

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ALFRED STREET JUNIOR SCHOOL**

Rushden, Northamptonshire

LEA area: Northamptonshire

Unique reference number: 121857

Headteacher: Mr John Kidney

Reporting inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole  
20891

Dates of inspection: 21<sup>st</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2002

Inspection number: 194151

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Alfred Street Junior School Alfred Street Rushden Northants
Postcode:	NN10 9YS
Telephone number:	01933 353762
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Davis
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Registered inspector	English as an additional language; Equal opportunities; Information and communication technology; Art and design; Design and technology.	The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught; How well is the school led and managed; What should the school do to improve further.
14178	Patricia Willman	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils; How well does the school work in partnership with parents.
2818	Graham Warner	Team inspector	Special educational needs; English; Physical education.	
17857	David Walters	Team inspector	Science; Geography; History.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils
23566	John Iles	Team inspector	Mathematics; Music; Religious education.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Alfred Street Junior School is an average sized school located in the centre of Rushden. It draws pupils from the surrounding area. A total of 295 pupils attend the school made of 153 boys and 142 girls aged from seven to eleven. Most pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds and live in an area that is economically average. Three pupils have English as an additional language and their main language is Chinese, but none is at an early stage of English language acquisition. Fifty-eight pupils are entitled to free school meals, a figure which is average. An above average percentage (34.5 per cent) of pupils have special educational needs which is a significant increase since the previous inspection. Five have statements of special educational need, which is about average. There are quite high levels of mobility of pupils. On admission to the school, most pupils attain levels that are above those expected for their age; many start school with good mathematical skills. Since the previous inspection there have been several changes of teacher, including the headteacher. The number of pupils attending the school has dipped slightly. The school has received an award for raising pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6.

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

This is a very good school which deserves its award for improving pupils' achievement in the last few years. Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science. The quality of teaching is very good and has a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. The headteacher and senior management team provide very good leadership and the school is managed well. The headteacher and staff are supported well by the governors. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The headteacher leads the school very well and management is good.
- Standards in history, geography, physical education and music are above those expected of eleven-year-olds.
- There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships are very good.

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

- The role of subject leaders in monitoring progress in the subjects.
- The use of assessment, marking and target setting to guide pupils on how to improve.

*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 very good improvement since it was last inspected in April 1997. Standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than before. Teaching has improved and there is now a high proportion of good and better lessons. The issues raised in the previous report have been dealt with effectively. The weaknesses in leadership and management have been addressed and there are now higher standards in ICT, better planning, more rigorous monitoring of teaching and improved guidance for staff on teaching the subjects. The school is in a good position to maintain the well above average standards in English, mathematics and science and to continue to improve the quality of education through determined and effective leadership and management.

## 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
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	A	A	A
Mathematics	A	A*	A	A
Science	C	A	A	A

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

Since the previous inspection standards have risen at a rate above the national trend and standards in almost all subjects have improved. The school sets sufficiently challenging targets and is on course to achieve them. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average. The school's system of streaming pupils by ability contributes to the good standards. Progress for pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the most able, is good and in Year 6 it is often very good due to highly effective teaching. Pupils start at the school with above average levels of attainment in English and mathematics and they make good gains in their learning. The pupils achieve well through hard work and guidance from their teachers and standards are sufficiently high. There was little difference between the performance of boys and girls.

The pupils are good at applying their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects and much of their writing is interesting and imaginative as well as technically correct. Pupils have particularly good knowledge of number and have very good skills in mental arithmetic. Standards are above average in history, geography, music and physical education. In ICT, art and design, religious education and design and technology the pupils attain appropriate standards for their age. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers to support their work in other subjects.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils show much enthusiasm for school and are avid workers. They listen attentively and are good at sharing their ideas in discussions. Through their hard work and desire to succeed they help to create a purposeful and interesting learning environment.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils have a very good understanding of the school's code of conduct. They work and play happily together. They move around the school in an orderly way. In assemblies their behaviour is excellent.
Personal development and relationships	Good. The pupils are particularly good at working co-operatively and supporting each other. In many lessons they enjoy the challenge of investigating solutions to problems and maturely persevere with tasks. Relationships are very good. Pupils show much thoughtful kindness, for example, in raising funds to support charities.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils like coming to school. Punctuality is good.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very 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 teaching is very good and is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The teaching is sometimes inspirational. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good due to well-structured and thought-provoking lessons which enthuse the pupils. Pupils are effectively guided on how to improve the speed, accuracy and expression of their reading and are encouraged to read for pleasure. Writing opportunities are many and varied and teachers are particularly skilful in encouraging the use of correct spelling, grammar and punctuation to enhance the pupils' lively style. Several lessons in mathematics were excellent due to brisk and purposeful introductions, well-focused and challenging activities and skilful intervention by the teachers and support staff. Teachers encourage the pupils to apply what they have learned in English and mathematics to other subjects. The teaching of science, ICT, art and design, music, design and technology, religious education, history, physical education and geography is good. Some very good and excellent lessons were observed in these subjects.

Through good planning and preparation the teachers meet the needs of all pupils. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good as there is a good match of work to the targets in individual education plans and the support staff are very good at providing encouragement and guidance. The more and most able are set challenging work in the streamed classes and sets and respond by working productively. Pupils' learning is good. The pupils respond enthusiastically, being keen to do their best. They listen to instructions carefully, behave well and collaborate effectively. They produce good quantities of work and take much care to ensure that it is of sufficiently high quality. There are some areas where teaching could be improved; they include marking pupils' work more consistently and improving the pace and achieving better control in a few lessons. In Year 3 there is an over-reliance on undemanding worksheets in history.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Sometimes the length of time between the teaching of topics in history and geography results in uneven progress. There is a good number of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Individual education plans are used well to guide staff in planning work which is matched to the needs of the pupils. Support staff make a very good contribution to the pupils' progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Moral development is promoted very well through the "Alfo way". The staff are good role models and insist upon effective relationships and care for others. Spiritual and cultural development are good. The pupils are prepared well for life in a culturally diverse society.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff are caring and thoughtful and have a good understanding of procedures for child protection. The school has made satisfactory headway in improving assessment although more remains to be done to link assessment to targets and marking.

The school has a good relationship with parents. Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress and are supportive of the school.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy are a very effective team and have a clear understanding of how to move the school forward. The staff and governors ably support them. They provide a firm steer to school development and have good strategic plans.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Effectively. The governors are knowledgeable about the school's work and keep a check on how well it is doing through regular monitoring.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school makes good use of test data to evaluate and improve its performance. Governors set challenging targets for the staff and review them regularly.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school uses funds well and ensures best value through tendering for supplies and services. There are sufficient well-qualified staff. Apart from the library, resources are satisfactory. The buildings are in need of some renovation.

## 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 enjoy school and make good progress.</li> <li>• The good teaching which encourages their children to work hard.</li> <li>• The approachability of staff.</li> <li>• The school's leadership and management.</li> <li>• Their children's behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's buildings.</li> <li>• Consistency in homework.</li> </ul>

The inspection team fully endorse the positive views of parents. The building is in need of some refurbishment. Homework is used appropriately to support pupils' learning.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS**

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

1. Parents comment positively about their children's achievement and the school's success in national tests. Overall standards at the school have improved since the previous inspection and are above average overall. Standards are sufficiently high in all subjects although there is some variation in the rate of pupils' progress between year groups. Pupils start at the school with at least average skills in reading and writing and their mathematical knowledge is above average. The school builds successfully on this good starting point through very good teaching and pupils achieve well. There has been good improvement in the pupils' performance in national tests at the end of Year 6 and the school received an award for raising pupils' attainment between 1996 and 2000. This good rate of improvement has been maintained well and the results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 showed that standards were well above average in English, mathematics and science. When compared with schools with similar intakes, standards were also well above average. This good improvement over time has been achieved against the background of an increasing proportion of pupils with special educational needs and quite high mobility of pupils. There is some variation in the performance of boys and girls from year to year - in some years the boys outperform the girls but the converse is true in other years - but this is not significant. Through analysis of test results the school identified that girls were not achieving as well as the boys in mathematics and introduced a variety of successful strategies to raise girls' self esteem and performance. These measures have been successful.
2. The reasons for the school's success in national tests are:
  - the teaching of English and mathematics, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, is very effective;
  - improved planning to ensure that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed more effectively between classes and year groups;
  - rigorous monitoring and effective support of teaching and learning by the headteacher;
  - the staff's good use of their training experiences to improve their skills in the teaching of literacy and numeracy;
  - streaming in most year groups enables teachers to focus on the needs of pupils with similar abilities.
3. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 6 pupils should attain standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and science. Standards in speaking and listening are very good. The pupils are attentive and thoughtful listeners who are able to absorb ideas and take in and follow instructions. They speak audibly and clearly in front of different audiences and are able to sustain an interesting conversation for extended periods. Their speaking and listening skills are enhanced through opportunities to take part in drama and engage in "circle time", class discussions about personal and social issues. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading and many cope well with complex and sophisticated texts that require them to think beyond the obvious, interpret thoughts and feelings and analyse characters. Pupils use a good variety of skills and techniques to improve their reading. Many express preferences for authors, explain carefully how they use non-fiction books to help them to research information and talk excitedly about their favourite stories. They read confidently and with clarity to an audience and add expression to hold the listeners'

attention. Opportunities to use books for research are limited by the cramped and poorly equipped library. Pupils' writing is of a very good standard. The pupils have a good grasp of the skills and techniques that contribute to effective writing. They use grammar and punctuation correctly and ensure that most spellings are accurate. Their handwriting and presentation are also good. Pupils' imaginative writing is enlivened with interesting phrases and ideas. They write factual accounts using good technical vocabulary and also employ good skills in writing poetry, which bubbles over with humour.

