

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **THORPE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Netherton, Peterborough

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110774

Headteacher: Mrs C. Dyehouse

Reporting inspector: Mrs O.M.Cooper  
10859

Dates of inspection: 10 – 13 September 2001

Inspection number: 193034

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Atherstone Avenue  
Netherton  
Peterborough  
Cambridgeshire

Postcode: PE3 9UG

Telephone number: 01733 264340

Fax number: 01733 267135

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr D. Mucklin

Date of previous inspection: 17 – 21 March 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
10859	Mrs O. M. Cooper	Registered inspector	Art and design	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
19365	Mr G. B. Stockley	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
18370	Mr J.K. Johnson	Team inspector	English Geography	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
25787	Mr E.S. Morris	Team inspector	Science Music Physical education Special educational needs	

21245	Mr W.A. Lowe	Team inspector	Mathematics Religious education Equal opportunities English as an additional language	
17685	Ms L. Spooner	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology History Areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services

Strathblane House  
Ashfield Road  
Cheadle  
Stockport  
SK8 1BB

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33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Thorpe Primary is a very large community school with 417 pupils in the main school and a further 52 part-time pupils attending the nursery. Its annual intake of children represents a very broad social and cultural mix, with almost half living beyond the immediate locality. The proportion of pupils from families in which English is not the first language is very high and increasing. The principal non-English first languages spoken are Punjabi, Gujarati, Chinese and Bengali. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is broadly average and the proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is above average. Attainment in both language and number among children on entry to the school is below average. There has been a high turnover of staff in the last two years with 13 teachers leaving and 14 being appointed. The school accommodates students undertaking initial teacher training.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is an effective school that has a number of very good features and is now providing a good education for all its pupils. Overall standards are average by the time pupils transfer to high school. This is because the school is very well led and managed, the teaching is good, the pupils are happy, well cared for in attractive, stimulating surroundings and have good attitudes towards school. The school gives satisfactory value for money when the high income per pupil is taken into consideration.

#### **What the school does well**

- The school's management provides very clear educational direction, concentrating on standards.
- The teaching is good.
- Pupils have good attitudes to their work.
- Pupils are very well cared for.
- Children make a good start to their school life in the nursery and reception classes.
- The curriculum provides a rich, wide range of experiences and opportunities for learning.

#### **What could be improved**

- Standards in English in Years 1 and 2, and in writing in English in Years 3 to 6.
- Standards in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6.
- The range and number of books in the school library.
- The accommodation, to give infant pupils better access to some learning resources.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.*

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school has made satisfactory improvement since it was last inspected in March 1997. The rate of improvement has been hindered by the four changes of headteacher and deputy headteacher. Standards have risen in line with the national trend and satisfactory progress has been made in overcoming the points for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. However, the most notable improvement in some issues has been in the last year since the headteacher and her deputy took up their posts. In particular, the school has improved its system of assessment and has improved teaching. Higher attaining pupils are now sufficiently challenged and standards in design and technology have risen and are average. Standards in information and communication technology are still below average by the end of Year 6. The funding for the professional development of teachers, to provide support for pupils from ethnic minority groups and for the implementation of performance management has been used very effectively and has been beneficial in the drive to raise standards. The school has the commitment and capacity for further improvement.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	C	D	D
Mathematics	E	B	D	E
Science	D	C	D	D

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Children in the nursery and reception classes (the Foundation Stage) make good progress and, by the end of the year in a reception class, many achieve the Early Learning Goals in number, and in their physical, creative and personal development. In language and knowledge of the world, progress is good but because of the low level of skills and knowledge on entry, fewer children achieve the Early Learning Goals and standards are below average.

The results of national tests in 2000 at the end of Year 2 were well below the national average in reading and average in writing. In mathematics, the results were average. Much effort has been put into raising standards in the last year, with improvement evident in the test results in mathematics in 2001, but it will take longer for the results in reading and writing to reflect the improvement. Pupils are now achieving well in Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, overall standards are average. Standards of the current Year 2 pupils' work are below average in reading and speaking and listening, but are average in writing, mathematics and science. Standards are average in all other subjects except for religious education where they are above average.

The results of national tests taken at the end of Year 6 in 2001 showed improvement over the 2000 results in English, mathematics and science, both for the nationally expected level 4 and the higher level 5. The improvement in all three subjects in the last year has been greater than the national trend in recent years. The current standards of Year 6 pupils' work are average and their achievement is good, as there is a high proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs in this year group. Standards are average in all subjects except for information and communication technology where they are below average. In religious education standards are above average.

Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress.

The school was successful in meeting its targets for English and science in 2001, but not in mathematics. The targets for 2002 are challenging.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	<b>Good.</b> Most pupils enjoy coming to school and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	<b>Good.</b> Behaviour in lessons, at play and in the dining hall is good. There is a high level of racial harmony.

Personal development and relationships	<b>Good.</b> Pupils take on responsibility in a mature manner and their personal qualities are well developed. Pupils' relationships with each other and with members of staff are good.
Attendance	<b>Satisfactory.</b> Broadly average, although unauthorised absence is above average.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.*

The quality of the teaching and pupils' learning is good overall and has improved since the previous inspection. The teaching meets the learning needs of all pupils well. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and of pupils with English as an additional language is also good. The strengths of the teaching are in the quality of lesson planning, teachers' expectations, the use of assessment to match tasks closely to the learning needs of individuals, and the use of resources and teaching assistants. There is a weakness in the level of knowledge and confidence in teaching information and communication technology amongst the staff. The teaching of literacy is satisfactory and is affected by the shortage of books. The teaching of numeracy is good throughout the school. The teaching of religious education is good in Years 1 and 2, and is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. Teaching is good overall in all other subjects except for art and design and geography where it is satisfactory. In the unsatisfactory lesson seen there were weaknesses in class control and a high noise level which hindered learning for a significant number of the pupils.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	<b>Good.</b> The curriculum provides a rich and wide range of opportunities for learning, is relevant to the needs of all pupils and meets statutory requirements. Extra-curricular provision is good and links with local high schools are very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	<b>Good.</b> Pupils have individual or group education plans, and the monitoring of their progress towards the targets is very good.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	<b>Good.</b> The provision is well co-ordinated and teaching assistants are effectively deployed to support pupils with their learning.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	<b>Very good overall.</b> Provision for the development of pupils' personal qualities is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is good and for their moral and social development very good.

How well the school cares for its pupils	<b>Very good.</b> The school looks after its pupils very well. There are good procedures for child protection and the school takes all reasonable steps to ensure the pupils' welfare and safety. Arrangements for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress are very good. Behaviour and attendance are monitored well and action taken where necessary.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	<b>Good.</b> The school has a good working partnership with parents.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	<b>Very good overall.</b> The headteacher and her deputy provide strong leadership, example and clear direction for the school. Responsibilities are delegated effectively and curriculum managers influence the development of subjects and aspects of the school through their action plans.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	<b>Very well.</b> They are involved very effectively in the daily work of the school and in its financial management. Governors have a very clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They fulfil all their statutory requirements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	<b>Very good.</b> Assessment data and reviews are used well to track pupils' progress, to compare the school's performance with other schools, to identify areas for improvement, and to take appropriate action to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Finances are managed efficiently with due regard for the established principles of best value. There are insufficient books in the library and this adversely affects standards in literacy. Staffing is adequate, with a good number of teaching assistants who are deployed well. The accommodation is satisfactory, but the separate buildings make it difficult for Year 1 and 2 pupils to develop independence in accessing resources in the junior building.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like coming to school.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• The children are expected to work hard.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in setting homework.</li> <li>• Information on their child's progress.</li> <li>• The school's partnership with parents.</li> <li>• The range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the parents' positive views. Consistency in setting homework has been an issue, but all parents have been informed of the arrangements for this year by letter. The information on their child's progress, contained in reports to parents, could be more helpful. The school's partnership with parents is good and the range of activities outside lessons is also good, although mainly confined to pupils in Years 3 to 6, with little for pupils in Years 1 and 2.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

##### ***Standards achieved by children in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes)***

1. Assessment of the children when they enter the nursery indicates a wide range of ability, but overall their attainment in literacy and numeracy is well below average. Children make good progress in the nursery, but at the end of the year approximately one in three pupils do not transfer to the reception classes in the school. These are often the more able children. On entry to the reception classes, the assessment results show overall attainment is below average in literacy and numeracy, with about half the children not having skills as well developed as expected for their age. Children again make good progress in the reception classes and achieve well. By the end of their time in reception most children are on course to achieve the Early Learning Goals in all aspects of learning except for communication, language and literacy and knowledge and understanding of the world. The children's attainment reflects the high proportion of children who speak English as an additional language and who do not have sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas. In knowledge and understanding of the world, whilst overall attainment is below average, the children make good progress in developing computer skills.

##### ***Results and achievements of pupils in Years 1 and 2***

2. The results of the year 2000 national tests at the end of Year 2 in reading were well below the national average and well below those of similar schools (on the basis of entitlement to a free school meal). Standards in reading have declined each year over the last four years, falling from above the national average in 1996 to well below average in 2000. Writing results tend to be better than reading and were average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. The mathematics results were below the national average and well below those of similar schools. The girls' results in reading tend to be better than those of the boys, but there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in writing and mathematics. The school has worked hard to raise standards in literacy and numeracy over the last year, with notable improvement in standards in mathematics shown in the 2001 test results. However, in reading and writing standards declined slightly, partly due to insufficient resources. Only one teacher had been in the school for longer than one year and, in the previous year pupils had also experienced different teachers working on a daily supply basis or short-term contracts, with insufficient knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy. This adversely affected the consistency of approach to the teaching and to continuity in pupils' learning. Even so, the proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected for their age in reading and mathematics showed a significant improvement in 2001, as those pupils capable of reaching higher levels were carefully targeted.
3. The standards of work of the current Year 2 pupils are better than those of the previous year and are broadly average overall. The assessments at the end of Year 1 indicate standards will rise at the end of Year 2 in 2002. Inspection findings show standards will remain below average in reading, and remain at average levels in writing and mathematics. Standards overall are below average in English because

speaking and listening skills are also below average because of the high proportion of pupils having English as an additional language. In mathematics and science standards are average. Given the below average attainment on entry to the reception classes and the very high proportion of pupils with English as an additional language, pupils achieve well. In all other subjects pupils achieve well, particularly in religious education where attainment exceeds the level expected by the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 2 because the teaching is consistently good.

