very good. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to learning. Attendance and punctuality are well above average.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is consistently good or better. These teachers have very high expectations of pupils and challenge them very well, because they have very good subject knowledge. They use a very good range of teaching methods and question pupils skilfully, so that learning has a very good depth. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is mostly satisfactory, but there is too limited a focus on the teaching of basic skills in writing and mathematics, which is restricting progress. Teaching is good in the reception; it provides a good range of experiences, which includes opportunities for exploratory play and direct teaching. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution in all lessons, especially for pupils with special educational needs. Assessment systems are satisfactory. They enable key staff to measure standards, and set targets for pupils to help them improve. However, methods of assessment are not consistent and it is difficult to track pupils' progress over time. Teachers' marking is not always linked to pupils' targets or to learning objectives.

There is a good curriculum with very good enrichment opportunities, including a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Visits and visitors enrich pupils' learning very well. There are some good curriculum topics, involving the whole school. Art and music support pupils' personal development very well. A good programme of personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHCE) is linked into all subjects. Pupils are encouraged to understand and appreciate the need for racial harmony. Good links increase pupils' involvement with the church, other schools and community. Teachers know and care for pupils well, although they provide insufficient guidance about how to improve standards. There are satisfactory links with parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has a clear vision for the development of the curriculum and teaching and learning. Together, the headteacher and governors are seeking to address the current staffing difficulties, which are a result of increased pupil numbers and long-term staff absences. The roles of subject managers and key staff in monitoring are under developed. Governance of the school is satisfactory and all statutory requirements are met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Although most parents have positive views of the school, a significant minority have a range of concerns, which they feel have not been adequately addressed. Pupils' views are positive.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Raise standards in writing and mathematics by Year 2, including the quality of handwriting, formation of numerals and the presentation of work
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of subject coordinators and key staff in monitoring standards, the curriculum and teaching and learning
- Improve procedures to deal with parental grievances

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils achieve well overall, including those pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented. Standards are broadly well above average in Year 6 and above average overall in Year 2.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In English, standards are consistently well above average by Year 6
- Over time standards have improved significantly in science and art and design and are well above average by Year 6
- By Year 2 standards in writing and mathematics are not high enough, as pupils' knowledge of basic skills are too limited

Commentary

1. Children make a good start in the reception. On entry to school standards are above those expected in all areas of learning. Children achieve well and, by the end of the reception year, most exceed expected levels in all areas of learning and attain well above expectations in their personal, social and emotional development. All children are well-prepared for their next stage of learning.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
Reading	15.1 (16.8)	15.8 (15.7)
Writing	13.9 (16.7)	14.6 (14.6)
Mathematics	15.1 (16.8)	16.2 (16.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

2. Currently pupils are achieving satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and standards are average and above average by the end of Year 2. Standards are improving at a lower rate than the national pattern over time, although with small cohort sizes a meaningful comparison of data is difficult. Over a two-year period, there has been instability in staffing and this has influenced the progress of some pupils, as teachers and pupils take time to get to know each other. In national tests, results fluctuate in all areas assessed, varying from above to well below average over a four-year period. In 2004 standards were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. Compared to pupils in similar schools, test results were well below average in all areas tested. Fewer pupils than nationally attained the higher level 3 in reading and mathematics and none in writing. However, in the latest national tests, standards appear to have shown good improvement. Inspectors judge current standards to be above average in speaking and listening, reading and science and average in mathematics and writing. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are not firmly embedded by Year 2 and variations in standards of presentation, handwriting and formation of numerals are restricting progress. Pupils with special educational needs

achieve similarly to other pupils because of good support, well-matched to their needs. An appropriate challenge has enabled the gifted and talented pupils to attain higher levels in the latest tests.

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	29.5 (29.2)	26.9 (26.8)
Mathematics	28.5 (28.6)	27.0 (26.8)
Science	29.5 (30.5)	28.6 (28.6)

There were 12 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year

- Standards by Year 6 are well above average overall. In national tests the trend of improvement over time is above the national trend. An analysis of data has shown that a significant number of pupils each year attain the higher level 5 in English, mathematics and science, and less able pupils attain well, because of the good support they receive. In 2004, half of all pupils attained the higher level 5 in English, forty-two per cent in mathematics and a third of all pupils in science. Compared to similar schools, test results were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Moreover, in English, test results were in the top five per cent of similar schools. However, significant factors have influenced test results in the last two years, including above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and above average mobility. Moreover, with small numbers of pupils in each cohort, there is some annual variation in the school's overall performance. Underperformance can affect test scores, as in 2004 when each pupil represented eight per cent of the cohort. In the latest national tests more pupils have attained the higher level 5 in mathematics, results in science are similar to previously, but fewer pupils than predicted have attained the higher level 5 in English. Inspection findings are that pupils have well above average speaking and listening and reading skills, and above average writing skills. Inspectors evaluate standards in science to be well above average and, above average in mathematics. By Years 5 and 6 pupils have good standards of presentation, handwriting, and number formation because teacher expectations are high and pupils have a good understanding of the criteria of good work.
- By Year 6 pupils with special educational needs achieve standards in English, mathematics and science that are close to expected levels for their age. This is because learning tasks are carefully chosen for them and pupils are well supported by experienced teaching assistants in classrooms. Pupils experience success and this boosts their self-esteem. They make good progress towards the targets of their individual education plans. Careful consideration is given to the needs of the gifted and talented pupils in Years 3 to 6; carefully planned activities challenge them well.
- In ICT standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and are well above average by Year 6 and above average by Year 2. Teachers have high expectations that pupils will reach these high standards, challenging them effectively in lessons and projects and through extra-curricular activities. Pupils have better access to machines and use ICT well in other subjects. They are confident and skilled, able to make independent choices about methods of recording. Additionally, some pupils will choose to research on the Internet at home and some produce computerised homework tasks of a good quality.

6. Standards are well above average in art and design by Year 6. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they teach new skills effectively. Throughout school pupils are taught to use art techniques creatively and Year 6 have good levels of independence and maturity of style, producing work of a high quality.
7. In history and geography standards are above average by Year 6. Pupils have a good knowledge of their local environment and of local historical events. In religious education, pupils have a keen interest and standards by Year 6 are above locally expected levels. Special topics are helping to engage pupils more effectively in learning about major world faiths. For example, the recent “Bible Week” kindled an interest in stories of the Old and New Testament and as a result standards of all pupils are above average in Christianity. Standards in music are also above average.

Pupils’ attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils have very positive attitudes to school and behaviour is very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good, as is the provision for pupils’ social, moral, spiritual and personal development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very attentive in class and are eager to work hard
- Pupils form very good relationships and are sensitive to each others’ needs
- Pupils have a very good understanding of their own cultural heritage and of the wider world.
- Attendance is well above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence

Commentary

8. The pupils’ attitudes to learning are very good. Teachers set high standards of behaviour and productivity and pupils respond positively. They enjoy being challenged. Pupils are keen to participate in class discussions; they listen attentively and make thoughtful contributions. Their self-discipline is very good: they work hard individually and in groups.
9. The pupils’ horizons have been broadened considerably by their involvement in a number of national and international charity appeals. The “Adopt a Minefield” project, for example, has increased pupils’ understanding of the world’s diversity and the difficulties facing people less fortunate than them. Assemblies and religious education topics contribute well to moral and spiritual development and promote a deeper understanding both of Christian values and the traditions and customs of other ethnic groups and faiths. Pupils’ experience of cultural and religious diversity has been further enhanced by visits to various places of worship including a Hindu Temple and Kingdom Hall.
10. A broad curriculum and the use of a variety of question techniques by teachers in class encourage pupils to explore the impact of their actions on others and to discuss issues facing the wider community. Pupils have a good understanding of their own cultural heritage. They express their views with confidence. They are mature and have good self-esteem. The school council provides a very good opportunity for pupils to take on more responsibility and to contribute collectively to the life of the school.