4. The pupils' very good progress in mathematics has been enhanced in recent years by the school's approach to developing pupils' ability to investigate and solve problems using a wide variety of strategies. Pupils achieve very well in mathematics and standards are well above average. They have exceptionally good skills in recalling number facts such as multiplication tables quickly and correctly. They have a thorough grounding in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and use their knowledge to solve complex problems involving several operations. Pupils also have a very good understanding of shape, space and measures. They present their work on graphs and charts very well and show much ability in interpreting data from a variety of sources.
5. Because the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught very well pupils have much confidence in using these skills to support their work in other subjects. There is some very imaginative writing in history and pupils' accounts of their residential visits include humour, pathos and vivid description. Pupils use skills such as note taking well when researching information for topic work. The use of numeracy skills is also very good. Pupils measure carefully and accurately in designing and making slippers. In science the pupils make good use of their skills in making charts and graphs to present the results of their investigations.
6. By the end of Year 6 standards in science are well above average. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. Pupils are particularly strong in collecting and collating data and using it to record their experiments. They have very secure knowledge of scientific terms and this helps them to understand investigations and to plan their own work using correct terminology. The teaching is good as it focuses not just on imparting knowledge but also challenging pupils so that they begin to think of reasonable explanations for scientific processes. They have a very good knowledge of life and living things, physical forces and materials and their properties.
7. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved much since the previous inspection and are now average. The rate of pupils' progress in ICT has increased much in recent months due to new equipment, staff training, regular opportunities to use computers and good teaching. Although the teachers do encourage the use of computers in other subjects, this is not consistent and the school has correctly identified this as an area for further extension.
8. Standards in history, geography, physical education and music are above those expected of pupils by the end of Year 6. Pupils are very competent in using a range of materials, sources of evidence and their own general knowledge to enhance their understanding of history and geography. However, further improvement in standards in history and geography is constrained by the long gap between blocks of teaching in these subjects. In physical education lessons pupils apply much effort and are inventive and creative in dance. Standards in swimming are well above average with all pupils achieving the minimum standards required by eleven-year-olds and many achieving awards for water safety and distance swimming. The pupils thoroughly enjoy all aspects of music and are inspired by knowledgeable teaching so that they

listen and appraise music very well. They have very good skills of playing instruments and enjoy composing and performing. Extra-curricular activities contribute much to the good standards in music.

9. By the end of Year 6 standards in art and design, religious education and design and technology are in line with those expected for pupils aged eleven. In design and technology there are strengths in the way that pupils plan and design their work. Generally pupils' art skills are average but they have well advanced drawing techniques and are aware of shape, line, form and perspective.
10. Overall progress in the subjects is good. Progress is often very good in Years 4, 5 and 6 due to teaching which stimulates the pupils' imagination, challenges them and is matched well to their particular needs. Progress in Year 3 is not as rapid as in other year groups. However, pupils do make at least satisfactory progress in Year 3 and progress in English and mathematics is good. The different rates of progress are due to variations in the overall quality of teaching. Pupils' overall rate of progress has improved much since the previous inspection and this is due to effective support, guidance and monitoring of teaching, particularly in English and mathematics. More remains to be done by subject leaders in monitoring the work of their colleagues and the progress of pupils to ensure that skills, knowledge and understanding are developed consistently.
11. The school's very good provision for pupils with special educational needs ensures that these pupils make good progress overall and very good progress in English and mathematics. By the time they leave the school many pupils with special educational needs achieve standards which are appropriate for their age and this a significant achievement. This success is due in no small measure to well focused individual education plans, very effective support from learning assistants and good provision in the streamed classes and sets. Pupils with statements of special educational needs also achieve well and make good progress towards their targets. Pupils with physical disabilities receive very caring and effective support. In summary, pupils attain well above average standards in English, mathematics and science due to very good teaching and effective leadership and management. Overall pupils make good progress although progress is mainly satisfactory in Year 3. The variation is due to the underdeveloped use of assessment, marking and target setting to guide pupils on how to improve.

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

12. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have very good attitudes to school. They respond very well to the positive values promoted by the school and the relationships they have with each other and with the adults who work with them are very good. Their behaviour in almost all lessons is very good and, in many instances, it is excellent. These aspects of pupils' development have improved since the last inspection. Their enthusiasm for school, hard work and commitment are major factors in their rate of progress and the high standards they achieve. The pupils are very proud of their school and enjoy coming. As a result, attendance is above the national average and is good. Those parents who expressed a view prior to and during the inspection believe that standards of behaviour at the school are good. They are also pleased that the good values consistently promoted by the staff have a very positive impact on their children's personal, social and emotional development. The pupils' very positive response to all these aspects of their development creates a happy and purposeful community.

13. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well motivated, keen to learn and very enthusiastic about many aspects of their lives in school. They comment that their lessons are interesting and often fun. They enjoy the lunchtime and after school clubs which they support in large numbers. For example, about one third of the pupils are members of the school choir. They talk excitedly about visits they have been on and the current Year 5 are looking forward eagerly to their Everdon experience. Parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection feel that their children like coming to school and this was confirmed by many of the pupils. The pupils respond very well to the structure of the literacy and numeracy sessions and particularly enjoy their lessons in the new computer suite. Many regularly access the Internet during the mid-day break to find information on subjects of interest. They contribute thoughtfully to discussions in literacy, listening carefully to their teachers and to others in the class. In a Year 6 numeracy lesson, when pupils were required to visualise and describe three-dimensional shapes, they accepted the competitive challenge and became totally absorbed in the task, discussing their ideas and producing very high quality work as a result. Pupils also enjoy the practical nature of many of their lessons. For example, in a Year 4 science lesson investigating thermal insulators, pupils were fascinated by the melting ice cubes and, because of the teacher's high expectations and constant challenge, the pupils made excellent progress. The school is committed to inclusion and the good support provided for pupils with special educational needs enables them to take a full part in the activities offered in school and they do so with enthusiasm and commitment. These pupils have good attitudes to school and respond well to the realistic and achievable targets which are set for them.
14. Because of the generally high quality of the teaching in most lessons, pupils' behaviour in classrooms is very good. In a small number of lessons in Year 3, when pupils were bored and disinterested in their lesson, they became restless and inattentive and did not learn as much as they should. Pupils' behaviour in assemblies is excellent. They sit quietly, listen carefully and are keen to participate. They respond well to the consistent, firm and fair management by all members of staff, they understand what is expected of them and know the boundaries that are clearly established within the school. Several pupils commented that the recent introduction of the "Alfo Way" code has had a positive effect on standards of behaviour. Pupils behave sensibly at playtimes and express confidence that staff on duty will deal with any disputes quickly and fairly. There have been no exclusions.
15. Pupils' personal development is good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, gain an insight into their own and others' feelings during their personal, social and health education lessons. In their religious education lessons they learn to respect the views and beliefs of those from different faiths. Through their fund raising activities, pupils become aware of the difficulties of others less fortunate than themselves. During their time in the school, pupils take their responsibilities towards the school community seriously. The monitors are conscious of the need to set an example to the younger pupils and many others cheerfully volunteer to carry out jobs for their teachers during playtimes and lunchtimes. Most pupils get on very well together and have very good, and often excellent, relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school. Although disagreements and disputes between pupils occur from time to time, they know that bullying is unacceptable. Pupils often work constructively together in lessons, sharing ideas and improving the quality of their work. They understand the impact of their actions on their friends and on the environment. They clearly understand the difference between right and wrong and strongly disapprove of the recent instances of minor pilfering that have taken place. Because pupils are given many opportunities to organise their own work both in the

classroom and at home, they learn to make independent decisions and choices. As a result, during their time in school, they develop a mature attitude to personal responsibility. Pupils treat the building and resources with appropriate care and respect. Although there are no formal, regular systems for taking pupils' views about school into account, they were consulted over the content of the "Alfo Way", a strategy that has contributed to its acceptance and success. Pupils are friendly, polite and outgoing individuals who express their views confidently on a variety of subjects.

16. The good level of attendance at the time of the last inspection has been maintained. Inspection of the pattern of attendance in the school indicates that many Year 6 pupils have an excellent record and this is a significant factor in the high standards they achieve. Most pupils arrive at school in good time, registration is quick and lessons start promptly.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT**

17. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now very good. Parents expressed much confidence in the quality of teaching and their views are justified. The proportion of good and better teaching has increased significantly. Half of the lessons seen were very good or excellent with a third being good. A tenth were satisfactory and only two lessons were unsatisfactory or worse. The most effective teaching is in Years 4, 5 and 6. The quality of teaching has a beneficial impact on the pupils' progress and is contributing much to good standards in English, mathematics, science, music, history, physical education and geography.
18. There are several important factors which impact positively on the quality of teaching at the school. These measures help to ensure that the needs of pupils of all abilities are met effectively. They include:
  - effective monitoring of English, mathematics and science by the headteacher and subject leaders;
  - much improved planning since the previous inspection;
  - the effective use of support staff;
  - the organisation of pupils into classes which are streamed or set according to ability.
19. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good teaching. Planning is well focused and linked well to targets in the pupils' individual education plans. The learning support assistants give significantly good levels of support and are very focused in their approach. They ask challenging questions, are on hand to guide the pupils and offer much encouragement, which inspires the pupils with confidence. The staff make good use of a wide range of resources to support learning. This practical approach helps pupils to understand new ideas and to improve their skills. Most pupils with special educational needs work hard, respond with enthusiasm to their teachers and are keen to do their best. They contribute actively in discussions and listen carefully to instructions.
20. The school has very good strategies for teaching English and mathematics and the teachers plan thoroughly for these subjects. The staff have good subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy which they use well to prepare lessons. The introductions to lessons are well-paced and set the scene for learning. Teachers make very clear to the pupils what is expected of them and by explaining the lessons' objectives and referring to them through lessons the pupils gain a good understanding of what they have been taught. The teachers begin lessons brightly, often with a round of quick-fire

questions that focus pupils' attention. This works especially well in the teaching of mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to compete against one another in a friendly but rigorous way. Questions are geared to the different needs of pupils in the class and the teachers use their knowledge of the pupils to set questions which are challenging for all abilities. In an excellent lesson in Year 4 the teacher linked the introductory session to the main task of sorting and collecting data. The pupils were held spellbound as the teacher used interesting apparatus to stimulate learning. The pupils went on to produce good quantities of work in a short time and clearly understood the process of collating and organising information.

