

INSPECTION REPORT

WITTERING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Peterborough, Cambridgeshire

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110755

Headteacher: Mr. R. Laurie

Reporting inspector: Mrs Margaret Hulme
OFSTED Inspector Number: 3609

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 5th June 2003

Inspection number: 247041
Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2003

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Road
Wittering
PETERBOROUGH
Cambridgeshire

Postcode: PE8 6AF

Telephone number: 01780 782336

Fax number: 01780 782336

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr. R. Dummigan

Date of previous inspection: November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
3609	Mrs M. Hulme	Registered inspector	Art and design; Religious education;	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
9306	Mrs B. Moore	Lay inspector	None	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4109	Mr J. Barley	Team inspector	Information and communication technology; History; Music Educational inclusion. English as an additional language	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
32389	Mr C. Constable	Team inspector	English; Design and technology; Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
20288	Mrs S. Morton	Team inspector	Science; The Foundation Stage; Special educational needs;	
11848	Mr J. Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics; Geography	

The inspection contractor was:

Lincolnshire Education Associates
The Innovation Centre
Europarc
GRIMSBY
North East Lincolnshire
DN37 9TT

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6 - 9
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10 - 13
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13 - 15
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15 - 18
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	18 - 19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	19 - 20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	20 - 23
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	24
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25 - 28
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29 - 46

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a school that works with the challenge of a constantly changing population where few children spend more than two years in the school and there is a constant turnover of 50 per cent of the roll. Over 80 per cent of children come from families based at RAF Wittering and consequently the intake comes from all over the United Kingdom as well as from the immediate village. There are 275 children of whom 44 are in the reception classes of the Foundation Stage. Almost all are white of UK heritage and there are two children whose mother tongue is not believed to be English but they are well settled and understand and speak English satisfactorily. There are 10 children known to be eligible for free school meals. There are 42 (15 per cent) children identified as having learning difficulties and five have specific statements of special educational need, which is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school that does well for its children. The headteacher provides very good leadership that is strong and purposeful in directing the work of the school. In this staff and governors support him very well. The committed teaching and very good relationships support children's learning very effectively and are driving up standards. There are high standards in several subjects by Year 6. There is a good range of learning opportunities but the school recognises that a few subjects need a little further development. Children enjoy coming to school and are pleased about the range of activities offered them. They achieve well and make good progress. Despite its high turnover the school is successful in providing high standards and maintaining a high quality of education for its children. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children achieve well and reach high standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography, and religious education by the time they leave school.
- It gives children in the Foundation Stage a good start, preparing them well for the National Curriculum.
- Personal development is very good and results in children having very good attitudes to their work and behaving very well.
- The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and is well supported by staff and governors.
- It takes very good care of its children and provides a caring and supportive ethos.
- It works well in partnership with parents who are very satisfied with the quality of education provided.

What could be improved

- The range of mathematical and science activities at Year 2, particularly for more able children so they make better progress.
- Some aspects of science, ICT and the Foundation Stage curriculum to ensure the range of learning opportunities meets national expectations.
- The remaining inconsistencies in teaching relating to handwriting, marking, use of time and use of ICT to support learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997 and has made good improvement. All issues identified for action in the previous report have been tackled successfully and the previous headteacher had begun to make other improvements. A change of headteacher has provided firm direction for the developments that have taken place since. Improvements have now been made to results in national tests, the curriculum, assessment procedures, the role of subject co-ordinators, parental partnership, aspects of care and support and provision for personal development. The better and more effective teaching is improving standards. There is now a strong sense of direction and purpose and the school offers good value for money.

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
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	B	A	A	C
mathematics	A	C	B	D
science	C	A	A	B

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

The current Year 6 achieve well in lessons and overall are reaching above average standards in English, mathematics and science. As can be seen from the tables above the well above average results for English and science and the above average results for mathematics compared unfavourably in the comparison with similar schools (those that have the same percentage of free school meals). The similar schools factor is an unreliable one when judging this school because it is unusual with over 80 per cent of the children from the local RAF base and the intake coming from all over the country. Half the children reached the higher level in both English and science and over a third doing so in mathematics. The targets set for Year 6 children's attainment in 2002 were exceeded in English and met for mathematics. Children in the reception classes get off to a good start. Some have started National curriculum work early but the majority will reach the expected standards in all areas of learning by the end of the year. By Year 2, results in the national tests for 2002 show average attainment in reading and above average in writing and mathematics but the more able children do not progress as well as the could in mathematics and science and need more time spent on investigative aspects of science. There are some inconsistencies in handwriting that need attention.

Overall, there has been an improvement in standards since children are now doing better in more subjects than at the last inspection. By the time children leave school they are achieving standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design, geography and religious education that are higher than is usually expected for Year 6 age. There are improvements too by Year 2 with children achieving higher standards in English and art and design than at the last inspection. Children with learning difficulties achieve well reflecting the good quality support they receive. There are no children identified as gifted and talented children. There are a few children whose mother tongue is not English but they too are achieving well and making good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Children are enthusiastic in lessons and make very good efforts because they want to please the teachers
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Children benefit from teachers' high expectations and any small instances are usually handled well with no disruption to lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Children gain considerable confidence and their work is valued. They enjoy responsibility and carry out tasks well.
Attendance	Very good – well above the national average

Children come willingly to school. They work hard and take pride in what they achieve. They take a full part in school life and self-esteem is high. The very good behaviour is a key factor in the sustained work and very good

efforts. The very good relationships that exist between staff and children have established a good foundation for learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very good

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

Overall the teaching is good. Four out of ten lessons were very good and there were three excellent lessons and no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a big improvement since the last inspection because the school has introduced a good system of keeping track of observing lessons in order to improve them. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is good and it is consistently very good in the Year 6 class. There is good teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The effective planning ensures well-directed and confidently taught lessons. Assistants who are well trained and use their knowledge and expertise effectively, particularly when working with children with learning difficulties, support teachers very well. There are some weaknesses such as inconsistencies in marking and homework. In the infant classes teachers need to improve challenge for more able children and occasionally pace in mathematics when providing oral and mental sessions. There are many strengths in the teaching that enable the needs of all children to be met. These include very good relationships that encourage children to be effective learners and the expectation that children will work hard and achieve their best. The wide range of ways that teachers collect information on children's progress and use it in planning lessons ensures that all children achieve success.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Curricular opportunities are good but a few improvements are needed in provision for science, information and communication technology and the Foundation Stage.
Provision for children with special educational needs	The very good provision ensures appropriate good quality support for those that need it and children make good progress and achieve as well as they can
Provision for children with English as an additional language	Good. Children learn English quickly and they can take a full part in all activities and understand what is happening in lessons.
Provision for children's personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual and cultural development has improved. Children know the difference between right and wrong and have a very good understanding of the need for social responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Staff care greatly about children's welfare and provide the best possible support and guidance that they can.

The school works very well in partnership with parents. It values the contributions of parents to their children's learning and is keen to have them working in school. Parents have very good views of the school and are very satisfied with the quality of education it provides but there is a minor weakness relating to consistency in homework. Good provision for extra-curricular activities, very good provision for personal, social and health education. Although procedures for monitoring attendance are mainly satisfactory the school lacks written guidance on action to be taken on first day absence.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall, very good. The headteacher provides strong and purposeful leadership and is well supported by staff.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. Governors are clear about their roles and responsibilities. They are well organised and use a number of ways to keep themselves informed.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is now a good understanding of the school's performance. The improved use of analyses has helped the staff to understand what works well and why. Governors take a keen interest
The strategic use of resources	Very good use is made of resources including grants and other funding provided by parents to achieve high standards

The school has sufficient teachers and support staff that are deployed appropriately and the premises have been greatly improved and now provide excellent facilities for teaching and learning. Learning resources are good overall but better provision is needed for the physical development of the Foundation Stage outdoors. The headteacher and governors are keen to ensure that everyone in the school has the same hopes and aspirations and the school's aims and values are reflected in all that they do. Secure systems are in place to ensure that the financial and administrative work of school management is efficiently carried out. The principles of best value are used well and decisions are made with improved standards in mind.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Teaching is good and helps children become mature and responsible. There are high expectations and behaviour is good. They feel comfortable about bringing suggestions or concerns to school. Their children like school and make good progress. The school is well led and managed. They are well informed about how their children are doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The range of activities outside lessons Consistency in homework

