

INSPECTION REPORT

DOGSTHORPE JUNIOR SCHOOL

Dogsthorpe, Peterborough

LEA area: City of Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110718

Headteacher: Janet McMurdo

Reporting inspector: Mr M Thompson
25372

Dates of inspection: 12/11/01 – 15/11/01

Inspection number: 230371

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Central Avenue Dogsthorpe Peterborough
Postcode:	PE1 4LH
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Elizabeth Noble
Date of previous inspection:	16 th March 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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25372	Mike Thompson	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19374	Wendy Sheehan	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?
12658	Margaret Beardsley	Team inspector	English Geography History	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
8839	Mike Egerton	Team inspector	Special educational needs Mathematics Physical education	How well are pupils taught?
22452	Mary Farman	Team inspector	Equal opportunities English as an additional language Science Music Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Dogsthorpe Junior School has 311 pupils on roll and is situated in an area with above average levels of deprivation, to the east of the centre of the city of Peterborough. Most of its pupils are of white, UK heritage and come from the local authority housing estate around the school. Families regularly move into and away from the area, and as a result the turnover of pupils is high. For example, almost a third of pupils currently in Year 6 have joined the school within the past three years. There is a high proportion of pupils from homes in which English is not the principal language spoken, and this proportion is steadily increasing each year. Most of these are in Years 3 and 4, and a small number receive extra help because they are in the early stages of developing skills in English. About a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is a higher proportion than is found in most schools. Four out of every ten are identified as having special educational needs. This proportion is well above the national average. Most of the pupils on the special needs register have emotional, behavioural or learning difficulties and 12 have statements of special educational need, which entitle them to extra help. Most pupils are admitted from the adjoining infant school at the start of Year 3. Data from the national tests, taken by pupils at the end of Year 2 in the infant school, shows that the attainment of those pupils who transfer to the junior school is low. The school has recently experienced a period in which the turnover of teaching staff has been very high. Thirteen teachers have left and 12 have joined the school within the past two years. At the time of the inspection, the headteacher had been in post for two terms.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an improving and effective school that provides good value for money. Many of its pupils are from disadvantaged home circumstances; two fifths have special educational needs, one fifth have English as an additional language and many move into the school or leave the school each year. From a low starting point, pupils make good progress because they are well cared for and well taught. Although the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the national target of Level 4 in the annual national tests is well below average, it has improved significantly in recent years. The school provides an orderly and attractive environment for its pupils and works very hard to give effective help to the small but significant minority of pupils with serious emotional and behavioural difficulties. As a result, pupils' attitudes towards their lessons are good and standards of behaviour are satisfactory overall. Considerable credit for the school's improved performance needs to be given to the governors, who have a very clear understanding of the day to day challenges faced by staff and have ensured that good appointments have been made. One of these is the new headteacher, who has made a considerable impact within a very short time and provides high quality leadership.

What the school does well

- From a low starting point, pupils make good progress in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- Standards in music and physical education are above average.
- Teaching is good or better in three-quarters of lessons
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The headteacher and governors give very good leadership.
- Pupils are well looked after by all adults within the school.

What could be improved

- Standards in English and mathematics.
- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The way in which the curriculum is planned in art and design, design and technology, geography and history.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Overall, the school has made good progress since its last inspection in March 1998. In particular, its performance in the annual National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6 has improved at a greater rate than most schools nationally. The key issues identified in its previous inspection report have all been addressed. There is now a clear long-term curriculum plan and there are schemes of work for all subjects. The range of pupils' writing has improved, although attention still needs to be given to the presentation of work. Teaching is significantly better; the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced from 20 per cent to five per cent and the proportion of very good or excellent teaching has risen from two per cent to almost 30 per cent. Standards in science have greatly improved. The school improvement plan sets out a very clear course for the future development of the school, and the brochure and governors' annual report now fully meet requirements. In addition, standards of composing and of physical education have improved. Much better use is made of assessment information and the quality of leadership is better.

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	E	E	E	E
Mathematics	E	E	E	E
Science	E	C	E	D

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

Although standards in English and for mathematics have remained in the 'well below average' category, the underlying trend has been of considerable improvement. The proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 in English has improved from 34 per cent in 1998 to 60 per cent in 2001, in mathematics the proportion has risen from 16 per cent to 56 per cent in the same period. Gains in science have been even greater, with the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level rising by 60 percentage points from 21 per cent in 1998 to 81 per cent in 2001. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level is well below average, and this is a contributory factor to the continued low overall grading. Overall, the school's results have improved at a much greater rate than those of most schools nationally.

The improving trend of recent years is set to continue. The headteacher is clearly focused on raising standards and is setting suitably challenging targets, and a team of good quality teachers has been recruited. This year's national test results in English were close to the target set, but results in mathematics fell well short. The strong emphasis placed on literacy, numeracy and science has, however, affected standards in art and design, design and technology, geography and history because not enough time is given to teaching these subjects. Inspection findings are that standards are above average in physical education and music; they are average in science and religious education and below average in English, mathematics, art and design, design and technology, geography, history, and information and communication technology. From a low starting point, pupils make good progress overall. Progress over time is good in English, mathematics, science, music, physical education and religious education. Progress in art and design, design and technology, geography and history is slow because the way in which the curriculum is arranged does not allow the regular, step-by-step development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding in these subjects. Since many pupils have difficulty in remembering simple facts and techniques, they need regular opportunities to practise and develop their skills. Progress in information and communication technology is slow because pupils do

not have enough opportunities to use computers and because some areas of the curriculum are not fully covered.

Especially noteworthy is the improvement in standards of reading and the greater emphasis placed on experimental and investigative science, which has contributed to the better national test results in this subject. Particular weaknesses are speaking and listening skills, especially for middle and lower-attaining pupils, and the use of information and communication technology in all subjects.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils are keen to learn and do not allow the behaviour of a small minority to distract them from their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory overall. However, a small but significant number of pupils, clearly identified by the school, have difficulty in controlling their own behaviour. The school has taken reasonable and appropriate action in dealing with these pupils, and there has been a high level of exclusions in the past two years.
Personal development and relationships	The personal development of pupils and relationships between pupils are generally satisfactory.
Attendance	Attendance rates are below the national average. The school has been successful in reducing the number of unauthorised absences, and these are now about average. Holidays taken during term time are a problem.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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 has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Three quarters of the 74 lessons seen were good or better, and over a quarter were very good or excellent. A small proportion of lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, history, music, physical education and religious education. It is satisfactory in art and design and information and communication technology. Owing to the way in which the curriculum is planned, the only geography lessons seen were in Year 4 and therefore no overall judgement on the quality of teaching in this subject can be made. Pupils are taught in groups based on their attainment in English, mathematics and science, and this is having an effect in raising standards. Skills in literacy and numeracy are well taught. Teachers successfully meet the varied needs of their pupils because they plan their lessons thoroughly, and constantly assess the level of pupils' understanding through good questioning. As a result, pupils are generally interested in their lessons and try hard. A particularly good feature of lessons is the teamwork between teachers and skilled learning support assistants. These learning support assistants provide very good help for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language and ensure that these pupils play a full part in lessons. Teachers' skills in managing pupils are of critical importance in this school. In most lessons they are good or very good. Where they are inconsistent or weak, the learning of the majority of well-behaved and attentive pupils is affected by the conduct of a small minority.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum in English, mathematics and science is good. The curriculum in art and design, design and technology, geography and history needs to be improved. Although the planned curriculum information and communication technology is sound, it cannot be taught in full because of the shortage of some resources.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is a small, but significant number of disturbed pupils within the school and extensive support is provided for them. A particularly good feature of this support is the 'Nurture Group' for pupils in Year 3 who have poor social skills.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Pupils are fully integrated into all activities and make good progress in developing their skills in English.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The arrangements for pupils' moral development are good. The way in which the school develops pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good overall. Pupils' academic and social development is very carefully monitored.

The school works hard to try to involve parents in their children's education.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very clear direction for the work of the school. She is very well supported by her able deputy.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are committed and supportive and have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have ensured that all statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Teachers are good at critically evaluating their work and are committed to improve further.
The strategic use of resources	Very good overall. Grants allocated for specific purposes, such as funds for special educational needs, are very well used. However, computers need to be used more to support work in all subjects.

Overall, the levels of staffing and resources are good. The accommodation is spacious and is well maintained. Governors are very good at applying principles of 'best value' when making decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and make good progress• Teaching is good• Teachers are approachable• The school expects their children to work hard	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Standards of behaviour• Information from the school about their children's progress• The range of extra-curricular activities

Inspectors' judgements support all of the positive views expressed by parents.

With regard to the areas which some parents would like to see improved:

- The inspection team agrees that standards of behaviour of a significant minority of pupils should be improved.
- Information provided by the school is good. Pupils' annual written reports are very detailed and there are frequent opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is better than is found in most schools. However, the 'Tuesday Club' in which most of these activities take place is relatively new.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 Attainment on entry to the school, in Year 3, is low. Prior to their transfer from the adjoining infant school, pupils in Year 2 are tested in reading, writing and mathematics. Results of the 2000 national tests for those pupils who transferred from the infant school show that the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected standard was well below average in reading and very low in writing and mathematics. A significant number of these pupils have poor social skills and some also have emotional and behavioural problems. Data compiled by the school shows that while there is some year on year fluctuation in attainment on entry because of variations in the groups tested, the trend is one of steady improvement overall. In response to the needs of pupils, which are quickly identified as they join the school, a large number are placed on the special educational needs register. Currently, 40 per cent of pupils are on the special educational needs register and four per cent have statements of special educational need. A small number of Year 3 pupils spend each afternoon session in the school's 'Nurture Group', which has been established to support pupils who have low levels of social skills. This unit is an unusual feature for a junior school, and is more often found in infant schools in areas of high deprivation. The school also takes in a number of pupils who are from homes in which English is not the principal language spoken. There are currently eight per cent of pupils in this category, and the proportion is increasing each year. Since such a high number of pupils have very clearly identified needs, 18 learning support assistants and a part-time teacher are employed to help the class teachers.
- 2 As they move from year to year, pupils make good progress overall. This happens because pupils are well taught and their progress is carefully monitored. In English and mathematics, pupils are taught in 'sets'. These groupings, based on attainment, are effective in raising standards because pupils are working alongside others of broadly similar potential, and teachers are better able to devise achievable challenges for all. Results of periodic reading and spelling tests and of the voluntary and statutory national tests are very carefully analysed so that strengths and weaknesses within subjects and within individual pupils' performances can be clearly identified. As a result of the good progress made over time, the proportion of pupils achieving the national target level in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is increasing year by year. During the three year period from 1998 to 2001 the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the expected Level 4 has increased by 26 percentage points, while in mathematics results have improved by 40 percentage points. Overall, the school's performance in the national tests is categorised as being well below the national average and the average for schools with pupils from similar backgrounds in both of these subjects. This is because there is still a large proportion of pupils attaining below the expected level and too few above it. The school is fully aware of this situation and has a number of initiatives underway to raise attainment further. One of these is the linking of teachers' performance targets to the attainment of a small group of identified pupils in each class. The school's performance in raising pupils' attainment is even more noteworthy when viewed in the context of the high mobility of the local population. About one fifth of pupils either joined the school or left during the course of the previous year. In these circumstances, the school's very good procedures for assessing and for monitoring the progress of pupils are of critical importance.
- 3 The school has a strong commitment to raise attainment and sets challenging targets for the performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests in English and mathematics. In 2000, the school came close to achieving its target of 63 per cent of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English and scored 60 per cent overall. The difference between its performance and its target was the equivalent of the results of two pupils. In mathematics, it fell well short of its target of 73 per cent. For the current group of pupils in Year 6, targets are higher, at 71 per cent for English and 78 per cent for mathematics and reflect the school's analysis of the potential of this year group. The school's detailed analysis of test data has identified some areas of difference in the attainment of boys and girls, although the results of national tests and inspection findings do not indicate any significant differences. For example, the school is focusing on raising girls' attainment in

numeracy, with a particular emphasis being placed on higher-attainers. A single-sex homework club for girls is one of the initiatives undertaken.