### ***Results and achievements of pupils in Years 3 to 6***

4. The overall results of national tests in 2000 for Year 6 pupils were below the national average and were well below those of similar schools. In English, mathematics and science standards were below the national average and below the average for similar schools. In relation to their starting points at the beginning of Year 3, these Year 6 pupils underachieved, particularly in English and mathematics. This underachievement reflects the lack of direction, as the school had been without a permanent headteacher for over a year and there had been a significant turnover of senior management staff. The appointment of a new headteacher and a deputy headteacher in September 2000 and their focus on improving teaching and raising attainment led to improved results in all three subjects in 2001. In English the results improved by 9 percentage points, in mathematics by 14 percentage points and in science by 10 percentage points. The proportion of pupils exceeding the level expected by the end of Year 6 also increased in these three subjects. These results show good improvement and may well take overall attainment above the national average, but the national averages for 2001 are not available as yet. In relation to their starting points in Year 3, these pupils achieved satisfactorily, and many of those with English as an additional language achieved well. Over the last five years the results have fluctuated from year to year, but the overall trend has been upwards at the same rate as the national trend. Despite this good improvement in 2001, the school did not meet the target set by the governors in mathematics, but it did in English and science. Two pupils predicted to reach the expected level in mathematics left the school during Year 5, after targets were set, and this affected the overall results. All pupils predicted to exceed the expected level in English and mathematics in 2001 were successful.
5. Over the three-year period 1998-2000, the test results showed the performance of boys in the school was better than that of boys nationally, whilst the girls' performance was below girls nationally. The 2001 results show action taken in the last year has had some success. The girls' results in English and mathematics were better than those of the boys, but in science there was no difference. The girls with English as an additional language performed better than the boys in writing, but the boys performed better in the reading tests. Inspection findings show no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls in lessons as individual pupils are now being tracked more effectively and individual targets for improvement set.
6. Inspection findings show standards among the current Year 6 pupils are broadly average in speaking and listening, reading, writing, mathematics and science. There is a high proportion (55 per cent) of pupils in the current Year 6 who are on the school's register of special educational needs and receiving additional support. When this is taken into consideration, pupils are achieving well in most subjects. Standards are average in all subjects except information and communication technology where they are below average. In religious education standards rise

above those expected by the end of Year 6. Standards are now similar to those found at the time of the previous inspection after the improvement in the last year.

### ***Standards in English, mathematics and science***

7. In Years 1 and 2 pupils make slower progress than expected in developing their speaking and listening skills, reflecting the high proportion of pupils with English as a second language and their limited vocabulary. There are many opportunities for speaking and listening during literacy hours and by Year 6 standards are average, with a large majority of pupils able to express themselves clearly and confidently. However, pupils' skills in speaking could be better. For example, the way in which teachers sometimes pose questions has some effect on pupils' progress, as they often ask questions requiring one-word answers. The teaching methods in occasional lessons, where the class is taught as a whole group, give pupils too few opportunities to contribute, or work in small groups to discuss their ideas and opinions. Listening skills are better; most pupils listen with interest to their teachers and respond appropriately to questions.
8. By the end of Year 2, a significant majority of pupils can read satisfactorily, including a good number of those with English as an additional language, but a lack of good quality resources is hindering pupils' progress. By Year 6, most pupils are fluent, accurate and independent readers and are reaching average standards or higher. They use dictionaries and a Thesaurus effectively and content and index pages to find information, although research skills do not progress as well as they should due to the poor library provision.
9. Writing has been a focus for improvement and is improving. By the end of Year 2, pupils write with correct grammar and simple punctuation in their stories. Handwriting improves steadily. Writing is average in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils develop their range of spelling strategies and benefit from having them as part of their homework. Pupils extend their literacy skills satisfactorily in other subjects, for example, when they record science experiments or write extended reports in history, geography or religious education.
10. In mathematics, pupils develop sound numerical knowledge and skills in Years 1 and 2. This is because of the effective teaching of the National Numeracy Strategy. Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory understanding of addition and subtraction of whole numbers and can apply this to money when shopping and giving change. They have some understanding of multiplication and division. They recognise and name simple shapes and begin to use standard measures accurately. Standards of work of the current Year 6 pupils are broadly average; they have a satisfactory understanding of place value, including decimal fractions, fractions and percentages. The pupils' mental arithmetic skills, data handling and their understanding of the metric system of measurement are satisfactory.
11. In science in Years 2 and 6, standards of work are average. Good emphasis is placed on practical work and the development of pupils' investigative and experimental skills and pupils enjoy the lessons. They acquire sound knowledge and understanding of life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes.

### ***Progress of pupils with special educational needs***

12. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and usually attain the standards that their teachers expect of them. Some attain the nationally expected levels in literacy and numeracy by the end of Year 6. Most achieve well in lessons and in working towards the targets in their individual education plans which are carefully tailored to their specific needs. They receive a high level of support from teaching assistants, which is usually of good quality and the very effective use of assessment means tasks are closely matched to their individual learning needs.

### ***Progress of pupils with English as an additional language***

13. Overall, pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress, and most achieve well. The high number of teaching assistants who are bilingual make a significant contribution to helping pupils settle into the school and in supporting parents who willingly enter into partnership with the school in helping pupils to learn English and to develop reading and numeracy skills. Progress is hampered for some pupils by prolonged absence. The school recognises this problem and negotiates on an individual basis with the families concerned in its attempts to improve attendance. The school tracks the progress of these pupils very well to ensure sufficient progress is being made and targets those who are falling behind.

### ***Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development***

14. Pupils throughout the school have good attitudes to learning. In lessons they listen well to the teacher and work with interest and enthusiasm. Pupils' opinions on a wide range of issues are sought through the class councils and their views are valued and acted upon. Some pupils lack confidence and teachers help them by developing their self-esteem.
15. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils know the rules relating to behaviour and in the main are polite and kind to each other. They have an opportunity to contribute to the behaviour policy when they discuss and agree class rules at the start of each year. Lunchtime in the dining room is a pleasant social occasion where pupils talk freely with a minimum level of adult supervision. Pupils move around the school sensibly and pupils from all cultural backgrounds play well together at break. They are respectful to teachers and other adults, often holding doors open as they pass through. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural difficulties are well managed in class and during breaks and their behaviour is not detrimental to their own learning or to that of their classmates. During the previous academic year there was one fixed-period exclusion for unacceptable behaviour. This pupil's behaviour and work improved subsequently.
16. Pupils' personal development is very good. They have a very good understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of the impact of their actions on others. They are proud of the responsibility given to them in tasks such as helping in the dining room and supervising younger pupils' play activities and they carry out these duties well. However, few examples were seen of pupils taking the initiative, particularly in planning and organising their own learning. Relationships throughout the school are good and this makes a significant contribution to its effectiveness.

17. Attendance is satisfactory. It is around the national average for primary schools and almost all pupils arrive in good time for the start of the school day. Registers are marked in accordance with the legal requirements and registration is completed quickly and efficiently, enabling lessons to begin promptly. Pupils respond politely to teachers and good use is made of registration periods to reinforce behaviour expectations.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. The quality of the teaching and pupils' learning is good and has improved since the previous inspection. The improvement has been most notable in the last year since rigorous monitoring procedures were introduced and teachers' expectations of pupils have been raised. A total of 81 lessons were seen. Of these, 69 per cent were good, including 15 per cent that were very good and a further 2 per cent that were excellent. Thirty per cent of lessons were satisfactory and one per cent was unsatisfactory.
19. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is consistently good and often very good and it is good overall throughout Years 1 to 6. The particular strengths of the teaching are in the planning, teachers' expectations, the quality and use of assessment, the management of pupils, the deployment of teaching assistants and the efficient use of resources, with the exception of computers in classrooms. The teaching assistants are well briefed and usually provide good support for pupils in their learning. Pupils learn effectively and enjoy opportunities for practical work, fieldwork and educational visits. Although there has been some improvement in the teaching of information and communication technology and in the resources, this still remains a weakness, with insufficient knowledge and confidence amongst staff to make full use of the computers available in classrooms. Further training has just begun for teachers and teaching assistants which is to last for two terms. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are not as well developed as they could be because teachers sometimes ask questions requiring 'one word' answers and occasionally do too much of the talking during lesson introductions.
20. Teaching and learning are consistently good in the nursery and reception classes, and often very good in the nursery where three out of five lessons were very good. In the reception classes three out of eight lessons were very good, including an example of excellent teaching. The teaching assistants play a very important role in the teaching and contribute much to the calm reassuring atmosphere which helps the children settle into school routines quickly and gives them the confidence to explore the rich and stimulating learning environment. The planning of daily activities relating to all areas of learning is a particular strength.
21. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good overall. However, the teaching of English is satisfactory. The headteacher found weaknesses in the teaching of the national strategy for literacy, in the quantity and range of books and the lack of reading records during her audit of the school, conducted on taking up the post. Changes in the way pupils are grouped in lessons have been implemented, which have been beneficial in raising standards by the end of Year 6. Training for teachers in the last year has concentrated on 'grammar for writing' and target setting and this training is continuing. The whole school approach to the teaching of reading has also been reviewed and a new reading scheme and records introduced, which are beginning to raise standards. Even with the improvement in the last year, the teaching of literacy is still a high priority for action in the school improvement plan as the school recognises further improvement is necessary. In occasional lessons with pupils in

Years 3 to 6, the teaching assistants tend to do too much of the written work for the pupils, which is then copied and this does not help the pupils to improve their writing or spelling skills. Lessons are planned well and support the teaching, which has improved over the last year, as shown in the monitoring records. Pupils know their personal targets for reading and writing and are aware of their own progress. Subjects such as history, science and religious education make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' literacy skills through discussion of their ideas and through their written work, but there is room for further improvement.