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views. The range of activities outside lessons is good and similar to other schools. Inspectors agree with the concerns about homework and consider this aspect needs greater clarification about what parents should expect.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The school does well by its children, who achieve well in National Curriculum tests by the time they leave school because based on average points score results for 2002 they were well above average for English and science and above average for mathematics. This is a remarkable achievement for a school with such a high turnover of children because many have attended at least four schools by the time they arrive at Wittering and because they come from schools all over the country some have not been taught the range of work needed to do well in the national tests. However, teachers work hard to make up these discrepancies because they are aware that some may have to move on yet again before taking the Year 6 tests.
2. Overall, the standards of work seen in lessons and in the samples provided by the school during the inspection are generally good. Children reach standards that are at least typical for their age by Year 2 and by Year 6 and a number of children in each year group do better than this. Standards in six subjects of the National Curriculum are higher than is usually expected for age by Year 6. Children's attainment on entry to school is broadly similar to that found nationally and by the end of reception year most will reach the expected standards for their age. Many have already reached that point and have started on National Curriculum work early. All groups achieve well during their time in school. Standards in all subjects have at least been maintained since the last inspection and improvement is good because there are higher standards in two subjects by Year 2 and in six subjects by Year 6.
3. Children in the reception class (Foundation Stage) get off to a good start in all areas of learning. They are making good progress towards the expected standards for their age because all staff are highly committed to their well-being and respect children as individuals and as learners. Children achieve well. The work planned for them is carefully matched to their stage of learning and care is taken to plan for any child whose mother tongue is not believed to be English. Progress in one area of learning, physical development, is hampered in one aspect because the school does not yet have the range of outdoor equipment it needs as recommended in the national guidance for the Foundation Stage. However, the school recognises the need to develop this further. Standards in the areas of learning seen in lessons and in the analysis of work samples are shown in the table below.

Area of learning	Personal, social and emotional development	Communication, language and literacy	Mathematical development	Knowledge and understanding of the world	Physical development	Creative development
Expected standards for age	Most achieving expected standards	Most achieve expected standards and many started the National Curriculum	Most achieve expected standards many started the National Curriculum	Most achieving expected standards and some doing better	Achieving expected standards	Most achieving expected standards and some doing better
Progress	Good progress	Good progress	Good progress	Good progress	satisfactory progress	Good progress

4. Results in the National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds in 2002, show that children's attainments are average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. However, when compared with similar schools (those that have the same percentage of free school meals) results are below average in reading and average for writing and mathematics. Although the

majority of children reached the expected standards for their age the percentage reaching the higher level in reading was lower than average, in writing they were close to average and only in mathematics were they higher than average. Teachers have worked even harder with the children this year but admit to difficulties owing to the high turnover and that some children have not covered sufficient work to do well in their national tests when they arrive.

5. The comparison with similar schools is dependent on the social backgrounds of families living in the area where the school is situated. In Wittering the intake of children (over 80% from RAF base) is from all over the country not just the local village and with the constant turnover is an unreliable measurement of attainment because family circumstances do not relate to a stable population and the facts provided by the usual census information. Parents, governors and staff expressed concerns about the way that a factor such as free school meals is used given the peculiar circumstances at this school.
6. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds in the same year, results were above the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. However, when compared to similar schools results were above average for science, average for English and below average for mathematics. Evidence shows that children had made very good progress in English and science and satisfactory progress in mathematics since the tests when they were in Year 2. Results at the higher level were very good in English and science with half the children reaching that level. They were good in mathematics with over a third reaching that high level. The targets set for Year 6 children's attainment in National Curriculum tests in 2002 were exceeded in English and met for mathematics.
7. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection and are now above average by Year 2 and at the end of Year 6. Children reach high standards in speaking and listening skills, which enables them to listen carefully and take an active part in class discussions. For example, Year 2 children talk confidently about their preferences in fiction books and Year 6 children use imaginative language in poetry lessons. Reading standards are average overall by Year 2. Good use is made of letter sound knowledge to read unknown words and more children are now using expression and reading fluently. By Year 6 reading is above average. They talk enthusiastically about different genres such as biography and enjoy the language of Shakespeare and Kipling. Some children use expression very effectively bringing a piece of writing alive. Standards in writing are average overall but at Year 6 there are a number of children doing better. In all classes there are children who have a good understanding about writing for different purposes including factual accounts, stories, lists, post cards, note taking and modern myths. The use of drafting in writing is effective, particularly at Year 4. Children make good efforts to write fluently but there are inconsistencies in the use of joined writing which needs more attention.
8. Standards in mathematics have been maintained since the last inspection and are average by Year 2. There is a growing confidence in the use of numeracy skills for problem solving and children reach high standards in work related to standard units of time. There are some weaknesses in mathematics at Year 2, which hamper the progress of more able children. For example, understanding the place value of numbers up to 1,000, using different methods to add and subtract and using decimal notation in money. Although children recognise a right angle they do not understand angle as a measurement of turn. By Year 6 children attain above average standards overall which is an improvement on the previous inspection. Almost all reach expected standards with about 40 per cent doing better and a few reach standards well in excess of what is expected for this age. The attainment of girls, which has been significantly lower to that of boys for the last three years, is no longer the case and their results are on a par

with boys. There are no significant weaknesses at this stage but there are many things they do particularly well that include fractions, percentages, decimals and solving problems. They reach very high standards in using and applying mathematics.

9. Standards in science are average by Year 2 and above average by Year 6. Children at Year 2 are gaining an appropriate range of knowledge and understanding of science overall but too little time is devoted to developing skills of scientific enquiry. This can be improved by more activities relating to exploration and investigation. By Year 6 children have covered a range of science topics, which build effectively on previous work. They carry out investigations, make predictions, draw conclusions and make effective use of both mathematics skills and those relating to information and communication technology. They work as independently as they can.
10. Standards in National Curriculum subjects and religious education seen in lessons and in the analysis of work samples are shown in the table below.

SUBJECTS OF THE CURRICULUM	BY THE END OF YEAR 2	BY THE END OF YEAR 6
English	Above average	above average
Mathematics	average	above average
Science	average	above average
Art and design	Above expected standards	Above expected standards
Design and technology	Expected standards for age	Expected standards for age
Geography	Expected standards for age	Above expected standards
History	Expected standards for age	Expected standards for age
ICT	Expected standards for age	Expected standards for age
Music	Expected standards for age	Expected standards for age
Physical education	Expected standards for age	Expected standards for age
Religious education	Expected standards for age	Above expected standards

11. In the work seen during the inspection, as can be seen in the table, standards are higher than usually expected for age in six subjects by the end of Year 6. Although standards in all other subjects are typical for age by the end of Year 6 there are some aspects of some subjects where children achieve high standards. This is the case for information and communication technology when older children use the Internet for research and for music where there are high standards in singing. There were also some lessons where children reached a higher standard, for example, the Year 1, Year 2 and Year 6 history lessons.
12. Children with learning difficulties achieve well, reflecting the good quality support they receive from skilled classroom assistants and their teachers. Most make good progress overall in their learning both towards their own targets set within their individual education plans and in lessons. This is an improvement on the previous inspection when children were judged as making satisfactory progress. There are no children identified as gifted or talented according to national guidance.
13. The main reason that children achieve well is a combination of two factors. These are the professional knowledge and expertise of the headteacher and deputy head who provide firm direction for the teaching of the curriculum, and the effective teaching of the staff, who encourage children to have very good attitudes to their work and consequently this results in the efforts that produce high standards in several subjects by the time they leave school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. This is a significant strength of the school and shows improvement since the last inspection. Inspection findings are consistent with views expressed by parents at their meeting. The very

good relationships established between teachers and children results in enthusiastic learners whose attitudes to their work are very good and most behave very well at all times.