21. Teachers find many ways to make English lessons challenging. They provide a good range of texts and are very skilful in balancing the technical aspects of the teaching of English with motivating pupils with a love of reading and writing. In Year 6, the teachers' enthusiasm for literature inspires the pupils with an appreciation of complex texts such as Macbeth. Pupils responded excellently to this demanding text and used their imaginations well to produce their own poetry of the play in colloquial language. The teaching of reading and writing is very good. There are opportunities for the pupils to practise reading in a variety of ways and there is good teaching of skills such as scanning text for information and note taking. There are daily opportunities for the pupils to read, alone or to a member of staff and the teachers use these times to assess how well the pupils make progress in reading. The teachers build on the pupils' interest in literature and promote effective learning through studying different styles of writing. Towards the end of lessons the teachers spend time questioning the pupils to gauge how much they have learned. Pupils' books show that the teachers correct basic mistakes in their writing and often add comments praising their work. However, there are few instances of the teacher linking marking to the pupils' targets or including written guidance on how the pupils might improve.
22. The teachers have good knowledge of the subjects and since the previous inspection their skills in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved much through effective training and support but the teachers make insufficient use of computers to support work in other subjects. All subjects are taught well although there are slight variations between year groups or classes depending largely on the individual teacher's enthusiasm and understanding of the subject. The teaching of science is good. Staff plan lessons thoroughly and provide good opportunities for the pupils to investigate and experiment. Occasionally, in science lessons, the teacher is too ambitious and expectations are too high resulting in some frustration by the pupils and lack of understanding of what has been taught. ICT now benefits from good teaching and staff make very good use of the resources in the computer suite to provide stimulating challenges for the pupils. In Year 3 the pupils persevered well with an adventure program, making notes of their progress and using the information to improve their performance. The teaching of religious education is good and staff make good use of artefacts to bring the subject to life. Artefacts are also used well to support the teaching of history. In an excellent lesson in history in Year 4 the teacher used special objects to extend pupils' historical understanding. In an outstanding lesson in Year 5 the pupils were engrossed by the teacher's use of a range of sources of evidence and came to a clear understanding of the difference between fact and fiction. There is very good expertise in the teaching of music which promotes good standards throughout the school in composing, performing and listening and appraising music. The other subjects of art and design, physical education, geography and design and technology are also taught well although there is an overuse of undemanding worksheets in Year 3 in history.

23. The important role that support staff play in helping pupils in the classroom contributes significantly to pupils' success. Support staff are given good guidance by the teachers and also use their initiative and expertise when working alongside pupils. They offer much praise and encouragement and also expect much of the pupils. They pose challenging questions and are readily on hand to provide guidance. Underpinning the effective learning in classrooms are the very positive relationships between the staff and pupils. Teachers make much use of praise and encouragement and the pupils respond enthusiastically to the team point system. Much is expected of the pupils not only in lessons but also at extra-curricular activities and the pupils show a keen desire to please their teachers, for example, in regular practice of musical instruments. Teachers have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and performance. They expect the pupils, to work hard and to strive to achieve. Pupils respond well to these demands and work productively, take care of equipment and resources and present their work well. The mutual respect between staff and pupils helps to ensure that behaviour and attitudes are very good. The pupils' rate of learning is at its best in Years 4, 5 and 6 where it is often very good. Learning is less rapid in Year 3 due to less challenging teaching. In a few lessons the pace is too slow and this occasionally results in pupils becoming restless. In a science and mathematics lesson in Year 3 the pupils lost concentration and the momentum for learning dipped.
24. There is satisfactory provision for homework, which includes reading, mathematics and some topic work. Pupils say they enjoy homework and that it helps them to improve. The pupils are encouraged to use their initiative and to work independently, for example, in design and technology they plan their work thoroughly, discuss it with their friends and then use a variety of ideas to improve their own designs. Pupils concentrate hard on activities and apply physical and creative effort well. In art and design they study the work of famous artists carefully and apply what they have learned to their own work. In lessons in physical education they refine and improve their performance by practising skills and watching their friends, they adapt their movements, analyse their performance and then refine their skills. Pupils also enjoy working independently on problem solving. They make very effective use of their knowledge of number to solve complex problems and also maturely apply their skills learned in English and mathematics to their work in other subjects.

#### **HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS**

25. The school provides an interesting and varied curriculum which is suitably broad and in the main well balanced. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of visits that help to enthuse the pupils' interest in subjects such as history, geography and information and communication technology (ICT). The curriculum has a good impact on pupils' learning and because it is carefully planned, pupils develop knowledge, skills and understanding consistently. Since the previous inspection, the school has worked hard and successfully to improve the curriculum which is now good. Planning for the subjects is very thorough and, linked to the appropriate schemes of work, provides good guidance for teachers. Parents are very happy with the school's curriculum and feel that the staff work hard to make it interesting for their children. They are particularly appreciative of the good range of extra-curricular activities and residential visits.
26. A strength in the planning of the curriculum is the inclusion of literacy and numeracy teaching in other subjects. Teachers look for opportunities to enhance their pupils' skills in these aspects of learning and this contributes to good achievement in many subjects. The school has adopted the national strategies for literacy and numeracy

and been involved in effective staff training which has enabled the teachers to become very competent in these aspects of the school's work.

27. The school's curriculum meets statutory requirements and includes all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. The school uses the syllabus followed by most schools in Northamptonshire for religious education. A suitable amount of time is given to each subject and there is a particular emphasis on English. The provision for ICT has been improved and pupils now have appropriate access to good quality computers and suitable opportunities to develop their basic skills. In some classes computers are used well to support the work in other subjects, but this is not consistent and is an area for further development. Although history and geography are taught well and often imaginatively, there are long gaps between the teaching of geography and history topics and this means that pupils sometimes forget what they have already learned.
28. The school is very aware of its responsibilities to ensure that all pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. No pupils with special educational needs are disapplied from the National Curriculum. They take a full part in all activities in the school. They are given every opportunity to be as involved as they wish to be in extra-curricular activities as well as in lessons. Some parents choose not to involve their children in religious education and ICT and the school accommodates their wishes. The school has an appropriate policy for equal opportunities and staff are well aware of the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils.
29. The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The level of support is very good. When it is necessary for the pupils to receive support it is well planned and linked effectively to individual education plans. In class lessons, work is planned at different levels, particularly in English and mathematics. The pupils are well supported here by the streaming system that the school adopts in Year 3, 5 and 6. In Year 4 they are taught in mixed ability classes in most subjects with setting for mathematics. Again their support is effective as a result of careful and thoughtful planning. The added support of learning assistants in many lessons in all year groups is greatly advantageous. Learning support assistants are fully involved in drawing up the pupils' individual education plans.
30. The school makes appropriate provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE) and prepares pupils well for their life in a multi-cultural society. There is an appropriate programme of sex education and parents are made aware of this provision. The school emphasises topics such as healthy eating and also makes the pupils aware of the dangers of harmful substances. In many classes there are opportunities for the pupils to discuss social and personal issues in 'circle time'. The pupils say that they value these opportunities and staff report that they have had a good impact on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. The curriculum is enriched through many extra-curricular activities that occur at lunchtime and after school. Pupils are enthusiastic participants and take their commitment to these activities very seriously. Another aspect of the school's curriculum is the opportunity for the pupils to take part in residential visits to improve their skills in using computers and to take part in adventurous activities.
31. The school is very much part of its local community being close to the centre of the town. There is a tradition of raising funds to support local and national charities and also to provide opportunities for the pupils to share their musical expertise by singing and dancing to community groups. There are very good links with the other schools in the town. Links with the secondary school are well established and include opportunities for the pupils to use the school's equipment and resources and to

benefit from specialist teaching in subjects such as design and technology and ICT by secondary school teachers. There are good opportunities for the pupils to visit the secondary schools prior to transfer to the next phase of their education. Suitable records and information about the pupils are shared between the schools.

32. The provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good overall. There is particular strength in the provision for moral development. Provision for spiritual development is good. There are a number of effectively planned opportunities across the curriculum in all classes throughout the school. Teachers give good opportunities to pupils to consider others' feelings and emotions as they discuss sensitive issues such as conflict and bullying. The teachers use class discussion times to sensitively introduce new ideas and to challenge the pupils' thinking. Religious education lessons also play a significant role in nurturing the pupils' spiritual understanding and knowledge of the traditions and beliefs of many cultures and faiths. Staff also seek to value the pupils' work and this is successfully achieved as pupils contribute well-written poetry to the local authority's annual collection of school's poetry. Their writing is often sensitive and expresses mood and feeling very well. In assemblies there are good opportunities for the pupils to reflect and consider important issues and to participate in the daily act of collective worship. The contribution of the recorder group at these times adds much to the spiritual atmosphere.
33. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good and makes a significant contribution to the very good behaviour and relationships throughout the school. The few pupils who have difficulties in forming relationships are extremely well supported by the good role models provided consistently by the staff. The school promotes its behaviour code, the "Alfo Way" successfully in all classes. There are shared expectations and pupils are taught very well to understand the differences between right and wrong. There are good systems to reward good behaviour. The weekly competition to obtain the most points is acknowledged publicly in assemblies. Provision for social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to form very good relationships with one another and the adults who work with them. Social development is an integral part of the school's way of operating. The school has the feeling of a large, happy family. There are good opportunities to learn how to socialise in a variety of contexts including residential visits. Teachers also plan opportunities for different groups to work together in classrooms and on day visits that support pupils' knowledge of subjects such as art and design and history. Pupils respond by working harmoniously in pairs, small groups and whole classes. They listen carefully and respectfully to one another as well as to the adults who work with them. The high quality of the relationships that are formed underpins the social development of pupils successfully.
34. Provision for pupils' cultural development is also good. There are strengths in the way that their own culture is successfully supported in a range of ways. The love of literature by authors as diverse as Laurie Lee and Shakespeare is part of their learning in Year 6. In design and technology the topic on making slippers links very well with the industry and history of the local area. Music and dance are also helping pupils' knowledge of their own culture to develop effectively. Country dancing and Maypole dancing are accompanied by traditional music and give pupils a great deal of pleasure. They take this warmth out into their local community as they dance for various groups of people including some of the local older people. They consider the cultures of others in their religious education lessons about other faiths. The school prepares pupils well for life in a culturally diverse society by providing good opportunities for the pupils to explore their own and others' cultures. The school

strongly promotes racial equality and harmony through classroom discussions and assemblies.