22. The national strategy for numeracy is taught well in most year groups, as the school benefits from having four 'leading mathematics teachers' as recognised by local education authorities. In Years 1, 2, 5 and 6, the teaching is consistently good. The teachers have a good understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and provide challenging activities during the introductory mental sessions and in written and practical tasks. The effectiveness of the teaching can be seen in the improvement in results in the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6 in 2001.
23. The science teaching is good in Years 1 to 6. Teachers have good control and discipline and lessons proceed at a good pace, which sustains pupils' interest. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, plan many practical tasks and can lead good discussions about scientific principles.
24. In the foundation subjects the teaching is good overall and particularly good in lessons seen in physical education, history, design and technology and music in Years 3 to 6, and in design and technology and history in Years 1 and 2. In religious education the teaching is good in Years 1 and 2, and is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In information and communication technology no class lessons were seen in Years 1 and 2. The teaching seen with Years 3 to 6 was good in two out of three lessons. However, teachers are more confident in teaching word processing and data handling skills than sensing, monitoring and controlling.
25. Teachers' lesson planning is of good quality and consistent throughout the year groups. Lesson plans are computer generated, but some teachers do not use information technology as effectively as they could, because they lack knowledge and confidence. Notes are made of pupils who do better or not as well as expected in lessons, so that further teaching, additional support, or more challenging tasks can be planned. This is effective in meeting the learning needs of most pupils. Written work is marked regularly and the quality of marking and presentation has been a focus in the last year. Whilst marking contains helpful comments, the presentation of pupils' work varies considerably, according to the individual teacher's expectations and is still not good enough in some year groups.
26. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are fully included in all lessons and mostly taught and supported well. Teachers are successful in matching their teaching styles and learning materials to pupils' needs. The good relationships between staff and pupils and the effectiveness of classroom support have a positive effect on pupils' learning. No pupils have been identified as gifted or talented.

## HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?

27. The school's curriculum is well planned and relevant to pupils' needs in that most of them achieve well in relation to their earlier attainment. It has improved since the last inspection because teachers are now clearer about what pupils are to learn and they plan effectively together to ensure key learning objectives are addressed. All National Curriculum subjects, religious education and areas of learning for children in the Foundation Stage are included and statutory requirements are met. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of well-planned visits to museums, local churches and field study centres, that support pupils' learning. Teachers also provide a good range of extra-curricular clubs and sports activities but most of these opportunities are not offered to pupils in Years 1 and 2.
28. There are too few opportunities planned for speaking and listening and this slows down pupils' language development particularly in Years 1 and 2. A further issue is the range and quantity of books available to pupils. Although this is an improving situation there are some limitations to pupils' learning because they are not able to develop good library and research skills to support their learning effectively in all subjects.
29. Pupils are given good opportunities to practise their basic skills such as grammar and punctuation and numeracy within lessons. The national strategies have been embraced well by teachers. Recently implemented initiatives such as ability grouping for mathematics, English and science lessons, 'booster' groups for English, mathematics and science, a homework club for Year 6 and new resources for reading in Years 1 to 6 are helping pupils to master language and number skills more effectively. In addition, groups of pupils identified as underachieving are targeted for reading in Years 1 and 2 and for reading and mathematics in Years 3 to 6. Although there are some good examples of literacy and numeracy skills used in other subjects such as geography, the application of skills across a range of subjects requires some improvement.
30. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the last inspection. There is now a clear scheme of work encompassing all the required skills to be taught by the end of Year 6. Pupils learn basic word processing and data handling skills in the computer suite but these are not sufficiently practised and applied in other subjects in the classroom. The school has successfully addressed shortcomings of the design technology curriculum highlighted in the last report.
31. All pupils are given appropriate instruction about the misuse of drugs. Some Year 6 pupils are withdrawn from lessons that involve discussion of the harmful effects of drugs for religious reasons. As part of personal, social and health programme, Year 6 pupils are taught sex education. Citizenship already features in the curriculum through schemes such as youth citizen awards, in which pupils have worked with managers from industry, for example Hotpoint, to highlight the importance of careers and different work skills.
32. The curriculum provided for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. Children are stimulated by the range of relevant and purposeful activities, which are planned for them in all the recommended areas of learning.

33. The school provides well for the pupils who have additional learning needs. Their needs are identified and assessed quickly and help is given through group and individual work. Equally effective is the support given to those pupils who learn English as an additional language. Bilingual teaching assistants offer valuable help in classrooms to ensure pupils acquire the language skills they need in order to keep pace and as a result, most pupils attain the standards in reading and writing expected for their age by the time they leave the school.
34. Very good links have been established with the local community, which benefit pupils' learning. A good example is the Axiom Housing project where pupils are able to contribute ideas to the development of a local playground. In addition to such projects the school has the Investors in People award and the Activemark for sport. Thorpe community association, a very active fund-raising group provides welcome financial help towards information technology, books and playground furnishings. Work placement and Initial Teacher Training students are offered excellent support in the school and there is a very good relationship with the local secondary school, a 'Beacon school', which is to be strengthened through curriculum links such as the provision of French lessons for Year 6 pupils.
35. The school has maintained the very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This continues to be a strength of the school. Acts of collective worship are of satisfactory quality and meet statutory requirements. Pupils are given many opportunities in assemblies, circle times and class discussions to reflect on the fundamental beliefs and practices of others. They are given time to consider their own role within the community as 'carers', for example, and how their actions may affect the lives of others. At times they are able to delight in the wonder and creativity of their own learning, for example, when Year 2 pupils manage to light up three bulbs in their circuit, or when Year 5 pupils experienced the stillness and the silence of worship when they visited the local Mandir.
36. Provision for moral development is very good. It is firmly rooted in the school ethos and the expectation that pupils will respond appropriately. They set their own rules for behaviour in and around the school. Pupils develop a strong sense of what is right and wrong. They are respectful and tolerant. Provision for social development is very good and greatly strengthened by the role models presented by staff. Very good relationships have been established so pupils are confident and reliable when undertaking tasks. Older pupils, for example, have the opportunity to help younger children. They sit on the School Council and are trained in first aid in their steps towards citizenship. Pupils of all ages develop a sense of 'community' as members of the 'walking bus' scheme. Pupils made a worthwhile contribution to the community through the Green Wheel project by providing designs to decorate a panel marking out the city's cycle routes.
37. There are many opportunities to develop pupils' awareness and recognition of the diversity of cultural backgrounds within the school and wider community. Visitors to school, visits to places of worship, celebrations of faiths and cultural events take place throughout the year. One of the highlights is the performance of the Bhangra dance group at the annual summer fete, an event enjoyed by the whole school community. The school also provides opportunities for traditional English dancing as well as visits to Peterborough and local places of historical interest such as Stibbington village and school, where pupils experience some aspects of English heritage.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school has good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, health and safety. All members of staff have a genuine concern for the well-being of all their pupils and have created an environment in which pupils are valued and respected. The governors and all staff regard health and safety as a high priority. The governors review the health and safety policy regularly and appropriate risk assessments have been carried out. Health and safety inspections take place termly and all routine safety checks are carried out. Several members of staff are trained in first aid.
39. The curriculum includes drugs education and promotes a healthy lifestyle. The school gained the 'Health Promoting Schools' award earlier this year. Circle time provides an opportunity for pupils to explore important issues in a safe setting. The school's arrangements for child protection are good, all staff being aware of their responsibilities.
40. There are good procedures for monitoring attendance. Any absence not supported by a note or telephone call from the parent is followed up promptly. Any problems or concerns are referred to the headteacher who works closely with the parents. The school is able to call upon the services of the education welfare officer where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality.
41. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good and help to make the school an orderly and pleasant community. The very good behaviour policy emphasises the importance of recognising and rewarding good behaviour. This encourages the majority of pupils to behave well and has a positive effect on the quality of their learning. There are school and class rules, which pupils help to formulate. Pupils know these rules well and are aware that good behaviour is rewarded. Pupils are encouraged to tell a teacher or other adult if they are bullied and this successfully eliminates oppressive behaviour.
42. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress are very good and impressive, whereas at the time of the previous inspection they were judged to be a weakness. A significant amount of progress has been made with this former key issue, particularly in the last year. Following a detailed analysis of test data and teacher assessments, the school has introduced an annual cycle of testing, the results of which are used very well to identify groups of pupils in need of additional support in reading, writing and mathematics, and to adapt the curriculum where necessary. A system for tracking each pupil's progress has recently been introduced. Staff have had training to enable them to make better use of the information to identify pupils requiring extra help and to measure how well the school is meeting all pupils' educational and personal needs. Teachers are using assessment information very well on a day-to-day basis, modifying their lesson plans appropriately when necessary. There is evidence of success from the progress made by individual pupils. Those pupils with special educational needs have good quality individual education plans and appropriate targets are set.
43. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. The comprehensive monitoring arrangements ensure that teachers have good knowledge of pupils as individuals. Pupils' achievements are rewarded and this has a positive effect on their attitudes.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. Parents have positive views of the school and most are satisfied with the quality of education that their children receive. They consider that teaching and behaviour are good and that their children make good progress. Inspection findings support these views. Parents are less happy about the information they receive about their children's progress; the amount of homework and the range of extra-curricular activities. Almost a quarter of those parents who responded to the questionnaire do not feel that the school works closely with parents, although most of the parents who attended the meeting with the Registered Inspector prior to the inspection reported satisfaction with this aspect.
45. Inspectors agree that pupils' annual reports, although improving, still do not inform parents clearly how well their child is doing in relation to what is expected at the end of each year. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to put it right in future reports. The school has recently reviewed the homework arrangements and information is sent to parents at the start of the year. The arrangements sensibly provide for an increasing amount of homework towards the end of the primary years, in preparation for pupils' transfer to secondary education. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, described more fully in the curriculum section of the report.
46. The school has good links with parents that support pupils' education well. It welcomes parents as partners in the education process and provides good induction arrangements for new pupils, including home visits for children starting in the nursery and reception classes. All teaching assistants are involved in the home visits and bilingual support provided where necessary. The school also works very closely with parents of pupils with religious beliefs that lead to the withdrawal of their children from lessons in National Curriculum subjects. The school respects parents' wishes to withdraw their children from information and communication technology, religious education and music. It also makes arrangements for pupils to eat separately. An active 'parents' association' organises a number of social events throughout the year and raises a considerable amount of money for the school. It has provided funds for the computer suite and for books. A significant number of parents help regularly in classes and were helping during the inspection. The school listens to parents' views and, where appropriate, responds positively to suggestions and concerns. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept fully informed of their progress.
47. The school provides good information for parents. The prospectus is well presented and informative. Parents receive regular newsletters containing useful information about school life. Teachers send letters to parents at the beginning of term about the curriculum to be taught. Pupils' annual reports give useful information about what pupils have learned and what they need to do to improve. Parents have three formal opportunities each year to discuss their child's work and progress with the class teacher and bilingual teaching assistants are available to help in consultations where necessary. They are strongly encouraged to speak to their child's teacher at any time if they have concerns. Inspection findings do not support the views of those parents who feel that the school does not work closely with them. However, there has been a significant change in the way that parents are expected to arrange discussions with teachers as a result of the increased security arrangements and it may be that this has had an impact on parents' views. The school remains committed to working closely with parents.