15. From the moment they start school in the reception classes the Foundation Stage children quickly settle to routines and have very positive attitudes to their work. Most are keen to learn, listen carefully to adults, use their imagination and concentrate well in lessons. In all lessons seen at this stage children's attitudes to their work were at least good and on a few occasions were excellent because teachers had established very good relationships with them and managed the children very well. From Years 1 to 6 children work hard, concentration is sustained and progress is good. In most lessons children complete the work expected by teachers because they have a good understanding of what they have to do right from the beginning of the lesson. Occasionally, there are a few children in some classes that challenge the authority of the teacher but such incidents are usually handled very well and disruption does not occur. However, in some science lessons for younger children the management of behaviour slipped because the teacher did not keep an overview of what the whole class was doing.
16. Behaviour both in and out of the classroom is generally very good and sometimes excellent. This is a direct response to the teachers' high expectations and to the mutual respect that exists. This is particularly good considering the high turnover of children that the school experiences with its close association with The R.A.F. base. Many children have changed school several times before coming to Wittering and the majority spend about two years on average in this school. Children are very polite and courteous. They willingly engage in conversation with teachers and visitors responding politely and respectfully to questions. The school is an orderly community and every day children entered the hall for assembly quietly and calmly even when their parents attended. Playtimes and lunch times are very pleasant social occasions. Despite the large numbers in the dining room noise levels remained acceptable throughout the meal. No oppressive behaviour or racist or sexist incidences were observed.
17. Personal development is very good. The children form very constructive relationships with one another and are encouraged to co-operate on activities. For example, during information and communication technology lessons the children discuss their work to find common solutions, they take turns in using the equipment and respect one another's views and opinions. Children enjoy having responsibilities which are increased as they get older. Initially they are given jobs within the classroom for such tasks as the registers or tidying book corners. By Year 6 they help supervise in younger classrooms during wet playtimes and lunchtimes, they take responsibility for preparing for assembly, answer the telephone, carry messages accurately and collect information for the headteacher. As they progress through the school children develop a greater respect for the views of other people and reflect upon their own actions and the impact they have on others. By the time they leave school most have become very confident and mature young people.
18. Attendance levels are well above average and the majority of authorised absence is a result of family holidays. Registers are marked accurately and efficiently twice a day. There is no unauthorised absence or exclusions during the last year.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and is now one of the school strengths. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection when it was mainly satisfactory. At this

inspection there were 81 per cent of lessons that were good or better, including three excellent lessons and the rest were satisfactory. Unlike last time there was no unsatisfactory teaching during this inspection. The better and more effective teaching is driving up standards.

20. The findings of this inspection show that at the Foundation Stage the teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. In Years 1 and 2 the teaching was good, one in four lessons were very good and the two excellent lessons were attributable to the headteacher. In Years 3 to 6 the teaching was very good overall including one excellent lesson. There were 14 good lessons and one in six that were satisfactory.
21. Strengths in teaching and learning are the establishment of very good relationships between teachers and children, which has provided a foundation for improving learning. Teachers listen carefully to children who know their contributions are valued and this makes them eager to do their best work. Many children are prepared to make very good intellectual and creative efforts because in all classes they want to please their teachers. For example, in a literacy session in a reception class there was constant boosting of confidence and praise was given for effort which resulted in children who were prepared to persevere with tasks even if they couldn't achieve them at first. This was particularly effective with those children who had recently joined the class. In this lesson very good progress was made in reading skills and comprehension and children behaved as confident writers.
22. Teachers plan lessons effectively that results in confident, clear direction. They have clear objectives for what they wish children to learn. In all lessons these are shared with the children who then have a clear understanding of what they have to do and what the teacher wants them to accomplish by the end of the lesson. For example, in a Year 4 literacy lesson the clear introduction quickly moved children on to poetry writing and by the end of the lesson the teacher's technique of "What am I looking for" elicited the responses that showed they had a good understanding of what they had achieved.
23. The pace of working is mainly good so no time is wasted and lessons move on quickly, concentration is maintained and work is completed. Teachers plan lessons in ways that meet the needs of most children and group activities are generally appropriate for their stage of learning. In this way the work set by teachers maintains interest and children get on with the activities they are given to do. Occasionally a lack of pace, as in part of the lesson related to oral mathematics at Year 2, reduced progress in acquiring mental skills.
24. The effective teaching at the Foundation Stage in the reception classes gives children a good start towards achieving the expected standards they need before embarking on the work of the National Curriculum. Teachers know how essential good teamwork is at this stage and make effective use of the skills of teaching assistants resulting in a consistent approach to activities and just the right amount of support for those with learning difficulties. This was seen particularly in numeracy sessions where lower attaining children found they could match a quantity of small toys to numerals in one lesson and in another those with learning difficulties completed a task because they had constant encouragement and unobtrusive support.
25. There is good teaching of children with learning difficulties who are well supported in their learning in all classes. Tasks set are appropriate to learning needs and related to individual targets in their education plans which enables children to achieve success and take pride in their work. The high quality work of teaching assistants is recognised by the special educational needs co-ordinator as a key factor in these children's successes. Teachers regularly review targets and procedures are in place to identify those children who may be experiencing

difficulties in their learning. The expertise of a learning support teacher who visits the school and advises staff has improved the teaching and raised expectations of what children can achieve so that provision for those with learning difficulties is now very good.

26. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is generally good and consistently very good at the Foundation Stage and Year 6. All teachers use the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively. Teachers plan lessons in other subjects in ways that emphasise the use of literacy and numeracy skills. For example, in a Year 1 history lesson children were comparing features of past and present related to the seaside. Inspired by a poem they were encouraged to read difficult words such as *supplied*, *neatest* and *pleasure* and were challenged to describe crabs and lobsters. As the lesson progressed to discussion about likely items to sell at a kiosk they split into groups to spell their suggestions and good attempts were made at such words as *sandwiches* and *inflatable*.
27. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. For example, there is good direct teaching of skills, which was particularly evident at the Foundation Stage with an emphasis on the use of capitals and full stops in writing and how to space out words so work is well presented. Children were well aware of what was meant by the teacher's statement, "not a football, just a dot" and had been taught to say the sentence they wished to write in their heads to make sure words were in the right order. The teaching of alphabet letter sounds and how they can be blended together to help children read unfamiliar words is good and has resulted in children who will make attempts safe in the knowledge that teachers understand they may not succeed the first time. The teaching of word-processing skills begins with the reception children and by Year 2 the majority are competent at composing a story or poem using the computer. The information and communication suite has been beneficial to teachers in attempts to have the whole class learn a skill together and then practise these skills in other work.
28. The management of children is usually very good and most followed directions and made good efforts in their work but this did not always work well. For example, the very good behaviour observed in other lessons was only satisfactory in a science lesson because the organisation was at fault. The teacher spent too much time working with one group and failed to oversee the whole class and occasionally support staff were not as well deployed as they might be.
29. Organisation also affected children's progress as in a science lesson when the class returned late from a physical education lesson and finishing off changing took too long so there was too little time for them to take part in such activities as the planned paired discussion. Progress in a religious education lesson was reduced because the work was organised in two short sessions and came to an end just when children were extending their understanding. The press of time in physical education resulted in no warm up session in one lesson and the whole lesson lasted only 23 minutes. However, overall and in most subjects the lessons were well-organised and enabled good progress.
30. The samples of written work provided by the school and in a few lessons indicated that some weaknesses identified at the last inspection still remain despite the good guidance provided. For example, the presentation of work in some classes indicates inconsistencies in the teaching of joined handwriting. Although there are good examples in the marking of work that challenged children to improve there was too much that merely referred to work done well without reference to improvement. In some classes there was well thought out homework that reinforced learning but this was not the case across the school and some children considered that they could choose if they did it or not. Parents are right to feel confused about what is

supposed to happen for homework and greater clarification would help parents, children and teachers.

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

31. Overall, a very good range of learning opportunities is offered to children by the school. A particular strength is the way that the curriculum is organised to provide very good access to the large number of children who enter the school at times other than the beginning of the academic year. Children have access to a wide range of experiences that extended what they know, understand and can do and ensure they make very good progress in their personal development.
32. The Foundation Stage curriculum for reception children is carefully matched to their needs, although, as the school recognises, the provision for outdoor physical activities needs to be extended. Foundation Stage teachers have also made good plans to establish the new, statutory profile for children as they complete their reception year.
33. The school meets almost all the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. However, it remains to develop the use of sensing equipment in information and communication technology but the co-ordinator is well aware and understands that when this is done all National Curriculum requirements will be met. The expectations of the Peterborough Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education are met. However, the organisation of time in religious education at Year 1 and in physical education in other classes is, on occasion, compromising lesson objectives. The school is a well-organised place for children to learn and teaching areas give children access to equipment and resources. Displays are stimulating and reflect the wide range of activities in which children are engaged.
34. The school has good systems and processes for teaching both the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy. In both subjects there are good plans to ensure that children build on their skills as they progress from one class to the next. However, in some numeracy lessons the pace needs increasing so that children are challenged more and improve their learning. Reception children are prepared carefully for the demands of the literacy and numeracy lessons as they move into Year 1.
35. The equality of access and opportunity to learning opportunities the school provides is very good. All children benefit according to their needs. Work in most lessons is planned at different levels and is carefully matched to their stage of learning. Thus each child has an equal chance of achieving the lesson's aims. Provision for children with special educational needs are particularly commendable and is very good. All children regardless of the nature of their learning difficulty are fully included in lessons. The staff often modify tasks for children with learning difficulties thus allowing them to achieve success. Support from classroom assistants encourages these children to take a full and active part in their learning, reflecting the school's stated policy of being committed to an inclusive curriculum that will ensure the best possible progress for all children. For example, a Year 2 child was given a big soft ball to use with a tennis racket so that he could successfully develop the skill of striking a ball with the racket. Children whose mother tongue is not English are observed carefully and take a full part in all lessons.
36. There is good provision for extra-curricular activities outside lessons. Opportunities include hockey and netball clubs for older children. A netball team plays matches against local schools.