- 4 Standards in science have improved at a greater rate than in English or mathematics. At the time of the previous inspection, standards were judged to be well below average and progress was unsatisfactory. National tests, taken by Year 6 pupils shortly after that inspection confirmed these judgements, with only 21 per cent of pupils attaining the expected Level 4. However, in the most recent tests 81 per cent of pupils achieved this level. While in national terms, this still represents well below average attainment, it is nevertheless a significant achievement. Inspection evidence shows that the rate of progress is likely to continue and that standards overall are now close to the national average. This improvement is the result of the emphasis placed on developing pupils' skills in investigative and experimental work and, as in English and mathematics, the result of good teaching and the grouping of pupils by ability has been that they make good progress.
- 5 As part of its strategy to raise attainment in English, mathematics and science, the school, in common with many others, has allocated the whole of most morning sessions to these subjects. However, the morning session is considerably longer than in most other junior schools, particularly for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Consequently, some pupils have great difficulty in sustaining concentration throughout the entire period of time, and this undoubtedly affects their rate of work. The other effect of the lengthy morning session is that the time in the afternoons available for teaching subjects such as art and design, design and technology, geography and history is rather limited, once time for music, physical education, religious education and assemblies is accounted for. The school's response has been to teach these subjects periodically in 'blocks' of a few weeks at a time. Owing to the nature of many pupils, who have great difficulty in remembering what they have been taught, this method of working has resulted in pupils making slow progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding. Attainment in art and design, design and technology, geography and history is, therefore, below average.
- 6 Standards in information and communication technology are adversely affected by shortages in hardware for teaching elements of the subject such as sensing, and software for developing pupils' skills in areas such as research or multi-media presentations. The school is clearly focusing on the direct teaching of skills in information and communication technology and in most instances is using its computer suite for this purpose. However, the time allocations for classes are sometimes rather short, particularly when pupils have to take turns to use the computers. Those skills that are learned are generally not practised enough because the use of information and communication technology is not fully integrated into other subjects. Overall, standards in ICT are below average and pupils make slow progress.
- 7 Very good use is made of specialist teaching skills in music, and as a result standards are above average and pupils make good progress. Some of the highest quality teaching is found in physical education and this too results in pupils making good progress and attaining good standards. In religious education, a good programme of visits to places of worship, together with a well planned curriculum and good teaching has resulted in pupils making good progress over time and attaining satisfactory standards.
- 8 The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils are included in lessons and have equal access to the curriculum on offer. A good example of this practice was observed in the case of pupils who had missed their information and communication technology session because they were involved in another activity, and were later given the opportunity to do the work, helped by a learning support assistant. The effective deployment of skilled learning support assistants, and the care taken by teachers to ensure that work planned for pupils with special educational needs follows the theme being studied by the rest of the class, ensures that these pupils make good progress.
- 9 The pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve standards similar to English speaking pupils. They make good progress because of the very effective support they receive in class and are fully integrated into all activities.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 10 The school has continued to promote good attitudes and maintained standards of behaviour at a satisfactory level as reported in the last inspection. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language, are keen to come to school. This view was supported by almost all of the parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire. The majority of pupils have good attitudes towards their work, very many display a keen enthusiasm for school and lessons. For example, they enjoy and participate well in mental 'warm up' challenges set at the beginning of numeracy lessons, and this leads to greater involvement and enthusiasm in the rest of the lesson. The majority are well motivated, and respond well to teachers. However, some pupils are openly defiant and only make progress because of the skilled behaviour management techniques used by teachers. In most lessons, pupils are able to sustain concentration and persevere satisfactorily, even when their thoughts are occasionally disrupted by the behaviour of some pupils. They have a satisfactory ability in generating their own ideas and in solving problems for themselves. Some pupils' skills in listening are not well developed. This is particularly noticeable during whole class teaching sessions. In most lessons, pupils move quickly and sensibly from whole class activities to individual tasks, however, when working independently, a small minority of pupils do not do their own work and may disrupt the work of others
- 11 Overall, the behaviour of pupils is satisfactory. The majority of pupils understand that their actions affect others and accept responsibility for them. However, there is a substantial minority of pupils who are very badly behaved and constantly tax teachers' skills in managing their behaviour. Despite this, teachers manage to create an orderly learning environment. These disruptive pupils have been clearly identified by teachers and appropriate support is in place either through the use of individual 'behaviour books' or extra help in lessons. The incidence of exclusions during the last school year was high, and already this year there have been ten temporary exclusions. Instances of bullying, and of aggressive, sexist and racist behaviour are more frequent than found in most other primary schools, however, the actions taken by the school are fully in line with its behaviour policy. The governing body is always involved on each occasion, and supports the headteacher's actions. In discussion, Year 6 pupils stated that they felt that they could tell any staff member if they were concerned about bullying and knew that the problem would be dealt with quickly.
- 12 Relationships within the school are satisfactory and pupils make good progress in developing their social skills to a satisfactory level. All adults set good examples and show considerable concern for the safety and welfare of their pupils, most of whom respond well to this care. Pupils have a keen understanding of the impact of their actions on others and most show a satisfactory respect for feelings, values and beliefs of others. For example, in a religious education lesson most pupils could empathise with the feelings of Jonah in the Bible story. Many can talk about their own views and beliefs, but they are only sometimes prepared to listen to others' views. For instance in a Year 6 lesson in which pupils were discussing what they felt they were good at, some displayed immaturity and poor listening skills. When given the opportunity, many pupils, and in particular those in Year 6, show initiative. They readily accept the responsibility of carrying out routine tasks that help with the smooth running of the school. These include such jobs as helping to distribute registers, preparing for assembly and selling apples at break time. Pupils usually offer to help others and were frequently observed sharing equipment fairly and working sensibly together. All pupils have a very good understanding of their own targets for improving their work. The newly formed School Council, with representatives from Years 3 to 6, discusses ways of improving the school environment and facilities. Pupils selected to be on the council are proud of their responsibilities and express their opinions confidently. Pupils are generally very tolerant of those with behavioural problems, and are sensitive to their needs.
- 13 Overall, the rate of attendance at the school is unsatisfactory. The number of authorised absences is significant, whereas the proportion of pupils absent without good reason is low. Approximately a quarter of authorised absences are due to pupils taking holidays during term time. These absences disrupt pupils' learning. Teachers manage daily registration well. Very many pupils arrive on time at school and for classes, and prompt registration ensures a smooth and efficient start each day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 14 Overall, the quality of teaching is good with many very good and some excellent features. This is a significant improvement on the previous inspection when a high proportion of teaching was deemed to be unsatisfactory. Three quarters of the lessons seen were good or better, and over a quarter were very good or excellent. A small proportion of lessons was judged to be unsatisfactory. These were in just two classes, one in Year 4 and one in Year 5. Where lessons were unsatisfactory, pupil management was weak and disruption from pupils slowed progress and affected the rate of learning. Teaching in science was better than that observed in the other core subjects of English and mathematics.
- 15 Throughout the school, teachers are good at teaching basic skills, particularly in literacy and numeracy. In Year 3, the emphasis on developing counting skills gives pupils confidence in adding together numbers greater than 20. Building on this growing confidence, pupils acquire new skills at a good rate because teachers explain new ideas clearly, provide well structured tasks to practise them and build carefully on what pupils learned previously in order to provide continuity. For example, in a numeracy lesson in Year 4, the teacher used very carefully planned questions to focus on specific pupils. Previous learning was effectively used to rapidly develop an understanding that rounding up from 99p to £1 makes calculations much easier. By the end of the session, all pupils knew that if an item costs £7.99 and they bought four, the quickest method of finding the cost is by rounding up to £8 and deducting four pence. Similarly in literacy, pupils make considerable efforts to tackle unknown words because teachers have provided them with a range of strategies to carry this out.
- 16 The majority of teachers have high expectations of pupils' academic and personal standards. They expect pupils to do their best and work hard to improve. Challenging tasks are provided but, at the same time, work is pitched at different levels with easier tasks for pupils with special educational needs and more difficult tasks for higher-attaining pupils. This ensures that individuals reach their potential. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 6, the group work following the whole class session was pitched at three different levels in order to cater for the range of ability within the class. This gives some pupils the confidence to complete the task and other pupils a high target to reach.
- 17 Teachers manage pupils very well. On a daily basis, teachers are confronted with a significant proportion of pupils who display anti-social behaviour and a complete disregard for fellow pupils and adults. In spite of this, they continue to maintain an orderly and supportive atmosphere in classrooms and around the school. In order to achieve this, teachers are very well prepared within their own classrooms. Lesson planning is good, with good resources readily available so that group and class activities can go ahead smoothly and have the maximum effect on learning. Once lessons begin, teachers give clear guidance of their expectations and provide a very good range of opportunities for pupils to work together and cooperate. They expect pupils to work harmoniously together. For example, in a Year 3 physical education lesson pupils were organised into groups of three and given tasks that required cooperation to complete them successfully. In the activity they had to work out a sequence of movements with a clear beginning and ending that involved producing a shape.
- 18 Behaviour in lessons is managed well, with incidents of unsatisfactory behaviour handled sensitively but firmly. In the management of poor behaviour the learning support assistants play a vital role, often providing pupils with an outlet to resolve frustrations without disturbing the rest of the class. In situations where classes have no learning support assistants during a particular session, teachers know that help is immediately available should an incident occur.
- 19 The majority of teachers have good subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy, and this has a significant effect on these lessons. Whole class sessions are well planned with very clear learning objectives displayed for all the pupils to see. When pupils begin their individual work the learning objectives are copied into their books before they begin the task. Introductions to activities are used well to assess how much the pupils have remembered from their previous lessons. These on-going assessments are used to inform future planning, with teachers fine-tuning the next day's work in the light of the progress made during each lesson. Sometimes the plenary session, in

which learning is reviewed at the end of the lesson, lacked a sharp focus. Little or no time was given to the pupils to reflect on how they felt about their learning or if they had achieved the learning objective recorded at the beginning. The majority of pupils' work is marked thoroughly, but very often opportunities are missed to point out how pupils could improve on their work.

