

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **EMPINGHAM CE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Oakham

LEA area: Rutland

Unique reference number: 120177

Acting Headteacher: Miss E Biddle

Lead inspector: Mr C Parker

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> May 2005

Inspection number: 272662

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
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	55
School address:	School Lane Empingham Oakham Rutland
Postcode:	LE15 8PQ
Telephone number:	01780 460246
Fax number:	01780 460246
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N Jones
Date of previous inspection:	19 <sup>th</sup> June 2000

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is nearing completion of the process of federation with Great Casterton CE Primary School, three miles away. A headteacher was appointed in January 2004 to take the two schools to federation in September 2005. However, he left to take up another post in March 2005. At the time of the inspection the senior teacher at each school was acting as headteacher with the support of a mentor headteacher. The two acting headteachers are working jointly. In addition to changes in leadership, there has been a complete change of teaching staff in Years R to 4 in the last year.

The number of pupils has fallen in recent years and there are now 55 on roll, taught in three classes. There is some mobility; a small proportion of pupils leave to take up places in the private sector. Almost all pupils are of white British descent and all speak English as their first language. Each year group is quite small, between three and eleven pupils, and in some there is considerable imbalance in the number of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is well below average. Overall attainment on entry is broadly average.

The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average. Currently two pupil have a statement.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
11897	Chris Parker	Lead inspector	Mathematics; science; information and communication technology (ICT); art and design; design and technology; physical education, personal, social and health education; special educational needs
14083	Andy Anderson	Lay inspector	
19387	Mari Powell	Team inspector	English; history; geography; music; religious education; Foundation Stage;

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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

This is an **effective school** where pupils are engaged by good teaching. Consequently, they achieve well. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The pupils are achieving well because the teaching is good
- The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage
- The use of monitoring and evaluation to inform improvement planning is not sharp enough
- Standards in reading are above average
- The pupils' literacy skills are promoted very well across the curriculum
- Investigative skills in science are not developed systematically

The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Standards are about the same but the teaching has improved. Time is now well used in Years 1 and 2, standards in writing are better and the pupils now have good opportunities for spiritual development.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

**The pupils are achieving well.** The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage. Most of the children are well on course to achieve the early learning goals set for the end of the reception year. A few children are already exceeding them. Cohorts are small and therefore the data from the results of national tests should be used with caution. However, trends and patterns over the last few years show that the rate of improvement of Year 2 national test results is above average. Standards are currently average in English and mathematics and the pupils are achieving well.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	E	E	E	E*
mathematics	E	E	D	E*
science	E	D	D	E

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

At the end of Year 6 results have been low for the past four years and the trend of improvement has been below average. However, current standards are significantly higher than the results of national tests at the end of Year 6 indicate. In the last two years the groups taking the tests have been small, contained a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and some pupils made too little progress in Years 3 and 4. However, there has been a complete change of teaching staff in the last two years and inspection of the pupils' work and observation of lessons shows that they are now achieving well from Years 3 to 6. Standards at the end Year 6 are average in English and mathematics. Throughout the school, standards in reading are above average. In science standards are average and achievement is satisfactory overall but they are not as high as they should be because the skills of scientific investigation are not being systematically taught throughout the school, although they are developed well in Years 5 and 6.

Pupils have very positive attitudes. Behaviour is good and pupils are consistently well managed. Provision for **pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. Attendance and punctuality are very good. The school stimulates in pupils a desire to learn and consequently they are very interested in school life and the range of activities provided.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The **quality of education provided by the school is good**. The **teaching and learning are good**. Lessons are interesting and engage the pupils in their learning. Tasks are well matched to the needs of different groups. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Approaches to reading and writing are very clear and well implemented. In Years 5 and 6, for example, good use is made of opportunities to enhance writing in science. Intervention strategies strengthen the skills of those pupils who need some additional help. Assessment is satisfactory but there are many recent improvements that are beginning to bear fruit and are having a positive impact on the pupils' achievement.

The curriculum is broad and interesting. The curriculum for the youngest children is well planned and makes good use of the available resources. Throughout the school the pupils' literacy skills are used and developed effectively across the curriculum. Information and communication technology (ICT) is playing an increasingly effective role in learning. The accommodation is attractive and displays of the pupils' work aligned with improvement targets provide positive conditions for learning. The pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are good. Involvement of pupils through seeking and acting on their views is very good. The school provides very good information for parents.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership and management are satisfactory**. A partnership development plan provides a strategic overview for improvement but it does not draw sufficiently on the evaluation of the monitoring of teaching, the scrutiny of children's work or the analysis of pupils' performance to provide the precision needed for rapid and continuing improvement. The acting headteacher leads the teaching effectively. The co-ordinators are satisfactorily managing the individual subjects of the curriculum and have, in a relatively short time, developed the professional trust and a shared determination to improve further. Plans for the federation with Great Casterton CE Primary School are now at an advanced stage. A joint committee of the governing bodies of both schools has taken significant steps forward and developed the structures and procedures that will allow them to formally function in partnership. Except in one detail of their annual report, governors fulfil statutory requirements.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents hold the school in high regard and most are pleased with the progress made by their children. The pupils enjoy lessons and the vast majority have very positive views of the school.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Make full use of information from monitoring and self evaluation to plan for further improvement
- Develop the pupils' skills of scientific investigation more systematically in Years 1 to 4.