There is a singing club and a recorder group and time is made for children to have instrumental tuition. The school is justly proud of its involvement with the Comenius Project, which links schools within Europe. The school staff and children swap correspondence and visit other schools. This exchange has many advantages for children extending their awareness of other cultures and giving purpose to English, geography, computer and personal skills development. Learning opportunities outside lessons included a residential trip to York, trips to the local Sculpture Park, the Butterfly Park to study minibeasts, Burghley House to study the Tudors and visits to churches and farms. The curriculum is also enhanced by participation in local events such as the village fete and singing to the senior citizens at the RAF base during their Christmas celebrations. The expertise of visitors extends what the school can offer and has included musicians, live theatre, artists and sculptors all of whom enrich children's learning experiences.

37. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good. The teaching of drugs education and sex education is guided by policy that is known and understood by all staff. Lessons in science and physical education deal with the importance of hygiene, exercise and a balanced diet. The curriculum includes learning about growing up, sex education and the misuse of drugs such as tobacco and alcohol. Older children also benefit from visits by the police and the school nurse who provide specialist teaching. Parents of Year 6 children are consulted about the sex education programme offered to their children and are asked to give their consent to their children taking part in these lessons.
38. The school is geographically remote and this has an impact upon the ease of travel to and from school by visitors and the local community. The contribution of the local community to children's learning is therefore restricted. However the school has had recent involvement with the RAF Base when the Station Commander visited and planted a Jubilee Tree, the Bomb Disposal Squad also turned up with a technical vehicle and gave the children the opportunity to learn more about their work. The college at Stamford has placed nursery nurse students in school. Parents are employed in school as classroom assistants and they also volunteer to support trips and run the weekly bookshop that raises money for the school fund.
39. The school's links with other schools is good. Children compete with other primary schools in netball and football games, swimming gala, athletics meetings and an annual book quiz. Hockey tournaments are great occasions and recently the school won both the Peterborough Under 10 and the Under 11 contests. The liaison with pre-school groups and secondary schools so as to help the smooth transition of children to and from school is well established and the exchange of information is effective.
40. The school makes very good provision for personal education. Lessons in science and physical education teach children about the importance of exercise, hygiene and a balanced diet. The curriculum includes lessons about growing up, and, for the older children, sex education and the misuse of drugs. The importance of personal qualities such as fairness, caring, respect for themselves and others are regularly promoted in assemblies and lessons.
41. Personal development is extremely well supported in the way the school provides for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The provision in all these areas has improved from good to very good since the last inspection.
42. Spiritual awareness, such as the understanding of the lives of other people is promoted successfully. For instance, in religious education children are taught about the diversity of beliefs, customs and practices. They learn about the Hindu spring celebration of Holi and the Christian festival of Easter, which inform their views about life and their place in it. The very

active support made to charities such as 'Hope and Homes' and 'United Nations Children's Fund', which supports young victims of wars and disasters, gives them a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion. They develop an appreciation of beauty, truth and goodness through art, music and literature. Their spiritual awareness is awakened by such activities as the captivating visual and oral presentation of the animal story 'Alone' in assembly. They are very sensitive towards one another's needs in the way they play and work together.

43. The very good relationship between children and adults is testimony to the high quality of provision for moral and social development. It is fostered through the insistence on values such as fairness and respect for truth and justice. For example, children clearly distinguish between right and wrong when playing games and accept that rules are an essential part of doing things fairly. They develop the ability to think through the consequences of their own and others' action when, for example, Year 4 children write about the moral dilemma of receiving stolen goods. They work co-operatively on tasks, share sensibly and appreciate the needs of each other. For instance through the manner in which older children support the younger ones in and out of lessons. They recognise and appreciate the success when awards are presented in assemblies. Adults in the school provide powerful role models for moral and social development, which enable children to learn more about qualities such as courtesy and respect.
44. Visits to places such as Burghley House, Peterborough Cathedral and York provide an understanding of their own culture. They study and write about local traditions, myths and personalities, when celebrating harvest, finding out about the dangerous, mischievous and magical Fenland Boggarts and learning about Daniel Lambert who lived locally and who, at 53 stones, was the fattest man in Britain. They perform Christmas concerts, attend exhibitions of life in Tudor times and investigate the history and geography of their own locality. Events such as the Second World War, which have helped shaped the way we live today, are studied.
45. Children are very aware of diversity and richness of other cultures both in Britain and other countries. Many of them have lived abroad and, at school, their knowledge of other places and people is expanded, for instance, education when they study faiths such as Hinduism, Islam and Judaism in religious education. They learn about celebrations such as the Chinese New Year, sing songs in French and from India and dress up as book characters on World Book Day. Of particular significance in providing for cultural development are the links the school has established with other European countries. For example, great insight into the differences between cultures was promoted through the visit of a party of children from a partner school in the Czech Republic.
46. The school aims to provide a caring and stimulating curriculum, which provides the best possible opportunities for children's personal development. It has established a firm foundation upon which to pursue these aims.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS CHILDREN?

47. This is a very caring school in which children's well being is of paramount importance. At the time of the last inspection care of children was judged to be very good. This high standard has been maintained and is now a significant strength of the school. The staff understands children well and their care ensures that children are happy and secure.
48. Teachers understand the procedures to be followed to ensure that children are well protected and the level of welfare is very good with many excellent features. Social inclusion is given a

high priority in the school and was observed in lessons where it is well promoted in the daily life of the school in an atmosphere where everyone is valued. It is particularly well focused in the way children are welcomed in this school where the very high mobility of children brings many changes when children join and leave the school. Parents and their children approve the very sensitive and caring way in which children are welcomed and integrated into the daily life of the school. Very effective procedures are in place to promote all the related matters of health, safety and security to a high level.

49. There is a strong moral and caring ethos, which is part of the daily life of the school. This very effective support enables them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered. The very good personal support and guidance for children was evident in the way the school supported children and families during the recent conflict in the Gulf War. Together with support from RAF personnel the school reduced fears and helped children feel they could cope while parents were involved in the war.
50. The ways that the school keeps track of attendance is satisfactory overall; there is good practice especially in the monitoring of pupil mobility. However, one area of weakness exists relating to first day absence. Although practice is satisfactory the school lacks written guidance about action to be taken if a child fails to arrive and no message is received but the school is aware of this and have plans to improve it.
51. The school's highly inclusive approach and its commitment to equality of opportunity results in good care for children with learning difficulties. In the light of the high percentage of transient children the school is committed to the earliest possible identification of special learning needs, which is consistently implemented. Following identification, all children on the special educational needs register have individual education plans prepared. These are regularly checked by the co-ordinator and the school's assigned educational psychologist. Whole school procedures to keep track of progress across the curriculum are securely established and well used to inform the planning of learning. The statutory provision for the children with statements of special educational need is met and implemented.
52. The school has very good practices in place to identify how well children are learning and to support their personal development. For example, test results are analysed to check children's progress and the information used very effectively to detect areas of the curriculum in which there are particular weaknesses. As a consequence support is directed efficiently to help children who need it most. For example, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson the use of learning support assistants was effective in enabling children to make good progress in learning how to tell the time because they knew the children well, were well briefed about the learning objectives and used small steps to build carefully on what these children already knew and could do. . Very good systems are in place to check the progress of children with learning difficulties. These are used efficiently to set targets for improvement in their individual education plans.
53. Information about standards is also used constructively by teachers to help children set their own targets for improvement and to find evidence of any significant variation in the attainment of any group of children. For instance, results in the National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds in past years has shown that boys have consistently outperformed girls in mathematics. In remedying this concern there has been better targeting of questioning and discussion towards girls and investigative work in areas of girls' interests. As a result their attainment is now in line with that of boys. The high quality of the information in the records of achievement make sure