- 20 Teachers use questioning well to stimulate pupils' thinking and to extend their understanding. They balance questions well during whole-class sessions, targeting individuals and ensuring that both girls and boys are challenged to respond. Teachers match their questioning well to pupils with special educational needs by breaking down the questions into simple sequences. They do the opposite for higher-attaining pupils, and challenge their thinking. For example, in a Year 6 numeracy lesson, higher-attaining pupils were expected to explain the reasoning behind the answers that they gave.
- 21 Teachers provide a good combination of activities during lessons. For instance, they use whole-class sessions, group or individual tasks and a good range of practical activities to reinforce earlier learning. In the majority of classes these whole class sessions were well organised, but in a minority of cases they were too long and pupils became restless. In some instances the class became difficult to manage due to the attitudes of some pupils. In many subjects teachers provide effective opportunities to extend pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy, but there are very few occasions when information and communication technology skills are used. On occasions, the length of sessions affects the quality of teaching. Generally, time allocated for use of the computer suite is quite short, and this means that introductions may have to be rushed and that there is little time for the plenary session at the end of the lessons. On other occasions, time allocated for some lessons is too long. When this happens, teachers have difficulty in sustaining the pace of their teaching.
- 22 Teachers make very good use of learning support assistants during lessons. The support assistants know the pupils well and are able to act as mentors to the many pupils who require extra care and attention. The teachers value the relationships the support staff have with the pupils and the subtle ways in which they can give encouragement to individual pupils to complete their tasks.
- 23 Overall, homework is used satisfactorily. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science homework is very well planned and forms the basis of an important link between home and school. Tasks are planned in literacy and numeracy to carefully extend and consolidate the learning in school. Very clear guidance is given to help parents help their children and the result is a very good response to the weekly homework cycle.
- 24 The support for pupils with special educational needs is very good. The experienced learning support assistants use their expertise well to help their class teacher colleagues. There is an effective balance between the time spent by pupils learning as part of a whole class and those times when they are withdrawn from their classes to work in small groups. When preparing their lessons, all teachers take account of the needs of these pupils and use other trained staff to work very well with them. Teachers plan activities that ensure that all pupils are fully included and able to gain success.
- 25 The pupils who speak English as an additional language receive an effective level of support in class. This enables them to develop their skills of speaking, reading and writing English very quickly. The teachers ensure that the pupils are well supported by the use of equipment such as relevant and suitable visual aids and, where necessary, the use of their first language. The school ensures that the pupils are fully included in all classroom activities and that they have full access to the National Curriculum. The teachers take care to inform themselves about the range of cultures within the school. This enables them to deal sensitively with the pupils' cultural needs.

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

- 26 At the time of the previous inspection, there were weaknesses in the planning of the curriculum. Although all the subjects were being taught, there were insufficient details about what the pupils in each year should be learning and at what level. This had sometimes led to the same work being covered by pupils of different ages. These have been fully addressed and the planning of the curriculum is now more thorough. However, there are some difficulties in the way in which the curriculum is actually timetabled, which means that some subjects are not being taught as effectively as they could be, and standards in these subjects are lower than is expected nationally.
- 27 The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and provides a satisfactory range of learning opportunities for all pupils. The whole curriculum is mapped out in liaison with the partner infant school to ensure that topics are not repeated and pupils build on what they have already learned. All subjects have a policy document and a scheme of work based on nationally recommended guidelines, which are intended to ensure that pupils develop their skills and knowledge systematically. However, the way in which art and design, design and technology, geography and history are timetabled means that these subjects may be taught for a short intensive time and then not taught again for a lengthy period. This is an important factor which is having a negative effect upon progress and, thus, attainment in these subjects, because these pupils need regular reinforcement of what they have learned in order to retain it. Their skills are not developed in a step-by-step way because of the lack of continuity. Another effect of the way in which the timetable is organised is that there is insufficient time given to some of the foundation subjects¹. This has led to a lack of breadth in those subjects within the curriculum.
- 28 Planning for literacy and numeracy is in line with the recommended national strategies and both teaching and learning levels are good. The way in which literacy and numeracy are taught closely mirrors the approach recommended to all schools and is effective.
- 29 The grouping of pupils enables all to make progress commensurate with their abilities. All pupils have full and equal access to the resources and curriculum within the school. The pupils have, wherever possible, support within the classroom. This ensures that they are able to work alongside their classmates and develop suitable self-esteem. Extra-curricular activities, including sport, are open to all regardless of gender, ethnicity or home circumstances.
- 30 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All pupils with special educational needs have full access to the National Curriculum. Individual education plans are in place, and are of a high quality, relevant to the needs of the pupils and are regularly updated and reviewed.
- 31 The school provides the pupils who speak English as an additional language with a varied and relevant curriculum that meets their identified needs. The curriculum planning takes careful account of their needs and ensures that suitable work is planned for them. This has a positive effect on the standards achieved by these pupils.
- 32 Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, including sex education, is satisfactory, covering appropriate topics using the Cambridgeshire scheme of work.
- 33 The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of educational visits such as to the Jorvik Viking Centre at York as part of their history studies, or to a mosque as part of religious education. Visitors into school have included a 'Tudor Man' with whom pupils explored aspects of Tudor life, and a visitor who discussed the use of artefacts in archaeology and especially ancient Greece. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities. The newly introduced 'Tuesday Club' offers a wide range of activities, such as drama, art and country dancing, as well as sporting activities, and is well supported by pupils.
- 34 The school has established good partnerships with both the neighbouring infant school and the local secondary schools. As well as good curricular liaison, there are good pastoral links. Pupils from the infant school visit when they are in Year 2, and pupils in Year 3 return to the infants to

¹ Foundation subjects are those other than the 'core' subjects of English, mathematics and science.

show their teachers and the pupils what they have achieved. Teachers in Year 6 liaise regularly with teachers in Year 7 at the local secondary school, so that both academic and pastoral information is passed on. Year 6 pupils have opportunities to visit their new schools in the summer term to ensure as easy a transition as possible.

- 35 The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and has been maintained since the time of the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The school meets the requirements for a daily act of worship. Assemblies and religious education lessons make a satisfactory contribution to spiritual development. Religious education provides knowledge of, and insight into, other religions as well as Christianity. Assemblies often reinforce this, for instance the theme of an assembly at the beginning of Ramadan was about special books and the special book of Islam, the Qur'an. Assemblies are regularly taken by ministers of the local churches and offer opportunities for pupils to reflect and pray. However, there is no planned provision for spiritual development through other areas of the curriculum. Opportunities for pupils to reflect on what they have learned during the lesson are often missed in the plenary sessions at the end of lessons.
- 36 Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The teachers and other staff are very good role models and clearly promote moral values. For instance, teachers and learning support assistants remain calm and unruffled in their dealings with the very challenging behaviour of some pupils. The difference between right and wrong is implicit in much that is done in the school. In physical education, for instance, pupils are encouraged always to play by the rules. The behaviour policy, with its system of rewards and punishments, is well established in all classrooms and is well understood by pupils. The weekly 'Celebration Assembly' gives a high profile to those pupils who behave well, which helps to promote pupils' awareness of moral codes.
- 37 Provision for pupils' social development is very good. The school has put a great deal of effort into developing pupils' social skills. Pupils are expected to perform tasks such as sharing out resources and tidying up after themselves in lessons. They are encouraged to work together and are given many opportunities to do so in lessons. There is a range of duties that pupils carry out. For instance, older pupils keep the library in order. The 'Green Room' is available for pupils who need moments of calm to help them cope with their frustrations and behaviour problems at lunchtime. There is a School Council, which also engenders a sense of social responsibility. The activities' week in the summer term, which includes a residential weekend at Chatteris, is designed to develop pupils' personal and social skills.
- 38 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. The pupils are given an awareness of their own culture, for example by visits such as those to the Wisbech Museum, or the Cresset Theatre in Peterborough to see a production of Macbeth'. Pupils are introduced to the work of some famous artists, such as Monet, but there is little systematic planned art appreciation. Music is played as pupils come into assembly each afternoon, but this is not capitalised on to develop their knowledge and appreciation of different composers. Their understanding of other cultural traditions is satisfactory. They learn about religions, such as Sikhism and Hinduism in religious education. Their appreciation of different cultures is enhanced by visitors to the school who, for instance demonstrate Asian music and dance or talk about the Jewish faith and traditions.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 39 Teaching and non-teaching staff know the pupils well and are prepared to put in considerable time, outside of lessons, talking and counselling them. In discussion with inspectors, Year 6 pupils felt that one of the best things about school was that teachers listened to what they had to say. This is a significant strength in helping the school understand and evaluate pupils' personal development.
- 40 The procedures for health and safety and Child Protection have declined since the last inspection, but are nevertheless satisfactory. This is due to the large staff turnover and newly appointed teachers still becoming familiar with the school's routines. The Child Protection policy is good and recognises the need to ensure that pupils have adults they can approach with any concerns.

Pupils are taught how to stay safe through good personal, social and health education lessons. Clear procedures for dealing with any concerns are clearly outlined in the school's policy. Compliance with local authority Child Protection procedures is firmly in place. The school has two members of staff trained in Child Protection, and the welfare of pupils on the Child Protection register is well monitored. However, due to the recent turnover in staff, not everyone has yet received sufficient recent training to maintain and update their knowledge and understanding of the school's procedures.