48. The contribution of parents to their children's learning at school and at home is good. In addition to those parents who help regularly in school, the vast majority takes a keen interest in their children's education by monitoring homework and listening to reading. The school's partnership with parents helps in the drive to raise standards.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The school is very well led and managed and successfully pursues its aims. The school has benefited significantly from the clear direction from the headteacher and her deputy in the last year, in particular their concentration on improving teaching and target setting to raise standards. After a turbulent period, with significant staff turnover (13 have left and 14 joined the school in the last two years), the staff now works as a cohesive team and has the commitment and capacity for further improvement under this strong leadership. A new middle management team has also been formulated this term to pass information to the senior management team to improve the efficiency of the school. The headteacher finds most bureaucratic demands come from central government and the local education authority.
50. When the headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in September 2000, a thorough audit of the strengths and weaknesses in the school was undertaken. This revealed little progress in some of the key issues from the previous inspection and little improvement in teaching owing to the lack of consistency. By the end of the first term governors had been informed of what needed to be done to put the school back on track and the arrangements for doing so. All staff have worked hard in supporting the headteacher, and the introduction of performance management came at an opportune time for the school and has helped the rate of progress in improving standards.
51. The management roles of the curriculum managers have been clearly identified in revised job descriptions, which include their accountability for monitoring and standards. All curriculum managers check the termly plans for their subject, feedback to individual teachers and note points for action. Teachers' assessments are monitored by the headteacher for accuracy and regularity. This good practice helps in ensuring all policies and procedures are adhered to and that there is consistency throughout the school. The Foundation Stage manager provides very good leadership. She has a very clear overview of provision in both the nursery and reception classes and has set appropriate targets for further development. The newly appointed manager for special educational needs has also produced a plan for implementing the new Code of Practice effectively.
52. The progress on the key issue relating to assessment had been unsatisfactory prior to September 2000. In the last year very good procedures have been introduced, including a regular annual cycle of testing and assessment, which now enables the school to track its pupils' progress from the point of entry to when they leave. Every class teacher has targets for each pupil and their awareness of their accountability in helping pupils to achieve their targets has been raised through the performance management policy. This has raised teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of achieving and has been a key factor in the rise in standards by the end of Year 6. The action taken to meet the school's targets in the last year has been excellent.
53. Particularly good use is made of the funding for the professional development of staff. Whole school priorities are the main focus when planning how to use the

funding available, with consideration then given to the needs of individual teachers. There is evaluation of every training day or course attended to determine if value for money was provided in terms of its advantage to the school and its standards. The funding from the Single Regeneration Budget to support the achievement of pupils from ethnic minority groups is also used well. The teaching assistants provide effective support as well as being good role models and this contributes significantly to the high level of racial harmony within the school. The school is well aware of the value of this support in helping pupils to settle in quickly and in learning to speak English and uses the funding available to give maximum benefit to the pupils. Under the current arrangements this funding is only available for three years and the school is already exploring options for the future. The use of funding to support teachers new to the profession is excellent. It is carefully matched to meet the individual needs of the teacher and allows the opportunity for visits to other schools to observe good practice if requested.

54. The school improvement plan is a good document and is supported by action plans for subjects that are not high priorities but nevertheless need to be maintained. The plan outlines the development of the school over a three-year period, with one year's development in detail. The plan shows the success criteria, which provide the governors with a means of checking the success of the action taken in terms of pupils' progress and standards. Individual governors meet with curriculum managers to discuss improvements in their subjects.
55. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities. During the five terms when the school had acting headteachers they were instrumental in the management of the school. They take decisions in the best interests of the pupils after considering the options very carefully. This was evident in the appointment of the current headteacher and her deputy. It was on advice from the local education authority that the school was without a permanent headteacher for five terms following the secondment and subsequent resignation of the previous headteacher. There is an effective committee structure and a programme of meetings to feed into budget setting and school improvement planning. They monitor the work of the school rigorously and question proposals and ideas put forward by the staff. They monitor the pupils on the school's special educational needs register. They apply the principles of best value satisfactorily. For the last seven years they have put in a bid each year to join the buildings together, without success. Their determination to succeed is as strong as ever as this decision prevents infant pupils accessing the school library and computer suite easily.
56. The school's use of management information systems is satisfactory, but there is room for improvement. Whilst financial and pupil records are kept on computers and attendance registers have just been added to the system, much of the assessment information and the pupils' progress is worked out manually. This is very time consuming. Effective use is made of electronic mail.
57. There are sufficient teachers and a good number of teaching assistants who make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. The accommodation is adequate and well decorated. However, it does not help Year 1 and 2 pupils to become independent learners by accessing the library and computer suite as they would have to move between buildings and cope with security locks which are too high for them to reach. A period of torrential rain during the inspection gave inspectors the opportunity to see other problems vividly. The library has been relocated in a main corridor and does not provide adequately for pupils undertaking quiet research or private study. The staff could also work even more cohesively as a team and have

better access to all resources if the school became one building. Resources for learning are adequate, with strengths and deficiencies. Resources for science, religious education and physical education are good and for most other subjects are satisfactory. However, the library provision is poor and hinders the development of research skills. The number of books available for Years 1 and 2 is also poor which is partly why standards in reading have not improved.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

58. Good improvement has been made in raising standards through improved teaching and the focus on pupils' learning in the last year. In order to continue this rate of improvement the headteacher and staff supported by the governors should:

- (1) Improve standards in English by raising levels of attainment in reading, writing, speaking and listening in Years 1 and 2 and in writing in Years 3 to 6 by implementing the action identified in the school improvement plan.

Discussed in paragraphs 76, 77, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83.

- (2) Raise standards in information and communication technology in Years 3 to 6 by:

improving the knowledge and confidence of members of staff by providing training to ensure that all aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study are taught in sufficient depth;  
making better use of the computers available in classrooms to support the development of pupils' skills.

Discussed in paragraphs 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125.

This issue is already identified in the school improvement plan.

- (3) Improve library provision by increasing the number and range of fiction and non-fiction books in order to support literacy skills across all subjects.

Discussed in paragraphs 57, 81.

- (4) Take all steps possible to improve the accommodation by joining the buildings together and providing a staffroom large enough for the number of staff.

Discussed in paragraphs 55, 57.

The governors should also consider including the following minor issue in their action plan:

- (1) improve the quality of reports to parents by giving clear information as to whether pupils are doing as well as expected for their age in all subjects.

Discussed in paragraph 45.

- (2) improve the presentation of pupils' work in year groups where it is not yet high enough.

Discussed in paragraphs 25, 82.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	12	42	24	1	0	0
Percentage	2	15	52	30	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	417
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	68

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	8
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	12	95

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	111

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	25
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	36

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	31	29	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	18	20	29
	Girls	22	28	28
	Total	40	48	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	66 (69)	80 (88)	95 (88)
	National	*N/a (83)	*N/a (84)	*N/a (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	28	25
	Girls	29	29	29
	Total	49	57	54
Percentage of pupils At NC level 2 or above	School	81 (76)	95 (83)	90 (88)
	National	*N/a (84)	*N/a (88)	*N/a (88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	31	27	58

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	28	25	30
	Girls	21	20	26
	Total	49	45	56
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	84 (75)	78 (63)	97 (87)
	National	*N/a (75)	*N/a (72)	*N/a (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	23	30
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	49	44	52
Percentage of pupils At NC level 4 or above	School	84 (70)	75 (63)	93 (70)
	National	*N/a (70)	*N/a (72)	*N/a (79)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

\*National percentages for 2001 are not yet available.

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	8
Black – other	0
Indian	24
Pakistani	64
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	6
White	249
Any other minority ethnic group	2

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### **Exclusions in the last school year**

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

*This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.*

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	29
Average class size	29.8

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	340

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26:1
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	58
Number of pupils per FTE adult	8.7:1

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	943,624
Total expenditure	904,430
Expenditure per pupil	2,033
Balance brought forward from previous year	-9,931
Balance carried forward to next year	29,263

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.4
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	439
Number of questionnaires returned	140

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	49	7	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	31	53	9	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	34	54	4	2	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	21	53	23	1	2
The teaching is good.	35	53	6	1	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	44	24	6	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	34	11	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	36	51	5	1	6
The school works closely with parents.	29	44	16	7	4
The school is well led and managed.	26	45	12	4	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	55	8	1	9
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	41	19	4	19

### **Other issues raised by parents**

The quality of letters sent to parents. Letters contained typing and grammatical errors, but they are now proof-read more carefully and are satisfactory.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

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

59. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and is a strength of the school. This indicates a significant improvement since the previous inspection when provision for children in the reception classes was judged as satisfactory. At the time of the inspection, the school was in the process of admitting children into both the nursery and reception classes on a gradual, part-time basis as part of the induction process. Children are admitted to the nursery and into reception in the September following their third or fourth birthday respectively. Very good links are established between the school and parents and children settle very quickly into the routines. When the children start in the nursery, the findings from assessments show that the knowledge, skills and understanding of the large majority of children are well below expectations for children of this age, although all ability levels are represented. Not all nursery children move into the reception classes and some of the children admitted to the reception classes have no pre-school experience. Assessment information indicates that on admission to the reception, although attainment is still below expectations, particularly in language development, most children who attended the nursery have made good progress. Children with special educational needs or who have English as an additional language also make good progress as a result of very effective learning support.
60. The quality of the teaching seen across the Foundation Stage was never less than good, and, in 46 per cent of lessons was very good. Teachers and support staff plan together and this provides for continuity in learning. Planning is of very good quality. It takes full account of the six areas of learning and the Early Learning Goals outlined in the curriculum for this stage of learning. Planning sets clear and detailed learning objectives for all children, including children with special educational needs, those for whom English is an additional language and more able children. Assessment procedures for recording what children have learned are of a very high quality as they track attainment and progress in all six areas of learning. Information from these is discussed at the regular team meetings and is used well to inform planning. Teachers and support staff work very effectively together both as a team and in the individual contributions each makes to promote learning.
61. Parents are provided with opportunities to visit the school before their children are admitted. The separate nursery and reception parents' booklets provide satisfactory information. In addition, termly meetings are provided for parents to visit and discuss their children's progress. During the inspection, parents were made welcome into the classrooms at the beginnings of sessions and were able to talk to staff and stay with their children if they wished.
62. The accommodation is bright and attractive. Nursery and reception children have access to separate outdoor play areas. These areas provide a secure environment for learning, particularly in the development of physical and social skills. The school has already highlighted both areas for further improvement to increase the scope for planned, challenging outdoor play.