that there is minimum disruption in children's education when they move to another school. Given the constant high turnover this is a school strength.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. Parent's views of the school are very good and they express great satisfaction with the quality of education provided and the standards children achieve. This is a significant strength of the school. Throughout the inspection parents provided very positive views of the school confirming the views given at the pre-inspection meeting. Of the 126 inspection questionnaires returned a very high percentage of parents said their children like school, teaching is good, children make good progress and the school helps children to become mature and responsible.
55. The quality of information for parents is very good which is the same as at the last inspection. Children's reports meet legal requirements and are very detailed, giving a clear indication of children's progress. In addition they include targets for further development and details of social and personal development. Reports are kept up to date termly in order that those children who have to move to another school midterm have up to date information regarding their progress. Considerable work is undertaken by this school because of the challenge of so many transient children and they maintain records that are updated more frequently than in the majority of schools. The school prospectus is clear and helpful, includes items such as the homework policy. Newsletters give parents a clear indication of the life of the school and offer them opportunities to share in it.
56. Parents make good contributions to consolidate and improve children's learning at home and at school. They accept the homework such as reading and spelling but some expressed concerns about the way it is organised and consistency of approach by teachers. Although there is good practice with teachers both setting and marking homework when required this is not the case across the school and although the homework policy appears in the prospectus it was clear that many parents felt confused. Some parents make time to help in school and have so enjoyed the work that they have gone on to train and get employment as assistants in school. Such activities as the very well attended class assembly held during the inspection and end of term and Christmas concerts provide parents with an opportunity to be involved in their child's learning and see outcomes at first hand.
57. Although the questionnaires indicated that some parents felt there was a need for more extra-curricular activities, this was not confirmed by parents during the inspection and the range of opportunities, dealt with in another part of this report, are typical of many primary schools. The school appreciates the partnership they have with parents; they value highly the contribution parents make to the life of and to the community. Teachers are always helpful and supportive, and parents feel the school is now more willing to listen to their views. They appreciate the openness in which they are greeted by all staff, particularly valuing the daily opportunity to speak with the headteacher at the start and close of each day because his presence is evident as they arrive and leave.
58. The school works very well with parents, involving them at all stages of the process of provision for children with learning difficulties. During the inspection, parents articulated their appreciation of the school's very good attitudes towards their involvement and of the high standards of care and consideration given to individual children. They are clear that this makes a positive contribution to children's self-image and attitudes to learning and thus to their overall

life chances. Parents of those who have specific statements of special educational need are invited to the annual review meetings in accordance with the Code of Practice and their views are actively sought and regularly taken into consideration when decisions are made.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The school now has very good leadership. Since his appointment, the head teacher has set a clear agenda for school improvement and a vision for the future. He has successfully diagnosed the key areas for improvement and works effectively with his management team to bring about change. The headteacher's vision gives emphasis to the whole school, including governors, working together as a team for the benefit of the children. The deputy head and the Key Stage 2 co-ordinator are contributing very well to the leadership of the school.
60. In this school children have the highest priority and the challenge of meeting the needs of all when many have a limited time in the school requires much effort. For example, in the current Year 6 class only three children have been in the school since reception and of the others the longest stay has been two years. With over half the children constantly moving to other RAF bases is a unique situation and applies to few schools in this country. It particularly requires the special skills that provide a firm direction to the work of the school and this is well established.
61. The strong and purposeful leadership of the headteacher, using his good knowledge and professional expertise very effectively, has enabled all staff to extend their understanding of what children can achieve. He sets a good example to others through his own teaching skills and takes care to ensure that there is consultation about decisions in managing the school. The recommendations of the previous report had been tackled before he joined the staff but there has been good improvements to standards, National Curriculum tests, teaching, curriculum, assessment procedures and their use in planning, the role of co-ordinators, children's personal development, care and welfare and the partnership with parents. Most of all he has looked at the need for all children to be treated equally and in particular the needs of those transient children whose time in the school, although limited, is as precious as that of others. For example, children often arrive at Wittering and find that they have not been taught the skills that their class has already acquired but the dedication of teachers ensures that this is not the case for long and self-esteem increases.
62. The deputy headteacher has a significant role in school management and is effective in overseeing routine management and pastoral care. At present her leadership role is extensive and greater than might be expected for a school of this size because she has the added responsibilities of absent teachers. Currently she provides leadership as Key Stage 1 co-ordinator, as a member of the Senior Management Team; is overseeing leadership of English and the Foundation Stage; co-ordinates staff development; curriculum; orders and budget management. In addition, she monitors whole school planning and record keeping each term, manages work experience placements and quality assurance observations. She also has a leadership role in the Commenius Project to promote cultural understanding between five schools in other countries. All this and effective class teaching too. She tackles these responsibilities very well, but when a new Key Stage 1 co-ordinator is appointed in the near future the school intends a more equitable delegation of tasks to ensure no member of staff is overburdened.
63. The deputy headteacher had begun to move the school forward in the use of technology, both as a tool for learning in lessons and as a means of improving administration. The information and

communication technology suite had been planned and installed with air conditioning so that children have a space to learn new skills together as a class. With the advent of a new headteacher who is very knowledgeable and skilled in the use of technology for communication there was further progress and further training for staff plus new purchases moved the administration of the school from a paper based organisation to a smooth running, well resourced and efficient part of school management. Both administration staff have separate responsibilities but they know one another's tasks well and this is a great strength in ensuring the smooth running of the school. Their friendly, approachable manner is appreciated by all visitors and sets just the right tone in helping children and their parents to feel welcome.

64. The headteacher inherited what was thought to be a deficit budget and made many cutbacks to get the school on an even keel but the information he was given was misleading. A large budget had been provided for an influx of children to 600 pupils but these numbers did not materialise at that point and the local authority protected this budget for five years as both they and the school considered that a change might occur very quickly since a Navy contingent and Tactical Squadrons were expected on the RAF base. The school has set aside a sufficient budget for two additional teachers if that need arises quickly but the rest of this funding is gradually reducing as £80,000 is deducted from the budget by the local authority each year. The administrator ensures that all aspects of budgetary control are carried out to a high standard. Financial planning supports the school's priorities well and expenditure is monitored regularly. Governors constantly seek the best value for money and make effective decisions over spending so that more funds are retained to spend on children and teaching. For example, they find their own contractors for such tasks as grounds maintenance rather than pay a higher cost for the local authority workers.
65. The very effective ways of keeping track of observing lessons in order to improve them has had a very positive impact on the teaching. At the last inspection, improvements to teaching were an issue for action and there was some unsatisfactory teaching in the Foundation Stage and in the infant classes. In this inspection no unsatisfactory teaching has occurred and many lessons were taught very well, a few being excellent. This improvement in teaching and learning is a further factor in the success of the school. Teachers with responsibility for subject management have clearly defined roles and carry out their duties diligently. They monitor the lesson plans and all have spent some time observing lessons. However, some inconsistencies in teaching remain and need to be remedied.
66. The effective monitoring of performance is driving up standards. For example, when the school analysed the early assessments of the Foundation Stage it raised areas of concern because there was variation in results between classes; writing and spelling was a concern and children were below average and not showing any value added. This resulted in action that included a comparison of teaching in parallel classes that resulted in the sharing of best practice, writing skills were targeted as a school improvement; daily spelling games introduced and individual targets for children were introduced. This has resulted in children reaching higher standards in the areas of learning and some starting National Curriculum early.
67. Parents express their strong support for the way the school works and strongly approve of the leadership being given. Some of the teaching assistants started as volunteers and have gone on to train and work in school where they make good contributions to the work children achieve. Parents want to help their children. However, there are some uncertainties amongst some parents about what should be happening about homework and the policy and practice needs clarification.

68. The school has an appropriate number of suitably qualified teachers to ensure all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught effectively. Teachers are well supported by a good number of classroom assistants. All staff benefit from a comprehensive programme of professional development, closely linked to the needs of the school's development plan. Regular training has taken place to improve skills in a number of specific areas and classroom assistants have received training in their role to ensure they can now work more closely with teachers in lessons. Good induction procedures are in place to ensure that all new members of staff take up their roles quickly and effectively. The school stands in substantial and pleasant grounds. The accommodation has been improved significantly since the last inspection. There are two halls for a range of activities including physical education, music and drama. There are two very attractive libraries that are well stocked and a reading room. Specialist areas exist for food technology and information and communication technology. There is sufficient space to have separate music facilities. Refurbishment of classes in the older part of the building has given all children attractive surroundings in which to do their work. Accommodation is now excellent.
69. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities very well through an effective committee structure and by the appointment of individual governors to oversee key aspects of the school, such as special educational needs, literacy and numeracy. Governors regularly visit the school and have links to individual subjects that helps them understand children's work and progress. They are well informed by the work of the committees and the head teacher's reports. Consequently, governors have a good understanding of how the school works. The head teacher, management team and the governing body have a shared understanding of what the school does well and what it needs to do to improve. Consequently, the governing body makes a very effective contribution to the leadership and direction of the school and the priorities that the school has set are appropriate. Although practice is satisfactory the procedures for first day absence lacks written guidance and this too needs clarification. For the future, there is a shared and very firm commitment to move the school forward with a very strong likelihood of success.
70. Taking account of the attainment of children when they enter the school and the results they achieve by the time they leave, the inclusiveness and overall quality of education provided, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