- 41 A Health and Safety policy is in place, and a member of staff is designated as being responsible for health and safety. However, the policy is in need of review to include aspects of 'risk assessment'. The school promotes pupils' awareness of their own safety through science, personal, social and health education lessons, and through visits to school by the school nurse and local police. There is a sufficient, although minimal number, of staff trained in first aid skills, and good procedures are in place for recording accidents and for notifying parents. Staff and governors monitor and review safe working procedures periodically. Senior staff have received training on the restraint of pupils; however, a whole school policy has yet to be developed.
- 42 The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Statutory requirements for recording and reporting attendance are fully met. The way in which the school monitors pupils' attendance is good, and unauthorised absences are followed up through extremely well established procedures. All unexplained absences are followed up the same morning as they occur. Improving attendance is a high priority for the school, and in order to improve it further the school is currently in the process of appointing a home/school liaison officer. The school makes effective use of the support of its education welfare officer. Holiday absences continue to be a concern for the school. There are good measures in place to monitor these absences by the use of holiday forms to be signed by the headteacher. However, holidays in term time have a significant impact on reducing the school's attendance levels.
- 43 The procedures for promoting and monitoring positive behaviour are satisfactory overall. The current positive behaviour policy is very thorough; it works successfully for the majority of pupils and is consistently applied across the school. However, the policy is not effective in improving the conduct of the significant minority of pupils with poor behaviour. An indication of this is that the number of exclusions has not improved recently. Year 6 pupils had strong views about the policy and felt that the system was unfair; for them one of the worst things about school was the way that children who misbehaved were treated as good and given more rewards than the rest. This has led, in some instances, to other pupils copying the response of poorly behaved pupils in order to receive greater attention. However, very detailed records of pupils' behaviour are kept, and the school tries hard to create a climate that helps promote good behaviour. Appropriate anti-bullying policies are firmly in place, and records of instances of bullying, harassment and racism are carefully kept. Instances of bullying are firmly dealt with by the school. The school has recently improved lunchtime behaviour by separating the lunch break for Years 3 and 4 from the break for Years 5 and 6, and the pupils have generally appreciated this step. However, pupils in Years 5 and 6 now have to wait until 12.45 for lunch, which for some of them is too long and contributes to restless behaviour in class towards the end of the morning session.
- 44 Good procedures are in place for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress. Teachers keep regular and comprehensive notes of pupils' progress, which provide a valuable range of information about the pupils and give a clear picture of what they know and understand. This enables teachers to plan work that meets the needs of groups and individuals very effectively. From Year 3, pupils are identified and placed into appropriate ability groups for work in literacy and numeracy, and this is helping to ensure that lessons are delivered at an appropriate pace for all pupils. All targets have a clear focus and have sufficiently high levels of challenge. Three times a year, parents are invited to review their children's work with the class teacher. They discuss previous work, evaluate progress, and seek ways to work together to achieve further improvements. Parents receive very detailed information about their child's personal development and academic progress, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

- 45 Pupils with special educational needs receive very good quality support, either in class with work that is appropriately planned for them or in small groups working on social skills. The 'Nurture Group' set up for pupils in Year 3 provides an excellent environment where they can learn to work together and develop their self-esteem and confidence. Early identification of pupils' needs helps ensure that they receive this effective support from the outset and enables them to make good progress in their learning.
- 46 There is very careful, thorough and clear monitoring of the achievements and progress of pupils who speak English as an additional language. This enables the school to analyse achievements and plan future work to meet identified needs.
- 47 Overall, the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and the use of assessment to guide curricular planning, are very good and have improved considerably since the last inspection report. This is central to the drive to raise standards, and enables teachers to judge the effectiveness of learning activities. There are particularly well developed procedures for assessing pupils' progress in English and mathematics. The criteria used to assess pupils are linked to the National Curriculum targets and are precise and clear. These assessments are used effectively for tracking what has been taught, to identify the next steps in learning, to set new school targets, and to assist in developing and planning the curriculum. For example, as a result of the school's detailed analysis of data, single sex 'booster classes' were established in mathematics. Marking is consistent throughout the school and linked to the specific learning objectives of the lesson. Although in English, this 'targeted marking' results in spelling or grammatical errors not being corrected, which is a weakness. Overall, the marking scheme has yet to have an impact on improving the presentation of pupils' work.
- 48 As at the time of the last inspection report, the procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good. Pupils' personal development is monitored well in a formal way through detailed personal records. These records are matched against pupils' academic achievement for a full understanding of each pupil's needs. Personal, social and health education lessons take place weekly in all classes. However, pupils are not yet confident in responding to these lessons and often behave immaturely.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 49 The school has continued to improve the good relationships with parents reported at the time of the last inspection.
- 50 Parents are mostly supportive of the school, and are satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school. The response to the parents' pre-inspection questionnaire was good. Many parents are of the opinion that the school has made significant improvement since the appointment of the new headteacher.
- 51 The school's partnership with its parents is good. New pupils entering the school are well looked after and an increasingly close partnership is being developed with the adjoining infant school. The quality of documentation provided for parents is very good. Pupils' annual written reports are very good and include useful targets for improvement. In addition, the reports contain a very detailed section on pupils' social skills, reflecting the very good monitoring and detailed knowledge teachers have of their pupils. Through newsletters parents are regularly informed about what is to be taught to their children as well as aspects of school life. The school is also in the process of appointing a full time home/school liaison officer as part of its ongoing commitment to develop stronger links with parents and the community.
- 52 The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is adequate. Some parents make a contribution to their children's learning through listening to them read and signing homework diaries. Homework diaries are satisfactorily used and well monitored, and as a result make a positive contribution to pupils' progress. One parent helps with the football club and a few parents are employed as learning support assistants. A good feature of the school is the table outside every classroom displaying the homework set, and a file of previous homework. This enables all

parents to be clear about their children's homework. There are very good records of pupils' frequency in returning homework, and appropriate rewards are in place to celebrate regularly returned work. The standardising of homework procedures, so that all classes give it out on Fridays, results in all parents knowing when it is expected. The majority of parents feel that the amount of homework set is appropriate. Teachers are readily accessible to parents for informal discussions in addition to the more formal termly meetings to discuss their children's progress. Attendance at these meetings is very good.

- 53 Despite a lack of involvement by some parents, the school makes every effort to work closely with the parents of pupils with special educational needs when reviewing their children's progress and agreeing strategies for reaching new learning targets.
- 54 The school ensures that there is support for parents who need help in reading letters it sends to parents. It takes steps to involve the parents of pupils who speak English as an additional language in the work of the school and encourages them to support their children through homework and attending school events.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 55 The headteacher provides very strong leadership. She has made a significant impact within the relatively short time since her appointment, and has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to improve the school further. She is ably supported by her deputy, who shares her commitment to raising attainment. Together, they manage the school effectively and ensure that the school's stated aims are fully reflected in its work. Parents are greatly appreciative of the work of the headteacher and of her accessibility.
- 56 Following the previous inspection, an action plan was prepared in response to the key issues identified for future development. Overall, the school has successfully addressed these key issues as follows:
- 57 Key Issue 1: *'Plan systematically to ensure curriculum continuity and progression across the school by identifying curriculum priorities and by preparing schemes of work.'*
- 58 The school has worked closely with the adjoining Infant School to produce a long-term overview of the curriculum, to show how work in the different subjects will develop as pupils move from one school to the other. There are now schemes of work in place in all subjects.
- 59 Key Issue 2: *'Raise expectations in teachers and pupils of the quality and quantity of written work in English and other parts of the curriculum, and of its presentation.'*
- 60 Teachers worked hard to develop greater expertise in teaching English. The range of pupils' writing has improved, although attention still needs to be given to the presentation of work. There has been a very high turnover of teaching staff within the past two years and some of the teachers who benefited from the initial training are no longer at the school. However, newly appointed teachers have good subject knowledge and are skilled in teaching basic skills.
- 61 Key Issue 3: *'Address weaknesses in teaching'*
- 62 To some extent, this issue has been addressed through changes in teaching personnel, although a number of initiatives which were put in place, such as the careful monitoring of the quality of teaching, are an important feature of the school's efforts to raise attainment. The quality of teaching has significantly improved since the time of the last inspection. Unsatisfactory teaching has been reduced from 20 per cent to five per cent, and the proportion of very good or excellent lessons has risen from two per cent to almost 30 per cent.
- 63 Key Issue 4: *'Raise standards in science.'*

- 64 Standards in science were formerly well below average and pupils' progress was unsatisfactory. Standards are now broadly average and pupils make good progress.
- 65 Key Issue 5: *'Improve long-term planning to include financial and resource implications.'*
- 66 Long-term planning has improved. The school improvement plan sets out a very clear course of action and includes good detail of the likely implications of proposed initiatives in terms of costs and the use of time and resources.
- 67 Key Issue 6: *'Ensure that statutory requirements are met with regard to the school brochure and the governors' annual report to parents.'*
- 68 This issue has been fully addressed. The school's prospectus and governors' annual report for parents comply with statutory requirements and are clearly written and informative. The governing body ensures that all legal requirements are met.
- 69 The governors know the school well and have a very good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They visit formally on a regular basis, and these visits have a clear focus linked to each individual governor's area of responsibility. Governors successfully fulfil their role as 'critical friend' to the school through their monitoring of the school's work in their committees and in the regular meetings of the full governing body. They have a very clear understanding of the principles of 'best value' and look carefully at the impact of their decisions on the attainment of the pupils. Curriculum coordinators are required to justify the use of resources and identify further needs for their subjects. The school and governing body always engages in competitive tendering and seeks quotes for all significant purchases.
- 70 The headteacher has a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching through her regular lesson observations. Performance data, such as national test results, are very closely analysed and the information gained is well used in informing decisions about the curriculum. Staff appraisal, in the form of Performance Management, is fully in place. Currently, teachers' performance targets are linked to the attainment in numeracy of identified groups of pupils whose performance needs to be raised.
- 71 The day to day management of the school is effective. Efficient office procedures enable teachers to focus on their work in the classrooms rather than spend their time on routine administrative tasks.
- 72 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed extremely well, and very good systems are in place to ensure that these pupils receive full and correctly targeted support. The policy is good; it is thorough and inclusive, and the coordinator is bringing it in line with the new requirements. The systems in place ensure that pupils with special educational needs make good progress and grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- 73 The school makes very effective use of resources, grants and other funding. Educational priorities are very well supported by very good financial planning. The school secretary provides good, up to date financial information regularly for the headteacher, curriculum coordinators and the governing body. The most recent audit report found no action for improvement was required. The school makes effective use of new technology to support administration, but its use across the curriculum needs to be developed. The school responds effectively to the needs of different individuals and groups of pupils. It regards equality of access and opportunity as central to what it is trying to achieve, and care is taken to ensure that all pupils are fully included in all the school's activities. Specific grants, such as the funding for special educational needs and the ethnic minority achievement grant are used very well for their designated purpose and ensure that the identified pupils make good progress.
- 74 The overall number of teaching staff and their range of teaching qualifications are well matched to the present number on roll. Almost all teachers, including both the headteacher and deputy

headteacher, are new to the school since the time of the last inspection. The large staff turnover was due to several factors:

- the uncertainty that accompanied a period during which the amalgamation of the school with the adjoining infant school was considered;
- temporary contracts resulting in a more transient teaching staff;
- teachers gaining promotion, and moving to other schools.