## **Personal, social and emotional development**

63. By the end of the reception year, standards are average; most children will have achieved the Early Learning Goals in this area because the teaching is very good. All members of staff are effective role models and provide many opportunities for children to learn about themselves and how to relate to others in a range of situations. The children come into school happily. Routines are made clear and very good relationships are established from the moment the children come into class. The children are confident to leave parents and carers and quickly become absorbed in the range of interesting activities available. Many opportunities are provided for children to listen to each other and as a result they are developing good relationship skills and are beginning to know to wait until it is their turn to speak.
64. Good opportunities are provided through the range of carefully planned activities for children to develop independent learning skills. At the same time, in activities led by adults, children's learning is closely supported and monitored.
65. At the time of the inspection, the children in the reception class took part in a school assembly in the hall for the first time. This was very sensitively handled and helped the children to learn about being part of a larger community.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

66. Standards are below average. The majority of children are unlikely to attain the Early Learning Goals in speaking, reading and writing. However, most already listen attentively and are likely to reach the expected target in this area by the end of the year in reception.
67. Teaching in this aspect is good. Many opportunities are planned and taken to promote language. Bilingual and special needs support staff in both the nursery and reception classes provide very good support to help children understand explanations, questions and instructions.
68. Children in the nursery enjoy looking at books and listen and watch attentively when an adult talks about what is in the pictures. Some children in both nursery and reception use phrases and whole sentences to describe what they see or what they understand but these are in a minority. Most use single or one or two words when responding to questions or asked to talk about what they are doing. Children for whom English is an additional language are assessed during the first few weeks in nursery and reception to check their understanding and use of English. Information from these assessments is used effectively to plan individual targets for learning.
69. In both nursery and reception, children are provided with a stimulating literacy environment where early reading and writing skills are planned into many activities. This results in children enjoying looking at books and in some higher attaining children 'reading' the stories. A few children talk about what is happening in the story by looking at the pictures and recognising some letters of the alphabet. For the majority, however, their skills in explaining what they see or identifying objects in a picture are limited by their ability to use language and to express meaning.
70. For the large majority, levels of writing are below what is expected of children of this age. A small majority makes marks on paper and a few are beginning to write some recognisable letter shapes to represent meaning.

## **Mathematical development**

71. By the end of the reception year, standards are average, most children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals. Teaching in this area is very good. Teachers use a good variety of activities that are closely matched to the children's learning needs. In the nursery, every opportunity is planned and taken to promote mathematical development. Children count out loud with adults, and some are able to identify simple shapes when rolling out play dough naming basic colours when asked about their paintings. In the reception classes, activities are planned well and this enables children to recognise sets of small numbers of objects and to identify their own contributions to a pictogram. In one lesson observed, most children joined in with singing, 'Five Little Ducks' and 'Ten Green Bottles'. They sort and count teddy bears and higher attaining children recognised numbers to nine when following the story of 'Roly Poly Puppy'.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

72. On starting school, many children have had limited experience of the world around them. By the end of the reception year, although the majority of children will not achieve the Early Learning Goals for this aspect of learning, and standards are below average, they make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage. This is because teaching is good and effective in providing many planned opportunities for children to build upon previous experiences when learning about the world. Standards do not reach the expected level because a majority of children do not have sufficient language skills to enable them to talk about what they see and explain reasons for why things happen. An example of this is when children were observed making 'biscuit faces' out of a range of edible materials, few were able to talk about the finished product. The development of computer skills is an exception. As a result of very effective teaching, children learn quickly so that, for example, by the end of one lesson observed, they could use the mouse to click and drag images on the screen without adult help.

## **Physical development**

73. Most children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area except in fine motor skills such as handwriting and standards are average. Detailed and meticulous planning and effective teaching results in good provision for learning. In the nursery, adults encourage the children to try a range of activities. Although only in school for a very short time, many children were keen to climb on the climbing frame and slide down, and ride the wheeled toys around the play area. Children in the reception classes show good awareness of others, moving safely around the classrooms. When making paper plate faces, they hold crayons with satisfactory levels of control and use scissors appropriately to cut lengths of wool for hair.

## **Creative development**

74. Teaching in this area is good. Most children are on course to attain the Early Learning Goals by the end of reception and standards are average principally because they are provided with interesting activities and good opportunities to work independently. Children in the nursery explore pencils, crayons, paint and different types of paper to make pictures. Children's work is valued and included in attractive displays. In the few days they have been in nursery many have already learned the words of the 'Good Morning' song. In the reception, music is played as children come in at the start of a session and this creates a calm atmosphere. They make a

circle and join in with their teachers as they sing and perform the actions to 'If You're Happy And You Know It'. Many are keen to suggest a range of jungle animals that might be included in a new song they are to learn.

## ENGLISH

75. Standards in English are below average at the end of Year 2 and are average by the end of Year 6. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained at the end of Year 6, but not at the end of Year 2. Pupils reach average standards in reading, speaking and listening, and writing by the end of Year 6, but only reach average standards in writing by the end of Year 2.
76. Current standards in reading by the end of Year 2 have fallen below average, but the proportion of pupils reaching the expected level in writing is about average. For pupils who took the national tests for seven year-olds in 2001 their learning was disrupted by frequent changes of teacher. Standards in reading were not closely monitored and consequently dipped. Greater stability has now been achieved and the school has worked hard to implement effective strategies to improve reading in the last year. These have not yet had time to influence test results. The action taken to improve writing which included the effective deployment of teachers and all teaching assistants to provide individual and group support, has been more successful and accounts for the more acceptable standards attained in writing.
77. Standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are lower than expected when compared with similar schools. Nevertheless, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well over time, given their levels of attainment when they start school. A high proportion of pupils learns English as an additional language. By the end of Year 6 most attain at least the nationally expected level for their age.
78. Since the last inspection, improvements in teaching, as a result of performance management and monitoring are leading to a better pace of learning. Planning is consistent throughout the school and outcomes are closely monitored to ensure key objectives are met. This helps teachers assess and record progress accurately, adding strength to the very effective use of data to set targets for groups of pupils in order to improve standards.
79. Although new and effective strategies are beginning to benefit teaching and learning, it is too soon to see the full impact. Due to some inconsistent teaching in the past, some groups of pupils have not achieved as well as they should. Lower than expected standards are currently noticeable in Year 5, for example, where vocabulary, spelling and consequently writing standards of many pupils are weak.
80. By the end of Year 2 pupils' speaking and listening skills are not as good as they should be. This is partly because many pupils, especially those who learn English as an additional language do not have sufficient vocabulary to express their ideas clearly or begin to add detail when talking about events, or describing what they see in books. By Year 6, most pupils have more confidence and talk readily about things that interest them. They answer questions appropriately and most are willing to contribute to discussion in class. Although standards are generally satisfactory they could be better if pupils were given more frequent opportunities to speak, for example, through open-ended questioning, role play or reading to an audience.

81. Standards attained in reading in Year 2 are too low. The most able readers recognise words in a simple text and begin to use some expression. Too many of the other pupils however still lack the confidence to read fluently or gain the full meaning of what they read. Although pupils enjoy stories and select books to look at out of interest a few are not yet past the stage of talking about the pictures, making no attempt to read the print. By Year 6 reading levels are broadly typical of that age. Pupils read with increasing confidence and demonstrate the range of their reading by talking about favourite authors such as J.K. Rowling and Jacqueline Wilson. Pupils know how to find information in reference books but have not yet fully mastered the more advanced skills such as deducing underlying meaning in a text or gauging the difficulty of the text so they can select appropriate reading material. The development of a school library has begun and there are some good quality books available. However, there are not enough to help pupils improve their literacy skills across all curriculum areas. The shortage of books and lack of a suitably organised library has been detrimental to the development of reading and library skills.
82. Standards in writing evident from pupils' past work are about average for Year 2 and Year 6. Year 6 pupils practise a satisfactory range of writing such as narrative, report writing, poetry and discursive writing in which they use evidence from a text to support their opinions. They use research tools such as CD ROM to find information for their 'biographies'. Ideas are generally expressed clearly but there are inconsistencies in the standard of spelling with many common words such as 'riding' and 'sincerely' spelt incorrectly. There are occasional attempts to use more adventurous descriptive language. Most frequently, however, pupils choose familiar vocabulary. Limited writing opportunities across the other subjects means the pupils do not get enough practise in the use of technical language related, for example, to science, music or technology. By the end of Year 2, pupils use the features of narrative satisfactorily to write their own stories and sequence ideas logically when, for example, writing instructions about 'brushing my teeth'. Writing shows an increasing awareness of punctuation, but spelling is weak. Handwriting and presentation of work, which were issues raised in the previous report, still require some improvement especially in Years 3 to 6. Although past work indicates average standards in writing are attained the school recognises that the pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 are achieving below the expected level. Targets for writing, which were previously exceeded in 2001, have been set at more realistic levels. Current initiatives such as ability setting, group targets and 'booster' groups, as well as planned strategies for the provision of books and more curriculum time for writing, leave the school on course to raise attainment.
83. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Teachers plan and prepare their lessons well, making best use of available resources to help pupils learn. Teachers establish good relationships with their pupils. This helps them to manage pupils well and promote a good climate for learning. Assessments are used effectively to plan for groups of pupils so that work is generally more closely matched to their ability. Occasionally however, teachers' expectations are too high so some pupils do not achieve what they could in lessons because the work is too difficult for them. Teachers and support staff have a sound knowledge and understanding of the literacy strategy. This enables them to plan and teach the basic skills of grammar and punctuation effectively. However, too little time is planned for writing. The time allowed within literacy hours is often too short to be productive, especially for less able writers who struggle for the vocabulary to express their ideas. Strategies to help pupils build up their ideas and confidence with language such as open questioning, role play and the use of good quality

literature to forge closer links between reading and writing are not given sufficient time in some lessons. In a Year 6 lesson, teaching and learning were highly effective owing to the teacher's preparatory work leading up to the writing task. High expectations of pupils, and constant questioning to probe their understanding, combined with clear and relevant resources to exemplify the learning objective resulted in pupils being well able to identify formal and informal styles in letter writing, and accurately use the language specific to the task. This left the pupils well prepared to engage in the purposeful letter writing task planned for them in the next lesson. Very good teaching and learning took place in a Year 3 lesson because of the teacher's lively and animated presentation of the lesson as well as the very effective use of guided reading material to demonstrate the teaching points. Pupils linked their writing tasks directly to what they had read, making good use of opportunities to improve their use of speech marks in dialogue. However, the very good teaching is the exception, and in too many literacy lessons teaching, although satisfactory, does not currently facilitate progress in pupils' writing quickly enough.