71. Although much development has taken place and improvements since the last inspection are clearly evident the quality of education provided needs some fine tuning in terms of what is provided for some more able learners in infant classes, the range of learning opportunities and the inconsistencies in teaching that have only partially been resolved since the last inspection. The headteacher, staff and governors should now:

❑ **Extend the range of mathematical and science activities at Year 2, particularly for more able children to make better progress**

See paragraphs: 8, 9, 34, 99, 110, 117

❑ **Extend some aspects of the curriculum to provide**

- A wider range of science activities in infant classes that includes more investigative and experimental work
- Greater use of the Internet as a communication tool in learning
- Development in the use of equipment to record physical data
- Better provision for the physical development area of learning outdoors

See paragraphs: 9, 33, 79, 82, 110, 117, 149, 163

❑ **Resolve the inconsistencies in teaching relating to:**

- the teaching of handwriting;
- Using ICT to support learning
- The management of children in some science lessons
- Pace of some lessons
- Marking of work

See paragraphs: 7, 23, 28, 29, 30, 34, 56, 91, 103, 107, 113, 116, 118, 152

When governors compile the inspection action plan attention should be given to the minor issues of:

- Written guidance for first day absence of children
- Timetabling organisation to ensure that children have sufficient lesson time to extend skills in the subjects of religious education at Year 1, science and physical education
- Clarification of the expectations for homework and consistency in approach

See paragraphs: 29, 30, 33, 50, 56, 67, 69, 117, 163, 168

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	72
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	3	27	28	14	0	0	0
Percentage	4	38	39	20	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	275
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	42

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	140
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	140

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	21	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	15	16
	Girls	23	24	23
	Total	40	39	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (78)	85 (92)	85 (86)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	15	18
	Girls	23	23	24
	Total	39	38	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	85 (86)	83 (88)	91 (98)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		200	24	16

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	19	23
	Girls	15	11	15
	Total	32	30	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (88)	75 (74)	95 (95)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	21	19	19
	Girls	14	10	13
	Total	35	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (83)	73 (88)	82 (95)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	265	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	3	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	6	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19
Average class size	21.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	222

Financial year	2002/3
----------------	--------

	£
Total income	841,981
Total expenditure	787,309
Expenditure per pupil	2,393
Balance brought forward from previous year	202,793
Balance carried forward to next year	257,465

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	321
Number of questionnaires returned	126

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	59	38	2	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	63	34	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	62	36	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	41	19	3	3
The teaching is good.	70	29	2	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	45	3	1	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	68	30	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	37	52	5	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	61	34	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	43	0	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	34	17	9	11

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

72. Children enter the reception classes of the Foundation Stage with skills that are broadly similar to that found nationally, although the frequent movement of many of these children and the nature of the employment of many of the families combine to make children's emotional development less secure. The school works hard, and successfully, to provide the very supportive environment that counteracts these uncertainties. By the end of the reception year, all children, including those with learning difficulties and whose mother tongue is not English, make good progress towards achieving the expected standards in all six areas of learning, - many working successfully at the early stages of the National Curriculum in English and mathematics.

Personal, social and emotional development

73. Progress is good and most children will reach expected standards for this area of learning by the end of the reception year. Children have very good attitudes to school and to learning. They come into school ready to learn and involve themselves in activities with enthusiasm. Within activities, children make appropriate choices that they are able to justify. They work with care, showing that they can use materials and equipment safely, respecting the need for others to have a turn too. They behave very well in all sorts of contexts, – as seen when a class worked in the computer suite, getting on with their tasks in an orderly fashion and then sitting on the floor quietly when ready for the teacher demonstration. All children are developing a good understanding of what is right and wrong and why, and with sensitive staff support are able to consider the consequences of their actions on others. Relationships are consistently very good and consequently children learn how they are expected to behave in a range of situations, trying hard to comply and doing very well. The effective partnerships between teachers, support staff and parents result in the respectful relationships that are a feature of both classes. Children have a good understanding of the routines of the classroom and the school and move about the building with confidence.

Communication, language and literacy

74. Good use is made of all learning opportunities to develop and extend children's use of written and spoken language and so most children make good progress in this area. However, a minority of children, mainly those who have already been identified as having learning difficulties or those who have joined the school recently are unlikely to reach expected standards in this area by the end of the reception year. Children readily take part in opportunities to use their speaking skills, for example, when a group of children introduced the lesson on road safety with their own recollections of a visitor who spoke about avoiding accidents outside. Throughout the day, children are made aware of a range of good quality books and are encouraged to share their reading books with adults. At story time, children join in with the direct speech or the repetitive phrases featured in the text, thus learning about the significance of different prints and conventions in writing. Children interpret illustrations and the feelings of characters and are sometimes able to predict what may happen next in unknown stories. All children enjoy listening to stories and responding to what they have heard.
75. Children's writing shows good progress, with a significant minority making very good progress in writing a short series of sentences independently. These children understand how to use simple

punctuation and include lively speech within the plot – although not demarcated with speech marks. All children make a good attempt to write their names and are developing a comprehensive knowledge of letter sounds. They write or make marks enthusiastically because of the variety of interesting writing opportunities and the encouragement from the staff to take pride in their achievements. A significant minority of children have very good reading and writing skills. They are able to read and write key words and to make phonetically plausible attempts at a range of other words that recount a favourite story or event from their own experience.

Mathematical development

76. Children make good progress overall in reaching the expected standards and a significant minority is working well in the early stages of the National Curriculum. The good progress occurs because lessons are well planned and adults support children well. Children are extending their understanding of numbers to ten and beyond. Lower attaining children are encouraged to build sound number concepts by matching favourite toys to the correct numeral and talking about it, whilst more able children show that they can record “add 1” statements independently and use mental methods to subtract from two-digit numbers in practical situations. All children explore the properties of solid shapes through games and practical activities and develop their understanding of ‘wide and narrow’ through the use of a variety of mark making equipment.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

77. Children make good progress towards reaching the expected standards in this area of learning because the curriculum is enhanced by visitors and by special celebrations that provide them with a range of first hand experiences that help to make sense of the world. A minority of children will not reach expected standards by the end of the reception year because they have already been identified as having learning difficulties or have not previously benefited from a broadly based curriculum. Children learn about living things through a variety of well-chosen stories and through investigation of the outdoor environment, finding out about the features and living things within their school grounds. Children investigate objects and materials using their senses and select the tools and techniques they need to shape, assemble and join materials they are using, as seen in a display of shoe fastenings.
78. Children particularly work well with computers both in the suite and in their own classrooms because the school has provided the machines and software that support different areas of learning, and has provided a high quality programme of skills teaching through the year. In the classroom, all children enjoy using the painting program to create the background and then insects for their mini-beast pictures and slower learners enjoy practising correct letter formation. In the computer suite, children start up a program and use the menu to navigate to the desired activity, which is excellent for their age. They subsequently follow the teacher’s example to collect data about eye colour from a particular group of other children, to add this information to a pictogram on screen and to comment about their findings. One child had time to print a graph independently.

Physical development

79. Children make satisfactory progress in this area of learning and most are likely to meet the expected standards by the end of term. They use a range of small equipment well because of the good teaching, which builds on previous learning and develops skills through enjoyable

activities, within well-structured lessons. Children can handle tools and materials with increasing control, and safety, in a variety of contexts. However progress in one aspect of physical development is not as good as others because opportunities for children to travel around, under, over and through climbing equipment outdoors are limited by lack of large, fixed climbing equipment and by the lack of direct access to the outside courtyard from one classroom.

Creative development

80. Children make good progress in this area and the majority will reach expected standards by the end of reception year because they have access to a range of well-planned activities that encourage creative working, developing a variety of skills. They explore colour, shape and texture creating their own artefacts as seen when children created their own crowns to use later in the role-play castle. They use their imagination in a variety of contexts. As a result of good teaching, the children sing well with clear diction and strong voices, with appropriate percussion playing and actions. They work hard to learn some quite difficult words and clearly enjoy performing songs for their parents and the rest of the school.