75 While the school has experienced difficulty in appointing teachers of the calibre it seeks, there are currently no teaching posts vacant at the school.

76 At present the staffing situation appears to be more stable, partly due to the introduction of permanent teaching contracts, and already the staff has formed an extremely well focused team which is committed to improvement. Teamwork is a very significant feature, and teachers and learning support assistants work very closely together. This team approach in each year group has been invaluable in supporting teachers who are new to the school. All teachers and subject coordinators have clear job descriptions and are aware of their roles and responsibilities. Administrative and other staff are well deployed.

77 The school has made good use of its accommodation. Within a short period of time since her appointment, the headteacher has invested wisely to improve the internal décor, resulting in an attractive, bright and comfortable environment to support pupils' learning. Parents and pupils both feel this has instilled a new quality of pride in the school. The recently completed office suite provides a more welcoming and secure entrance. The maintenance and cleanliness of the premises is good.

78 The range and quality of resources available to support learning across the curriculum are satisfactory overall; for physical education and religious education they are good. The range of computer software to support pupils' learning across the curriculum is at present unsatisfactory. Many resources are matched to gender and cultural diversity. The range of books in the library, and their condition, is satisfactory. Pupils generally make good use of the library resources.

79 A wide range of indicators, including the good progress of pupils from a low starting point, the good quality of teaching, the very good leadership, and the good level of improvement achieved since the last inspection show that the school is effective. Even though the school's income is above average, it provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80 In order for the school to improve further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Raise standards in English by:
 - creating more opportunities for extended, creative writing in English and other subjects;
 - planning for the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills across the curriculum;
 - improving pupils' handwriting and spelling.
- (2) Raise standards in mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in everyday situations and to solve problems;
 - ensuring that opportunities to develop pupils' skills in numeracy in other subjects are fully used;
 - improving the quality of presentation in order to increase accuracy in working out;
 - establishing clear reasons for the difference in attainment of boys and girls in test results.
- (3) Raise standards in information and communication technology by:

- reviewing the way in which the information and communication technology suite is used;
 - ensuring that shortages in software and hardware are remedied;
 - making better use of information and communication technology in other subjects.
- (4) Improve the curriculum offered to pupils in art and design, design and technology, geography and history by:
- reviewing the way in which an overview of the curriculum is mapped out to make it easier for possible links between subjects to be identified;
 - reviewing the frequency with which these subjects are taught.

A further issue which the school may wish to consider would be to explore other means of improving the behaviour of the significant minority of disruptive pupils.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	74
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	24

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	16	33	16	2	1	1
Percentage	7	22	45	22	3	1	1

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

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)	Not applicable	311
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Not applicable	100

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	Not applicable	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	Not applicable	124

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	40
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	29

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	5.2
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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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	33	37	70

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	22	32
	Girls	20	17	25
	Total	42	39	57
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (66)	56 (54)	81 (86)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	22	25
	Girls	18	16	22
	Total	33	38	47
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47 (71)	54 (67)	67 (84)
	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	6
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	7
Indian	7
Pakistani	14
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	274
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	23	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)	13.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Average class size	25.9

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	295

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	Not applicable
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	Not applicable
Total number of education support staff	Not applicable
Total aggregate hours worked per week	Not applicable
Number of pupils per FTE adult	Not applicable

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	674,578
Total expenditure	639,803
Expenditure per pupil	2,078
Balance brought forward from previous year	45,163
Balance carried forward to next year	79,938

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	12
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.5
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	311
Number of questionnaires returned	142

Percentage of responses in each category (rounded to the nearest whole number)

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	49	43	6	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	39	54	3	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	37	17	3	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	35	48	11	4	4
The teaching is good.	45	48	2	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	43	16	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	38	7	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	0	1	4
The school works closely with parents.	30	52	10	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	39	45	7	1	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	46	8	1	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	46	13	4	11

Forty-six per cent of questionnaires were returned.

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

ENGLISH

- 81 In the 2000 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 6, standards in English were well below the national average and below average in comparison with schools with pupils of similar backgrounds. The results for the most recent tests give a similar overall picture. In each case, the overall result is based on a calculation of the average points scored. Results have been low because too few pupils have achieved above the national target of Level 4. However, these figures conceal the year on year improvements made in pupils' attainment in English. The proportion of pupils attaining the national target level has increased each year since 1998, from 34 per cent to the 2001 figure of 60 per cent. The proportion of pupils at the expected level declined slightly from 2000 to 2001. The reasons for this slight fall may be attributed to the nature of the group of pupils tested and also to the staffing problems that the school has experienced in the past two years, which have now been resolved. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well. They greatly exceeded their targets that were set when they entered the school, based on their attainment at that time.
- 82 The boys have made very good progress over the past four years from a very low base, and in the last two years achieved significantly more highly than the girls, which is against the national trend. This can be attributed to the extra homework classes and booster classes, designed to improve their performance. However, in work seen during the inspection, there was no significant difference between the work of the boys and that of the girls. Pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress.
- 83 As part of its drive to raise standards throughout the school, pupils are grouped into 'sets' for literacy lessons according to their previous attainment in English. There are three sets in each year group.
- 84 The standards of speaking and listening are below average. Only the higher-attaining pupils meet expectations in their speaking and listening skills. They listen well to the teachers' instructions and to each other in discussions. They are articulate and speak clearly in good English, whether recounting an experience or giving explanations. For instance, in Year 4, a pupil gave a clear, succinct explanation of the water cycle in a geography lesson and Year 6 pupils effectively discussed how to change a story into a play script. However, many middle and lower attaining pupils do not always listen well; they are reluctant to speak in sentences, have a limited vocabulary and often give only one-word answers to questions. Unless prompted, they rarely give extended answers. There are not enough planned opportunities across the curriculum to develop fully pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- 85 In Year 6, standards of reading are just below average and are improving throughout the school. Pupils are enthusiastic about reading, and make good use of the wide range of books in the fiction library, regularly exchanging the books they have read. They enjoy reading together during literacy lessons as well as individually. One pupil, expressing her love of reading, felt that reading gave her inspiration. Higher and many middle attaining pupils read accurately and fluently, and quite often with good expression. When they make mistakes, they often correct themselves and use a good range of strategies to help them to decipher unfamiliar words. They regularly use the context of the passage to try to determine the meaning of what they have read. However, some middle and lower attaining pupils have reading books that are too difficult for them. There is still quite a large group of pupils in all years experiencing some degree of difficulty with reading and requiring considerable help because they do not possess effective strategies for tackling new words. Generally, pupils of all levels of attainment have good 'book skills', in as much as they know the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and know how to use the index and how to skim pages for information. One pupil in Year 6 gave a clear explanation of what a bibliography is. Pupils' research skills are steadily developing, and they use the non-fiction library well. These skills are developed satisfactorily in other subjects, too, such as history where pupils find information about the Victorians and other topics.

- 86 Standards in writing are below average. Higher-attaining pupils reach standards just above the national average. They often write at length, with an increasing degree of confidence and accuracy. They use a range of punctuation, and their sentence structure is increasingly complex. They write for different purposes, and their work is well executed. For example, one pupil wrote a very powerful letter of complaint against foxhunting. Another showed good note-taking skills while interviewing people who work in the school, before re-writing these notes as a report. However, there is a general lack of creativity and 'sparkle' in pupils' writing, mainly because their vocabulary is not as extensive as one would expect, but also because there are not enough opportunities for personal or creative writing. Middle-attaining pupils are generally below average. Their work is less accurate, and spelling and punctuation are not yet secure, although simple sentences are usually correctly punctuated. Lower-attaining pupils write in simple sentences and are aware of the need for full stops and capital letters, but spelling and punctuation are weak, and they rarely write at length. The standard of handwriting of most middle and lower-attaining pupils is below what is normally expected. Although pupils can write neatly when doing handwriting practice or writing up a piece of 'quality work', these skills are not being used in their everyday work, and presentation is unsatisfactory. There is little use of word-processing to improve the quality of presentation and information and communication technology is generally not used enough to support work in English. There is some development of literacy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils wrote a newspaper report of a Viking raid as part of their study of history, and in religious education they wrote the story of Buddha's life. However, these opportunities are generally not fully exploited.
- 87 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Of the 12 lessons observed, five were very good, three were good, three were satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching was due to a lack of strategies for maintaining discipline in the classroom. Since pupils respond well to the effective teaching, learning is also good. Teachers' planning is good and contains clear objectives, which are shared with pupils at the beginning of each lesson. This gives the lessons focus, and when these objectives are reviewed at the end of lessons pupils are able to see whether they have achieved them as they go over what they have learned. A strength of lessons is the way in which teachers skilfully target different pupils with their questions, thus ensuring that all pupils are involved and suitably challenged. For instance, in a very good literacy lesson, the teacher's questioning brought in all the pupils, challenging those who were reluctant to answer, and encouraging them to expand their answers. This resulted in longer answers and more appropriate words being used. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their teaching of basic skills is effective. For example, in 'guided reading' sessions, teachers encourage pupils to use a variety of reading strategies and continually check that pupils understand what they are reading. Group work is very well matched to pupils' abilities, and is well linked to the whole group session. In the best lessons, teachers keep up a brisk pace, which maintains pupils' interest and enthusiasm. Teachers continually offer support and encouragement to pupils while they are working. As a result, pupils gain in confidence and self-esteem. Teachers make very good use of the learning support assistants who work alongside them, ensuring that they are always well briefed. Consequently learning support assistants play a very important part in pupils' learning.
- 88 In some lessons there are weaknesses. Occasionally, the introduction to the lesson, often conducted with pupils seated on the carpet, is too long with the result that pupils become restless and lose interest. Although most teachers manage pupils very well, there are some cases where the working noise level is too high to allow pupils to concentrate properly on their work. On other occasions, the constant need to control disruptive members of the class slows the pace of learning, and time is lost. A further weakness is the pupils' lack of knowledge of their own learning. For instance, teachers mark pupils' work according to the policy of 'targeted marking', which informs the pupils whether or not they have achieved the learning objective. However, gross spelling or grammatical errors are often not picked up in the marking, thus pupils cannot correct their mistakes. Pupils are generally not given an indication of what they have to do to improve.
- 89 Behaviour is satisfactory. The majority of pupils behave well in lessons. They are interested in what they are doing and have positive attitudes to their work, which makes an important contribution to their achievement. There is, however, a significant minority of pupils who, if not managed well, are disruptive. Pupils with behavioural difficulties work well when they are interested

and closely supervised. Pupils with special educational needs, and those for whom English is an additional language, are well integrated into the school; they are well supported and most are keen to work hard. Relationships between pupils and between teacher and pupils are mostly good. The result is an ethos in lessons where most pupils expect to work hard and teachers are able to encourage them to do their best.