11. The pupils behave very well in lessons and in the playground. They are polite to each other and to adults. They treat others with respect and show consideration to the feelings and needs of younger children and those with special needs. They form very good relationships with each other and co-operate well together. The school's approach to behaviour management has been very effective. Pupils were actively involved in developing a new approach to bullying and are justifiably proud of the resulting improvements in general conduct. The system of rewards and sanctions, *Golden Time*, is well understood and generally valued. No inappropriate behaviour was witnessed during the inspection. There have been no exclusions recently.
12. Pupils like coming to school and are keen to learn. Attendance is very good and has been consistently above the national average for three years. The attendance rate for this academic year continues this trend. There is no unauthorised absence. The procedures for recording and monitoring absence are very effective. The vast majority of pupils arrive in good time for the start of the school day. Parents are fully conversant with the school's procedures and the importance placed on regular attendance: they support attendance very well.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.1	National data	0.4

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education for its pupils. Teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory. There is a good curriculum enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Provision is very good in the arts and citizenship activities. There are good links with the church, community and other schools and colleges. Links with parents are satisfactory overall, although a significant minority considers the school inadequate in dealing with their concerns.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are good and assessment is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the reception and Years 3 to 6 teachers challenge pupils well because of good subject knowledge and skilful questioning
- Pupils are encouraged to learn because of very good relationships with others

- There is insufficient use of assessment information to raise standards, and marking does not give pupils enough guidance about how to improve

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 31 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2(6%)	7 (23%)	15(48%)	7(23%)	0	0	0

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

13. During the inspection the large majority of teaching seen was good or better. The school has given good attention to improving the quality of teaching styles and, as a result, most teachers are confident and teach with enthusiasm. There is a very good variety in the use of teaching methods and, in Years 3 to 6, a very good depth to the learning. In science, two lessons were judged to be excellent, both in mixed aged junior classes. Pupils achieved highly in their investigative activities, enjoying their roles as “science detectives,” as they learnt about wild flowers and grasses in a country lane, or made discoveries about liquids and gases. Both teachers provided an exciting introduction to the lesson; one introducing evaporation by reciting poetry and role-playing taking a shower, and both asking pertinent questions which inspired pupils to learn. The teachers explained the tasks clearly and succinctly, providing all pupils with a well ordered challenge. Several lessons were judged to be very good, mostly in Years 3 to 6, but with examples in the other key stages, also. In English and mathematics almost all teaching was good or better.
14. In the reception class the teacher has a good understanding of how young children learn and, in the classroom, she provides a good range of opportunities, which challenge and engage them. One afternoon, after a lively introduction using a puppet, children were challenged to make a house for Sidney, the snail. They worked well in groups and individually to construct houses in clay, duplo and with large wooden bricks, or they designed his accommodation by cutting out from catalogues to make scrapbooks. Children took real pride in their own achievements and showed a keen interest in the work of others. “What sort of a house is it?” asked one child, when admiring a clay model. “A house on stilts,” was the reply, pointing to photographs which the teacher had used in her introduction. Throughout the day children are engrossed in learning through exploration and direct teaching. Teaching assistants, students and voluntary helpers ensure that children are challenged well. There is a very good emphasis on the development of observational skills and good use of language to explain discoveries and ideas. Personal and social skills are promoted effectively and children make good gains. Outdoors, learning opportunities lack a suitable challenge for all abilities. Although there are regular opportunities to develop personal and social skills, there is some lack of depth to the experiences in other areas of learning.
15. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is mostly satisfactory. Most lessons are planned well and resources are used effectively to engage pupils. Good links are created to consolidate learning through a range of experiences across the curriculum. In one very good English lesson in a mixed aged class of Years 1 and 2, pupils undertook research activities to answer queries about Ancient Egypt. There was a good structure to the activities, which enabled them to use their prior learning. Pupils had watched a video about the British museum, learnt about the discoveries of Howard Carter, and then,

they composed questions on Tutankhamen. Research involved use of the Internet, video footage or books. Pupils persevered well in their investigations, concentrating effectively for long periods of time. Teaching assistants gave valuable support, confidently using the interactive whiteboard to help less able pupils extract information from picture clues. By the end of the session all pupils had posed useful queries and then evaluated the most productive methods of research. The teacher had good subject knowledge and expectations were high. However, in many lessons, pupils are not challenged sufficiently and the pace of learning is slower. Several staff changes have affected the continuity of approach and created among pupils some confusion about teacher expectations. Currently there is too limited a focus on the teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy. As a result, pupils struggle to write confidently because of a lack of knowledge of spelling families and, many have handwriting, which is inconsistent in size and shape. Although pupils have targets to help them improve, their use is infrequent and do not give most pupils sufficient support. Only pupils with special educational needs achieve well towards their individual targets. Teachers' marking gives comments of praise but little guidance about how to improve.

16. In Years 3 to 6 teachers have very good subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. They plan a very good challenge to learning tasks and make very good use of teaching assistants so that all pupils have opportunities to succeed. Teachers are skilled at asking the right questions so that pupils explore ideas and develop concepts sequentially. They use a good variety of tactics in discussions which inform, persuade, challenge and encourage. Often, their use of language is skilful, and metaphors, similes or synonyms are incorporated to stimulate, remind and encourage pupils. Good attention is given to the teaching of technical terms and, by Year 6, most pupils have a mature vocabulary. Relationships are very good between pupils and adults and together, as they explore and record, they create vibrancy and good pace to the learning. During the inspection, 90 per cent of teaching was good or better in Years 3 to 6 and more than a third was very good or excellent. Teachers encourage cooperative and independent learning and, by Year 6, pupils achieve this very successfully. There is firm management of behaviour and pupils have a good understanding of what is expected of them. There is some good marking to help pupils improve, especially in science in Years 3 and 4, but this is not extended to all junior classes and all teachers. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and succeed in meeting their learning targets.
17. Each year there is a thorough analysis of national test results to measure standards and identify subject strengths and weaknesses in core subjects. This information is shared with class teachers, enabling them to judge the value added achievement of each pupil. Data is also used to identify those pupils who are under achieving and teachers respond with appropriate support in lessons. Pupils undertake a termly writing assessment to measure standards although insufficient use is made of the findings to identify trends. During the year, there are few systems to allow continuous tracking of pupils' progress and no intensive intervention strategies to raise standards by giving specialist support. Although teachers undertake informal discussions, increased pupil numbers are making it more difficult to operate current systems and precise on-going assessments are not always available.
18. Overall assessment systems are satisfactory. In ICT, although pupils achieve well, procedures to track pupils' attainment and progress are insufficient and there is little precise information about current standards. All teachers make regular assessments in the foundation subjects based on National Curriculum levels, but it is difficult to track pupils' progress because there is no moderation of results.