84. The subject is well led and managed. This is evident in the significant improvements that have taken place during the last year. Curriculum managers are committed to raising standards and work enthusiastically to implement new and effective strategies. Strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified and action plans are set to address the issues of raising standards and improving teaching and the curriculum.

## **MATHEMATICS**

85. Standards of work at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average, improving and have been maintained since the previous inspection. A particularly marked feature of this improvement is the increase in the number of pupils who exceeded the nationally expected level in the national tests earlier in 2001. This improvement clearly demonstrates the success of the school's strategies to improve the standards attained by more able pupils in response to the points made in the previous inspection report.
86. The headteacher and senior management team fully recognise the need to continue to raise standards within mathematics for all levels of attainment and they have done a considerable amount of work to improve provision for the subject. For example, pupils' answers to test questions have been analysed and weaknesses in their knowledge addressed in planning. The standard of teaching and learning is monitored and feedback is given to teachers on both their strengths and where their classroom practice can be improved. The organisation of pupils into ability groups has enabled the school to target its resources more efficiently and helped to ensure that pupils are given work more closely suited their individual needs and rates of progress. Pupils are given individual targets that are checked through regular testing and their progress is recorded and monitored. Teaching within the subject is of a good standard and maintains the level noted in the last report. Also maintained is the good level of progress made by pupils of all abilities including those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. No significant differences between the attainment of boys and girls were noted during the inspection.
87. By the end of Year 2, most pupils can add and subtract 2-digit numbers with reasonable accuracy and have an understanding of early multiplication and division. They can use this knowledge to solve number problems and manipulate numbers

using their 2, 5, and 10 times tables. Pupils recognise odd and even numbers, understand place value and can recognise proportions expressed as simple fractions. They can collect data using simple tally charts and represent the information gathered in the form of block graphs. In measuring, they are aware of the need for accuracy and can use both standard and non-standard units. They are able to name many of the common two and three-dimensional shapes, for example, circle, square, pentagon, cylinder, cube and rectangular prism.

88. Pupils' progress is good and they achieve well in Years 1 and 2, owing to the good teaching and learning that was a feature of almost all the mathematics lessons seen in these year groups. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, that also developed their listening and recall skills, pupils made good progress in their ability to understand different types of numbers due to the positive strategies adopted by the teacher and their very good attitudes and behaviour. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils made good progress when careful planning ensured that they were all working at the correct level of difficulty. In addition, the effective use of teaching assistants and the high level of discussion effectively developed the pupils' understanding of the thought processes involved in number work. The lesson was also distinguished by the eagerness of the pupils to join in the activities, many of them showing genuine pleasure and excitement.
89. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to calculate using their knowledge of place value, for example, they can multiply by 10, 100 and 1000 by moving digits the appropriate number of columns to the left and are able to extend this into decimal fractions. They have an understanding of approximate proportions using decimals, fractions and percentages to describe them. For example, they know that  $0.5 = \frac{1}{2} = 50$  per cent. Pupils are able to use simple formulae when calculating area and understand the use of brackets in demarcating their work, for example, more able pupils can calculate the area of right-angled triangles. Pupils are beginning to work with simple algebraic equations. In their work on data handling pupils are able to use frequency charts to collect information and then reproduce it in the form of both line and block graphs. Pupils are able to use their knowledge to solve number problems.
90. Pupils are now making good progress and achieving well in Years 3 to 6. For example, in a Year 3 lesson on calculating missing numbers the pupils made good progress because the teacher had a secure understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy and was careful to ensure the correct use of mathematical vocabulary. Questioning skills were used effectively and assessment used well to judge pupils' understanding. In a Year 5 lesson on doubling numbers to calculate  $\times 4$ ,  $\times 8$  and  $\times 16$ , the well judged mixture of direct teaching and practical work, when linked to the use of resources carefully matched to the focus of the lesson, led to a good learning experience for the pupils. The plenary session, in a Year 6 lesson, was used well by the teacher to extend the theme of the similarities and differences between calculations, for example,  $3 \times 7 = 21$  is similar to  $3 \times 0.7 = 2.1$ . This good use of the end of the lesson summary led to some pupils being able to calculate similar sums mentally. It was noted that the presentation of their work by Year 6 pupils was generally good. However, this is not the case in all classrooms and more needs to be done to ensure that pupils of all ages present their work neatly.
91. During the inspection very little work was seen that linked mathematics with information and communication technology. The school is aware of this weakness and is working to increase the use of computers within the subject. The curriculum manager has purchased software linked to the scheme of work to overcome the

weakness. However, there are links between mathematics and other subjects. For example, the use of line graphs by Year 6 pupils in their science work and the use of tally charts by Year 3 pupils in a geography study of local housing. The development of the speaking and listening skills of the pupils is a feature of many lessons in mathematics. For example, a group of middle attainers were able to discuss their work clearly and offered good explanations of the processes involved.

92. Other features of the good level of teaching for all ages of pupils included good relationships within classrooms between pupils and their teachers and the brisk pace that is maintained during lessons. Teachers have good expectations and generally demonstrated an understanding of the needs of all their pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed well and class control is good. Lessons are well planned in both the short and medium term with due regard being made to on-going assessment. Homework is well planned and pupils are offered help with it if in difficulty. However, the quality of marking across the school is inconsistent with some confined to ticks and the occasional word of praise. Pupils are given individual targets that are regularly updated. Throughout the school pupils demonstrate good, sometimes very good, attitudes to their mathematics work. They are well behaved, co-operate effectively with each other and with their teachers.
93. The subject is well led and managed. The monitoring of planning, teaching, pupils' targets and homework returns ensures that the school is complying with the National Numeracy Strategy and maintaining its focus on the raising of pupils' attainment and progress. The resources available for teaching the subject are generally of good quality and easily accessible.

## **SCIENCE**

94. Attainment in science is average at the end of Years 2 and 6 and similar to that found at the time of the last inspection. Since the last inspection the school has successfully kept pace with the rising trend in national standards. Pupils of all ages make good progress in experimental and investigative work and achieve well. They are given many well-planned opportunities to carry out their own experiments and learn scientific principles through a practical approach. This is working well to improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject as well as making the work more interesting, enjoyable and relevant. This was clearly seen in a Year 2 lesson where the pupils were constructing electrical circuits and were visibly pleased when they succeeded in making the bulb light up. In this one lesson the pupils learned that a circuit has to be complete for it to work as well as how to connect the various components. In fact, one group even succeeded in connecting three batteries to light three bulbs in one circuit and they were overjoyed when it worked.
95. By the time they leave the school pupils have achieved well in science. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, reach appropriate levels, which are a direct consequence of good teaching. Science makes a good contribution to improving literacy skills through pupils writing well thought out reports on their experiments. Numeracy is also helped by pupils producing tables and graphs to display their findings. A good example of this was the line graphs Year 6 pupils made to show the relationship between their heartbeat and different forms of exercise. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in science is an area yet to be fully explored and developed throughout the school.

96. By the end of Year 2 pupils know the lifecycle of plants and various animals such as frogs, butterflies and humans. They know the names of the external parts of plants, parts of the human body and can identify living and non-living things. They know which appliances found around the home are powered by mains electricity, and which by batteries. Through their experiments with circuits they know which materials are good conductors. At the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the need for fairness in their scientific investigations. They conduct a wide variety of experiments and know that only one variable should be changed at a time or their results could be inaccurate. For example, when investigating which solids will dissolve in water they know that the amount of water used each time, its temperature and the quantity of solid introduced must remain constant for the test to be fair. Pupils can predict possible outcomes of experiments and draw sensible conclusions from the results they obtain. These conclusions are often based on the scientific knowledge they have acquired as they have progressed through the school and show how they have developed and deepened their understanding year on year. Pupils have been thoroughly taught all aspects of the science curriculum by the time they leave the school and, with the emphasis on practical and challenging activities, develop a questioning approach that is the mark of a true scientist.
97. The quality of teaching is always good or very good. This is an improvement since the 1997 inspection when teaching was judged to be predominantly satisfactory or good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and always share the lesson objectives with their class to enable pupils to focus on the learning intentions and to know when they have achieved them. Planning is done jointly by the teachers in each year group to share ideas and to ensure that all pupils have similar experiences. The correct scientific vocabulary is stressed in each lesson and pupils, from an early age, learn to use it appropriately. This has a very positive impact on learning, particularly for those pupils who have English as an additional language. It enables them to extend their knowledge of both science and English. This was very well demonstrated in a Year 1 lesson about forces, where the teacher used flash cards and constantly stressed and repeated the words she wanted the pupils to learn. By the end of the lesson all the pupils could use and knew the meaning of words such as stretch, squeeze, pull, twist and squash. They demonstrated their understanding by showing the teacher the correct movements with a lump of play dough. Teachers manage their pupils well and create a calm and purposeful working atmosphere that helps pupils concentrate on their work without interruption. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and this influences the pupils who show a similar level of interest. They have a good subject knowledge that enables them to make useful teaching points and help pupils to learn new concepts securely. Learning support assistants, volunteer parents and visitors are all used well to help pupils learn more effectively. They are briefed about their role by the teachers before lessons and often work with a designated group of pupils to support and guide them. As they move from year to year pupils develop mature attitudes to the work and are keen to succeed. They respond well to the good teaching they receive and their behaviour is always good.
98. Leadership of the subject is good and planning is carefully monitored. Teaching has not yet been monitored to assess its effectiveness and to highlight training needs. Assessment procedures are very good and are used effectively to identify individuals and groups of pupils in need of further support. Test results are analysed to find any aspects of the curriculum that require development. For instance, it was found that some pupils were having difficulty in drawing conclusions from a given set of data and this has now been addressed.