- 90 Since the last inspection, the school has made good progress in raising standards. The coordinator provides good leadership to the staff, and there is a good scheme of work. Reading has improved, and pupils now have good library skills. Writing has also improved, although spelling and handwriting still remain relative weaknesses. Most pupils make good progress. There is still some weakness in speaking and listening skills, but teaching has improved greatly.

MATHEMATICS

- 91 The most recent national test results show that attainment of pupils in Year 6 is well below the national average in comparison with all schools and with schools of a similar nature. Closer analysis of these results show that the school has made very good progress in increasing the proportion of pupils who attain the nationally expected Level 4, and that these results are now in line with the national average. However, the school has not increased the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5, and this is the reason why results overall are well below the national average. There are very clear reasons why the school has not achieved the number of pupils reaching above the expected level. The attainment on entry to the school in mathematics is poor, with a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, many of whom are highly disturbed emotionally and continue to show aggressive and anti-social behaviour. There is a high level of mobility of families locally, and the movement of pupils in and out of the school adversely affects attainment by the end of Year 6. During the past two years the school has recruited 12 new teachers and for the first time is in a position where all teaching staff have permanent contracts. These teachers are totally committed to raising standards. In spite of past difficulties, standards in mathematics have improved considerably since the time of the last inspection. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the commitment of staff to improving results indicate that standards are likely to continue to improve in future years. The inspection judges standards as higher than in last year's national tests. This is due to the considerable impact of the new headteacher and her deputy in initiating very clear targets and assessments in mathematics, which focus teaching more directly on each pupil's learning needs. Very clear target setting for pupils in Year 6 will soon be extended to pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5. This is likely to have a major impact on the future performance of all pupils, since targets are firmly based on the analysis of test results and identified areas of weakness.
- 92 Throughout the school, pupils are grouped into 'sets' for numeracy lessons according to their previous attainment in mathematics. This initiative is contributing to the improved standards in mathematics. There are three sets in each year group.
- 93 Pupils entering the school in Year 3 have a very wide spread of ability, but only a very small proportion of these pupils have achieved above average standards in the national tests for seven year olds. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 are confident in handling numbers larger than 20. Most are accurate when doubling numbers such as 35 and 45 and, in an exercise recording various fractions, most referred to the fractions by their correct name and were able to record them correctly. During a lesson for higher-attainers, the insistence by the teacher on pupils explaining their methods of working out rather than just accepting an answer sharpened their understanding of the fact that different strategies could be used to tackle the same problem. In contrast with the small number of pupils able to cope with work at that level, the larger group of lower-attaining pupils is engaged in counting activities up to ten and using cubes to help them to check their answers. Although some of them are able to record the results, a number of pupils have very poorly developed skills in setting out their work, and this slows their progress. Good use is made of practical apparatus, and this helps the pupils to become quite engrossed. Progress during the first year in school is good, and the majority of pupils develop very positive attitudes to mathematics.

- 94 As pupils move through the school progress continues to be good and is better than that observed at the previous inspection. This is confirmed by the rise in the number of Year 6 pupils attaining the nationally expected level. By the time they reach Year 6, most pupils have a secure grasp of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. They are familiar with the use of the decimal point and know how to convert simple decimals to fractions. Their knowledge of shapes is generally secure. For example, they are able to prove that when three triangles are arranged in different shapes, the perimeter remains the same. During a lesson observed, pupils learned how to measure an angle with accuracy. From earlier work, pupils remembered the terms 'right angle', 'acute angle' and 'obtuse angle' and were able to explain the differences. They apply what they know to problem solving and are familiar with the language of mathematics.
- 95 By the end of Year 6, a sound foundation has been laid in mathematics although some pupils have difficulty remembering all they have been taught. Pupils' progress is now enhanced by the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, and in particular by the daily sessions of mental work. During these sessions pupils are challenged to explain their thinking and to confirm their learning. The learning support assistants give pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language very good support in their work. These pupils make good progress.
- 96 Pupils' learning in mathematics is not evident in many other subject areas of the curriculum. Pupils need more opportunities to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, in information and communication technology there are limited opportunities for pupils to handle data, and workbooks contain few examples in which mathematical skill has been used in other curriculum areas. The school is rightly intending to explore links with the investigative work being done in the science curriculum and to look at ways in which this can be used to enhance mathematical learning.
- 97 Overall, the quality of teaching is good, with some excellent lessons. Of the 12 lessons observed, two were excellent, two were very good, five were good and three were satisfactory. The quality of teaching is significantly better than at the time of the previous inspection. Lessons are well planned, with very clear learning objectives displayed for the pupils to see. Introductions to lessons are very well used in order to assess how much the pupils know and have remembered from previous work. Teachers manage pupils well during lessons; they keep introductions short and to the point and make sure that the tasks given to the pupils are well matched to their potential attainment. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, although at times pupils' presentation of work is slipshod and careless. This affects the accuracy of pupils' calculations because when their working out is carelessly tabulated it often results in wrong answers. Homework is used very effectively to support the work being done in mathematics and is very carefully planned. Parents are given clear information as to how to support their children, and many pupils complete their assignments.
- 98 The curriculum is broad and balanced and the numeracy strategy well established. More emphasis, however, needs to be placed on investigative work. Providing more opportunities for pupils to use mathematics in everyday situations and to solve problems would help them to attain the higher levels. Grouping pupils by prior attainment is helping significantly to raise standards. Standards achieved in the national tests are still a matter of concern, particularly at the higher levels. There is still a concern over the difference in the attainment of boys and girls. In lessons, there was no evidence of any differences in the performance of boys and girls, but in test results the boys continue to outshine the girls. In some lessons a number of boys were dominant due to their aggressive behaviour, and this may have an adverse effect on the confidence of girls. Continued investigation into this anomaly needs to be carried out and it may be a further factor depressing the level of attainment overall. Improvements in teaching and the positive attitudes of the majority of pupils towards their learning, the rigorous monitoring of progress and the identification of clear learning targets are all likely to contribute significantly to further improvement.

SCIENCE

- 99 There has been a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection. The school places a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in investigating and exploring ideas in science. This is a key feature of the curriculum and makes a positive contribution to the improved standards. By Year 6, most pupils attain standards that meet national expectations. This judgement represents an improvement on the most recent national test results. The improvement is explained by differences in the groups of pupils compared and has also been brought about because the school carefully analyses its test results and uses the findings to adjust its planning. For example, putting pupils into similar ability groups enables all pupils to achieve and work well. There has also been an improvement in the quality of teaching in science. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and give the pupils interesting and challenging work. There is clear evidence of a steady improvement in pupils' performance in science.
- 100 By Year 6, the majority of the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of scientific vocabulary and the specific scientific meaning of terms such as 'fair test'. They make good progress in developing an increasingly wide and secure knowledge base. For example, in Year 6 they use their knowledge of electric circuits to set up a range of investigations to demonstrate how to change circuits. There is no noticeable difference between the achievements of boys and girls. Careful teaching ensures that the pupils know that investigations need to be repeated before conclusions are drawn. Teachers make very effective links with work in mathematics. This gives the pupils a good understanding of how to use their mathematical knowledge in a range of situations. For example, a group of lower-attaining Year 5 pupils worked out a suitable scale for measuring the distance of the planets from the sun. The teacher took them out onto the school field and they set out the relative distances. This gave them a practical insight into the solar system. The younger pupils quickly develop secure understanding of how to plan experiments and to predict results. They know that '*scientists test things to see if they're true*'. All the teachers link work in science very closely with the pupils' work in English. This ensures that the pupils, including those who have English as an additional language, develop a good understanding of scientific vocabulary. The pupils with special educational needs receive skilled and carefully structured support in the classroom. This enables them to work alongside their classmates at a similar rate of learning. It increases their self-esteem and develops their social skills effectively. Many pupils do not take enough care over the presentation of their work. This reduces the quality and accuracy of their recorded findings. The school is aware of this and is taking steps to improve this area of pupils' work. All teachers use questions skilfully to enable pupils to explain and answer questions about their experiments. This develops the pupils' learning very effectively.
- 101 An analysis of pupils' previously completed work shows that the teachers ensure the pupils understand concepts such as the functions of plant and human organs. The school places a suitably strong emphasis on healthy eating and the need for bodily hygiene in order to remain healthy. The higher-attaining pupils know that bacteria can be helpful as well as harmful and that food chains usually begin with a green plant. By Year 5, most pupils plan accurate identification keys to classify insects and animals. There is a similar level of attainment in the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the effects of condensation and evaporation.
- 102 Pupils use their literacy skills effectively and their mathematical skills adequately to support their work in science. They understand the specific scientific meaning of terms such as 'circuit' and 'conductor'. A significant number of pupils have difficulty in presenting their findings clearly and logically. The teachers use marking carefully to improve these skills. All pupils use measurement increasingly accurately in their scientific investigations, for example when measuring the circumference of their heads. They represent findings accurately on charts, tables and graphs. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. The use of information and communication technology to support work in science is under-developed.
- 103 Overall, the quality of teaching is good. It ensures that pupils learn well and make good progress. Of the 11 lessons observed, teaching was excellent in two, very good in four, good in three, satisfactory in one and poor in one. This generally high quality of teaching improves pupils' learning and progress. The vast majority of teachers are secure and very confident in their

teaching. They use their subject knowledge very carefully to develop the pupils' thinking. This leads to mature thought and logical reasoning, for instance when pupils were challenged to work out why it is necessary to use standard symbols in electricity. All teachers' planning is thorough and consistently places a clear focus on practising and improving key skills. The pupils use these skills to build on what they already know. In the excellent lessons the teachers plan interesting and challenging work that involves all pupils. This ensures that the pupils concentrate, work very hard and make rapid progress in learning new facts and skills. An example of this was observed in a Year 4 lesson where the teacher used a felt model of internal organs. The pupils quickly learned where the major organs, such as the heart and lungs, are as well as their names and functions. There was some poor teaching during the course of the inspection. This was because the teacher was unable to overcome the rude and disruptive attitudes of a significant minority of pupils. The management of these pupils was less skilful than in other classes and learning was slow.