The curriculum

The curriculum is broad, lively and interesting. It is well planned with very good opportunities for enrichment, with very good provision for the arts. Accommodation and resources are good overall, but library provision and the area for outdoor learning in the Foundation Stage are inadequate.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has an inclusive approach that enables all the children to participate.
- Pupils have good opportunities to learn about global issues.
- Visits and visitors enhance the range of learning opportunities.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good

Commentary

19. The curriculum has undergone a comprehensive review. As a result, some interesting, relevant topics are taught and resources are used well to deliver the learning. The curriculum for the Foundation Stage takes full account of the nationally defined Early Learning Goals, appropriate for the youngest children. Good consideration is given to pupils with special educational needs and teachers plan well for their learning. Good support is provided to assist them, when necessary. The literacy and numeracy strategies are fully and carefully planned to meet the needs of mixed age classes. Religious education is taught following the guidance of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and there is a comprehensive programme for health education and citizenship. The staff are very aware that in the case of cross curricular topics, they need to ensure that discrete subject skills are respected.
20. The teachers work well together to plan the curriculum in an interesting but coherent way that makes relevant links between subjects. For instance, mathematical skills are enhanced by their application in science and geography lessons. Information and communication technology has a wide application in mathematics, history and other subjects. The school makes very good use of global projects such as "Adopt a Minefield" to stimulate learning about countries such as Cambodia. The pupils have recently been engaged in creating large, striking collage figures to send to participants of major conferences, about the entitlement of every child to an education.
21. Learning about the environment is very skilfully woven into lessons in art and music as well as the more obvious areas of science and geography. The link with Whisby Educational Trust considerably enhances the pupils' first hand experience. The pupils benefit from a rich programme of visits and visitors in conjunction with their environmental and other work. The school's music curriculum, for example, is much broader for its good links with groups who introduced Indian and Brazilian music. A local theatre school has enabled the children to enrich their knowledge of dance and music. The community and local secondary schools have provided facilities and expertise to enhance the pupils' artistic experiences. Pupils visit museums in Lincoln and in London. For example, the oldest pupils based an entire history project around a visit to Hardwick Hall and drew relevant conclusions from studying a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I. All the teachers are very alert to opportunities to use first hand resources such as poets, writers, artists and local people who have particular expertise or experiences to relate such as having lived through World War II. This extends to

planning opportunities where the pupils visit places of worship such as a Hindu and Sikh temple. Such experiences are invaluable in providing pupils with a broader cultural awareness of what is held to be special for people from different cultures.

22. The extra-curricular provision is very good. There is a variety of sports and dance opportunities and pupils are able to play competitive sport against other schools. Good links with the community, for example, with the local church and social links with other schools enliven the pupils' learning experiences.
23. There are sufficient teachers for the number of pupils on roll. The outside accommodation has many attractive features such as the picnic areas and the large wooden play chalets. There are two ponds that provide a useful resource for environmental work. Two classes have created an attractive small garden between their classrooms. However, the outdoor area for the reception class is very restricted and does not provide adequate space for a range of outdoor learning. Two classes are housed in temporary classrooms that are not spacious enough for the more investigative approach to learning which the school seeks to encourage. In addition they lack toilet facilities

Care, guidance and support

Provision for the care, welfare, health and safety of pupils is good. Support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is satisfactory. Pupils are actively involved in the school's work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good use is made of the available accommodation
- There are very good arrangements for children joining the school and for pupils transferring to secondary school
- Special educational needs are quickly identified and pupils are sensitively managed
- The monitoring of assessment and tracking procedures is insufficiently rigorous

Commentary

24. The school provides a safe and secure environment for all its pupils. Routine safety checks of premises and equipment are regularly conducted and systematically recorded. Any minor problems are quickly and effectively addressed. Significant health and safety issues are brought to the attention of the headteacher and reported to the governing body, as appropriate. The governing body meets its statutory requirements for health and safety and the designated governor carries out a formal audit of the premises annually.
25. Risk assessment and critical incidence practice are sound. The child protection policy is up-to-date and the key individual responsible for child protection has been trained. Staff are advised of the school's procedures in the staff handbook but new staff would benefit from specific training. Playground supervision is alert and sensitive: first aid arrangements are well established and effective.
26. The available accommodation is well managed. The outdoor area for reception children is limited in size, but it has been used imaginatively and the small library area is well managed. The schools' rising pupil roll is putting increasing pressure on space,

specifically in the two mobile classrooms, on storage and on the hard surface play area when the field is unavailable. Increasing the accommodation is a priority for the school.

27. Teachers and supervisory staff are approachable and know their pupils well. Pupils generally feel there is an adult they can trust to ask for help. The provision for the care and inclusion of children with special educational needs is good. Needs are quickly identified, individual education plans drawn up and regularly reviewed with parents. These pupils make progress similar to all other pupils. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for.
28. Advice and guidance based on assessment and monitoring is satisfactory. Teachers regularly assess pupils and this evaluation is used to set individual targets each term. The pupils are involved in this process and the targets are shared with parents in consultation evenings and in the end of year reports. Some pupils do not know their targets, however, and others are too general to be meaningful. The inconsistent quality of marking results in inadequate guidance for pupils to improve their work. This lack of rigour in monitoring impacts negatively on the success of the planning process as the school roll continues to increase.
29. There are very good arrangements for children joining the school in reception and for pupils transferring to secondary school. There is a playgroup on site and the school visits the other feeder nurseries prior to entry. Parents receive good induction information and the children benefit from familiarisation visits. The intake is staggered and the children are sensitively managed, facilitating a smooth transition to school life which is greatly valued by parents. There are very good links with a number of local secondary schools. Well-established cross-curricular and sporting links with these schools support the junior school pupils well in their preparation for transfer. The close partnerships with these schools ensure a positive experience for the majority of pupils as they move from this small village school into a much larger school community.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The partnership with parents is satisfactory overall. Links with other schools and the wider community are good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents actively contribute to pupils' learning at school and at home
- Good links with the local parish impact positively on moral and spiritual development
- Good links with other schools in sports and the arts enrich the curriculum and provide well for personal development
- Parents are not consulted sufficiently about important decisions and procedures to deal with parents' grievances are unsatisfactory

Commentary

30. The quality and quantity of information provided to parents is good. Curriculum information is distributed at the start of each term and parents receive regular newsletters detailing school events. The majority of parents are positive about the work of the school and the progress their children are making. Two open evenings are held in the course of the year when progress and targets are discussed: these are well attended. Parents also receive a written report at the end of the school year. These

reports detail the work pupils have covered but do not always indicate consistently the standards achieved or show precisely where improvements need to be made. The School Prospectus gives a brief introduction to the work of the school and the Governors' Annual Report provides a succinct summary of the previous year's work: both meet statutory requirements.

31. A number of parents help in class and accompany pupils on school trips. Parents regularly accompany their young children into school at the start of the school day to support the development of reading skills. Reading diaries provide a regular means of communicating about day to day progress but need to be used more consistently by the school to further develop the home/school learning partnership. Parents help with homework and the school has run workshops for parents in literacy, numeracy and science to explain new teaching methods and help them support better their children's learning at home. The Friends Association is active in its support of the school through fund raising events and provides a range of additional resources.
32. Parents generally feel the teaching staff are accessible and approachable. A significant minority of parents however feel aggrieved at the lack of consultation by the school's management on important decisions, such as class reorganisation and staff deployment, which significantly affect their children. Dissatisfaction was also expressed at the school's response to individual complaints. The school does survey parents' views in questionnaires but there is limited opportunity for parents to discuss their views collectively and thereby influence decision-making in the school. Current procedures to deal with parents' grievances are judged to be unsatisfactory.
33. The school is outward looking and has productive community links. Improvements to the school's accommodation since the last inspection are results of the effective management of external resources. The school hall is used regularly by the village and by a privately organised "Kids Club," which is popular and valued highly by working parents. The pupils benefit from a very wide range of extra-curricular activities. There are good links with the District Council and other local schools in sports and the arts. These links enhance the range of learning opportunities and contribute well to the personal development of pupils. Through its membership of the local network of schools there is good access to additional funding for training and resources. The school makes an effective contribution to the initial training of teachers. The management arrangements for shared provision are satisfactory.
34. The school also draws on the local community for the benefit of pupils. Good links with the local parish church and the offices of Lincoln Cathedral, through visits and assemblies, provide well for the moral and spiritual development of pupils. There are many school trips within the locality and more distant, including a number of residential visits, which enrich the curriculum, develop an awareness of diverse cultures and contribute positively to the personal development of pupils.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides good leadership in the curriculum and teaching and learning. Leadership of senior managers and subject coordinators is underdeveloped. Governance of the school is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Financial management is very good

- Procedures to deal with the concerns and complaints of parents are insufficient
- Staff training is effectively linked to school improvement