In addition:

- The governing body should ensure that all reporting requirements for their annual report are fully met.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

The pupils are achieving well. Standards are average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children make a good start in the Foundation Stage
- Pupils are making good progress because they are well taught
- Investigative skills in science are not developed systematically

#### **Commentary**

1. The children's attainment on entry to school is broadly average. The good link with the on-site playgroup ensures that the transition to school is very smooth. The effective partnership of teacher and nursery nurse ensures the children make rapid progress. Most of the children are well on course to achieve the early learning goals set for the end of the reception year. A few children are already exceeding them, for example, in mathematics and in the development of their personal and social skills.
2. Cohorts are small and, therefore, the data from the results of national tests should be used with considerable caution. However, there are trends and patterns over the last few years which show that the rate of improvement, at the end of Year 2, is above average. For the last three years results have compared favourably with all schools nationally. In 2004 they were well above average in reading and average in writing and mathematics. In general, results have compared well with similar schools but were below average in writing and mathematics in 2004.
3. At the end of Year 6 results have been low in English, mathematics and science for the past four years when compared with all schools and schools where pupils achieved similar results at the end of Year 2. The trend of improvement over the same period is below average. However, current standards are significantly higher than the results of national tests at the end of Year 6 indicate. In the last two years the groups taking the tests have contained a high proportion of pupils with special educational needs. In addition, analysis of optional test results shows that in the recent past pupils made very little progress in Years 3 and 4. The same data shows much better progress being made in Years 5 and 6. There has been a complete change of staff in the last two years and inspection of the pupils' work and observation of lessons shows that they are now achieving well from Years 3 to 6. Pupils are now building effectively on the good progress made in the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2.
4. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are average in English and mathematics. The pupils are making good progress and achieving well. Improvements to the curriculum and increasingly effective use of assessment information and target setting aligned to the high expectations are proving beneficial. The pupils are doing well in English because the skills of reading and writing are well taught and frequently practised in other subjects of the curriculum. They also have many good opportunities to talk in pairs, groups and to the class. In mathematics frequent opportunities to solve

problems allow the older pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills, hence they achieve well.

5. In science standards are average and achievement is satisfactory overall although progress accelerates in Years 5 and 6. This is because the skills of scientific investigation are taught and applied effectively, whereas in Years 1 to 4 they are not being systematically developed.
6. The pupils' competence in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with expectations the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Although the school has only had such good resources for a relatively short time every effort is being made to utilise them effectively in teaching and learning right across the curriculum.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils have very positive attitudes and their behaviour is good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Attendance and punctuality are very good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are very interested in school life and the range of activities provided.
- The school stimulates in pupils a desire to learn.

### **Commentary**

7. Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. The children are developing a good understanding of the responsibilities of living together in a community and respecting each other. The spiritual development of the pupils has been improved since the last inspection. Assemblies create an atmosphere in which pupils can consider the feelings of others. They are encouraged to reflect on deeper feelings and emotions, for example, in their writing. One pupil wrote about his feelings every time he passes the hospital following the loss of grand parent. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. Children are learning about other cultures and faiths in religious education, personal, social and health education and finding out about, for example, patterns in Islamic art and design. Very good use is made of the local area through, for example, visits that develop pupils' awareness of their own culture and traditions.
8. Most pupils are very happy to come to school and are eager to learn. They are attentive, co-operative and collaborate very well with each other. The vast majority of pupils behave very well in lessons and when moving around the school. Behaviour among the younger children is very good and any misbehaviour amongst older pupils is managed quickly and effectively to ensure learning is not interrupted. High expectations of good behaviour are consistent throughout the school. Pupils have good relationships with each other and are polite and respectful to adults. Where pupils are offered opportunities to take on responsibilities, for example, helping in assemblies, they respond in a mature and responsible manner.
9. Most parents agree that children behave well in school. However, a small minority of parents expressed concerns about bullying. During the inspection no signs of bullying or harassment were observed.