- 104 All teachers use lesson evaluations and assessments to guide them in what to teach next. This ensures good quality progress for the vast majority of pupils. Teachers plan carefully to support the increasing number of pupils who have English as an additional language. The learning support assistants give very effective help to lower-attaining pupils and ensure that they participate fully in science lessons. The school makes effective use of the information from assessment to plan the science curriculum. The new subject leader has a clear vision for the direction of science and is totally committed to raising standards. In conjunction with colleagues she monitors trends in attainment, planning across the school and the pupils' standards. For instance, the school identified a weakness in scientific enquiry from the national tests. This weakness is being addressed successfully. Pupils' work already shows a marked improvement in this area. The careful and systematic monitoring of provision by the subject leader ensures there is consistency in the curriculum for all year groups.

ART AND DESIGN

- 105 Standards in art and design are below those normally expected of pupils in Year 6. All pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make slow progress. This situation occurs because of the way in which the curriculum is organised. Pupils do not have regular, weekly art lessons and, although all elements of the curriculum are taught at some time as pupils move from Year 3 to Year 6, they are unable to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in any depth. In this respect, the school is continuing to teach art in the 'slimmed down' way adopted by many schools during the initial period of implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies.
- 106 Owing to the way in which the curriculum is planned, no art lessons were observed in Year 3. Evidence of attainment came from observations of lessons in other year groups, discussions with the coordinator and with pupils in Year 6, and a scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning.
- 107 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Of the four lessons observed, two were of good quality and two were satisfactory. Strengths of art teaching lie in teachers' planning and in the management of pupils. As a consequence, pupils benefit from well-structured lessons and are generally well behaved. Overall, teachers' explanations of the tasks to be attempted and demonstrations of the required techniques are satisfactory, and resources are generally well prepared and are easily accessible. Pupils, therefore, know what they have to do and start work quickly. Pupils in Year 6 were observed drawing designs for a hat, based on an 'Alice in Wonderland' theme, that they were later going to make as part of their work in design and technology. Although the lesson took place more than two months after the start of term, pupils said that this was their first art lesson in Year 6. Skills of drawing varied widely, but were generally satisfactory. In Year 4, two lessons were observed in which pupils made 'matchstick' figures from either art straws or from pipe cleaners. Although the outline planning was the same, the quality of teaching was very different. Pupils in one of the classes benefited from good demonstrations of technique, clear explanations and increased levels of challenge as the lesson developed, while in the other class, these elements of the lesson were barely satisfactory. Unfortunately, the recently appointed coordinator for art and design has not had the opportunity to monitor the quality of

teaching and learning. Therefore good teaching, such as that observed, has not yet been identified by the school and shared with other teachers.

- 108 There is no systematic approach to developing pupils' skills of art appreciation, and very little evidence of pupils' work in the style of a range of famous artists. There is also little evidence of the use of information and communication technology in art.
- 109 Overall, progress since the last inspection has been barely satisfactory. Standards remain below average and progress is slow. However, the quality of teaching is better and work is underway to develop a portfolio of samples of pupils' work to use as a reference point for teachers.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 110 Standards in design and technology are below average for Year 6. This is a similar situation to that reported at the time of the previous inspection in 1998. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, make slow progress.
- 111 Teaching is significantly better than it was in 1998, and is now of good quality. Three of the four lessons observed were good and the other was very good. The quality of assessment is also significantly better than it was and is now very good. The coordinator has collated a very good portfolio of examples of pupils' work. All of the samples of work are clearly annotated, giving a very good reference point for teachers' judgements about the quality of work produced by their classes. This portfolio also shows that pupils are experiencing a good range of design and technology activities from the use of pneumatic systems to move different parts of model monsters in Year 3 to the construction of powered model vehicles in Year 6. However, the way in which the curriculum is organised, and the lack of integration of design and technology activities into subjects such as English, means that there are sometimes lengthy periods of time between 'blocks' of design and technology lessons.
- 112 The improvements made in the quality of teaching and in assessment have yet to impact on attainment in Year 6 because pupils have not been given regular enough opportunities to develop and practice their skills in previous years. As a result their skills in basic tasks, such as sewing, are below average as are skills in the design and evaluation elements of the subject. The coordinator has worked hard to develop the school's provision for design and technology and is currently developing 'design and make' activities for all year groups based on nationally recommended guidance. The long-term curriculum plan for design and technology needs to be developed further to clearly identify possible links with other subjects, such as information and communication technology.
- 113 Strengths of teaching in design and technology lie in the quality of teachers' planning, their clear teaching of basic skills, the good use of learning support assistants to help develop pupils' skills, and the good management of pupils' behaviour. The impact of this good teaching is that pupils are very interested in their assignments, sustain good levels of concentration and work hard. The best lesson observed was in Year 3, where pupils had to evaluate a range of sandwich snacks. The teacher was very well prepared and controlled the activity very well without stifling pupils' initiative. She knew her pupils very well and was acutely aware of potential difficulties regarding food allergies. Her dialogue and her good awareness of individual pupils' responses sustained a very good pace to learning and ensured that all pupils were focused on the activity.
- 114 The coordinator provides good leadership and has a clear view of the future development of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

- 115 Owing to the way in which the curriculum is planned, no geography lessons were observed in Years 3,5 and 6 and only two lessons were observed in Year 4. There was, therefore, insufficient evidence to comment upon the quality of teaching overall. There was little evidence of geography in pupils' workbooks because most classes had not studied the subject so far this year, and there was little previous work available. A discussion was held with a group of pupils in Year 6 to gain some insight into standards. These pupils were uncertain about what geography is and, while talking about 'the humanities', sometimes confused geography with history and religious education. They had problems recalling what they had learned during the previous year, but when prompted seemed to have a satisfactory knowledge of how to use maps and grid references through their work in mathematics. They had some knowledge of geographical terms, such as 'equator' and 'water cycle'. However, their knowledge is very sketchy and is less than expected of pupils of this age.
- 116 The main reason for the unsatisfactory standards is the way in which the curriculum is organised. Pupils generally study one topic per year, which is taught over a short period of time; hence the gap between one topic and another could be as much as five terms. This lack of continuity means that geographical skills, knowledge and understanding are not developed in a step by step way, and pupils have great difficulty in remembering what they have learned. In the lessons that were observed in Year 4, it is clear that pupils enjoy geography. In one lesson in particular, in which they were learning about deserts and polar regions, the pupils were making good progress and reaching levels well in line with what would be expected at that age.
- 117 The strength of the geography curriculum is that it takes into account what has been learned in the adjoining infant school, and the topics have been linked to other areas of the curriculum. There are good 'topic' guidelines for teachers and there is a potentially good assessment scheme with learning objectives matched to the scheme of work. The newly appointed coordinator is keen to develop the subject.
- 118 There has been some improvement in the management of the subject since the last inspection; the scheme of work is in place, resources are now centrally stored in 'topic boxes', but the overall weakness in progress still remains.

HISTORY

- 119 There were only three history lessons observed during the inspection; further evidence was gained from pupils' books, work on display and discussion with pupils in Year 6.
- 120 In lessons, pupils show a keen interest in history. Year 3 pupils learn about the Ancient Egyptians, and are knowledgeable about the pharaohs, the Egyptian gods, and their rituals. The ritual of weighing the heart to ascertain how truthful the individual had been during his life fascinated them. One lower-attaining pupil could explain how the Egyptians wrote in pictures, and knew the term 'hieroglyphics'. Year 5 pupils knew about Ancient Greece and the way in which people lived at that time. They had carried out some research on the Greek gods, and had some understanding of the influence the gods had on the Greeks. In Year 6, pupils learned about some aspects of Victorian life. They had a good knowledge of the work of Dr. Barnardo and Lord Shaftesbury and how the lives of the poorest people, particularly children, were affected. However, the limited time given to history means that pupils were unable to explore the wider issues of the Victorian period such as the influence it had on our lives today.
- 121 Pupils enjoy history and make satisfactory progress in lessons, often reaching standards expected for their ages. However, their progress over time is unsatisfactory. They do not have a clear understanding of the chronology of the different periods and where they fit in. Year 6 pupils could remember isolated things they had studied, for instance they remember their work on Viking ships and the wives of King Henry VIII, but they do not have a clear understanding of periods in history

and there is a lack of breadth to their knowledge. This is due to the same problems of the timetable as in geography. Although history is rather more integrated into the rest of the curriculum than is geography, there are often long gaps in time between the study of different topics, and much of what pupils have learned is forgotten because it is not being regularly reinforced.

- 122 The quality of teaching is good. Of the three lessons observed, two were good and one was satisfactory. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and plan their lessons well, making sure that pupils work at a level appropriate to their ability through adapted worksheets and tasks. Teachers have clear objectives, which they share with the pupils so that the pupils know what they are aiming for. They use their skilful questioning techniques well at the beginning of lessons to remind pupils of what they have learned, and to probe their understanding. In the best lessons, they use the plenary session well at the end of the lesson to review what has been learned.
- 123 Since the last inspection, there has been some improvement in history. There is now a scheme of work and a portfolio of examples of pupils' assessed work, which is helpful to staff when planning and judging standards. Resources are more centrally available, and there is evidence that pupils do more research and collate the information gathered. The coordinator intends to improve these skills further through the application of information and communication technology, which is currently under-used in supporting work in history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 124 Standards in information and communication technology attained by pupils in Year 6 are below average and pupils make slow progress. Standards are the same as reported at the time of the last inspection. There are three main factors that contribute to this situation:
- the way in which the information and communication technology suite is used limits the effectiveness of teaching;
 - shortages of software and hardware mean that some elements of the curriculum are not taught;
 - the lack of integration of information and communication technology into other subjects means that pupils do not get enough opportunities to practise the skills that they have learned.
- 125 In addition, national requirements have increased significantly in recent years and the school has not managed to keep pace with these changes.
- 126 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Seven lessons were observed during the course of the inspection; two of these were good and four were satisfactory, but one was very poor. Almost all of the lessons observed took place in the information and communication technology suite. Lessons in the suite are tightly timetabled and most of them last for just 30 minutes or so and, because there are not enough computers in the suite for a whole class, pupils have to share. The shortage of time frequently leads to teachers giving very brief introductions and having little time for a plenary session to review learning at the end of each lesson. The need for pupils to share machines sometimes results in one of the pairing playing too little part in the lesson while waiting for a turn at the keyboard. The shortage of space for whole class teaching in the suite and the need for pupils to share computers means that teachers' skills in managing the behaviour of their pupils are critically important. The most effective lessons in the suite were those that were closely directed by the teachers, but this close direction also meant that pupils had even less time to work at the computers because there were frequent occasions when the teacher needed to tell the pupils what to do. On the single occasion when a teacher did not keep a close control of the pupils, behaviour rapidly deteriorated and as a consequence the few pupils who were paying attention to what the teacher had to say did little or no work because of the poor attitudes of others.
- 127 At the time of the previous inspection there was no detailed scheme of work for information and communication technology. This situation has improved with the adoption of nationally recommended guidance by the school. However, a lack of resources means that some elements of the subject, such as sensing, cannot be taught, and opportunities for developing skills in others,

such as modelling, are limited. In a Year 6 lesson, the lack of an electronic encyclopaedia suitable for pupils with reading ages from nine to 13 severely limited the range of research possible. The teacher tried hard to find a suitable passage of text about life in Victorian times, but even then the text proved to be too difficult for a number of pupils. Within the information and communication technology suite, some of the computers occasionally prove to be unreliable, the machines are not networked, and the range of software suitable for use on the machines is limited. At the time of inspection, few pupils had experienced using e-mail or the Internet.