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

35. The good quality of the care provided for pupils has been maintained well since the last inspection. The welfare of all pupils is a fundamental priority for the school and the kindness and commitment of all adults who work with and care for the pupils ensures that the day-to-day educational and personal support for individual pupils is good. Although the monitoring of pupils' academic progress is satisfactory, because of inconsistencies in the systems of assessment through the school, it is not yet as effective as it should be. The provision made for those pupils with a statement of special educational need is good. Parents say that they trust the school to take care of their children and are confident that they will be kept informed of any problems that may arise.
36. The school has good procedures and established practices to govern health and safety and child protection. Although comprehensive risk assessments have not yet been formalised, termly checks and a good awareness of health and safety issues by the site supervisor and other staff ensure that the school is a healthy and safe environment. Good safety assessments are carried out for visits outside of school that minimise any potential risk and there are comprehensive procedures to deal with any critical incidents which may occur. The provision for first aid is very good and fire drills take place each term. The headteacher has attended appropriate training for his role as child protection co-ordinator. All staff follow recognised guidelines and have a good awareness of the particular needs of those pupils identified as at risk of harm. Teachers ensure that pupils understand how to use resources safely and the importance of good hygiene and diet. Pupils receive appropriate information about sex and drugs through the personal, social and health education programme and visitors come to school to talk to pupils about issues of personal safety. Supervision during playtimes and lunchtimes is good.
37. Because of the very good relationships that teachers have with the pupils, the formal and informal procedures for monitoring personal development are good. There are effective systems to monitor and promote pupils' attendance. The majority of parents inform the school of reasons for absence and there is very little recorded unauthorised absence. Class teachers alert the headteacher to any concern about individual attendance, and the school is well supported by the Education Welfare Officer. Pupils who achieve 100 per cent attendance over a year receive a certificate in recognition of their achievement. Morning and afternoon registration procedures comply with legal requirements. A particular strength in monitoring and promoting good behaviour in the school is the consistency and fairness with which staff apply the procedures. All staff including the mid-day supervisors have benefited from training in behaviour management, and this has effectively ensured the consistent approach. Pupils understand what is expected of them and trust the staff to handle any poor behaviour effectively. The recently introduced "Alfo Way" has been well received by the pupils who say that they try hard to achieve the incremental merit certificates. Records are kept of pupils who persistently misbehave, although there are few recorded instances. Bullying is not tolerated. Pupils understand the need to tell someone if they are unhappy and are confident that they will be helped.
38. The school has satisfactorily improved its procedures for assessment since the previous inspection. However, procedures are inconsistent through the school and the staff recognise the need to bring cohesion to this aspect of their work. The school complies with statutory requirements for testing pupils at the end of Year 6 and also

uses optional national tests yearly to check on pupils' progress. Teacher assessments and test results match closely. At different points during the school year the teachers test the pupils' reading skills and they keep adequate records of the results. The headteacher, senior management team and staff from Year 6 analyse the results of national tests and use the information to set general targets for improvement. This worked very well when the school identified girls' underachievement in mathematics and introduced a programme of action to raise standards.

39. However, the school has yet to forge the link between assessment, target setting and marking to ensure that pupils are guided sufficiently on how to improve. The school's statement about assessment lacks detail and there is no marking policy to guide staff on linking assessment and marking. As part of the school's use of national guidance, there is some very basic assessment in a few subjects typically at the end of a unit of work and also assessments in mathematics to plan work. This is giving a growing body of information about individual levels of attainment that has yet to be used fully to evaluate the rate of individual progress, to inform teachers' future planning or to ensure that pupils develop skills and understanding in a logical sequence. The school is working on improving consistency in assessment.
40. The educational and personal support and guidance provided for the pupils with special educational needs are good. The school's all-inclusive ethos helps to ensure that these pupils are well supported. The staff assess the needs of the pupils very carefully and tasks are devised at a level that supports individual needs. The precise and well thought out individual education plans are drawn up by class teachers and learning support assistants in the first instance. They then receive input from the headteacher as the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. The joint efforts of these members of staff ensure that individual needs are thoroughly assessed and progress is monitored and reviewed carefully in order to meet changing needs. The rigour in setting challenging targets enables the pupils to achieve well.

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

41. The school has a constructive and effective partnership with parents. This good relationship has been maintained well since the last inspection. The school provides parents with a range of opportunities to encourage them to become involved in school life and in the learning of their children. Most parents value the educational opportunities provided and are keen to help their children at home. This has a positive impact on the work of the school and on their children's attainment. The majority of parents who expressed an opinion prior to and during the inspection are supportive of the work of the school.
42. The information provided for parents about the school is good. The prospectus and governors' annual report contain useful and practical information about the school. The school offers two formal opportunities for individual consultation with staff about their children's progress, although a small number of parents choose not to attend these important meetings. The headteacher and class teachers will always make time to talk to parents if more information is required. The annual reports on pupils' progress are good. They give parents good information about how well their child has done but do not give a clear indication of attainment. Parents are kept up-to-date with school activities through regular letters and newsletters. Brief details about what each year group will be learning are published in the newsletters and this is sometimes supplemented with further detail provided by individual class teachers. Presentations to explain new educational initiatives are organised, but these have been poorly attended in the past.

43. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are involved at every stage in the decision making process about how their children's needs should be met. The majority accept the invitation to be involved in the reviews that are held regularly to decide on the next stage of provision. This is because most of the parents whose children have special needs have a high interest in ensuring that these needs are fully met and their children are enabled to make good progress. They feel welcome and valued in the school, knowing that their views will be listened to and appropriate action taken on any sensible suggestions they may make. They are given good quality information and they value the wide range of support provided for their children.
44. The school recognises the positive impact of parental involvement in raising the achievement of their children and improving school life. A small number of parents are actively involved within the school and their help and that of the parent governors is valued. Many parents volunteer to help with walks around the local area and visits further afield. The majority of parents take their responsibilities under the home/school agreement seriously by ensuring that their children attend school regularly and provide support for them at home. Events organised by the Friends' Association are well supported and the funds raised are used to improve the school's resources and develop the playground environment. Although the school does not formally canvas parents' views about aspects of school life, the headteacher is usually in the playground at the beginning and end of the day to listen to parents. Whilst this provides a very valuable line of informal communication, a more formal approach to parents would allow their views to be fed in to the decision making process.

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

45. The leadership and management of the school have improved much since the previous inspection and have had a significant impact on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching. The issues raised in the previous inspection report have been tackled rigorously and there is much more consistency in teaching, learning and curriculum development. However, the school has identified that more remains to be done in ensuring that assessment and marking are more consistent. Parents expressed the view that the school had improved in recent years and that the headteacher and staff are very approachable. They also believe that the school is led and managed well.
46. The headteacher and senior management team have a very clear understanding of school improvement and make a very effective team. Leadership is very good and results in a cohesive, committed and hard working team of teachers and support staff. The headteacher has been very successful in ensuring consistent management of behaviour and in promoting positive attitudes to learning. All staff contribute well to managing pupils' behaviour and help to create a positive and vibrant feel to the school. The school has clear aims and values which are understood by all and pursued with rigour. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and to improving the quality of education for all pupils.
47. The management of the school is good. The governing body successfully fulfils its statutory responsibilities and ensures that all subjects are taught. Requirements for religious education and collective worship are met well and these aspects of the work contribute effectively to promoting pupils' awareness of life in a culturally diverse society. The governors are keen to support the school and many are frequent visitors who are involved in monitoring the school's performance. Governors for literacy and numeracy are well aware of the school's strengths in these subjects and pleased with the pupils' performance, but there is no sense of complacency and the governors hold the school to account for its curriculum and test results. Governors are very

supportive in other aspects of the school's work, taking a keen interest in improving the accommodation and resources. They carefully consider the costs of new initiatives and ensure best value in purchasing supplies and services. For example, money has been spent well in providing a new computer suite and specific grants for the training of teachers have been used well.

48. There is an effective structure of committees. The committees are well organised and meet regularly. They report their findings to the main governing body and this approach ensures that all governors are kept fully informed of developments at the school and are able to make informed decisions when setting the school's priorities.
49. The school has a useful long-term strategic plan. It includes costs, timescales and measures of success. The people responsible for particular elements of the plan are clearly identified and resources, time and money are made available for them to ensure that targets are met. The school's plans are highly appropriate and the priorities are clear and well focused. Governors in consultation with the headteacher and staff allocate funding for these priorities. The governors follow through major items of expenditure to ensure that funds have been used well to support teaching and learning.
50. The school has effective systems for managing finance and there are robust financial controls. The most recent audit report on the school highlighted a few minor recommendations and the school has carried these out. Good use is made of technology to keep a track of spending and the administrative staff efficiently and effectively provide useful information to the headteacher and governors so that they can monitor the impact of spending. The school clearly earmarks funds for the subjects, the provision for special educational needs and staff training. These funds are used well. The governors have chosen to buy most of their supplies and services directly from the local authority and they review this decision regularly. They have found that this approach has worked well and has benefited the school particularly in building maintenance and improvement.
51. The headteacher and senior management team have good skills in analysing the school's performance in national tests. They identify particular areas of strength or weakness, discuss these with the staff and governors and put into action plans for improvement. This has worked particularly well in mathematics where girls were not achieving as highly as boys. Changes in the teaching, improved resources and careful setting of pupils by ability have resulted in an improvement in girls' attainment. The governors are also involved in evaluating the school's performance and have a good understanding of test data. They set challenging targets for the headteacher which are linked to pupils' performance and similarly teachers are given targets for improvement. These targets are reviewed annually.
52. The provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is managed well and meets statutory requirements. The school has good number of staff to support the pupils' progress and their work is overseen by the co-ordinator for SEN (SENCO). There is a recently appointed governor with responsibility to oversee this aspect of the school's work. The school provides additional funding for the provision for pupils with SEN and this is used wisely. The SENCO monitors the provision rigorously through an on-going programme of reviews. The staff have recently started a programme of training in new procedures for special needs. Resources for meeting SEN are satisfactory.
53. The school has sufficient teaching staff with appropriate qualifications and skills. Staff are keen to attend courses to improve their skills and there is an extensive

programme of staff development which has helped to improve the teachers' performance in teaching literacy and numeracy. Information from courses and training events is shared with colleagues, including support staff where appropriate and this helps to bring consistency in the teaching. The support staff make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. This is particularly noticeable in the work with pupils with SEN and especially those with physical disabilities. Support staff work very well alongside the teachers. They have good levels of expertise and are keen to enhance their skills through further training. Other staff working at the school contribute much to the sense of teamwork and cohesion. The site supervisor and staff of cleaners work hard to maintain the school.