### **Attendance**

The table below shows the attendance figures for the school. The attendance rate at the school is well above the national median. Most parents ensure the attendance of their children.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	3.9	School data	0.0
National data	5.5	National data	0.4

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

**Exclusions**

There have been no exclusions.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

**Teaching and learning**

The teaching and learning are good. Assessment is satisfactory.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are interesting and engage the pupils in their learning
- Recent developments in assessment are having a positive impact
- Pupils know what is expected of them and what they have to do to improve

**Commentary**

10. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. A very productive relationship has developed between a very experienced nursery nurse and a recently qualified teacher. The small group of reception aged children are well taught by the nursery nurse who interests and engages them in lively tasks that maintain their attention and foster good learning. The classroom provides a stimulating environment with good resources that are well used. This was well illustrated when the children, looking at the use of technology, used a microphone soon bursting into the chorus of; ‘Is this the way to Amarillo.’ Expectations of behaviour are high and this is particularly beneficial to the very small number of pupils who need clear guidance in this area.
11. The teaching in Years 1 to 6 is consistently good. Lessons are well planned and conditions for learning are good. The teachers have identified individual targets for each pupil and they use them effectively as a focus for learning. In lessons the teachers question the pupils about how they can improve their work. For example, when Year 3 and 4 pupils were writing conversational poems the teacher sat alongside pupils talking to them about the language they were using and how they were going create a rhythm for their poetry. The focus of these discussions was about finding a better word, or making a phrase more interesting. The drive to raise standards is also evident in the marking of the pupils’ work which, although developing, is increasingly helping the pupils to improve their work. Discussions with older pupils show that they have a good

understanding of their own targets and find the teachers' comments on their work useful.

12. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught. Approaches to reading and writing are very clear and well implemented. In Years 5 and 6, for example, good use is made of opportunities to enhance writing in science. Intervention strategies strengthen the skills of those pupils who need some additional help. Numeracy skills are well taught and practised in contexts which allow pupils to solve problems. In assembly pupils were asked to mentally calculate how much more they needed to raise to reach the target for the school's 'readathon' charity contribution.
13. The pupils' behaviour is well managed. Although one or two pupils display occasional challenges to their teachers they are firmly, yet sensitively managed so that learning is not interrupted. Lessons are interesting and the pupils are fully engaged so that they are occupied in purposeful tasks that enhance their learning. Most tasks provide a good degree of challenge that is well matched to the needs of the pupils. The small number of pupils with special educational needs is well supported and tasks are carefully modified to provide the right amount of challenge. Teaching assistants give good support to those pupils who need additional adult help and often facilitate good learning opportunities for lower attaining groups within each class.
14. Interactive whiteboards are being used as a good focus for learning by the teachers. The use of laptops is also being well integrated into learning in many subjects, so that, for example, Year 5 and 6 pupils were able to use simple models of the effect of exercise on the heart as part of a science lesson.
15. Although the school is without the leadership of a headteacher, there are shared high expectations among the teachers and many common approaches that give the teaching and learning a coherence. This is a significant factor in the good achievement of the pupils.

**Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 18 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	14	0	0	0	0

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

**The curriculum**

The curriculum is broad and interesting. There are good opportunities for enrichment. The accommodation and resources are good.

**Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils' literacy skills are used and developed effectively across the curriculum.
- ICT is playing an increasingly effective role in the curriculum

**Commentary**

16. The curriculum planning makes good use of national guidance to provide the pupils with an interesting curriculum that motivates and interests them. Although much of the long term planning has been completed relatively recently, it is being thoroughly implemented to provide the pupils with demanding tasks and is utilising a range of resources, including ICT, to ensure that topics and themes are studied in the depth that is expected. Particularly good use is made of the curriculum to provide the pupils with opportunities to extend and enhance their literacy skills either through reading exciting texts in history or writing chronological reports in science.
17. The curriculum for the youngest children is well planned and makes good use of the available resources. For example, they used laptop computers to create pictures of sea creatures and some children wrote words and simple sentences using a lower case keyboard. The nursery nurse nurtures the pupils and develops their play through careful questioning and conversation.
18. Currently, there are far fewer pupils with special educational needs than in recent years. Nevertheless, arrangements are well managed. Pupils who are causing the teachers a slight concern are also identified and, even though they do not have special educational needs, an individual education plan is drawn up. This allows the school to provide for each child's particular need and ensure they make the progress they should.
19. The school provides a good range of opportunities for the pupils. During the inspection almost half of the pupils attended football training. Pupils also attend art club which supplements the art curriculum and gives pupils the opportunity to, for example, sculpt three dimensional self portraits in clay. Parents were particularly pleased to that their children had the opportunity to try sailing.
20. The accommodation is attractive and displays of the pupils' work aligned with improvement targets provide positive conditions for learning. The improved ICT resources have opened a wide range of opportunities for both teaching and learning that are being exploited by the teachers. The library provides a satisfactory range of books and there is good outdoor space for games and physical education.