## ART AND DESIGN

99. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6 the standard of pupils' work is average and their achievement is satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection. As the inspection took place early in the school year, little work had been completed and evidence was gathered from the previous year, portfolios of assessed samples of work from Years 3 to 6 and discussions with pupils about the work they have completed. The discussions with Year 6 pupils showed all aspects of the subject are covered well, including two and three-dimensional work.
100. The strengths of art and design are the drawing and observational skills which also support pupils' recording of work in other subjects, for example, when drawing diagrams in science. By the end of Year 2, most pupils draw confidently and use a range of pencils and mark-making techniques to create different textures in their work. They recognise different methods and approaches of known artists and can reproduce similar effects in their own work, for example, Year 1 pupils' pictures of faces in the style of Picasso. Pupils develop a sound understanding of colour mixing and practise mixing eye and skin colours for their work. The scrutiny of last year's work showed some reliance on worksheets to aid the development of colour mixing, which allowed little opportunity for pupils to develop their skills as the amount of painting was minimal. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have developed satisfactory awareness of colour, tone, shape, line and texture when recording their work and talk of their likes and dislikes in the work of known artists. In Year 4, pupils study a range of paintings and give their views of what the artist is trying to portray and how the paintings make them feel. Pupils in Year 5 study a range of paintings and learn how the application of paint and the brush strokes give different finished effects. They also study the different lines and blocks of colour, which help them when starting their own pictures. Pupils talked of the opportunities they have to choose materials for themselves, work in their own style and to evaluate their work. All Year 6 pupils involved in discussions knew what they had to do to improve their work, for example, in not rushing, and improving the use of shading to show the effect of light. The pupils all talked with pride of their achievements and showed obvious enjoyment of the subject. Sketchpads of good quality are used to show progression in the development of skills and techniques. Pupils used a computer program effectively in Year 1 to create 'impressionist-style' pictures of gardens and Year 6 pupils talked of using programs to create book covers for their history topic on the Tudors. Work on display completed by the art club showed particularly good use of bold colours, and above average standards when drawing a small section of Rousseau's painting 'Tropical Storm with Tiger'.
101. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory throughout Years 1 to 6, with an example of good teaching of observational drawing in Year 6. Teachers have sound knowledge, help pupils to consider the approach to their work carefully and give encouragement and advice to help them achieve their best. Resources are carefully prepared and used well in practical lessons. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage them well and there is a pleasant working atmosphere in most classrooms. Pupils in Year 6 showed particularly good concentration, when engaged in sketching still life compositions and silence fell across the room. There is a tendency for lesson introductions to be too long, limiting the time for pupils to complete their work. In Year 2, whilst the explanation of the task was clear, the lack of a demonstration in how to approach the work led to some pupils not completing it

successfully. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make the same progress as other pupils and usually attain the standards which their teachers expect of them.

102. The subject is managed satisfactorily and most of the weaknesses identified in the previous report have been remedied. Arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to identify strengths and weaknesses and set targets for development have been implemented in the last year, and there is an action plan for developing the subject throughout the school. Good assessment procedures have also been implemented and are monitored by the headteacher. The staff has received training in displaying pupils' work more effectively during the last year and there were many attractive display boards evident during the inspection. Pupils have benefited from sessions with visiting artists and there are some links between art and other subjects, such as history and design and technology, for example, in the designs for hats and the completed headwear. However, links with other subjects could be strengthened to raise the profile of the subject.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. At the time of the previous inspection, standards in design and technology were average by the end of Year 2 but were below average by the end of Year 6. Standards have improved, and are now average by the end of both Years 2 and 6 and pupils are achieving well. During the present inspection, three lessons were observed, in Years 1, 3 and 5. Attainment in the lessons observed in Years 1 and 3 was above average. This was as a result of good teaching. Pupils' attainment in Year 5 was average. Other evidence to support the judgements on standards came from an analysis of work completed during the last school year and through discussions with pupils.
104. In the Year 1 lesson observed, pupils made very good gains in learning about how levers operated because they were given very clear information and the teacher had high expectations of what they should achieve. Having listened attentively, all pupils were able to make moving models using a variety of tools and materials. The work covered last year by Year 2 indicates that pupils are learning how to design a finished product and are developing satisfactory skills in planning and making. Work completed shows that pupils have planned, designed and made a sampler linked to their work on the Victorians; they have drawn up plans for making wheeled vehicles, and as part of their work in religious education have designed stained glass windows.
105. Year 3 pupils achieved good standards in their lesson on pneumatics as a result of the teacher's good subject knowledge and effective use of resources. They can confidently explain how air pressure can be used to make an object move. By the end of the lesson all pupils had produced a model using syringes and a plastic tube to make it move. Progress in Year 5 in learning about how materials and components have specific functions was satisfactory overall. However, a significant minority of pupils did not make enough progress during the set task and there was some underachievement. This was principally because some inappropriate behaviour was not dealt with effectively. The work done by Year 6 pupils last year indicates that they developed satisfactory skills in planning, designing, making and evaluating their work. Evidence, which included a project to make beach shoes, indicates a satisfactory understanding of purpose, materials and techniques. Although pupils know how to label their plans, there is limited evidence of accurate

measurement. Pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of what went well and how a finished product might be improved when evaluating their work.

106. The quality of the teaching is now good overall. In two of the lessons seen, teaching was good in one and very good in the other. Teaching was unsatisfactory in the lesson seen in Year 5 because the behaviour of some pupils was not managed effectively. Lessons are well planned and organised. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use this effectively to explain what they want the pupils to learn and to find out what they know and understand. In the best lessons, teachers pay particular attention to the development of personal and social skills by providing opportunities for pupils to work together.
107. The scheme of work takes account of the most recent curriculum changes. Planning is consistent and takes account of different learning needs. Pupils' attainment and progress is carefully tracked against key learning objectives. At the time of the inspection, the curriculum manager had only been in post for a few days. Nevertheless, over the holiday, hard work had been done to audit resources and review the current position of the subject and set draft priorities for further improvement. Resources for the subject are of a good quality and well organised to provide good access for teachers. The school has a food technology area, which is used satisfactorily during the year. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social development.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

108. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are average and achievement is satisfactory. The school has maintained the standards previously reported whilst successfully consolidating a sound programme of study and ensuring improvement in the presentation of pupils' work.
109. By the end of Year 2 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the area around their school which they contrast with seaside resorts, for example, by identifying differences in features such as housing. By the end of Year 6 pupils begin to understand the nature of settlement and the factors which influence changes. As part of their 'water' study they trace the course of a river from source to mouth identifying features such as tributaries, flood plains and an ox-bow lake. Pupils study the social and cultural differences found in the contrasting lifestyles of an Indian village and European countries such as France.
110. Geographical enquiry skills are satisfactorily developed through field study work, when pupils observe and record what they see, and through map reading when using four figure grid references to locate features of an area. Limited use of information technology however means that recording skills are not developed as fully as they should be.
111. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in Years 1 to 6. Teachers follow the planned curriculum closely to ensure knowledge and skills are taught at an appropriate level. Lessons are well organised with sufficient resources such as maps and plans. This enabled a Year 4 class, for example, to find their way to different areas of the school in order to record the level of noise pollution. Pupils concluded, after discussion, that not all noise is intrusive.

112. The newly appointed curriculum manager is maintaining the level of curriculum support given to geography throughout the school. Teachers' plans are monitored and priorities identified. A review of resources and improving the range of software form part of the action plan for improvement.

## **HISTORY**

113. Evidence from lessons, work in books and on display and discussions with pupils, indicate that standards are average for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection.
114. Pupils in Year 1 make comparisons between the toys of today and those of about one hundred years ago. In the lesson observed, the pupils were keen to talk about the samples of old and new toys brought into the lesson by the teacher. For example, when asked to explain what the difference between toys was, one pupil said, "Because it's made of wood and not plastic". Pupils in Year 2 are learning how to ask historical questions and investigate the differences between objects from Victorian times and now and achievement is good. In the lesson observed, they were given good opportunities to think about what they would like to find out about the everyday life of the Victorians. They thought hard about this and presented some good ideas. For example, they wanted to know what the Victorians ate and if they did the same things as people of today.
115. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make good progress in building on their earlier learning and achieve well. Most remember facts well and are building a secure awareness of chronology. They are interested in the different lifestyles of people in the past. An example of this was during a discussion with Year 6 pupils when they said they liked history particularly when they were asked to write as if they lived at the particular time being studied. Work in pupils' books indicates that by Year 6 most pupils have a clear understanding of the facts surrounding events in history and are beginning to interpret some of the effects on people. Satisfactory use is made of information and communication technology through research using CD Roms. A good example of the use of word processing was the production of a 'Lonely Hearts' advertisement by Henry VIII asking for a new wife.
116. Pupils' learning is enhanced by the opportunities they are given to look at resource materials and talk about what they see and understand. In the lessons observed, pupils were attentive and interested when listening to their teachers, watching a related video or taking part in activities such as acting out a time line when learning about how long ago the Ancient Egyptians lived.
117. The quality of the teaching and learning is good in Years 1 to 6. In the lessons seen, all teaching was at least satisfactory and 75 per cent was good. Effective use is made of brainstorming to find out what pupils already know and to set the scene for what they would like to find out. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and use this effectively when giving explanations and questioning pupils to check what they know. They make good use of resources to enliven pupils' learning.
118. The management of the subject is good. Planning is of a good quality and is consistent across the school and within year groups. The curriculum manager has good opportunities to monitor teachers' planning and uses this effectively to provide support and guidelines for improvement. Good assessment procedures are in place and these enable teachers to keep an ongoing record of individual pupils' progress. Visits to places such as Stibbington and history days held at Peterborough Museum

enhance pupils' learning and provide them with opportunities to study history beyond the classroom. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' moral, social and cultural development.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

119. By the end of Year 2, standards are broadly average, but by the end of Year 6, standards are below average. This reflects the judgement made at the time of the previous inspection. Although this would indicate that little improvement has been made since then, national initiatives over the intervening period have changed expectations of attainment.
120. The principal reasons for pupils' attainment being below average by the end of Year 6 are threefold. Although the level of resources has significantly improved over the last two years, older pupils in school have not had the benefit of long-term access to enable them to develop their skills over time. At the time of the previous inspection, the provision of training to improve teachers' confidence and expertise in the subject was identified as a weakness contributing to the low standards. The school has now put a schedule of training into place for all teachers, but this is in its early stages and has not yet had time to influence the quality of learning consistently throughout the school. Planning for the subject has been revised. It is of a good quality and is consistent both throughout the school and within year groups. It ensures that pupils are taught all aspects of the programme of study. This is evident in the achievement of younger pupils in the school but has not been in place long enough to provide opportunities for older pupils to develop the full range of skills expected by Year 6.
121. It was not possible to observe any specific information and communication technology lessons in Years 1 and 2. Evidence is based on the analysis of work done during the previous school year, observing pupils working on computers and discussions with pupils. Attainment in the lessons observed in Years 3 and 4 was in line with expectations for pupils in these year groups. Attainment by Year 5 pupils is below what is expected. This is principally because they do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject expected for pupils of this age.
122. Good improvements have been made in the number and quality of computers since the previous inspection. The school now has a computer suite. This contains enough computers and other equipment to enable a whole class to be taught. All year groups have timetabled access to the suite with sufficient flexibility for classes to make additional use of the facility. Each classroom or teaching area has at least one computer. This provides opportunities for information and communications technology to be used at other times. During the inspection, however, limited use of these computers was observed during lessons. This was partly because information and communication technology was not planned as an integral part of the lesson, but also the weaknesses in knowledge and confidence among the staff. The school now employs a technician to maintain the computers and related equipment.
123. Samples of work indicate that by the end of Year 2, pupils are developing satisfactory skills in word processing. They can alter the appearance of text when using the computer to write stories, accounts and lists. They have produced simple graphs and as part of their work in geography, have used computer graphics to design an island. When observed working on the computer, pupils log on by

entering their own password, open programs and demonstrate satisfactory skills in operating the keyboard and mouse to control events on the screen.