Commentary

35. The headteacher has a good commitment to school improvement. Since her appointment she has worked hard to strengthen the curriculum and develop teaching and learning styles. Under her direction the curriculum has expanded and several innovative approaches have been introduced, which have widened pupils' knowledge and encouraged them to become better citizens. Each morning, for example, pupils have "Early Bird" or "Thinking" activities, which help them to settle into school and extend their knowledge and skills. Teaching and learning styles have undergone a review and teachers and pupils have identified their own best styles of teaching and learning. All staff are committed to the school's approach and they are inventive in their delivery. Pupils are taught to be "reflective" about their learning and they speak proudly of their "resilience," when completing a difficult task. Increased resourcing and an improved learning environment have been achieved through the good efforts of the headteacher and staff, sometimes in conjunction with the local community. Lottery funding has brought improved musical, arts and sports provision. A recent project with the Whisby Educational Trust has enabled a good development of the wild life area and pond. Parents and governors fully support the school in bringing about improvements and are pleased that greater opportunities are offered to their children.
36. The headteacher has many responsibilities, including a substantial teaching role. She is supported by a dedicated team of teachers, one of whom is identified as the second in charge. They are loyal to the headteacher and of each other. However, without a deputy headteacher, some elements of leadership and management have lacked development and rigour, and the deployment of some staff has been unsatisfactory. Key personnel have too many responsibilities and, as a result, their effectiveness is marginalised. Increased pupil and staff numbers and long-term staff absences are making it more difficult for the headteacher to monitor change sufficiently and she receives only limited support in monitoring from other staff. This is because most coordinators are newly appointed and their roles are currently under-developed. At present, coordinators have had few opportunities to monitor pupils' progress across the school or inject their expert knowledge and skills into school improvement planning in order to eliminate management issues and overcome subject weaknesses. Senior staff provide good induction and mentoring arrangements for the several staff that are newly qualified or require additional support.
37. The governors work as a united team with the headteacher, focused on developing the school's Christian principles and maintaining high standards. Governors meet regularly and fulfil all statutory responsibilities through their committee structure. They have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses gained through their own procedures of self-review and analysis. Governors regularly discuss on-going issues about accommodation and changes are brought about as funds allow. For example, the school is working hard to respond to parental concerns about toilet facilities. During the school year, governors have met with student council members and assisted them with financial backing, such as to improve playground equipment. Governors are appreciative of the council's efforts to eliminate bullying in the playground and have listened with interest to members' reports that this is no longer a problem. Following an annual survey of parental views, governors and the headteacher introduced a regular surgery, to provide parents and pupils with greater opportunities for consultation about issues affecting their child's education. Several

parents and one pupil have availed themselves of this facility. Nevertheless, governors acknowledge that they need to remain pro-active in their roles, as a number of parents have current concerns and are uneasy about present procedures of consultation.

38. The school improvement plan is based on a sound review of current provision, including a review of parental questionnaires and from meetings with the student council. The plan is recognised as an important document in order to drive forward improvements and it incorporates all annual school, local and national priorities; all carefully planned and with outcomes clearly identified. However, there is limited evidence of on-going evaluations of these targets, or monitoring of changes in Years 1 and 2 brought about through staff absence. Although the school has been successful in bringing about some good improvement in the curriculum and teaching and learning, there is a lack of rigour to the review of organisational and management changes. For example, there has been limited on-going monitoring of teaching and learning by key managers and governors in order to evaluate the introduction of mixed aged classes in Years 1 and 2 at the start of this school year. Nevertheless, the school is working hard to resolve parental anxieties about recent staffing instability in this key stage.
39. Financial management is very good. With the constant increase in pupil numbers, governors and the headteacher are very skilful in their budget management. All priorities are achieved, although there is a very small contingency fund for emergencies. However, there are sufficient staff and good numbers of teaching assistants, a well resourced curriculum and a bright and vibrant learning environment. Funds have been allocated to improve provision in ICT, and the development of a computer suite and installation of interactive whiteboards have provided all pupils with good access to appropriate technology. Additional resources are achieved very effectively from grants, by competitive bids and through competitions. For example, the school was given a minibus, won in a local competition.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	322,870
Total expenditure	329,794
Expenditure per pupil	1264

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	8,500
Balance carried forward to the next	1,576

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

40. There are currently 21 children in the reception class who started school in September. Most have had pre-school experience at a nursery or playgroup. The children's attainment on entry to school covers the full range of abilities but this year, from the evidence of the initial teacher assessment, it was above average when compared to the national picture. The overall provision for the children at the Foundation Stage is good and their achievement over time is above average. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Assessment is satisfactory overall. By the end of the reception year children are well-prepared for their next stage of learning.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The reception children have a very positive start to school life
- The staff are very sensitive to individual children's needs

Commentary

41. The children come to school happy, confident and secure. They make very good progress because the staff work well together, showing a very good caring and sensitive approach to the children's individual needs. The quiet rigour of the teaching is a notable feature of the staff's work. The children respond appropriately, which demonstrates very clearly the sense of trust that is being built and the very good rapport between adults and children. Each day children self-registered on arrival, happy to show their parents how well they are achieving on the "Early Bird" tasks. Children sit formally on the carpet reading books, awaiting the teachers' instruction. They are being well-prepared for the changes in routine in Year 1. Children's levels of independence are very good. They work well together in groups, for example, when engaged in role-play activities. They are learning to establish appropriate relationships and already they socialise very well. A significant strength is their ability to look after their own personal needs, for example they change independently for games lessons in the hall. Most children have learnt to share and agree limits. They use equipment carefully and share resources happily and at the end of a session they tidy away well. All children know the difference between right and wrong because the adults place a great emphasis on reinforcing socially acceptable behaviour.

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are making good gains in speaking and listening skills and early reading skills
- There are not enough opportunities for children to write independently, in their exploratory play or in other areas of learning

- Good assessments are made of reading and writing skills

Commentary

42. Children are achieving above the expected goals for their age in their communication skills and reading, and in line with expectations in writing. Most children start school with good standards in speaking and listening and teachers ensure that they have every opportunity to enhance these skills. Teachers plan very well to introduce new vocabulary and children make rapid gains, enabling them to question and explain their ideas clearly. Adults encourage children to extend their responses so that they can communicate in detail. Children are able to use the subject specific language of stories and they use mathematical terms also to good effect. Teachers emphasise and repeat new words, sometimes demonstrating by using practical equipment, so that the children see the word visually. Adults are good role-model examples and they correct grammatical errors sensitively. This ensures that the children feel confident and have a sense of pride in their ability to communicate. During the inspection children talked at length about the story of *Handa's Surprise*. They were very keen and eager to respond with ideas, thoughts and feelings to very good questioning from the teacher. As a result, the storybook captivated their attention and sustained their interest.
43. The teacher gives very good attention to the development of children's early reading skills. Books are shared daily and children listen attentively. They clearly enjoy books and handle them with care. Skilful questioning by the teacher helps the children to learn early reading skills. Most can point to individual words and the more able can read complex sentences and decipher difficult words, such as *appreciate*. All children know the terms *author* and *illustrator*, and they can identify a story character or recall a sequence of events. Children are keen to offer observations about a story and discuss the illustrations with an adult. They are given very good support at home.
44. Early writing skills are being suitably developed in literacy sessions and children are being taught well to form letters correctly and with an appropriate shape and size. All are using their knowledge of sounds well to write simple words and many make good attempts at writing more complex words. They are well supported during these activities. As a result, most children are achieving well in formal writing activities. However, teacher's planning shows that there are too few opportunities for children to write independently.

MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good use is made of role-play to promote mathematical understanding
- The children have positive attitudes towards mathematics

Commentary

45. Imaginative and creative teaching is having a positive impact on children and there is good enjoyment in mathematical learning. Daily number sessions are made exciting, sometimes through the use of puppets, and children are well motivated so that they achieve well. The pace of the sessions is brisk and the questioning by the teacher is

continually challenging children to think mathematically. They are able to use for example, positional vocabulary such as, *below, above, in, under, on top of* confidently and competently, when asked by the 'puppet' to place the toys in these positions. They practice counting in 10's to 100 and can confidently count forwards and backwards to 10. With the support of the number board they accurately take five from 90, or solve a problem such as *my house is number 23, my friend lives at number 21; what is the number in between?* The children have developed a very good understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes. Daily access to number games in exploratory play ensures that the children have time to play with numbers. As a result, children have good skills in counting, matching and sorting in a range of contexts. Most children are exceeding the early learning goals expected for their age and are working at the early stages of the National Curriculum.

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good foundations are being developed in the children's scientific understanding
- The children are taught basic computer skills well
- There are insufficient planned opportunities to extend children's learning in the outdoor classroom

Commentary

46. The children are exceeding the early learning goals in their knowledge and understanding of the world. In historical, geographical and scientific elements they are taught well and are making good progress in line with their capabilities. All the children are being challenged by handling equipment and materials to promote enquiry and investigation skills. Through well-planned practical science activities and careful questioning by adults they are discovering and developing an awareness of, for example, the different smell, pattern, textures, shape and colour of fruits. Through looking and handling the fruit the children are beginning to understand and use the terms *hard, rough, smooth* or *soft*. In most cases, they are excited, happy to touch, feel, smell and remain in awe of the experience as they look at, for example, the pattern in a guava, pineapple or the banana. The children's computer skills are developing well and they are confident in handling the mouse efficiently and following instructions on the screen. They co-operate well together.
47. Construction toys, playdoh, sand, water play, cutting and sticking activities are readily available in the classroom. Larger and smaller construction equipment are used well to support learning in the role-play area. However there were missed opportunities in the outdoor classroom to promote children's independent enquiry, exploration and discovery skills through the use of equipment such as the sand and water play. Because there is no structured purpose to most activities outdoors, few children sustain any interest during their free choice activity time. This also applies to other areas of learning during the 'free choice' sessions, particularly those designed to enhance writing opportunities.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in physical development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- All children are very agile and well-coordinated in both small and larger physical movements

Commentary

48. Physical skills are being well developed and children exceed the early learning goals despite the fact that there is insufficient space in the outdoor environment for apparatus and equipment. To compensate for this, good use is made of the school hall for activities with larger equipment, but not having daily access for developing larger movements limits their achievement. The children handle tools safely, manage construction equipment well and have been taught to hold a pencil correctly. They use a wide range of malleable materials confidently and competently. The majority use scissors confidently and those that have difficulty are well supported by an adult. Most of the children enjoy the challenge of coordinating a range of movements during a physical education lesson. Children use the space well and are very well behaved when practising the movements. They manoeuvre wheeled vehicles carefully in the small space available. They are determined to succeed, proud of their achievements and happy to share their success with each other. All the children are very agile and well co-ordinated. The teacher maintains an appropriate balance between vigilance about safety and encouraging independence. Consequently, they enjoy and benefit from their physical activities.

CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Provision in creative development is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most children exceed the expected early learning goals appropriate for their age

Commentary

49. Learning opportunities for art and design are good. The teaching of the basic art skills is good. The children have regular opportunities for painting and drawing and they enjoy making models, selecting and using materials well. A wide range of resources is available for their use and there are good opportunities for them to make decisions, for example, about whether to use wet paint or pastels, or which boxes to choose to make a model. The children use pastels and crayons for observational drawing well, and collage work and printing has creativity and flair. They are imaginative, for example, in designing and creating a large mural of God's Creation of the World, which is displayed in the school hall. Children have good opportunities for independent decision-making, choosing equipment and materials to develop particular skills and techniques. Songs are given a high profile and the children love singing, joining in happily, remembering the sequence of words and actions well and attempting to follow the melody contour of a song. They show that they can keep a steady pulse when they put actions to words and sing familiar songs lustily. There are good, imaginative role-play areas in the indoor classroom. The play links very closely to the planned topic coverage and

supports the acquisition of knowledge and understanding in other areas of learning such as work at a builder's yard. In these areas however, there are not enough practical opportunities to further mathematical and writing skills within the role-play situations. In the lessons seen adults did not participate in the children's role-play to either redirect the play or move the learning forward.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards in speaking and listening and reading are well above average by Year 6
- Literacy skills are used well across the curriculum
- The quality of presentation and handwriting is not good enough, apart from Years 5 and 6

Commentary

50. Standards in English are consistently high by Year 6. The school works hard to extend pupils' learning by challenging the higher attainers effectively and giving good support to the less able to raise their attainment. Inspection findings are that current standards are well above average by Year 6 in speaking and listening and reading, and above average in writing. Although pupils organise their writing well, and write effectively for different audiences, there is a lack of maturity in their writing style. In national tests standards have remained well above the national average over time and in comparison with similar pupils. The performances of Year 6 pupils have been in the top five per cent of similar schools in three of the last four years. In the latest national tests fewer pupils than predicted have attained the higher level five, although most pupils have attained national expectations. However, with small cohorts of pupils, the performance of one or two can influence the school's results, as one pupil represents between six and eight per cent of the class. Above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and higher than average mobility are also significant factors influencing the performance of Year 6 in 2005.
51. In national tests in Year 2 standards in reading and writing have varied significantly over time. For example, in the latest national tests, pupils have attained above average standards in reading and writing, although standards were below average in 2004. Inspectors judge that standards of the current Year 2 are above average in speaking and listening and reading, and average in writing. Often teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils and their expectations have been too low. This is partly the consequence of the inexperience of some teachers, but also because frequent staff changes mean that teachers are sometimes unfamiliar with pupils' needs.
52. The achievement of pupils is good overall in Years 3 to 6. Achievement in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory. Teaching assistants give valuable support to pupils with special educational needs, and the less able, and they achieve well. Teaching assistants are firm but fair in their demands, giving good individual support where necessary. For example, a puppet was used effectively to help a pupil write a simple sentence, clapping and praising good achievement and sulking when problems occurred. Through

the teaching assistant's imaginative teaching methods, the pupil achieved well. Special projects and class debates enable those pupils identified as gifted and talented to extend their learning and they achieve similarly to other pupils.

53. Pupils read with enthusiasm because of an enriched reading curriculum. Following a visit from the author Dick King Smith, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were better able to analyse a novel, and there are some good reviews of children's classics. Pupils are given good opportunities to write for different audiences, and older pupils are confident in choosing the best methods to express their views. For example, during the inspection, one Year 6 boy had used a formal letter very effectively to explain his arguments about single gender schools, while others had recorded their ideas in bullet points or as a report. The curriculum includes good opportunities for speaking and listening activities, in role-play, games of hot seating, drama or in debates. Teachers often set hypotheses for pupils to explore as a thinking activity and they demand that pupils explain their ideas clearly. As a result, Year 6 pupils are confident and articulate communicators.
54. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is consistently good or better in Years 3 to 6, where teachers have very good subject expertise, enabling them to question pupils effectively. These teachers make good on-going evaluations of pupils' responses and develop new teaching points skilfully from their ideas. Teachers are good role models, and they provide pupils with clear explanations of each lesson objective. Teaching methods are various and innovative. Within one lesson pupils will work independently, in groups and as a class. As a result, pupils in Years 3 to 6 are eager to learn, listen attentively to their teachers' exposition, and concentrate well and with good perseverance in order to produce work of a good quality. The pace of learning is rapid throughout the junior classes. In the mixed class of Years 5 and 6 the teachers' expectations of the quality of presentation and handwriting are particularly high and there is a marked improvement in pupils' performance.
55. In Years 1 and 2 teachers plan good lessons which make learning topical and relevant. In conjunction with their learning in other subjects, pupils have many opportunities to read and write. However, too little time is given to the teaching of basic skills in reading and writing and teacher expectations are too low. Pupils have a keen interest in learning and are making satisfactory progress, but their knowledge of how to improve is insufficient and their understanding of expected levels for their age and ability are too low. Too often pupils make only satisfactory use of known spelling rules and some accept work of a quality and quantity below their capabilities.
56. Assessment data shows that the performance of girls is consistently better than boys. As a result, more reading material has been purchased to interest boys and in lessons teachers try to find challenges which will interest both boys and girls. In Year 6, for example, pupils enjoyed the "If" game in which they had to dispose of wealth gained from the national lottery. There was a good debate about the chosen good causes and the moral case for claiming wealth for themselves. The headteacher makes good use of assessment data to identify subject strengths and weaknesses and provide staff with additional training, as necessary. As a result of recent training on teaching styles, teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at looking for imaginative methods of motivating pupils to learn. However, there is insufficient use of assessments data to track pupils' progress or to evaluate the effect of any strategies to raise standards. Additional support is the responsibility of each classteacher and help for those pupils with specific difficulties is not organised cohesively across the school. The quality of