### **Care, guidance and support**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school's arrangements for ensuring health and safety are good
- Relationships between children and adults are very good
- The school has good induction arrangements for pupils
- Child protection procedures are secure

### **Commentary**

21. All members of staff are very approachable, caring and committed to the children in their charge. They consistently demonstrate a very good knowledge of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures. As a result, the school provides effective care for its children. Supervision

at breaks and lunchtimes is alert and vigilant. Arrangements for first aid and dealing with minor injuries are very good.

22. Every child has a very good and trusting relationship with one or more adult in the school. The school council has been very effective in providing a forum for pupils to express their views, share their ideas and to have input into the day-to-day running of the school. The teachers clearly listen to the pupils and value their opinions. The class councils, offers all pupils very good opportunities to have their say and this is valued by the pupils.
23. The school's child protection procedures are fully understood by all members of staff. The governing body and acting headteacher take their health and safety responsibilities very seriously. All the required checks and inspections, including comprehensive risk assessments, are regularly carried out and properly recorded.
24. Children with special educational needs are supported very well across the school, particularly by the teaching assistants. This has a positive impact on the standards they achieve. Teachers are now keeping comprehensive assessment and tracking records of the progress of groups and individual pupils. Although these developments are relatively recent, the information which is available is being used to direct support and help the pupils to improve.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The majority of parents hold the school in high regard.
- Most parents support their children's learning well.
- The school provides very good information for parents.

### **Commentary**

25. The school has good and productive links with parents. The parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting were pleased with most aspects of the school and hold the school in high regard. The acting headteacher and staff are approachable and welcoming to parents. Parents support their children's education at home, for example with homework and the school often responds to requests for further information. Overall, there is good support for home reading and homework. The parents' association is very well supported and has raised considerable funds for the school.
26. The school provides very useful information about all aspects of school life. The school prospectus is attractive and informative. The governors hold an annual meeting with parents and publish a comprehensive annual report. However, the latest report has a minor omission. The parents receive very good information in the form of weekly newsletters and regular letters about events and activities. The school is developing its own website in collaboration with Great Casterton CE Primary School as they move towards federation.

27. The teachers provide parents with an informative annual progress report that clearly state the progress their children are making and set targets for future improvement. They are offered the opportunity to attend appropriate consultation evenings each year but parents report the teachers are very willing to discuss their child's progress at anytime should they have a concern.
28. The school uses the community well. Pupils are taken on trips and are exposed to wide range of visitors that enrich the curriculum and support their personal development. There are strong links with the local church. The very close links with the local playgroup help the very young children to settle down quickly into their new school environment. Good relationships with the main receiving secondary school ensure pupils have a smooth transition to the next stage of their education.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership, management and governance are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The leadership of teaching is good
- The monitoring and evaluation to inform improvement planning is not sharp enough
- Plans for federation are advancing effectively

### **Commentary**

29. The senior teacher is currently acting headteacher (jointly with the senior teacher at Great Casterton CE Primary School) with the support of an associate headteacher from the local education authority. This interim arrangement is providing secure leadership for the school until a new headteacher is appointed to lead the federation of the two schools.
30. In the period since the school was last inspected there has been a complete change of teaching staff. A number of improvement activities have taken place relatively recently. In response to the issues identified in the last inspection, report time is well used in Years 1 and 2, standards in writing have improved and the pupils now have good opportunities for spiritual development. These improvements have resulted from the good leadership of the teaching and the work of individual teachers. Although the school now has a long term strategic plan devised for both partner schools, it does not draw sufficiently on the evaluation of the monitoring of teaching, the scrutiny of the children's work or the analysis of pupils' performance to provide an improvement strategy that is matched to the needs of each school in the partnership. The broad brush strokes of the Partnership Development Plan do not provide a well focused outline for further improvement. In addition, the action plans created by co-ordinators do not work in harmony with the long term plan.
31. The co-ordinators are satisfactorily managing the individual subjects of the curriculum. In the core areas of the curriculum much monitoring is undertaken but in too few instances is sufficient consideration given to the impact of the teaching on the pupils' progress. Similarly, when checking the pupils' work, not enough consideration is given to whether pupils are doing well enough, reaching the levels they should or establishing clear targets for improvement. Evaluations such as, 'progress is fine' do not provide the detail and clarity needed for continuing improvement. In other aspects such as

assessment 'next steps' have been identified but these are not influencing the Partnership Development Plan. Nevertheless, the teachers have, in a relatively short time, developed the professional trust and team ethos to welcome the views of colleagues about their teaching and there is a shared determination to improve further.

32. Through training the governors have established a better understanding of performance data that allows them to challenge as well as support the school. Governors are very clear that they wish to see every child 'adding value' as they move through the school but currently the school's own analysis of performance has not been established for long enough to provide the detail they need to check, at frequent intervals, that this is the case. Plans for the federation with Great Casterton CE Primary School are now at an advanced stage. A joint committee of the governing bodies of both schools has developed the structures and procedures that will allow them to formally function in partnership. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities fully except in regard to their annual report which omits details of targets for test results.