54. The school has a satisfactory range and adequate quantity of resources for the teaching of the subjects. The new computer suite is of good quality and is already beginning to make a significant impact on the rate of pupils' progress. There are good textbooks to support the teaching of many subjects, and a suitable range of artefacts to stimulate pupils' interest in subjects such as history and religious education. The school makes good use of other resources such as visits to places of local and national interest and uses the local authority's loans service to provide additional items of equipment and books. However, the library is rather small and cramped and there is an inadequate range and number of books to enable pupils to enhance their research skills.
55. There have been many recent improvements to the school building including new windows and some work on the playground to make it a more attractive area for pupils. However, overall the accommodation is unsatisfactory. Many of the classrooms are small and cramped conditions inhibit opportunities for pupils in creative areas such as art and design. The furniture in most classes is cumbersome and old fashioned although the school does have a programme for replacement.
56. In view of:
- pupils' average socio-economic backgrounds and better than average attainment on admission to the school:
  - higher than average costs of educating the pupils:
  - well-above average standards attained in English, mathematics and science:
  - good achievement of almost all pupils in most subjects:
  - very good teaching.

The school provides good value for money which is an improvement since the last inspection.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER**

57. In order to build upon the very good improvement made since the previous inspection, the well above average standards and good quality of education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

**(1) \*Improve the role of subject leaders in monitoring progress in the subjects by:**

- a. providing more opportunities for them to evaluate the pupils' work and check on the consistency of developing skills, knowledge and understanding.

(Paragraphs 10, 45, 78, 80, 83, 92, 96, 101,111, 116.)

**(2) \*Make more effective use of assessment by:**

- i. introducing a consistent approach to marking pupils' work;
- ii. \*\*using marking more effectively to guide pupils on how they might improve;
- iii. linking pupils' targets to marking so that they are clear about the next step in their learning.

(Paragraphs 12, 21, 38-9, 45, 66, 78, 80, 91, 96, 101, 116.)

**Other issues the governors should consider for inclusion in the action plan:**

- \*extend the use of computers in other subjects; (Paragraphs 7, 27, 67, 70, 77, 81, 91, 99, 106.)
- \*improve the library; (Paragraphs 3, 54, 67, 81.)
- review the organisation of the teaching programmes for history and geography; (Paragraphs 8, 27, 90, 94)
- improve the accommodation. (Paragraphs 55, 87).

\*The school has identified these issues in its development plan.

\*\*This is done successfully in mathematics.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	63
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	41

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	21	21	7	1	1	0
Percentage	16	34	34	11	2	2	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	295
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	58

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	102

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	27
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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*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 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2001	41	33	74

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	37	39	40
	Girls	29	26	31
	Total	66	65	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	89 (89)	88 (83)	96 (98)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	38	39	40
	Girls	30	27	31
	Total	68	66	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (79)	89 (81)	96 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	2
Indian	3
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	3
White	285
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	0	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: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.3
Average class size	26.8

#### **Education support staff: Y3 – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	126

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	545,762
Total expenditure	528,307
Expenditure per pupil	1,804
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,640
Balance carried forward to next year	38,095

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
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	295
Number of questionnaires returned	69

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	1	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	38	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	0	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	41	41	17	1	0
The teaching is good.	57	41	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	51	10	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	26	3	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	1	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	23	59	12	1	4
The school is well led and managed.	57	32	3	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52	45	1	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	52	4	3	7

### Other issues raised by parents

Overall parents feel that the school ethos is one of supportive encouragement, together with the right amount of 'pressure' on the children to achieve their best. Parents feel the children benefit from the competitive element the streaming brings to the classroom. They say that there is a sharper focus on the management of the school and a positive approach to school improvement. Some parents felt the school buildings need improving

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

### **ENGLISH**

58. Standards in English have improved much since the previous inspection and are now well above the national average. Results of National Curriculum tests in 2001 showed that pupils achieved well above average standards and when compared with schools with similar intakes, standards were also well above average. Pupils achieve well in all aspects of English and are very successful in using their literacy skills to support their work in other subjects. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, is very good. This is also an improvement since the previous inspection. These improvements are the result of much improved teaching, sharply focused planning, the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and effective monitoring of teaching and learning. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English are well above average by the end of Year 6. The rate of improvement since the previous inspection has been above the national trend. Boys and girls perform equally well in English.
59. By the end of Year 6 pupils' skills in speaking and listening are well above the national average. Pupils speak articulately and clearly in a range of situations; they hold conversations with their peers and adults using a good range of vocabulary appropriate for the occasion. In discussions about their work they make good use of subject vocabulary. For example, in mathematics they carefully explain a series of complex operations using mathematical terms correctly. They talk animatedly about their visits to Everdon and Kingswood, narrating humorous incidents effectively. Pupils listen very well and show they have understood by carrying out instructions carefully. They show much consideration for their peers as they explain answers to questions. Pupils also enjoy listening to their teachers. For example, in a Year 6 lesson the teacher described the operation of a washing machine cycle using good sound effects and the pupils became totally absorbed in the description and learnt much about how to plan a series of operations using sensors. In assembly, pupils listen very well and during times of reflection they concentrate hard.
60. By the end of Year 6 pupils achieve well above average standards in reading. Pupils of all abilities do well to attain high standards. They have very good skills and techniques for building words which are developed well in Years 3 and 4 and, because of the wide range of materials available to them, they learn to read from a good range of texts which become increasingly more complex in Years 5 and 6. Very effective additional adult support for pupils with special educational needs ensures that all pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy reading and are proud of their achievements. In Year 6 they keep a log of what they have read, discuss the work of their favourite authors and, when doing research, draw information from a range of sources, including the internet, and collate the information in coherent argument. They read with very good levels of accuracy, developing fluency and expression in their reading. When reading aloud to an audience they are clear and audible.
61. Standards in writing are well above average by the end of Year 6. At all stages of their learning pupils experience writing in different styles. In literacy lessons, pupils are taught very well the techniques and skills of writing and teachers emphasise the importance of correct spelling, grammar and punctuation. Pupils apply these skills very well to their writing which is usually well presented in a joined and legible script. Pupils' writing is imaginative and holds the reader's attention well. For example, in Year 5 pupils produced some excellent instructional writing adding humour and

poignancy. In Year 6 pupils write well-structured poems. They also use their skills in reading complex texts such as Macbeth, and apply what they have learned in writing a modern version of part of this play which captured their attention and imagination.

62. The pupils apply their literacy skills well in several other subjects. In history they use research skills to find out about the Tudors, they take notes from reference books and interpret them skilfully, producing written work of high quality. In science they use subject specific vocabulary very well in all years.
63. Progress for all pupils is very good. This is due to the teachers' thorough knowledge and understanding of the subject and their expertise in understanding the National Literacy Strategy. From Year 3 pupils are encouraged to write using joined script and this is developed well throughout the school and pupils are also encouraged to use these skills in other subjects. Consequently, pupils' handwriting is well formed and fluent by the time they leave the school. Pupils' success in English is due to the consistency in the teaching of all aspects of the subject. There has been good monitoring by the headteacher and the subject leader to ensure that all staff follow subject guidance and set sufficiently challenging work for the pupils.
64. Pupils achieve well. They work hard and produce good quantities of work. They are keen to do their best in order to please their teachers and they show much pleasure in producing work of high quality. They appreciate the work of their friends and draw on others' ideas to fine-tune their writing. In most lessons, behaviour is very good and sometimes excellent. This is due to teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and their insistence on courtesy and respect for one another's views and opinions.
65. The quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent, particularly in Years 5 and 6. On rare occasions teaching is satisfactory. This is due to lack of confidence by the teachers in setting sufficiently challenging work and ensuring that the lessons proceed at sufficient pace. The teaching of basic skills is particularly good. Almost all lessons are well structured, follow the pattern of the National Literacy Strategy which is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils. There are brisk and purposeful introductions during which the teacher often sets the scene imaginatively using a good range of texts. Discussions are often lively at this point in the lesson and teachers ensure that pupils clearly understand what is to be learned and how much time they have to achieve the task. By setting time limits pupils are encouraged to work hard and to concentrate well. Teachers consistently remind pupils of what is to be achieved during the lesson and at the end of the lessons review what has been learned and keep a check on how well pupils have understood.
66. The work in groups is very effective. This is partly due to the school's system of streaming or setting for English, but is also the result of very effective support by learning assistants. This group of people works very well particularly with pupils who find work difficult. They use well-focused questions, encourage pupils to use aids such as dictionaries and sensitively correct their work. Homework is used regularly to improve pupils' spelling and, in some classes, there are opportunities for pupils to write at home. Lessons are planned and prepared very well and the needs of different pupils are taken into account. Marking is an area for further improvement. There are some good examples of marking where guidance is given to pupils. However, in most cases, there is insufficient guidance to show pupils how they might improve their work. The school is beginning to set targets for the pupils, although these are not always sharp enough and are not usually linked to marking.
67. The subject is well led and managed and there has been good monitoring to ensure consistency between year groups and classes. The school makes good use of data

from national tests to analyse pupils' performance and teachers keep accurate records of pupils' progress. The procedures for assessing pupils in English are satisfactory. There is a suitable range of resources to support the teaching of literacy and sufficient variety of reading books. However, the library is rather cramped and the range and quantity of books are limited. There have been recent improvements in the use of computers to support the teaching of English and, in some classes, pupils present their work using information and communication technology, but this is not consistent through the school and is an area for further development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