teachers' marking is variable and, only in the best examples, are pupils given good advice about how to improve.

57. Parents are keen to help with homework tasks and their support is appreciated by the school. Pupils learn spellings and read regularly at home. However reading diaries give insufficient advice about how to improve to pupils and their parents.
58. Leadership and management is satisfactory. During the long term absences of the coordinator, the responsibility for leadership and management has passed to the headteacher. She has analysed data to monitor standards and there has been some limited monitoring of teaching and learning. However arrangements have been of a temporary nature and longer term plans for raising standards have not been made. On-going tracking of pupils' progress is insufficient through book scrutiny or in an analysis of data.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

59. Pupils use their language and literacy skills well in other subjects. There are some good links to develop writing skills, such as project reports on paper making and Roman catapult building for design and technology. Reading skills are developed well through research on the internet or using reference books. ICT is often used to help with composition and presentation.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Over time, standards in mathematics are improving more rapidly by Year 6 than the national pattern
- Pupils' ability to solve mathematical problems is good by Year 6
- In Years 1 and 2 pupils are not achieving well enough, especially the more able

Commentary

60. Standards in mathematics are above average by Year 6 and average by Year 2. In 2004 standards by Year 6 were above the national average, and well above those achieved by pupils in similar schools. Significant factors had influenced test results, including above average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and above average mobility. Nevertheless, a third of all pupils attained the higher level 5 and, almost all pupils with special educational needs attained national expectations, because of the good levels of support they received. There was little difference in the performance of boys and girls too. In the latest national tests, all pupils have achieved well and some Year 6 have attained standards above their predicted targets, with more gaining the higher level 5 than in 2004. Pupils enjoy mathematics and tackle all problem solving activities with confidence and ease. Their good mental and investigative skills enable them to adapt prior knowledge to new and complex mathematical problems.
61. Over time pupils' performance by Year 2 is below the national median for their age group. Results in national tests vary significantly, although they are mostly below or

well below average. In 2004 standards were well below the national average and also well below those of pupils in similar schools. Fewer pupils than nationally attained the higher level 3, although most attained national expectations. In the last two years the performance of boys has been better than girls and with a greater difference than nationally. Although pupils can undertake calculations using the four rules of number, basic skills are not fully embedded and a significant number of pupils find it difficult to transfer their knowledge to new situations. Moreover some pupils have poor skills in forming numerals for their age and sometimes this affects their accuracy. In 2005, standards have shown some improvement and inspectors judge that currently standards are average by Year 2. However the frequent staff changes have led to a lack of challenge in some lessons, especially of the more able pupils.

62. The achievement of pupils is good in Years 3 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In Years 1 and 2 pupils are eager to succeed and proudly show visitors their exercise books in which they have achieved good accuracy in their calculations. However infant pupils lack confidence when explaining their workings out and are less competent at transferring their skills to other mathematical problems. In junior classes mathematical challenges engage all pupils and they achieve well not only in lessons, but also in special projects. Teaching assistants give good support to less able pupils so that they can participate full in all activities. More able pupils in Years 3 to 6 have good confidence in manipulating numbers and sometimes they will use computer skills to record answers or complete a homework task. In a good project in Years 3 and 4 involving design and technology, history and mathematics, pupils designed and made Roman catapults. They considered the problem of probability as they refined their machines, adding and removing elastic bands from the arm and then, they measured the range of their paper ammunition to identify the most successful weights.
63. The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and often very good. During the inspection four out of the five lessons were good or better, and forty per cent was very good. In very good lessons the teachers had very good subject knowledge and questioned pupils skilfully so that pupils extended their thinking logically and explained their ideas clearly. The lessons were well planned and took good account of the needs of different ability groups. In Years 1 and 2, teaching is overall satisfactory, although basic numeracy skills are insufficiently taught. However, whereas effective assessment ensures that work is appropriate for lower attaining pupils, the more able are sometimes insufficiently challenged. This is in part due to insufficient provision of suitable problem-solving work for the higher attainers. Additionally, in their teaching methods, the school has not yet addressed the differences in the performance of boys and girls.
64. In Years 1 and 2, pupils respond eagerly to the initial mental warm up sessions because the teachers are very encouraging and relationships are very good. Many pupils rapidly recognise numbers that together make ten or twenty. They have a basic knowledge of fractions and of the attributes of three-dimensional shapes such as cones, cylinders and pyramids. This is an aspect of the work that has improved over the last few months. Pupils are also making good progress in using basic metric measures as opposed to non-standard measures. The standards of work seen during the inspection are better than those achieved in the national tests of 2004. This is because, with the help of a consultant, teachers are now more aware of areas of learning that need more attention.
65. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching is very well structured. All pupils co-operate very well when they conduct mathematical investigations. Teachers use various teaching

methods to motivate pupils and develop their thinking skills. This was very evident in a lesson where the pupils had to identify the appropriate use of a range of standard measures. There were very good levels of enjoyment in the task and, as a result, pupils made rapid progress in identifying the best measures for each task. As a result of very good levels of discussion that preceded the practical activities, pupils had good strategies for solving the problems. Pupils are improving their recognition of patterns and relationships; they can generalise and predict outcomes. Thus, the more able feel challenged, concentrate well and there is a buzz of excitement as they work.

66. A scrutiny of pupils' work provides evidence of a good volume of work overall, but it is not always presented neatly and the formation of numerals is unsatisfactory in Years 1 and 2. More needs to be done to ensure consistency in the way calculations are recorded. Throughout school improvement targets are set for each pupil. Their work is regularly marked but recorded comments about where the pupils need to improve are infrequent and rarely relate to the improvement targets. Teachers do not ask questions that might advance the pupils' thinking. Termly assessments are set, but often they are not sufficiently sharp or regular, particularly in Years 1 and 2.

Mathematics across the curriculum

67. The pupils make good use of their mathematical skills in other subjects. In their science investigations they record data in tabular form, with the older pupils in Years 5 and 6 competently using computer programs to do so. By Years 5 and 6 pupils use a variety of graphs but do not always sufficiently interpret the graphs to summarise their conclusions. They have used measures and angles to construct vehicles in lessons in design and technology

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Greater emphasis on experimenting and investigating is improving standards
- There are inconsistencies in the presentation and marking of work

Commentary

68. Pupils in Year 2 attain above average standards and make steady and consistent gains in their learning over time. Between Years 3 and 4 pupils' progress is accelerated by the consistently very good teaching. By Year 6 they achieve well above average standards. Pupils with special educational needs have good support and make good progress. Standards have significantly improved since the last inspection.
69. During the inspection no lessons were available to be seen in Years 1 and 2. Evidence from exercise books and discussion with pupils indicates that there is a good interest in science. Pupils are well motivated and have a good knowledge and understanding about for example, healthy eating, how to make an electrical circuit, seed germination and the five senses. They also have good opportunities to attend the science club along with their older peers. Pupils talked enthusiastically about their experiments and demonstrated accurate knowledge and understanding. They use scientific terms such as, the crocodile clip, when they made an electrical circuit, talked about the content of

fat in a range of crisps and why we need sun, light and water to allow us to grow the tomato plant in the garden well. Pupils can explain about their predictions, how they conducted the experiments and they talk about their conclusions at length. The pupils are well on course to achieve above average standards by the end of Year 2 in their scientific knowledge and understanding.