### ***Financial information***

#### ***Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	253 051
Total expenditure	250 072
Expenditure per pupil	4167

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	18 137
Balance carried forward to the next	2 989

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

### **AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

Provision for the Foundation Stage is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is of good
- The adults know their children well and provide good care for personal welfare and guidance for academic development.

#### **Commentary**

33. The six children in the Foundation Stage benefit from a good balance of learning alongside the pupils in Years 1 and 2 and working as a discrete group with the nursery nurse. The children's attainment on entry is broadly average but the good link with the on-site playgroup ensures that the transition to school is very smooth. They, therefore, make rapid progress. Most of the children are well on course to achieve the early learning goals. A few children are already exceeding them, for example, in mathematics and in the development of their personal and social skills.
34. The teaching is of good quality. The teaching of numeracy has some very good features, for instance, in its impact on the development of early number recognition and the concept of "more" or "less". The children respond very positively to the well managed, interesting range of activities that provide a well balanced programme of learning in the six areas identified for this stage. The children's progress is tracked carefully so that the level at which they work becomes progressively more challenging. At the same time, the adults are very vigilant of all aspects of the children's welfare and safety.
35. The **personal, social and emotional development** of the children provides a very sound base for their learning. The classroom provides a well organised, stimulating environment. The children have a clear understanding of the routines, which ensure everyone has access to a variety of materials and equipment. The children understand that, for example, when they are sharing a "big book", they listen to what others say and take turns to respond. Two children engaged in an activity involving plastic animals and a mermaid in the water tray were careful to ensure that each child took its turn. Photographic evidence of children in a convoy of wheeled vehicles shows them co-operating in pairs and taking care not to bump into each other.
36. The development of **communication, language and literacy** skills is central to all other activities. The children make good, and in some cases very good, progress because the adults engage very actively with them, for example, during role play activities. As they shared a story the level of discussion was lively. Encouraged by the nursery nurse, the children made interesting suggestions about what a trident might be. One child offered; "It is the name of a rocket and it is the fork the King is holding." The children learn their sounds well. Displays in the classroom reinforce the regular direct teaching. A visit to the local church prompted a display about familiar words beginning with "ch". As they read the big books aloud as a group, the less confident readers actively join in with those who have more advanced reading skills. All the children

understand that writing carries meaning. One or two are still making marks to represent writing but are beginning to write the occasional recognisable letter. Other children confidently write whole sentences, for example, to provide captions for their drawings. They achieve well to produce phonetically feasible spellings. The progress of all the children towards achieving the levels identified for this stage is good.

37. The classroom environment provides a high level of stimuli for the **mathematical development** of the children. The numerals 1 to 20 are attractively represented in a variety of ways and can be referred to by the children as they work. Rhymes and songs are well used to reinforce number. Prominence is given to displaying shapes, for example, through construction materials. This enables the children to become familiar with the names of basic two and three dimensional shapes and to recognise them in the environment. A few children can record addition and subtraction of numbers. All the children are making good progress to link numerals with defined quantities. Careful assessments of their mathematical tasks move the children on securely to reach or even exceed the desired goals.
38. The children are alert and developing a good **knowledge and understanding of the world** around them. They have marvelled about how a butterfly develops. Inspired by this they have produced very colourful paintings of butterflies and caterpillars and read *The Hungry Caterpillar*. They enjoy building with blocks and other construction materials. Two children spent time in a role play corner pretending to be architects engaged in a building project. They develop their understanding of other cultures through learning about Diwali and the special rituals associated with it. The computers are well used. The children know that the mouse can change images on the screen. The activities are interesting, varied and challenge the children to observe the world and wonder at its beauty.
39. The children's **physical development** is carefully nurtured. They are encouraged to take responsibility for managing their clothing for lessons in physical education or when removing or replacing coats and aprons. They increasingly hold pencils and brushes with a comfortable grip so that they can control their writing, drawing and painting implements. Some children are painstakingly careful as they use modelling materials; others are well supported to handle small and large equipment appropriately. They are energetic as they undertake playground activities where they can run around, jump and climb. Overall, their physical skills are well in line with the early learning goals.
40. **Creative development** is well fostered by the skilful use of story and role play where the children through talking together can exercise their imagination. They have used natural materials from the local environment to create attract attractive weavings between the struts of a school fence. Their paintings are confident, large and full of bold colour. They enjoy singing, using percussion instruments and playing sound games with the use of a tape recorder.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision for English is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is good; as a result the pupils make good progress
- The pupils are very well motivated to develop their literacy skills