124. By Year 6, pupils are confident to tackle the tasks they are presented with and rise to the challenge. In the lesson observed, good skills teaching resulted in pupils being able to develop and record sequences of instructions to operate a control device. Evidence from work done during the previous year indicates that the current Year 6 have had experience of word processing, for example, in history where they compiled 'lonely hearts' advertisements for Henry VIII, and have collected numerical information and converted it to graphical form. Overall, however, most pupils by the time they are in Year 6, have limited skills and experience in the use of databases, control technology, problem solving and Internet usage. This is because they have not been provided with a consistent programme to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject during their time in the school.
125. Teaching was good in 75 per cent of lessons seen and never less than satisfactory in others. Where teaching is good, pupils work productively and independently. However, teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is variable. The school acknowledges this and has put in place a training schedule for all teachers during the current year. The variations in expertise and confidence in the past have resulted in a lack of consistency in the teaching as pupils have moved through the year groups. This is particularly evident in the underachievement of those pupils who have been in school the longest.
126. A satisfactory policy is in place. The school has adopted the most recent subject guidelines and has ensured that planning makes good provision for skills development. Assessment procedures are efficient and consistent and provide a clear picture of progress.
127. The curriculum manager is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and has a clear commitment to improvement. The quality and quantity of resources has been improved successfully. Areas for development within information and communication technology have been identified and appropriately prioritised in the subject action plan. Good arrangements are made for monitoring planning and assessment.

## **MUSIC**

128. Only three music lessons, in Years 2, 3 and 6 were observed during the inspection. The standards attained by pupils in these lessons were average. Some aspects of the music curriculum, such as composing and performing using instruments, were not seen during the inspection. However, by looking at teachers' planning and talking to pupils, it is clear that all aspects are successfully taught throughout the school and achievement is satisfactory. Standards in music have been maintained since the last inspection. The quality of singing in lessons and assemblies is satisfactory with pupils singing tunefully and with reasonable diction. A small number of pupils take the opportunity to learn to play woodwind, brass or stringed instruments with specialist tutors. These pupils often reach an above average standard of performance and increase their musical knowledge including how to read standard notation. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 can join a recorder club or the school choir to improve their knowledge and skills. All of these pupils perform in assemblies and to a wider audience in concerts. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve standards similar to their classmates.

129. Pupils in Year 2 know the names of a range of percussion instruments such as cymbals, bells and triangles and can compare the different sounds they make. They can pitch their voices to make high, medium and low sounds successfully. Some pupils, however, find it difficult to understand the difference between pitch and dynamics. For example, they will confuse a high-pitched note with one played loudly. Pupils in Year 3 show a good improvement in recognising the pitch of a note and more able pupils can replicate a note played on a chime bar with their voice. They also know the importance of posture and correct breathing in their singing. In Year 6 pupils understand that a piece of music can demonstrate a particular mood and that song lyrics can tell a story as well as being a reflection of a particular time and place. This was clearly seen in a lesson where the pupils read the lyrics and listened to the music of two very different songs. One was 'I just can't wait to be King' from the Lion King and the other a wartime favourite 'We'll Meet Again'. The pupils analysed the lyrics and made interesting and thoughtful suggestions as to the mood of the music that could accompany them. Music is played at the start and end of assemblies and this introduces pupils to a range of music by different composers from around the world.
130. The quality of the teaching seen is at least satisfactory with two good lessons observed. Teachers plan lessons carefully to build on pupils' prior attainment and move them on to the next stage in their learning. They manage their pupils well and lessons are orderly and often entertaining. Pupils enjoy their work and behave well in lessons. Those pupils who learn an instrument are keen to do well and proud of their achievements.
131. The use of information and communication technology to support and enhance music is limited to using CDs and tapes although a small number of pupils have used a composing program on the computers. This is an area that the school plans to develop further in the future. The curriculum manager is new to the post and has monitored teachers' planning but has not yet had the opportunity to monitor teaching to assess the effectiveness of the provision.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132. Standards are average at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is a similar judgement to that made in the last inspection and shows that standards have been maintained. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and is good in Years 3 to 6. Only games, gymnastics and problem-solving lessons were observed during the inspection but, from looking at teachers' planning, photographs and talking to pupils, it is clear that all aspects of the subject are taught including swimming, dance, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities. The school has been awarded an 'Activemark' certificate by Sport England in recognition of their commitment to a programme of physical activity and school sports. The range and number of out-of-school clubs for pupils to join is very good and provided by teachers in the school as well as by parents and outside agencies such as a local football club. These clubs add real value to the curriculum and give opportunities for pupils of all abilities to improve their skills.
133. Pupils in Year 2 understand the need for correct warm-up activities and learn about the effect of exercise on the body. They use space well and know that they must avoid other pupils when travelling round the hall so that there are no accidents. They can successfully devise their own balances and demonstrate them to the class. In Year 6, pupils solve problems working in a team. For example, they work in small groups and rearrange themselves on a gymnastics bench, without touching

the floor, in height or age order. They demonstrate good co-operative skills and work together very well. In games lessons pupils improve their skills each year. They can throw and catch with reasonable accuracy, control and pass a football and use a hockey stick to move a ball through a series of cones. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 go swimming and, by the time they leave the school, the vast majority is able to swim twenty-five metres and are confident in water. Indeed, many pupils can swim very well using a range of strokes. Pupils dress correctly for lessons and work hard to improve their performance.

134. The quality of teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good and occasionally very good in Years 3 to 6. Teachers manage their pupils well resulting in time being used effectively to help pupils learn new skills. Lessons move along at a brisk pace with all pupils kept active and fully involved. This was clearly seen in a very good Year 3 gymnastics lesson where pupils were performing different jumps. All pupils were engaged in sustained activity throughout the lesson and the available time was used to the full by the teacher to improve standards. Teachers plan their lessons well with suitable time allocated for each section of the lesson. Lessons always start with appropriate warm up activities that are followed by the main activity which is planned to build on what the pupils can already do.
135. The leadership of the subject is very good. The curriculum manager has worked very hard to keep the profile of the subject high despite the recent appropriate focus of the school on literacy and numeracy. A good scheme of work has been devised to help teachers plan lessons effectively and give them useful tips on how to improve pupils' skills. The use of information and communication technology to support the subject is developing, with a helpful document produced to further improve links. The good accommodation and resources have a positive effect on standards. The school holds two annual sports days that are well attended by parents. The school also takes part in many competitive fixtures with other local schools. These include football, netball, cricket, athletics and swimming. The pupils who take part thoroughly enjoy the experience and it helps them to improve their expertise. Pupils in Year 5 also have the opportunity to take part in outdoor and adventurous activities such as archery, fencing and rock climbing during their residential trip to Norfolk.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

136. The school has maintained the above average standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 that were noted in the previous inspection. The pupils follow a scheme of work based on the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus and exceed the expectations of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. By the end of Year 2, pupils have made good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the subject and achievement is good. The achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 is generally satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs and English as a second language make progress similar to their peers.
137. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are developing an understanding of the diversity of religious beliefs in the world. They understand the importance of religious festivals and celebrations, such as Christmas and Divali. For example, pupils in Year 2 have a good understanding of the baptismal service and its importance in the life of a Christian. Pupils are aware of the significance of places of worship and during lessons they are encouraged to talk about where they go to worship their God. The progress made by pupils in this age group is due in the main to the good teaching which was a feature of all the lessons observed. Teachers have good relationships

with their pupils and this enables them to hold meaningful discussions during lessons. For example, the Year 2 lesson in which pupils were encouraged to talk about visits to church that had some important meaning to them. The diversity of religions within the classes is used well by teachers to encourage understanding of different world faiths and beliefs.

138. In discussion, pupils in Year 6 demonstrated a good understanding of many of the major world religions, for example, Judaism, Buddhism and Christianity. They are able to talk about the similarities and differences in beliefs and can describe some of the different customs and ceremonies that are associated with them. From their studies of the Bible, pupils can talk about some of the main characters of the Old Testament such as Noah, Daniel, Joseph and Moses. They understand that the New Testament is the story of the life of Jesus and his teachings. Teaching for pupils in Years 3 to 6 is satisfactory, with some good features. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas through the use of careful questioning. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher introduced the Creation with a well-chosen story. Teachers take seriously the ideas put forward by pupils during discussions and they are encouraged to express their thoughts clearly, thus enhancing the pupils' speaking and listening skills. Effective links are made between religious education and other subjects such as history and geography.
139. The teaching of religious education is further enhanced by visits to local places of worship. For example, Year 2 visit a mosque, Year 3 visit one of the local Christian churches and pupils in Year 5 visit a Gurdwara. The school encourages visits from representatives of different faiths and this has a positive impact on pupils' understanding.
140. Generally pupils adopt a positive attitude towards their work. They are willing to take part in discussions and listen carefully to the ideas of others. Pupils behave well in lessons and co-operate with each other and their teachers.
141. The subject is satisfactorily led and the need to develop links between the subject and information and communication technology has already been identified. There are plans to provide training to enhance teachers' subject knowledge particularly about the major religions and the use of religious artefacts.