68. Standards in mathematics have improved since the previous inspection. The teaching of mathematics is very good and in many instances, particularly in Years 4, 5 and 6, it is excellent. The high quality of teaching has contributed much to improved performance in national tests in recent years. Standards have risen consistently at a rate above the national trend. Until recently boys tended to achieve higher results than girls. The school recognised these variations in performance and through effective streaming of pupils by ability provided additional support and challenge for girls. It has raised girls' attainment to be in line with that of boys. Results of national tests in 2001 showed that standards were well above the national average and, when compared with similar schools, they were also well above average. Inspection evidence shows a similar picture with pupils performing very well and attaining standards which are well above average by the end of Year 6. Pupils' understanding of mathematical vocabulary, and skills in problem solving, as well as their capacity to recall number facts quickly and accurately, are significant strengths. Reasons for improved performance over time have included the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and high quality teaching. Pupils make very good progress in mathematics. Pupils with special educational needs also make very good progress because they are supported well by knowledgeable classroom assistants. The most able are given very challenging work and they respond enthusiastically to these demands and achieve high standards.
69. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an excellent knowledge of mathematical vocabulary and use this effectively when solving problems because their knowledge enables them to understand complex issues. They have a very good understanding of how to apply different strategies. For example, in a very challenging lesson in Year 6, pupils combined three-dimensional shapes and accurately described the number of edges, vertices and faces within a complex polyhedron. Pupils' ability to solve problems and to investigate complex mathematical ideas is enhanced by their exceptionally good knowledge of basic number facts. They have extremely quick and accurate recall of multiplication tables, understand number patterns and bonds and calculate accurately in their heads. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils made excellent use of their knowledge of the four times table to identify multiples and gave clear explanations. The teacher was particularly skilful here as he encouraged the pupils to explain how they arrived at the correct answer by using a variety of strategies. This imaginative and challenging approach to teaching is a consistent feature throughout this school and contributes significantly to high standards.
70. By the end of Year 6, pupils' understanding of number is exceptionally good. They calculate using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division to several places of decimals. They have a very clear understanding of ratio, proportion and percentages and apply their knowledge well in practical situations. They understand the link between decimals and fractions and use either very competently in appropriate situations. Pupils also have very good knowledge and understanding of shape, space

and measure. They use this knowledge well in other subjects. For example, in design and technology they carefully measure templates for slippers. In science and geography, they make very good use of their skills in data handling to create charts and graphs to present their work meaningfully. They understand that graphic representation is often a quicker way of presenting information than writing complex statements. In some year groups, the teachers provide additional challenge to pupils' work by using computers effectively. Although this is not consistent yet across the school, it contributes much to pupils' understanding of data handling and analysis using spreadsheets.

71. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Teachers make very good use of the National Numeracy Strategy and plan lessons which move at a brisk pace and include exciting opportunities for pupils to improve their skills. The teachers have very high expectations of the pupils with regard to their behaviour and also of their performance. The pupils respond enthusiastically to their teachers' demands because relationships between staff and pupils are exceptionally good. There is a sense of trust and commitment between staff and pupils and this is illustrated well in the work of pupils with special educational needs. Staff working with these pupils show much sensitivity and care, but also through their experience and expertise, rigorously question the pupils and move learning on well. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support because activities are often practically based and this helps them to understand mathematical ideas.
72. The school organises the teaching of mathematics by streaming or setting the pupils and this is particularly successful as it enables teachers to plan work which is matched to particular groups within the classes. Parents and pupils speak highly of this form of organisation and it works very well. Within each class teachers give much consideration to planning work that is sufficiently challenging of all abilities. During the introduction to lessons teachers enthuse the pupils, for example by encouraging competition. Pupils take delight in being the first to answer a question and also show much appreciation for their peers who do well. Behaviour in most lessons is very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils listen attentively, often engrossed in their teachers' explanations. The introductions are so well focused that pupils are left in no doubt of what is expected of them and the time they have in which to complete their tasks. Throughout lessons, pupils are reminded of how much time is left and this keeps them on task and working hard. As a result pupils produce good quantities of work that is very well presented. Pupils love mathematics. Many say that it is their favourite subject and this is a tribute to effective and sensitive teaching. There are regular and satisfactory opportunities for pupils to work on mathematics at home.
73. The subject leader provides outstanding leadership, inspiring her colleagues and supporting their teaching through monitoring lessons. The school has good resources to support the teaching of mathematics and they are used well, particularly with pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher and subject leader have analysed pupils' performance in national tests and used the information to ensure consistency throughout the school in raising girls' achievement.

## **SCIENCE**

74. Inspection evidence shows that standards in science are well above average by the end of Year 6. The results of national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2001 showed the pupils achieved standards that were well above the national average and well above those of schools with similar intakes. Pupils achieve particularly well in their use and application of scientific principles, vocabulary and investigations. They record their work very effectively using skills learned in literacy and numeracy lessons. The good

quality of teaching has had a beneficial impact on improving pupils' performance in national tests and in ensuring consistent progress throughout the school. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the more able, make good progress in all aspects of science. Standards in science have improved since the previous inspection and an analysis of pupils' performance over the last four years shows that the rate of improvement has been better than the national trend.

75. By the end of Year 6, pupils' have good skills in using specific vocabulary. They have a very good understanding of the importance of basing scientific investigation on secure data and the need to repeat tests in order to confirm their findings. Investigative and experimental science is given a higher profile throughout the school and this helps all pupils to make good progress. Pupils have a secure understanding of some basic scientific principles such as 'prediction' and 'fair test'. They make good progress in using small measuring equipment, such as timers and Newton meters, which they use accurately. The practical emphasis in the teaching is particularly effective in the work with pupils with special educational needs and enables many to attain the nationally expected levels by the end of Year 6. For example, in a Year 3 lesson about magnetic force with mostly pupils with special educational needs there were good opportunities for the pupils to test the strength of four kinds of magnet by recording how many paper clips they could attract. The pupils successfully completed the experiment and their curiosity was aroused by the unexpected results. The teacher followed up these results well and helped the pupils to understand that predictions are not always correct.
76. There has been a significant improvement in the effectiveness of the teaching since the previous inspection. This has been achieved through better monitoring of planning of teaching styles. Overall teaching is good, with a higher proportion of very good and excellent teaching than reported previously. Teachers start lessons by reviewing earlier work and setting out clear objectives for the new lesson. In almost all lessons, teachers end by asking the class if they think the objectives have been achieved. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning, as it helps them to recognise how much they have achieved. Teachers plan lessons well and encourage pupils to work briskly, often within set time limits, so that lessons move along at a good pace. In an excellent Year 4 lesson, pupils researched insulators using a CD-ROM, and this promoted effective learning as pupils used their initiative and worked independently. Most teachers are skilful at asking searching questions. They sensitively extend pupils' answers by probing further, sometimes involving the opinions and ideas of the rest of the class to extend scientific knowledge. Such situations maintain the interest of the whole class and pupils achieve well. In most lessons teachers manage behaviour very effectively and the pupils concentrate, work hard and behave very well. Support staff make a very good contribution to pupils' learning by assisting them with problem solving. Occasionally teachers do not match the work well enough to the needs of pupils and they become restless and the momentum of learning is lost.
77. The school has developed a good science curriculum, which helps teachers know what they have to teach. This has had a good impact on improving the effectiveness of teaching. Pupils are enthusiastic about investigating through the 'hands on' approach and are keen to take part in lessons and find out what happens next. The amount of writing expected does not extend their literacy skills sufficiently, but some classes are becoming more engaged in research work using websites and CD-ROM. Through measuring, making graphs and recording their data, pupils have good opportunities to use their mathematical skills. The use of information and communication technology in lessons is improving, but the school does not make

sufficient use of equipment such as thermal sensors for pupils to collect and record information electronically.

78. The recently appointed subject leader provides a good level of leadership and has put together a good development plan, which gives a clear sense of direction for the subject. A limited amount of monitoring by the subject leader has been done but more is needed to ensure consistency in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding between year groups. Action is already being taken to provide a consistent and manageable method of assessing pupils' attainment although more remains to be done. Target setting has recently been introduced and is helping identify what is needed to help pupils improve. However, teachers do not mark pupils' work consistently to make pupils aware of how well they are doing or what they could do better. Resources have improved since the previous inspection and are satisfactory and sufficient. The curriculum does not include many opportunities for pupils to discuss moral and social issues arising from science.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

79. By the end of Year 6, standards in art and design are in line with those expected of 11-year-olds. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the most able, make good progress overall. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in drawing and standards in this aspect of the subject are above those expected as there is a consistent approach to teaching skills and a wide range of opportunities for pupils to practise and refine their techniques. The school has maintained standards in art and design since the previous inspection.
80. The school has a suitable scheme of work which provides appropriate guidance for teachers on developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The new subject leader has a satisfactory overview of art in the school but has had no opportunity to monitor work in classes. Assessment and monitoring of the pupils' achievements are underdeveloped. The pupils enjoy art and design and work hard during lessons, concentrating throughout and behaving very well. Many pupils think carefully about their ideas before committing them to paper and their drawings show evidence of careful planning. There are sketchbooks in most classes which include a good record of the pupils' progress in experimenting with line, form and perspective. These techniques are practised regularly and the teachers provide an interesting and challenging range of opportunities. Pupils in Year 5 produce very accurate drawings of Tudor buildings which are enhanced by effective shading and a good understanding of perspective. On their visit to Newnham they sketch cottages and the church, paying good attention to detail and producing work of good quality.
81. The school has a satisfactory range of resources although there is a limited number of books in the library to support the teaching about the works of famous artists. Pupils in each year group study famous artists and experiment with a variety of techniques such as finger painting and blending colours using pastel. The work is of satisfactory quality. Pupils in Year 3 experiment with painting using a limited number of colours and produce attractive patterns using primary and secondary colours. In their work, inspired by Escher and very effective explanations by the teacher, they produced very effective shapes which took account of geometric form and was used to create symmetrical and intricate patterns. There is little evidence of three-dimensional work but pupils use clay to models of the Tudor Rose. The school provides suitable opportunities for the pupils to experiment with printing and in Year 6 this work is of a good standard. Pupils design shapes and precisely cut them out, they use a variety of materials to make templates for printing and then apply several techniques before deciding on the most appropriate. They are knowledgeable about

the variety of techniques and work with much attention to detail. The teacher skilfully intervenes to move learning on with helpful comments and much encouragement. One of the strengths in the teaching in Year 6 is the way that the teachers praise the pupils' efforts and use the pupils' work as an inspiration for others in the class. In some classes there is appropriate use of computers to develop pupils' artistic skills. In Year 5, the pupils applied their knowledge of an art program and mathematical skills to create pictures in the style of Matisse. ICT is not used sufficiently to support the pupils' artistic development. Although in several classes pupils have experimented with simple paint programs not enough use is made of the Internet to broaden pupils' awareness of art in other cultures. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to visit art galleries.