## Commentary

- Standards are average in reading and writing by the end of Year 2. By the end of Year 6 standards in writing are average but in reading they are above average. The picture seen during the inspection is better than the one reflected in the test results. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress as a result of careful planning that takes good account of the pupils' individual needs. The programme for promoting literacy skills is delivered through a good balance of speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Careful planning ensures that all these skills are practised and extended through their application in other subjects of the curriculum. For example, biographical and autobiographical forms of writing are practised through work in history.
- The pupils in Year 2 are confidently reading a range of stories and also non-fiction text, for example, information about creatures in the natural world. There are valuable opportunities for reading in history and science lessons where use of the Internet is encouraged in order to access information. Reading skills are consistently promoted through very well focused phonic practice. The pupils often read together from large print class books. Their reading is expressive and shows that they understand why certain words or phrases are printed in a different font from the body of the text. The pupils concentrate well and clearly enjoy reading.
- Older pupils read fluently. By the end of Year 6 a good proportion have above average reading skills, sufficient to read texts that are more demanding and require the pupils to draw inferences. The pupils are very well taught to comment upon different types of text. For example, a class of older pupils showed a very good understanding of the features of a persuasive text on the subject of healthy eating. Some pupils are becoming adept at skimming text and selecting relevant information with appropriate rapidity. This is because the computers are used regularly for accessing and recording information, often in note form. In discussion, some readers expressed regret that the range of fiction available in school is too limited to suit their developing tastes.
- By the end of Year 2, the pupils are achieving well in writing. Standards are overall average but the trend for improvement is well established. The pupils respond well and make an effort to write in an interesting way because the topics for writing fire their imagination. A good example was seen when the pupils had to imagine what happened as a wolf hid around a corner awaiting the arrival of an unseen and unsuspecting boy. The pupils are developing their awareness of how connective words can be used to extend sentences. They are also developing confidence to use a wider range of punctuation, including speech marks when they include dialogue. Handwriting skills are consistently taught. Most pupils can join their letters but some do not consistently practise these skills then they write stories. Common words are generally appropriately spelt and more able writers are using their spelling banks to introduce more complex words into their writing.
- By the end of Year 6 the pupils are making good progress in developing their writing skills. They have a growing awareness of the quality of language, for example, to create effective story settings. They are improving their understanding of how good narrative is structured. They are now ready to experience more regular opportunities to write at greater length to demonstrate their grasp of narrative techniques. They are

beginning to understand how authors such as Roald Dahl achieve their effects through the effective use of figurative language. Writing tasks are well structured for lower ability writers. Written comments about their writing are often informative. All the pupils are aware of their writing targets and understand when they have achieved them.

46. The teaching of English is good throughout the school. There are also some very good features such as the very purposeful use of literature to raise the pupils' awareness of different types of writing and the quality of language. In the younger classes, the teachers and pupils often construct a piece of writing together, thereby providing a clear model for the pupils' own writing. The pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 respond well to the challenges and expectations of their teachers and to the additional support they receive. The teachers are skilful at engendering an interest in literature and raising the pupils' critical awareness of different ways of writing.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

47. This is a particularly effective feature of the teaching. The pupils are strongly encouraged to read a wide range of texts, for example, to support work in history. They thus acquire an understanding of how language fits different purposes. During a history topic on World War II the pupils in Years 3 and 4 read letters from evacuees, newspaper articles, documents and fiction relating to the 1940s. They undertake regular writing tasks within other subjects in order to practise, for example, the techniques of flashback, argument, persuasive and empathetic writing. Much valuable discussion takes place in many lessons including, for example, science and religious education. This helps pupils to clarify their ideas and to extend their vocabulary.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision for mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The teaching is good throughout the school and pupils are making good progress
- Pupils have good opportunities to use and apply the skills they learn

### **Commentary**

48. Standards are broadly average at the end of both Year 2 and 6 and similar to those at the time of the last inspection, although they have fallen to well below average in the intervening period. Analysis of last years results at the end of Year 6 shows that most pupils made satisfactory progress between Year 2 and Year 6 although they gained most in Years 5 and 6. For some, particularly lower attaining pupils, progress was slow and not enough was achieved. However, with entirely new teaching staff in the last two years provision has changed and evidence from lessons and scrutiny of the pupils' work shows the pupils, of all abilities, to be achieving well.
49. The teaching is good and effective. The teachers plan their lessons in considerable detail and manage the pupils confidently so that they make full use of the time available. In Years 1 and 2 the teacher modifies tasks well for the different ages and abilities. The teaching assistant provides good support for the small number of pupils with special educational needs ensuring full access to learning. In a lesson on two and three dimensional shapes the teacher led a good introductory discussion focusing on

the properties of shape in which the pupils made good gains in their mathematical vocabulary. Good use of resources and challenging practical tasks enhanced the pupils' knowledge and enabled Year 2 pupils increase their understanding of symmetry.