- 128 A good feature of provision is the recent use of software for pupils with special educational needs in mathematics. Computers outside classrooms are timetabled so that pupils in need of more practice of basic skills in mathematics can have regular, daily access. However, apart from this application, the computers outside the information and communication technology suite were not regularly used during the course of the inspection. Opportunities to use information and communication technology in other subjects are not always taken.
- 129 Standards of work observed during the course of the inspection, for example in the use of spreadsheets, word-processing or data handling, were generally in line with national expectations and pupils made satisfactory progress in lessons. However, the range of work undertaken is too narrow.
- 130 The coordinator is fully aware of the shortcomings in the subject and has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve matters. However, he does not have the opportunity to observe the quality of teaching and learning in lessons and is therefore unaware of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching within the school. All staff have some basic competence in the use of computers as a result of the New Opportunities Fund training available to all schools, although the quality of training appears to have been variable. The recently purchased interactive whiteboard for one of the Year 6 classes is proving to be a valuable resource, and makes the teaching of information and communication technology skills to whole class groups much easier than in the suite. This whiteboard is also very effectively used to teach skills across a range of other subjects.

MUSIC

- 131 Standards in music exceed expectations for pupils in Year 6. This is a good level of improvement in music since the previous inspection. The improvement is a direct result of the use of specialist teaching in music throughout the school. The school allocates a block of teaching time each half term. This ensures that the pupils acquire musical skills and knowledge in a step by step way. The scheme of work covers all elements of the National Curriculum and provides clear support and guidance for teachers. During the inspection there was no evidence to show progress in pupils' ability to listen to and appraise music. Work in music makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.
- 132 Throughout the school pupils achieve high standards in singing. They sing enthusiastically, melodically, and with clear enjoyment. By Year 5, the pupils sing confidently and accurately in two part rounds whilst playing their own accompaniments. They have a good understanding of musical notation and combine sounds from the pentatonic scale effectively. All pupils have ample opportunities to develop their composing skills. The teacher encourages them to write poems and compose music to reflect the mood of the poetry. This makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' skills in literacy and develops their understanding of how composers create mood. Standards improve steadily from Year 3 to Year 6. The school makes very effective use of the specialist skills of a learning support assistant and of the subject leader. This ensures that all pupils receive a consistent quality of teaching throughout the school. Most pupils reach above average levels of attainment in singing, performing and composing because of the emphasis on teaching musical skills and techniques. The recorder club develops further pupils' skills of instrumental playing and the ability to read music.
- 133 All the pupils are enthusiastic about their work, behave and concentrate well and enjoy their music lessons. They listen attentively to each other and their teachers and show much respect and value

for each other's efforts. Pupils in all classes have high levels of perseverance and work hard to produce work of a good quality. There is a very effective level of support for pupils with special educational needs. This enables them to make good progress in developing musical skills and knowledge. Careful planning for pupils who have English as an additional language ensures that they understand musical terminology. They work confidently and achieve standards similar to those of their classmates. The school's inclusion strategies are very effective.

- 134 The teaching of music is consistently good. Four lessons were observed, one in each of the four year groups; one of these was very good and three were good. This is having a significant effect on pupils' standards and learning, and is an improvement since the previous inspection. The school provides equality of opportunity and access for all pupils to the whole music curriculum. Music makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Resources for music are adequate and readily accessible for use by staff and pupils. There is a good supply of musical instruments and books. The school is aware of the lack of music for listening and appraising and that information and communication technology is not used enough. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use the computer to carry out independent research into musical instruments and the lives of composers. The supply of keyboards is insufficient to meet the needs of the pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 135 Standards achieved by pupils in Year 6 are above national expectations. This is an improvement on the standards reported at the time of the previous inspection. The school works hard to provide a varied curriculum for all pupils, which ensures that pupils with special educational needs and pupils with English as an additional language make good progress. The physical education curriculum covers all the elements of the subject and also makes a significant contribution to the personal development of the pupils. The coordinator, although relatively new to the role, has a clear grasp of the subject and how it needs to be improved. She has provided very practical help to staff by organising a scheme that ensures the good, progressive development of pupils' skills and opportunities for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This has been a major contribution to the improvements that have taken place. Work done by pupils is also systematically recorded through photographs, so providing a means of assessing balance within the curriculum and the contribution to physical education of extra-curricular activities.
- 136 Teaching is good throughout the school, with examples of good and excellent teaching. Of the four lessons seen, one was of the highest quality, two were very good and one was good. The good features of the lessons included very effective use of praise to celebrate achievement and effort; skilled intervention in team games to support individuals in keeping up with the rest of the class; and good quality demonstrations giving pupils a clear understanding of the movements to be carried out. During the warm-up session in a Year 4 class, the teacher demonstrated with great care a stretching exercise the pupils had to repeat. As a result of these very clear instructions the pupils were able to complete the task very effectively and gain the maximum benefit. As pupils move through the school they develop their throwing and catching skills very effectively. This is because of the systematic way in which skills are taught and built on from lesson to lesson. A good feature of the lessons is the way in which skills pupils have been learning are then used in a game situation. After a lesson learning how to chest-pass a ball, the pupils then enjoyed a vigorous game putting these skills to good use. When playing games and working together, pupils' skills of teamwork are higher than expected for their age. This is due to the high value placed on developing personal skills throughout the school and the many opportunities for pupils to learn to work together.
- 137 Skills in dance and gymnastics are developing well in Year 3. In a lesson observed, the teacher set very clear learning objectives with high learning expectations following a discussion about what the pupils had done in the previous lesson. The pupils responded well to the challenge; they worked very well in their groups, deciding the kinds of movements they would use and how they would combine them into a team effort. They tried hard to produce their best work and thought very carefully about what they were doing. At the end of the session they were confident to

demonstrate their work and they showed a genuine appreciation of each other's efforts. When doing this work the pupils showed that they can use the space in the hall sensibly, they are beginning to coordinate their movements and use balance well.

- 138 Pupils make good progress in swimming because there is a carefully planned programme of work each year. Each of the year groups swim for an hour a week for a period of six weeks. This intensive programme means that, by the time they complete their swimming sessions in Year 6, standards are above expectations with many pupils achieving much longer distances than expected for their age.
- 139 Pupils enjoy physical education because teachers approach this subject with enthusiasm. The majority of pupils behave well, changing sensibly and moving about the building in an orderly way. They respond quickly to instructions and do their best to carry out the tasks. Girls and boys work comfortably together and are happy to play in mixed teams.
- 140 Pupils benefit from a good range of extra-curricular activities where they extend their expertise across different aspects of dance, games and athletics. Events after school include netball, football, hockey, cross-country running and country dancing. The school eagerly accepts offers of help from parents, the local professional football club and a visiting dance teacher. All these contributions add a further richness to the physical education programme.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 141 The school is continuing to maintain the satisfactory standards reported at the previous inspection. There is an improvement in the pupils' understanding of how religious belief can affect everyday life. The previous inspection identified the need to improve the quality of teaching and the range of visits to different places of worship. The school has successfully addressed these requirements. The quality of teaching is consistently good and the pupils visit a wide range of places of worship. There is a good level of improvement since the previous inspection.
- 142 The religious education curriculum meets statutory requirements and follows the guidelines of the locally agreed syllabus. All year groups have enough opportunity to study different practices and beliefs in suitable depth. The careful planning ensures that pupils make good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding. This, and the good quality teaching, ensures that pupils develop a sound understanding of different religions, cultures and beliefs.
- 143 By Year 6, most of the pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. They successfully identify similarities and differences between a range of religions and beliefs such as Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism. The teachers ensure that all pupils have opportunities to acquire a suitable level and depth of understanding of the different beliefs. For example, pupils in Year 3 increase their understanding of the importance of religious artefacts in their work on Islam. Skilful teaching ensures that the pupils respect different customs and practices. A scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work showed that by Year 6 most pupils have a clear understanding that all religions have a set of rules by which believers live. They apply this knowledge to their own code of conduct in school. The school assemblies reinforce work in religious education effectively and give pupils time to think and reflect. This enables the pupils to develop their own ideas about belief and religion and makes a positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 144 The support for pupils with special educational needs is effective. It enables the pupils to take a full part in religious education lessons. Pupils who have English as an additional language receive carefully planned support in lessons. This makes a valuable contribution to promoting racial and cultural harmony within the school. The teachers ensure that all pupils make good progress in their learning and that the school's strategies for inclusion work effectively. The vast majority of pupils respond well to work in religious education. They value and respect the ideas and opinions of others and are confident in sharing their thoughts. There is a small, but significant, minority of

pupils who become restless and do not concentrate. This slows their learning and progress. Most pupils are eager to learn and enjoy the challenge in their work. However, they do not apply their writing skills very effectively to produce interesting pieces of work about religious events, and the presentation of this work is below the expectation of standards from pupils of similar ages. The school is aware of this and is actively seeking ways to improve presentation of work.

- 145 Although only two lessons were observed, both of them of good quality, there is enough evidence in pupils' books and from planning to judge teaching to be of good quality overall. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers are confident in the subject and prepare their lessons carefully and thoroughly. They provide clear and specific learning objectives, share these with the pupils and plan challenging and interesting activities. They give careful thought to providing a calm and reflective atmosphere in the classroom for the teaching of religious education. This helps pupils to think and contemplate and makes a positive contribution to their spiritual development. The teachers ask thought-provoking questions. For example, a class of Year 4 pupils was asked to think about the feelings of Jonah and then to explain how they would feel in a similar situation. Many pupils use words such as 'relieved' and 'sad', but a significant minority had difficulty in finding words to express their feelings. Well-trained and enthusiastic learning support assistants give a high level of assistance to the teachers. This is particularly noticeable in a Year 3 class where a bilingual assistant ensures full understanding by pupils.
- 146 Planning follows the locally agreed syllabus for religious education and includes relevant elements of a nationally recommended scheme of work. It gives an effective level of attention to the defined areas of learning. The school's scheme of work gives teachers clear guidance and suggestions to assist their teaching. All teachers keep records of the areas of work that pupils cover, but do not record pupils' attitudes towards religious education. This is an area for future development.