82. In the lessons seen the teaching was good overall with some very good features. There are variations in the quality of teaching and learning between year groups and this is due to insufficient consistency in monitoring what is learned in each class. Teachers plan lessons well and prepare them thoroughly with the help of pupils. They introduce the skills to be learned and in some cases make good use of technical vocabulary. Basic skills are taught well and the teachers make good links between art and other subjects. Pupils are often encouraged to illustrate their work in history and pay good attention to detail. In the best teaching the teachers offer good advice and encourage effective learning by allowing sufficient time for the pupils to experiment with a variety of techniques and to adapt and improve their work. They intervene with helpful advice and encourage pupils to be critical of their own and others' work. Pupils apply creative skills well and are painstaking in their approach to adding detail. They thoroughly enjoy art and design. Although pupils make good progress in a range of skills, there is a lack of opportunity to monitor and assess the achievement of pupils by the subject leader and this results in skills being developed in isolation rather than consistently and results in average standards overall.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

83. Pupils, including the more able and those with special educational needs, make good progress overall. Progress in Year 6 is sometimes very good as there are interesting opportunities for pupils to take part in imaginative projects and also to visit the secondary school where they benefit from teaching expertise and specialist resources. Standards at the end of Year 6 are in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds. The school has maintained these standards since the previous inspection. Due to lack of opportunities to monitor teaching and learning there is no sharp overview of standards and progress and this results in the pupils achieving average standards overall.
84. The teaching of design and technology is good because it focuses on developing pupils' skills consistently from year to year. Teachers make good use of national guidance to plan lessons which are interesting and stimulating. In Year 6 there is a very good link made with local history and industry and pupils design and make slippers. They make good use of their mathematical skills to measure accurately and plan their work thoroughly. Pupils discuss their designs and make suggestions to one another on how they might be improved. The teachers intervene very well at different points introducing new skills and techniques. For example, in one lesson the teacher talked about a variety of stitches and their appropriateness for sewing the slippers together. Pupils thoroughly enjoy design and technology. Those with special educational needs gain much satisfaction from making functional and attractive products.

85. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress in understanding mechanisms. They use a variety of equipment and tools to make moving pictures using levers and linkages very effectively. Pupils concentrated very well in these lessons, persevered and met with significant success. The teachers structure lessons very well to include opportunities for pupils to think through their designs and to adapt and improve them before starting to make models. Pupils apply their literacy skills well during this process. They write instructions in the correct sequence and use labelled diagrams to make their instructions clear. Pupils in Year 5 combine food technology with making suitable containers to hold biscuits. Their containers are robust enough to protect the biscuit from crumbling and are also designed to attract a potential buyer's interest.
86. In all of the lessons observed, pupils' behaviour was very good. They maintained concentration well and listened carefully to instructions. The teachers moved learning on at a good pace, achieving a successful balance between investigation and skills development. Pupils are reminded to work with care and to use resources sparingly so that there is little waste. This was done well in the work in Year 6 when pupils cut templates from fabric, nesting their templates to ensure minimum wastage. The school has sufficient suitable resources to support the teaching of design and technology.
87. The recently appointed subject leader for design and technology has a clear understanding of how to develop the subject further. As yet, there has been no opportunity for her to monitor the work of pupils and her colleagues. However, she has reviewed teachers' planning to ensure that all classes have opportunities to take part in design and technology. One of the strengths in the subject is the opportunity for pupils to visit the secondary school where they are taught by specialist teachers. This compensates for the restrictions at the school caused by cramped accommodation. During their visit to the secondary school pupils have the opportunity to work with wood and to combine technical skills with information and communication technology and science to make working models of fairground rides.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

88. By the end of Year 6 most pupils are achieving standards that are above the expectations for their age. Although there was no judgement at the time of the last inspection, indications are that standards have improved. Pupils are making good progress in the vocabulary of the subject and in their understanding of the social and economic consequences of natural disasters, such as floods. Opportunities to study geography are not consistent across the school. Some Year 3 work is undemanding and pupils do not make such good progress as subsequent years. This is because the teaching is insufficiently challenging. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 study a wide range of regions and ideas and are making good progress in using electronic methods of researching information.
89. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of maps and mapping. They use their mathematical skills well to read co-ordinates and to present findings of surveys in graphs and charts. Pupils have a good knowledge of their local area and the impact of industry on population growth and change. Pupils take the learning of geography seriously and use their skills to analyse the impact of people on the environment. Pupils in Year 5 discuss issues such as traffic flow, density and pedestrianisation and complete surveys to support their findings. Of the skills pupils apply they are adept in colour coding and using keys. Year 6 pupils have undertaken their own research to find out about rivers around the world. This work is of a good standard and provides a clear illustration of the pupils' skills of using their initiative and working independently. There is good evidence in these booklets of pupils using

computers to enhance their work and also making effective use of their literacy skills to write lively and interesting reports.

90. Geography is taught in blocks of time and this hampers consistent progress as there are long gaps between topics and pupils tend to forget some of what they have learned. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make satisfactory progress in understanding their own town and its position and influence in the rest of the county. In Year 4 in their work on recycling, pupils successfully categorised materials to repair, recycle or throw away.
91. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teaching is most effective in Years 5 and 6 because there is a strong emphasis on pupils producing good quantities of work and using skills such as research. Teachers have an appropriate knowledge of geography. Lesson planning is satisfactory overall and good when the teachers plan practical activities for pupils that are sufficiently challenging. Teachers relate well to their pupils and make good use of reward and praise to encourage them. There is a particularly strong emphasis on teaching geographical vocabulary and this enables pupils to understand ideas and themes. Pupils in Year 6 use this vocabulary well in their writing about rivers. In some classes, pupils are given opportunities to collect and collate data and to use computers to present it, but this is not consistent. The teachers correct pupils' work but when marking rarely provide guidance on how the work might be improved.
92. The subject leader is recently appointed and is very enthusiastic about the subject. She is aware of the shortcomings in assessing pupils' work and in monitoring teaching and has plans to improve these aspects. The school has a suitable range of resources to support the teaching of geography and a good number of globes and atlases. Teachers make good use of local visits and also the residential visits are used as opportunities to broaden pupils' understanding of geography. Pupils, following their visit to Everdon, spoke enthusiastically about their experiences.

## **HISTORY**

93. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 is higher than reported at the previous inspection. Most pupils reach standards that are above those expected for their age because they are well motivated by good teaching. Teaching is more effective as a result an improvement in the quality of resources. Action taken in these two areas has provided better support for teachers, some of whom lacked the confidence to teach this subject well. Most pupils are making good progress and have an above average understanding of time and order of historical events. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are enthused by the interesting range of visits organised by the school. In discussion with pupils they reveal their good knowledge of life in a Tudor house and commented accurately on differences between life in Tudor times and today. The more able pupils also make good progress, as much is expected of them in interpreting information from a variety of sources. The work set for these pupils is particularly demanding and requires them to use their literacy skills very well to research information, make notes and collate their findings to present to the class.
94. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of the main events in British history, particularly Victorian influences. They know how schooling has changed and how life and conditions in local factories have also improved. Through their visits to the Black Country Museum they gain a secure understanding of what life was like for ordinary people. Pupils are enthusiastic about their study of history as lessons are brought to life by inspiring teachers who share their love of the subject and their

significant subject knowledge. The teaching of history is thorough and well focused. There is good emphasis placed on studying both primary and secondary sources of evidence. Teachers create attractive displays in their classrooms of historical objects and these are often a talking point in lessons. In Years 3 and 4 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of life in Ancient Greece and the Egyptian civilisation. History is taught in blocks of time and there are sometimes long gaps between each topic. This inhibits consistent progress in developing historical understanding, although, when the subject is taught, teaching is good and has a beneficial impact on learning. Literacy skills are taught well in Years 5 and 6 because there are opportunities for pupils to write extended passages. Historical knowledge is taught effectively in all the year groups. In the lessons seen, pupils worked hard and concentrated well. Teachers managed behaviour effectively and the pupils clearly understood what was expected of them. They behaved well and worked hard. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection although more remains to be done to ensure that it is consistent throughout the school. Overall teaching of history is good.

95. The subject leader has a clear understanding of how the subject needs to develop. There has been no monitoring of teaching, although the subject leader has had the opportunity to look at teachers' plans. There is no formal system of assessing pupils' performance, although some teachers keep records of coverage of the subject. This is an area for development. The school has sufficient resources to support the teaching of history and makes good use of visits to heighten pupils' understanding and enjoyment of history. A further area for development in the teaching of history is the use of marking to clearly identify pupils' progress and to guide them on how to improve their work. Information and communication technology is rarely used to support the teaching of history, although some pupils use the Internet to research topics at home.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

96. The school has made very good improvement in the standards achieved in ICT since the previous inspection. By the end of Year 6 standards are now in line with those expected of eleven-year-olds. Following a slow rate of initial improvement after the last inspection much has been done to raise the profile of the subject and to accelerate the rate of progress. Pupils now make good progress in all aspects of ICT. Pupils with special educational needs are given good opportunities to improve their skills and with additional help from support staff achieve appropriate standards for their age. They make good progress. Those pupils who bring wide experience and expertise from having computers at home are also challenged sufficiently and sometimes work alongside their less confident peers.
97. The teaching of ICT is good. Staff have benefited much from recent training and the support of the subject leader. Almost all are confident in using the new computer suite. At the start of lessons the teachers make good use of a large screen to demonstrate to the pupils different processes. Pupils pay good attention during this period and, because explanations are clear, apply what they have learnt when working alone or in pairs. Pupils are very keen to improve their skills and co-operate extremely well during lessons. They willingly explore new programs and experiment with different tools to find out how to improve their work.
98. By the end of Year 6, pupils are competent in word processing. They understand that the computer has several tools to enable them to edit, refine and present their work. In their work on Macbeth, pupils created a good visual impact through the use of a variety of fonts, colours and sizes. Throughout the school pupils make good progress in word processing. They understand that the mouse can be used to perform several

functions and also use the computer's tools, such as spellchecker, to ensure accuracy in their work. Pupils also use control keys well and understand several processes.