Teaching

81. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. This is an improved situation on the previous inspection when a small number of lessons were found to be unsatisfactory. Teachers provide a secure and interesting place for children to learn. Their calm and reassuring manner together with a high expectation of what is acceptable behaviour combines with the very good relationships to maximise children's learning. The children's imagination is captured by the high quality of resources used in contexts that relate to their own experiences, for example, when children use information and communication technology to sequence events in a story about a bear getting ready for the day. Children are encouraged to enjoy their learning and shared laughter is a common feature of classrooms.
82. Children make good progress because all staff are highly committed to their well-being and show respect for each of the children as individuals and as learners, which increases children's self esteem. Teachers plan a range of learning opportunities together that support learning well. They have worked hard to bring planning within the six areas of the Foundation Curriculum since the last inspection. However, some planned opportunities for child initiated play and for the full range of outdoor play opportunities, require further attention. Teachers take every opportunity to reinforce learning in relevant ways – for instance, in asking children to check numbers present for lunch using mental addition and subtraction.
83. Teachers provide good examples of spoken and written language and provide carefully selected activities that promote language use through other areas of learning. This was seen when work on developing story language. The activity was enhanced in a number of ways and included: opportunities to act out the story using models of the characters and puppets, use of the computer for name writing, use of picture of characters to make simple sentences, annotating illustrations with their own dialogue and modelling the characters in dough. Both classrooms feature well labelled displays, a variety of visual prompts such as reminder cards and speech bubbles, auditory prompts such as taped versions of the week's story, to maximise children's learning. Both classes have selections of books for children to choose, sets of audio tapes and frequent opportunities to use information and communication technology to develop communication skills.

84. Teachers showed particular sensitivity to the separation of many children from their parents during the recent war in Iraq. This was demonstrated in the care taken for extra talking time on particular days to meet the need of specific children and with smaller details – for example, including the “bluey” forces letter in the resources for the writing table.
85. Teachers have very good procedures for assessing children’s progress throughout the Foundation Stage and are well placed to complete the new profile by the end of term. They make good use of assessments to identify the next stage of learning and use this information to plan the differing needs of all groups of children. Teachers work well with parents and this results in high levels of parental support for learning.
86. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator leads the work very well and children’s progress is better since the last inspection. She took on this responsibility in January of this year, covering for the maternity leave of a colleague. The school recognises the need to develop opportunities for extended outdoor play further and to plan for increased opportunities for child-initiated play. However, senior staff are rightly keenly aware of the need to provide high levels of security for children when working outdoors.

ENGLISH

87. Overall, standards in English are above average at Years 2 and 6. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the overall standard was average. Of particular note is the number of children in Year 6 achieving the higher level in the national tests and this is well above average. All children make good progress including those with special educational needs and those whose mother tongue is not English. These improvements are due to the good and, at times, very good teaching, the implementation and organisation of the National Literacy Strategy, the ways used to encourage reading and effective assessment and monitoring of children’s progress.
88. Standards in speaking and listening are above average. The majority of children have good listening skills and they listen carefully to their teachers and one another in the classroom. These well-developed listening skills help them to concentrate on instructions and have good discussions during lessons. Children’s speaking skills are also well developed. They explain ideas clearly and fluently and enjoy exploring the use of language, for example an articulate child in Year 1 when discussing a poster about how to look after pets asked, “What is a pooper scooper?” By Year 2, children express preferences and talk confidently about their favourite fiction books. By Year 6, children have a good vocabulary. Some more able children use words and sounds imaginatively for example; during a poetry lesson they rhymed ‘Porter’ with ‘sorta’, as an adaptation of ‘sort of’.
89. Standards in reading are average for children by the end of Year 2 and above average by the end of Year 6. When reading aloud, Year 2 children use their knowledge of letters and sounds effectively to help them identify new words and most also use clues from illustrations. A significant number read fluently and with expression. Children enjoy their reading, and during a discussion about reading they smiled and chatted with the sheer enthusiasm of the pleasure they get from books. Most children can explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction. When looking at non-fiction books about topics they are covering in class, most children can identify the contents page and index and use alphabetical order confidently to scan the index.

90. At Year 6, children read fluently and most use a very good degree of expression. Their choice of books ranges from those written for the young teenage reader, such as those by the author Jacqueline Wilson, to adult texts; one pupil was reading the full version of *The Lord of The Rings*. When reading aloud children read accurately and understand how to use expression to bring a piece of writing alive. Children of all abilities are enthusiastic readers. They can talk about different genres, including biography and autobiography. Some talk knowledgeably about Shakespeare, naming plays and discussing the content, another said his favourite poem was 'If' by Rudyard Kipling and this prompted others to say that Kipling also wrote 'The Jungle Book'. Children make very good use of the library and use the usual Dewey classification system to find books. The quality and quantity of books and other resources are good. The library is well stocked with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and is an excellent resource. Children's library skills are good across the school.
91. Standards in writing are in line with those expected of children by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, although, in Year 6, there are a number of more able children who attain above average standards. Year 1 children write short stories using appropriate vocabulary and most are beginning to write independently and some produce longer stories than might be expected. By the end of Year 2 most children spell simple words accurately and many are able to spell complex words. They understand sentence structure and often use capital letters and full stops consistently. Children use writing for different purposes for example, a Year 1 class wrote factual accounts about 'Catherine of Aragon' and another wrote a modern myth about 'The Rutland Panther'. As in this example from history, writing skills are emphasised in other subjects too, particularly geography and religious education. Handwriting is usually fluent and with letters the correct size but there were some inconsistencies in the use of joined handwriting.
92. By the end of Year 6 most children use drafting effectively to evaluate and improve their work, as in a Year 4 lesson on nonsense poems where children drafted and refined their work. Children are given valuable opportunities to write at length, through extended writing lessons and most children take full advantage of the time to use their language skills to write poetry or stories. Some children need more structure during these lessons so as to help them develop their writing skills. As with the younger children all older children write for a wide range of purposes and for different audiences, a Year 4 class used note-taking skills when exploring different animals habitats and a Year 6 class used writing to describe the differences between contrasting places in geography.
93. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good, making a positive impact on pupils' learning. The National Literacy Strategy is well established and the school has a well-organized scheme of work that provides good guidance for teachers enabling them to produce clear planning. Lesson aims are shared with the children at the beginning of each lesson and this gives each pupil an understanding of what they have to achieve by the end of the lesson. Teacher's management of classes is mostly very good, and children in all classes are very well motivated and want to give of their best. There is an atmosphere of concentration that pervades the school due to the very good relationships between staff and children. This atmosphere means that children feel comfortable and are therefore willing to contribute and are even prepared to take chances knowing that they will be encouraged if they make mistakes. Classroom assistants are well deployed in the classrooms and make a significant contribution to this positive atmosphere. They help with a variety of tasks and, where they support children with special educational needs, are a major factor in the good progress made by these children.

94. Where teaching is very good lessons have a brisk pace and teachers prepare a range of activities, which are well matched to different levels of ability. In these lessons teachers also use their very good knowledge and understanding of English to carry their children on a wave of enthusiasm. This encourages children to learn even when they are challenged to complete demanding tasks. For example, in a Year 6 lesson on writing limericks, children had to complete a task that demanded that they think about words that rhyme in a particular pattern, keep their poem to five lines with a certain number of syllables in each line and consider carefully their choice of vocabulary.
95. Generally, marking congratulates children for work well done but the best marking is where the pupil is challenged to improve. The use of information and communication technology to support learning in English is good with children working on computers as part of lessons and using word-processing skills to produce good quality displays. The computer suite is a well-used resource that promotes children's enjoyment in learning English. Assessment is used to inform planning and the daily reading diary is a very good means of communicating between parents and teachers.
96. The leadership and management of English is good. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and knowledgeable ensuring that there is firm direction for the subject. Test information is used well by staff to match teaching to the needs of individual children. Recent staff training was undertaken to help the development of writing skills to make teaching more effective.
97. The English co-ordinator is also the Comenius Project co-ordinator that links this school with others in Europe and provides a breadth to the subject that promotes thinking about language and the use of language. For example, a recent visit by children from a Czech school made children consider how to overcome the language barrier. This promotes thinking about language in different and unusual ways.

MATHEMATICS

98. By Year 2 standards are average in numeracy and mathematics (number, space, shape and measure). This is similar to the standards reported at the last inspection. Although children have done a limited amount of work in data handling in mathematics this has been enhanced by work in this aspect in geography and science. Almost all Year 6 children attain standards that are at least average for their age in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. A large proportion of the age group, approximately 40 per cent, attain high standards and a few are capable of reaching those well in excess of that expected of eleven year olds. This is an improvement on the last inspection when attainment was reported as being average.
99. By Year 2, children reach high standards in work related to the use of standard units of time and there is emerging confidence in the application of number skills to problem solving. For instance, using vocabulary such as 'largest' and 'smallest' to order sets of numbers, amount of money and measurements and writing sums to match picture stories. However, there are some weakness in what is taught, particularly for the more able children. For example, very little work is evident in understanding the place value of numbers up to 1000, using different methods to add and subtract or in the use of decimal notation in the context of money. Few children distinguish between straight and turning movements, and, although many recognise a right angle, they do not understand angle as a measurement of turn.