50. In Years 3 and 4 a very good lesson on time captivated the pupils because they were engaged by a range of teaching styles and set challenging tasks based on real travel timetables. The pupils responded enthusiastically and concentrated fully resulting in very good learning and progress. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils were similarly productive because their work on percentages provided them with interesting problems to work out costs and savings on goods offered at discount prices in sales. The most able were extended by working out the value added tax on a range of items.
51. The pupils have targets which are prominent in their work and they keep a record of their own progress. Work is generally well presented and thoughtfully marked often with comments that aid improvement although these could, in some instances, be clearer about what the pupil needs to do next. The introduction of more frequent testing is already providing a clear picture of how well the pupils are progressing.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. The pupils are given an appropriate range of opportunities to use and apply their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. For example, younger pupils sing counting rhymes in music and older pupils use graphs and charts in science.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision for science is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The pupils achieve well in Years 5 and 6
- The skills of scientific investigation are not taught systematically in Years 1 to 4

#### **Commentary**

53. The scrutiny of the pupils' work shows that they are making satisfactory progress overall but that the rate of progress increases in Years 5 and 6 when they achieve well. This is confirmed by the one lesson observed in Years 5 and 6 when the pupils made good gains in their knowledge of the factors that affect pulse rates and were given a good opportunity to plan how they would record their observations, present results and explain what they found out. In this lesson the teacher made good use of a computer based model of the heart.
54. The pupils' work in Year 6 contains a good range of evidence that they are developing their investigative skills well. When investigating which material is best for sound proofing the pupils made well informed predictions and drew sensible conclusions. They used diagrams to illustrate their findings when separating liquids and solids and interpreted graphs showing how the temperature of water increases as it is heated. A strong feature of the teaching, very evident in the pupils' work, is the very good opportunities provided for the pupils to practise and extend their writing for different purposes.

55. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils have completed an appropriate range of work, but on occasions worksheets are used for recording rather than the pupils devising their own methods of recording. While the pupils are gaining a secure knowledge of the content of the topics covered, few charts and graphs are used and pupils rarely provide explanations of data or results. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils have been introduced to the conventions of a fair test but this has not been built on effectively. A new rolling programme of science themes has been introduced to give greater clarity to the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 but at the present time not enough consideration is being given introducing and developing the pupils' investigative skills.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The school has good resources which are used well

### **Commentary**

56. The pupils use ICT competently and to the level expected by the end of both Year 2 and Year 6. The school has in the last year acquired a set of laptops that can be moved from class to class and used in lessons. The teachers are planning more and more opportunities for the pupils to use computers. The pupils are being taught new ICT skills through a planned programme of work. For example, in Years 1 and 2 the pupils were taught how to construct a pictogram; they have also learned how to make labels using both words and pictures. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils have learned how to use a range of tools in painting software. The oldest pupils are able to create simple control systems that, for example, turn on traffic lights in the correct sequence. They have also looked at how other control systems work, for example, automatic doors.
57. In the one lesson observed in Years 1 and 2 the teacher used the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate how ICT can be used to collect and display information. Confident use of the technology, good planning and support for the pupils ensured they achieved well and extended their ICT skills.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

58. The teachers are making increasing use of ICT both in their teaching and in the pupils' learning. The interactive whiteboards are used effectively, for example, to teach equivalence in mathematics and to highlight how rhyming couplet is constructed in English. The laptop computers are used well in lessons for word processing, for example in Years 3 and 4 the pupils have written kennings in the style of the Vikings and in Years 5 and 6 the pupils have constructed their own timelines in history.

## **HUMANITIES**

59. It was only possible to observe one lesson in history but none in geography. Two religious education lessons were seen. The pupils' recorded work and the teachers' planning was scrutinised. In Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 it was also possible to evaluate the work displayed in the classroom.