99. The school has a good range of software to support the teaching of the subject. In their work on spreadsheets and databases pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age. The oldest pupils have a good understanding of formulae and a good knowledge of technical terms related to technology. The teaching of subject vocabulary is done very well and teachers always insist on the use of correct terms. Pupils have also improved their skills in modelling and control much since the previous inspection. They understand that computers control a sequence of events and, by combining their experiences in science about circuits, they are able to create a series of instructions for the computer to follow. The teachers have started to use computers in their teaching of some other subjects but this is not consistent. The school has identified this aspect for further development.
100. Teaching and learning are good. The pupils enjoy using ICT and apply themselves well. They are keen to co-operate, share equipment and discuss ideas of how to improve their work. The more able support their less confident friends. Behaviour in lessons is usually good although in some cases the pupils become distracted and restless when the pace of lessons drops. Sometimes the computer suite becomes over warm and this has an adverse effect on pupils' concentration. Staff have benefited from good training and they are competent users of ICT with sufficient subject knowledge to improve the pupils' performance. Lessons start with well-paced introductions and clear instructions. And at the end of lessons teachers review what has been learned. By teaching skills directly on a regular basis, standards have begun to rise rapidly and pupils' competence and enjoyment ICT has been enhanced.
101. The subject leader has a good understanding of the subject and clear aims to raise standards further. Staff training has had a positive impact and teachers' access to computers at home has enabled them to refine their skills. The school also makes use of a residential visit to provide opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of experiences of ICT. The school is experimenting with systems to assess and record pupils' achievement but there is no consistent approach by all staff.

## **MUSIC**

102. By the end of Year 6, standards in music are above those expected by eleven-year-olds. The provision made for the teaching of music is a particular strength as it inspires and enthuses pupils with a love of singing and performance. Throughout the school pupils make very good progress largely because of the wide range of opportunities and the high level of staff expertise. Pupils with special educational needs take a full part in the musical activities in the school and also achieve very well. Since the previous inspection the school has maintained its good provision and high standards in music. At the meeting with parents they spoke warmly of the school's provision and expressed much delight that their children were given opportunities to perform in public and to learn a good range of instruments. Extra-curricular activities, such as the recorder groups, contribute much to the pupils' enthusiasm for music. Daily opportunities to play recorders in assemblies, sight reading the music, add much to the atmosphere of collective worship. It also contributes much to raising pupils' self-esteem and improving their confidence. Other opportunities such as the singing in the school choir at a variety of events, does much to enhance pupils' social skills.

103. The quality of teaching is very good because it focuses on extending pupils' technical knowledge of music and provides them with many opportunities to listen to and appraise the work of a variety of composers. There is an immense sense of fun and enjoyment generated in lessons and in extra-curricular activities. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and this is underpinned by an appropriate scheme of work and thorough planning. Lessons are planned to include a balance of activities. There are good warm ups so that voices are prepared for singing. Pupils are taught to respond rhythmically to clapping and to beating of instruments. Teachers pass on good advice about how to control voices. They stretch the pupils' ability by encouraging them to sing complex pieces in a number of parts and successfully teach about the impact of different types of voices when expressing meaning through song.
104. Pupils are very excited by opportunities to take part in music lessons and behaviour throughout them is of a high standard. They listen attentively, copying sounds and rhythms correctly and are also keen to make suggestions of their own to enhance performance and composition. Teachers present pupils with challenges and the pupils respond very well to this, producing high quality work. Individual performance is encouraged and celebrated and pupils are pleased to perform in front of an audience.
105. Skills throughout the school are developed consistently and pupils in each class and year group are given similar opportunities. This is achieved through a successful combination of whole year lessons and smaller group work where pupils have opportunities to compose. The imaginative approach to teaching combines several creative elements. In Year 4 pupils responded very well to the music of Vivaldi. They listened intently and interpreted the music in pictures expressing mood and feeling very well. From Year 3 pupils are effectively taught key musical terms and phrases. By the end of Year 6 they have a very good understanding of musical vocabulary and use this well when reading music and when discussing their work. They understand such terms as *ostinato*, *drone* and *triad chord* and use this knowledge in practical music making.
106. The subject leader has a very clear understanding of the strengths of music teaching throughout the school and provides very good support to her colleagues. Her excellent subject knowledge and enthusiasm does much to inspire confidence in teachers who do not have such high levels of expertise. Her infectious enthusiasm also inspires the pupils. Although there are no formal procedures for assessing pupils' performance and for recording their work due to lack of equipment, the subject leader has a very good overview of standards. The school has an adequate number and satisfactory range of musical instruments, which includes instruments used in a variety of cultures. There are an appropriate number of recorded pieces of music to stimulate pupils' listening and appraising skills. Opportunities for pupils to use information and communication technology to support their work in music are too limited.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. By the end of Year 6, standards in physical education are above the level expected for eleven-year-olds. This is an improvement upon the sound standards found at the time of the last inspection. Teaching and learning are good, and there is some very good teaching and learning in Years 3 and 6. During the inspection it was possible to observe all of the strands of physical education except swimming. However, swimming is a recognised strength of the school's physical education provision. The school is located close to the swimming baths. By the time the pupils leave school all of them swim capably. Many swim significant distances and have a thorough grounding in water safety. The good results of the pupils' achievements in swimming

are celebrated in assembly. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. The school takes particularly good care of pupils with physical disabilities and sets targets for them that provide sufficient and appropriate challenge.

108. The other areas of physical development are built upon consistently over the four years in the school and pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In Year 3 the pupils respond with enthusiasm to the good range of physical activities provided. All Year 3 classes join together for energetic and enjoyable games lessons where the focus on control of skills is effectively achieved by the pupils. They practise the skills and techniques of throwing, catching and striking and show particularly good control as they refine their hockey skills when they dribble balls around obstacles.
109. In gymnastics lessons there is also a good emphasis on improving pupils' control and poise. Pupils travel and balance in a sequence of movements to a very good standard. The teachers skilfully build up skills over a period of time and take account of what has been learned before. Teaching is good and the lessons begin with effective warm-up exercises that increase in intensity. The techniques practiced in warming up are often extended in the main part of the lessons. Skills in dance are well promoted and linked well to learning in literacy lessons. In Year 4 pupils created characters in response to a written description. They used pathways and levels in their work purposefully after listening carefully to a poem. The combination of these skills is built upon in Years 5 and 6 where dance and gymnastics are strongly represented in pupils' activities. Good control in the movements in country dancing is balanced with creative sequencing work as pupils work with partners using equipment to make effective symmetrical and asymmetrical balances.
110. All teachers plan thoroughly bearing in mind the physical prowess of the pupils and their ages. Tasks are carefully chosen to develop physical skills gradually. High expectations are set and invariably met. Learning mirrors the teaching as pupils respond with keenness and enthusiasm as well as skill. They enjoy their physical education work and express this clearly in the efforts that they make to achieve the best possible standards.
111. There is effective management of physical education even though the subject leader is a part time teacher. She has a clear idea of the needs in the subject and has detailed them in an appropriate improvement plan. Resources are satisfactory. The subject leader has not yet had enough opportunity to monitor teaching and learning directly in order to give her an overview of standards across the school.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

112. Standards in religious education are in line with the targets in the syllabus followed by most schools in Northamptonshire. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and the more able, make satisfactory progress. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Standards in the subject are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school has recently appointed a new subject leader to oversee the work in religious education and she has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve standards further.
113. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a secure understanding of a variety of religious beliefs and traditions. They know that many religions have common themes and values and that all also have their own special characteristics. Teachers are very sensitive in promoting discussion about major world religions and part of the success

of teaching is the way that pupils are encouraged to appreciate differences and similarities and to value other people's opinions. Throughout the school pupils are given good opportunities to celebrate a variety of festivals which enhances their understanding of religious tradition. There is a good balance between teaching about Christianity and other major faiths.

114. Progress through the school is satisfactory in acquiring basic religious knowledge and understanding, but pupils make good progress in making mature responses to challenging ideas. This is because teachers seek to promote tolerance and care for others. An excellent example of this was in Year 5 when the class were discussing the differences between value and cost. The teacher shared a collection of special items, some of which had no monetary value but meant much to her and the pupils' curiosity was aroused. The lesson then led into examining artefacts from the Hindu religion and pupils handled these objects with care and consideration and gained in their appreciation of their value in the eyes of Hindu worshippers. In this way teachers prepare pupils well for life in a multi-faith society.
115. Pupils also study the lives of famous people who have been influenced by their religious beliefs. In Year 4 pupils study the lives of Florence Nightingale and Mother Theresa and know about the work of Samuel Booth and the Red Cross. Pupils in Year 3 have a secure knowledge of several Bible stories and understand the importance of Jesus in Christian worship.
116. Overall, the teaching of religious education is satisfactory with some examples of very good teaching. Pupils are keen to learn about other faiths and enjoy the discussion that religious education stimulates. They listen attentively and the teacher encourages them to ask questions, not only that improve their knowledge, but, also, to test their understanding. Much of the work in religious education is through discussion, although there are examples of recorded work in which pupils express their feelings and emotions clearly. However, some of this work is on worksheets which are undemanding and require simple responses. In contrast some very good teaching in Year 6 provided pupils with opportunities to listen to a wide variety of religious music and to comment on how it evoked feelings and moods. The subject leader had identified this as an area for improvement. Teachers have a satisfactory knowledge of the subject and follow the school's guidance appropriately. Lesson planning is thorough and staff make good use of artefacts to stimulate the pupils' interest. Marking is satisfactory and pupils' mistakes are corrected, although there are few comments to guide pupils on how they might improve. Underpinning the teaching is the good relationship that teachers have with their pupils and the mutual respect shown in all classes. This contributes to orderly lessons where pupils behave well and listen carefully to others' opinions. In discussion with pupils it was obvious that they enjoy religious education and particularly the opportunities provided to find out about others' beliefs. The subject leader has plans to monitor the teaching and learning of religious education. As yet, there is no formal assessment of pupils' progress in religious education and this is an area for improvement.