70. In two excellent lessons, staff expertise and enthusiasm highly motivated pupils to reach very good standards. In these lessons, pupils approached practical tasks with enthusiasm and enjoyment. In the mixed class of Years 5 and 6 the excellent preparation by the teacher, including the well-planned resources, allowed the pupils to produce well-researched facts and drawings of plants outside in the lane, hedgerows and school's wildlife area. In the mixed class of Years 3 and 4 an excellent introductory session on evaporation and condensation captivated the pupils' interest and enthusiasm through the use of role-play. This approach stimulated the pupils to high levels of scientific enquiry, and a very good understanding of scientific vocabulary. Pupils were eager to carry out their group experiments and interpret the results. They used scientific vocabulary in an appropriate context. Teaching in these classes is based on mutual respect and understanding. Pupils share ideas and have lively discussions with each other, and with their teacher and other staff. They confidently express their own ideas. During group discussions teachers were adept at developing pupils' understanding of scientific facts, and sensitively correcting any misconceptions. All pupils behave responsibly when handling scientific equipment. An analysis of teachers' planning shows that there is an increasing emphasis on independent investigations by pupils, an approach which is improving the pupils' enquiry skills. Although excellent teaching was seen during the inspection, pupils' work in exercise books indicates that teaching is good over time. In some instances it was noted that there is too much copied text in both scientific knowledge and in the conclusions of an experiment and a lack of opportunity for the pupils to plan their own experiment.
71. Marking is inconsistent. In some instances, there is insufficient marking of work to further support and guide the pupils in scientific understanding, and when writing up their findings from experiments and the conclusions. In Years 1 and 2 for example, the basic literacy skills are not firmly embedded. The spelling of scientific vocabulary is frequently left uncorrected; the work is generally untidy and shows weak handwriting skills.
72. The overall monitoring of the science curriculum, teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. This is because the role of the coordinator has not been clearly or sufficiently addressed since the last inspection. The coordinator for science, who is highly qualified, has been in post just two months and has only been able to form a brief overview of the subject. Year 2 and Year 6 assessments are analysed but tracking progress over time is not firmly embedded.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils attain above average standards Year 2 and well above average by Year 6
- ICT is used well across the curriculum

Commentary

73. Standards have improved since the last inspection. By Year 6 pupils are very confident using ICT for a range of different purposes. They are fully competent at logging on to the network, opening applications, locating files and storing work in selected folders. They use digital cameras as a matter of course and have recently been introduced to data loggers.
74. Word processing is used consistently across the curriculum. Year 2 can access information on the internet and then switch to a word processing program to record what they have found. They have used their skills to provide captions for drawings and to record stories. Recently Years 1 and 2 have researched extensively about Ancient Egypt by studying images and gathering information from other sources. More able Year 2 pupils are adept at using a search engine and have good control over the mouse. By the time they reach Year 6, pupils are using a wide range of skills for word processing, combining text and images, using spreadsheets and other data recording devices. Pupils are currently preparing PowerPoint presentations as part of a topic to broaden the range of their publishing skills.
75. In the curriculum there is considerable enthusiasm for the use of ICT. Teachers share knowledge and skills with each other well so that expertise is extended. The interactive whiteboards are a well used and flexible tool for teachers and pupils. Older pupils are currently working to produce their own website. The computer club provides a very good opportunity for pupils to extend their skills.
76. The well equipped computer suite and generally good resource levels are fully appreciated by the staff and pupils. The current coordinator provides very enthusiastic support and encouragement for the use of ICT. Teachers and learning support assistants are very pro-active in promoting its use.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

77. ICT skills are consistently and imaginatively used in all areas of the pupils' learning. For example, pupils have recently produced a brochure to publicise their local area.

HUMANITIES

78. Only two lessons in history and one in geography were seen during the inspection. Consequently, no judgements can be made about the quality of the provision in these two subjects. However, work on display, teachers' planning and a portfolio of levelled examples of work were seen. This evidence indicates that there are some strengths common to both subjects. The teaching of the humanities is well planned. Pupils learn through an interesting variety of activities. As a starting point the teachers use what pupils know already, and they build new skills progressively on earlier knowledge. Pupils are developing effective enquiry skills that enable them to gather information from a range of sources such as historic buildings, works of art from the past and Internet accounts, as well as from a good range of books and photographic evidence. A good example of how skills develop in geography is the use of an increasing range of complex maps and plans. Some of the work is very constructively marked and takes account of specific learning objectives. However, this is not consistently the case and is an area for further development.

79. In **geography**, Years 1 and 2 are learning how to read basic maps and are extending their understanding to create simple maps of their own locality. They also recognise some of the positive features of their local area. The entrance hall contains some very imaginative displays about different climatic regions in the world. Each display clearly shows the weather in different regions and how it affects vegetation, animal life and the jobs people do. The pupils have also been very engaged in a topic about Cambodia that arose out of their becoming aware of the devastation caused by land mines. By Years 3 to 6 pupils are using computers to construct plans, for example, of their bedrooms. They have effectively used their knowledge of shapes in mathematics to position items contained in their rooms. Recent work in junior classes arises from the theme “Beliefs and values of the earth” and has involved some wide-ranging cross curricular studies. Pupils have looked at aspects of life in different countries, for example, the provision of clean water in Africa and South America. They have used computer programs about free trade and the global supermarket, then they organised a Free Trade Coffee afternoon to link with their work in personal, health and social education. Pupils are beginning to understand the concept of “sustained development” and they enter in long discussions about its meaning with teacher and their peers.
80. In **history**, Years 1 and 2 are developing their enquiry skills well during a study of Ancient Egypt. Computers are used to research from texts and visual images. Pupils showed considerable excitement and application as, having heard about the work of Howard Carter they pretended to be archaeologists and “dug” for Egyptian artefacts as if they were in the Valley of the Kings. They have created large artefacts such as a pyramid and a sarcophagus and learned about burial practices in Ancient Egypt. They are developing a good understanding of how things change over time. The curriculum has enabled Years 3 to 6 to enjoy different aspects of historical learning about the Tudor and Elizabethan periods. They have taken two interesting approaches, one through the study of Hardwick Hall and the other using a portrait of Queen Elizabeth I as a point of departure. The first hand experiences of visiting Hardwick Hall as brought alive and resulted in some good quality work. They are developing a good sense of chronology through studying a variety of topics from motte and bailey castles to Elizabethan explorers and on into the invention of “The Rocket”. Years 5 and 6 have done a unit of work on World War II and benefited from talking to people who lived through it.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is a rich and innovative
- Pupils’ personal qualities are developed effectively through religious education.

Commentary

81. Pupils achieve well and attain above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by Years 2 and 6. Since the last inspection standards have improved.
82. Religions are studied in a topic based approach with themes common to all religions. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Years 3 and 4 were considering the theme of water and its significance in different faiths. They identified stories in the Old and

New Testament where water was important; they looked at the importance of Holy Water in a christening or baptism; and then considered how and why, in the Islamic faith, water is used to clean the human body prior to worship. The teachers questioned pupils skilfully so that they were persuaded to make connections, and respect the values, customs and beliefs of major world faiths. The contributions of individuals are also valued and exploited for the benefit of the individual and the school community. There is a good understanding of the customs of Jehovah's witnesses as a result of the personal contributions of some pupils.