60. In **geography**, they have studied features of the local area and compared them with the environment of the Isle of Struay. They are beginning to appreciate climatic differences in different parts of the world. A range of postcards from other countries provide an interesting resource for their observations. The pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 are achieving well and extending their skills to evaluate local features such as traffic, the layout of their village, how people travel to school. A wall display of their work reflects a good grasp of coastal features including the way erosion impacts upon the coastline. They have used news items such as the tsunami event to learn about unusual happenings around the world. They are becoming familiar with a range of maps and methods for collecting, recording and analysing data. Work in geography has provided good opportunities for recording factual information through note-taking, labelling maps and diagrams and descriptive writing.
61. In **history**, the younger pupils acquire a satisfactory understanding of how the past is represented through, for example, toys and items used in the home. They know that Florence Nightingale lived in the past and that life was rather different at that time. A visit to Burghley House has enhanced the older pupils' understanding of life during the Tudor period. They recognise the very different lives of rich and poor people. They have enriched their own cultural understanding through a study of the Vikings and the recognition that they have left a legacy in the local area. Pupils recognise local place names which derive from the time of the Vikings. During the inspection, the pupils in Years 3 and 4 were very absorbed in learning about the Blitz and the plight of evacuees.
62. Lessons are well prepared and include interesting activities. The pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, had a lively recollection of their discussion with a visitor who had lived through World War II. The teachers are very alert to acquiring interesting materials such as photographs and artefacts to bring the learning alive. In one lesson, the use of drama allowed pupils effectively to recreate the feelings and impressions of the evacuees. Some of the planning is now ripe for review to fully ensure progression in the pupils' learning and to provide clear objectives against which it can be assessed.
63. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils recognise that the Bible has a special significance for Christians and the Torah for Jews. Following recent visits to the local church the pupils have recorded information about the stained glass windows, the decorated lectern and other features of the building. The pupils have heard stories from the Bible and understand that Christmas and Easter are significant times in the church's year. However, some worksheet based tasks they are set are rather trivial and do not exploit good opportunities for the pupils to develop their writing skills.
64. The pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 have explored a variety of topics and at times, standards of work are above average. This was evident when pupils were comparing their own concept of the attributes of a good friend with those of Jesus' disciples. One pupil, after careful thought, said that she felt that she had to make compromises in the interest of friendship. The pupils recognise some of the Christian symbols such as the cross, the fish and the significance of elements of the Christmas orange. These older pupils have produced a satisfactory range of work about aspects of Islam and Sikhism. This has made a good contribution to their cultural development and to developing respect for the beliefs of others.
65. The planning of work is developing well but is not yet sufficiently coherent across the school. The teachers are aware of the need to ensure that new learning builds on previous knowledge so that the pupils' understanding develops progressively. The

recording and presentation of work in the pupils' books is not yet consistent across the school but good attention is given to devising interesting activities supported by resources that capture the pupils' interest. As a result, the pupils listen well and the quality of discussion is good, reflecting the good relationships that underpin the teaching and stimulate the pupils to want to learn.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

66. No art and design, design and technology or physical education lessons were seen during the inspection. Displays and collections of the pupils' work in art and design and design and technology were scrutinised. Parts of three music lessons were observed. The school has good facilities for **physical education** and these are used in a good range of extra curricular opportunities which the school hopes to extend further through federation.
67. The **art and design** work on display is of the quality and standard expected by Years 2 and 6. In Year 2 the pupils have used a wide range of materials to weave creating some interesting effects, for example where they have woven twigs. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils have used computer software to create interesting patterns but in their sketch books they have not used a wide enough range of media to explore pattern, colour and texture. In Year 5 and 6 the pupils have created interesting paper sculptures in the style of the ancient Greeks. Work in lessons is extend by the opportunities provided at the after school art club.
68. In **design and technology** in Years 1 and 2 the pupils have planned and made finger puppets. Their designs are displayed alongside their work showing the stages the pupils went through to complete their products. In the work of the pupils in Years 5 and 6 similar processes have been followed developed with greater sophistication; their sketches and diagrams are more detailed and their annotations evaluate both methods and the suitability of materials. They have designed and made a range of interesting and imaginative hats of a good standard.
69. **Music** is well taught by a specialist teacher. In addition to the standard class lessons, she teaches the recorder to whole classes and leads the whole school in a weekly singing practice. This enriches the pupils' cultural and creative experiences.
70. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 participate enthusiastically in singing and in leading others by pointing confidently to the pictorial score. The pupils with special educational needs participate well and achieve the objective of the lessons successfully. In addition, there are good opportunities to create different sounds on untuned percussion instruments such as tambours, triangles, guiros and others. The lesson was conducted at a brisk pace so that the pupils behaved well and therefore the objectives of the lesson were met.
71. The pupils in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 apply earlier skills well to recognise the features of different types of music. In a lesson seen they were quick to point out the variations in pitch and dynamics in two songs about "Cats" and "Mice". They are accustomed to listening carefully and the oldest pupils, therefore, lose no time when they are invited to accompany the songs with a range of instruments to create a class performance.
72. The lessons are well planned and have a well-defined structure. The teacher is skilful at building on earlier learning, for example, about pitch, dynamics and duration. This was evident when pupils in Years 3 and 4 were asked to describe music representing

different animals. The teacher has high expectations of the pupils, expects them to behave well and to handle the instruments with care. They make good progress because the teacher evaluates their responses to the tasks in line with agreed criteria.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

73. The school is involved in the healthy eating lifestyle programme (HELP). This involves promoting the pupils' personal development through, for example, special person certificates or expressing emotions during a 'big draw' event. In one PSHE seen during the inspection the oldest pupils were following up an earlier lesson on the effects of drug abuse and addiction. The pupils contributed very maturely to the discussion and showed a good understanding of the detrimental effect of tobacco, alcohol, drugs and solvents on the human body.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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