83. The school has developed topic weeks as an addition to class lessons. During a recent Bible topic pupils took part in some very good activities incorporating work in several subjects, and with a common theme of Bible stories. A large circular mural of the creation story is an example of very good work linking religious education, mathematics and art and design. Younger pupils in the reception and Years 1 and 2 produced quadrants of a circle in which they depicted the Bible's sequence of creation by using the batik technique in art work. They added good things, which they can see in the world around them and their pictures included plants, animals, insects and birds, but also aeroplanes, cars and cigarettes, all of which they believed God has created for them. The topic was enriched by the contributions of visitors, and by visits. The visit of Noah, role-played by the vicar, led to some imaginative work in writing and art, drama was used in Years 3 and 4 to tell the New Testament story of Jesus walking on water, and other pupils had opportunities to discuss the deep faith of individuals through the visit of a catholic nun.
84. Coordination for religious education has been re-allocated in this school year. The coordinator has a good enthusiasm for the subject and is keenly interested in its development. However, the role is currently under-developed, although coordination is satisfactory. There is a good commitment to the development of the subject by all staff. Teachers are committed to sharing their knowledge and developing among pupils a respect and understanding of the needs of others. The subject promotes pupils' personal development very well.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

85. There was insufficient evidence to make an overall judgement on the quality of provision in art and design, design and technology and physical education.
86. Indications are that pupils are attaining above average standards in **art and design** by Year 2 and, by Year 6, they are achieving well above average standards. Since the last inspection standards in art and design have improved significantly. All pupils have high levels of enthusiasm for art and take a pride in their work. Pupils' work on displays shows that there is a strong focus on the development of observational skills. Pupils have good experiences of using a wide range of natural and man made materials and they learn a good range of techniques in specialist lessons. Art and design skills increase rapidly as pupils mature and by Year 6 they have very good skills in observational drawing, use of colour, perspective and sculpture. An observation of a mixed class of Years 3 and 4 revealed that they have very good observation skills also. They give close attention to details in their sketches, such as in drawing plants outside in the hedgerow. The use of art skills in other subjects is good, and there is evidence of work of as high quality, such as the pattern work of the Egyptians in Year 2. Throughout school there is a good emphasis on art appreciation from European and Non-European cultures and from visits to places of interest, such as the National Gallery or Hardwick Hall. The coordinator is a very recent appointment and she has within this two month

period produced a good portfolio of pupils' work, covering a vast range of art and design skills. Furthermore, she has begun to analyse pupils' performance in order to support the introduction of teacher and pupil assessments in art and design.

87. In **design and technology** a scrutiny of displays and a portfolio of work indicates that all strands of the subject are taught regularly and with a good breadth of activities. Prior to undertaking work on moving vehicles Years 1 and 2 visited a steam engine "Romulus" and examined "The Tornado" on its visit to school. Their work included joining of materials to make models from junk materials and they learnt to make joints in wood using paper right angles. At the end of the project their evaluations show that had good enjoyment; "I liked the glue" wrote one pupil and another showed a developing understanding of forces as his car went down a ramp. He noted; "My car went fast. It wasn't what I expected." The project had made good links to science as pupils learnt about forces. All Year 2 pupils can use technical vocabulary such as axles and chassis to describe their models and comment about their results. Older pupils build on earlier skills by completing elaborate design plans with views, side elevations and precise measurements. Years 3 and 4 have made Roman catapults as part of a topic of work. Again they looked at forces and improved on their earlier knowledge as they realised that if they used too many elastic bands it reduces the effectiveness of the force in their operations. The coordinator is enthusiastic. She has levelled and annotated this work well and provided examples for future staff reference.
88. Indications are that by Year 6 pupils attain standards, which are appropriate for their age. In a recent paper making activity pupils evaluated their own work and give reasoned arguments to support suggested improvements. Their work showed good levels of creativity as they added grasses, leaves and petals to their paper. The coordinator has not yet had the opportunity to share her expertise with other staff members. There have been only informal opportunities for monitoring standards, the curriculum and teaching and learning.
89. In **physical education** a scrutiny of teachers planning indicates that all strands of the subject are taught. Indications are that standards are at least average by Years 2 and 6. Lessons include a good focus on the importance of exercise to ensure a healthy heart. Discussions with pupils show that they enjoy physical activities and many join in extra activities arranged for them. Sports include football, netball, rounders, lacrosse and a fit club. Inter-school competitions are organised successfully. The school participates regularly, even though with small pupil numbers the teams are sometimes difficult to organise. Proudly, pupils and teachers talk about their recent success in winning the lacrosse competition organised for the local cluster of schools. There is a good understanding among pupils that preferences do exist for various sports and that the needs of all must be considered. The student council have made a football rota for the playground to ensure all pupils are treated fairly and, during the inspection, Year 6 had a good discussion about the benefits of playing in mixed gender sports.

MUSIC

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music makes a positive contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils
- There are good opportunities for performance in Years 3 to 6

Commentary

In music, planning shows that all the required elements of the curriculum are taught. In two very short planned sessions in Years 1 and 2 pupils' enjoyment and great efforts in singing and playing of instruments made a positive contribution to their spiritual and personal development.

90. In Years 3 to 6 standards are above average. All pupils have good opportunities to listen to a wide range of music from all over the world. The quality of the teaching seen was very good. In one lesson good use was made of a visual image of a meandering river as a stimulus to encourage creativity. Standards in individual instrumental performance are good and all pupils have good opportunities to perform and play instruments. Visiting musicians and musical performances extends teaching. Lessons provide pupils with a very good foundation in the basic rudiments of music, a good understanding of musical learning and mastery of the instrument. A high number of pupils are involved in playing ocarinas, recorders, violin, cello, and woodwind instruments.
91. The quality of singing in assemblies is satisfactory. Pupils keep a steady beat, their words are clear and they follow the flow of the melody fairly accurately. In two composition lessons the learning was very well planned and organised. Pupils cooperated well in groups and were taught effectively and competently. Towards the end of each lesson pupils confidently performed their rhythmic patterns as part of a whole class composition or they gave individual performances, all showing good levels of competence in musical notation. In both lessons, the teachers gave guidance on how to improve. As a result, the pupils improved their performance and one group combined sounds well to make thin or thicker layers of sound. In both lessons the pupils thoroughly enjoyed their musical experience. The subject is coordinated well and ably supported by other specialist musicians. The well prepared musical performances are held in high regard by parents and the local community.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good school ethos encourages pupils to have respect for the feelings and beliefs of others
- Pupils have a very good understanding of global issues by Year 6

Commentary

92. Pupils' personal development is an important aspect of the school's work. As pupils participate in a range of worthwhile experiences, teachers provide them with sensitive but challenging support. In Years 5 and 6 the recent work about education for all children has increased pupils' awareness of the roles of world leaders as they meet at major world conferences. Teachers know pupils well and they role-model suitable

attitudes for pupils and guide them in moral understanding. As a result, pupils are tolerant towards younger pupils and take their citizenship roles seriously.

93. The school's programme for personal, social and health education gives good attention to personal safety, drugs, healthy eating and human development. The school nurse helps with the coverage of sex education. Visits to the cathedral and other local places of worship help pupils to recognise values and beliefs of the local community. The curriculum is effective in extending appreciation of many cultural traditions.
94. Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of the school community through the student council and it is clear that the school takes account of its decisions. Strategies to eradicate bullying in the playground are currently effective and pupils are proud of their success. Governors have shown that they value the contributions of the student council and have met with them, responding positively to their ideas by giving a budgetary allowance.
95. Leadership and management of the area are good. All staff actively support the school's enthusiasm to promote pupils' personal qualities and there is good and continuous coverage of issues in the curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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