100. One important factor in the current standards is the attainment of girls, which has been significantly below that of boys in the National Curriculum tests over the last three years. This has now been rectified resulting in better targeting of girls during questioning and discussion and tasks in their areas of interest. They are now reaching equal levels of attainment with those of boys. There are no significant weaknesses at this age but there is a range of strengths. For example, the skill in finding answers to number problems using a variety of methods, the knowledge of fractions, decimals and percentages and the understanding of positive and negative of coordinate references on a grid divided into four quadrants.
101. There is especially high attainment in using and applying mathematics. For instance, in finding an answer by recognising and completing a complex number pattern when finding the cost of stamps. Also in using conversion graphs to ascertain the exchange rates for Pounds, Francs and Marks and work connected with interpreting data by the correct use of terms such as *range, mode, median* and *mean*. Work, which is well above that expected of eleven year olds, is tackled well when carrying through substantial tasks to solve complex problems by understanding how to break them down to more manageable forms. For example, in using factors in the numbered letters of the alphabet (A=1, B=2 etc.) to find a word, the letter values of which multiply together to make a million.
102. One particular strength of the school is in the application and use of mathematics in other subjects. For instance, Year 1 children draw accurate column and pie diagrams of their favourite flowers and Year 2 produce graphs and a computer data file from information they collect about favourite holiday destinations. In science, Year 3 children find out the strength of various types of thread using metric weights and Year 4 investigate the differences in the circumferences of both children's and adults' heads by accurate measuring. Older children learn how to use six-figure grid references to give the location of places on an Ordnance Survey map in geography and measure and record pulse rates before and after exercise. Children discover more about symmetry when they study the work of the artist Seurat and, during a visit of a practising engineer, Year 6 learn how to use mathematical knowledge to make rigid models.
103. The quality of teaching has improved since last inspection. It is now good in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understand how to teach mathematics and numeracy. However, on occasions the oral sessions lack the necessary pace to rehearse sharpen and develop mental skills. For example, in a Year 1 lesson children's use of addition and subtraction facts up to twenty was not brisk enough and failed to involve all children.
104. Lessons are well planned, children well informed about what they are expected to learn and teachers make good use of discussions at the end of the lesson to check what has been learnt and make plans for future work. Good use is made of resources in almost all lessons and children are taught to use these to help with tasks. For example, younger ones access large wall mounted number squares up to 100 to help in adding and subtracting.
105. The main quality of the very good teaching is in the level of challenge and expectation. For instance, in the excellent Year 6 lesson when children learned how to tackle a complex problem involving factors, alphabet letters and a million. In this the clarity and pace of the teaching, the all-embracing nature of the questioning and discussion and the manner in which children are encouraged to be responsible for their own learning results in excellent progress. Similarly in a Year 4 tasks that are very well matched to the age and abilities of the children enable promotes very good learning about lines of symmetry in shapes. During this lesson the teacher was constantly asking searching questions to extend children's learning. For example, 'Can we

discover a triangle with three mirror lines of symmetry?’ Expectations are less well promoted for more able children in a Year 5 data-handling lesson when they are given too low a starting point in tasks involving finding the range, mode, median and mean of sets of statistics.

106. There is good teaching of children with learning difficulties and slower learners who are well supported by learning support assistants and have tasks carefully matched to their abilities. This enables them to make good progress. For example, in a Year 2 lesson a well-directed task, good use of resources, discrete questioning and the high quality of adult pupil relationships enabled six of these children to make good progress when learning about time. Similar good practice was observed in most other lessons. This results in all children being included in the learning opportunities and achieving success. In addition ‘booster’ classes bolster the attainment of older children in some areas of mathematics.
107. The weaknesses seen relate to a lack of appropriate information technology software to support the teaching of mathematics. However, teachers do use other aspects of information and communication technology such as use spreadsheets, databases, the OHP and OHP calculators. There is also some inconsistency in the use of homework.
108. The subject is very well led by the co-ordinator. He is well informed about standards and the quality of teaching. His observation of lessons in order to improve them resulted in the introduction of an investigative lesson every week, which has led to improvement in using and applying numeracy. His overview of the subject makes sure that there is a consistent whole school approach to curriculum planning and checking the progress in children’s learning. Resources for mathematics are good. In view of the high number of children moving to and from the school each year the achievements in mathematics, particularly of the oldest children is exceptionally high.

SCIENCE

109. Standards are average by the end of Year 2 and children make steady progress. Although most children reach an expected level of understanding, few are challenged enough to do better and reach a higher level in their scientific knowledge and when developing enquiring minds. By Year 6 standards are above average and progress is good. Those children with learning difficulties and those whose mother tongue is not English, achieve well and make good progress because work is matched to their stage of learning and there is skilled support from teaching assistants. Standards are similar at this inspection to that of the previous one.
110. By Year 2, children have a suitable knowledge and understanding of science overall. They know about materials and their uses as well as life processes. They can identify the correct types of foods required for healthy living. They understand that some changes such as chocolate melting, can be reversed, whilst others cannot. When learning about physical processes most children are beginning to establish an understanding of how simple circuits work through first-hand experience of experimenting with bulbs, batteries and wires. Evidence from the scrutiny of written work and from lessons observed at Years 1 and 2 shows that insufficient attention is given to the development of the skills of scientific enquiry – echoing the outcomes of teachers assessments at Year 2 in 2002. For example, in a lesson involving the planting of seeds in order to test out the ideal conditions for growth, children were not encouraged to collect evidence through careful observation or to discuss whether the test they were setting up, was fair.

111. By Year 6, children have covered an appropriate range of science topics. In a project on providing conditions for healthy plant growth in Year 3 children were able to demonstrate their understanding of life processes relating to plants, and to discuss how to plan a fair test. Their discussion of how to control and change variables demonstrated good progress made in scientific enquiry skills since Year 2. A lesson on the properties and classification of solids, liquids and gases enabled lower attaining Year 6 children to develop their own understanding of the different properties – with skilled support from classroom assistants, and the use of an electronic encyclopaedia. The study of physical processes was evident in samples of previous work.
112. During the inspection, it was not possible to observe any science lessons in Year 6 but, in discussions, children described working on a variety of topics explaining how they identify and collect the resources they need and work independently as far as possible. Evidence from the work samples showed a good understanding of the stages of an investigation and good use of predictions and ability to draw conclusions. There was effective use of line and block graphs to display information appropriately.
113. Teaching ranged from satisfactory to good. It was good in half the lessons and satisfactory in the rest. Overall, the quality of teaching was satisfactory in the infant classes and good in the juniors.
114. Where teaching was good, the planning had clear objectives that were understood by children who clearly knew what they had to do and what they were expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Teachers made good use of a variety of prompts for learning. This was particularly effective when a teacher-led a challenging class discussion on controlling variables in a Year 3 science investigation. She involved children in recording their suggestions on sticky labels which were then moved around the laminated planning board to reflect their growing understanding of the implications of changing each factor in the context of fair testing.
115. Lessons proceeded at a good pace but care was taken to identify and resolve misunderstandings and to support all ability groups in developing new knowledge, based on previous understanding, so that all made good progress.
116. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and reflects the clear explanation of tasks and introduction to lessons. They take care to ensure that displays of work have clear labelling that reinforces key vocabulary to support children. In the junior classes a good range of books and electronic information sources supports investigative work. Discussions with Year 6 and samples of their work show that by the time they leave the school, they have made good progress in understanding and carrying out scientific investigations. They can evaluate experiments with increased use of scientific detail and make use of an appropriate variety of graphs, tables and diagrams. The marking of work is carried out consistently but often does not indicate the way forward with sufficient clarity.
117. Weaknesses in teaching related to a lack of sufficient opportunities to develop the skills of scientific enquiry and in the infant classes there was a lack of challenge for more able children resulting from tasks not planned for stage of learning and the need to improve diagnostic marking to give children a clearer picture of the next steps in learning. Sometimes, if a lesson was too short, there was insufficient time to include all the planned elements of the lesson and children had no time to be involved in paired discussion or to develop investigative work.
118. Although teachers generally manage the children very well in lessons this was not always the case in science. The relaxed atmosphere in a Year 2 class produced some misbehaviour that

was not immediately remedied. This occurred as a result of the teacher becoming too involved in directing the details of children working and failing to maintain an overview of everyone. A significant minority of the oldest children with behavioural difficulties were well managed because the efforts of both teacher and the support assistant acted quickly to minimise disruption.

119. Good use is made of literacy skills, which are developed through the subject as they discuss investigations, seek information from books and electronic sources and record experiments. They practise numeracy skills when measuring, recording and interpreting data. Teachers encourage children to handle resources with care and make good use of information and communication technology as a tool to support learning enhancing the acquisition of knowledge skills and understanding, for example, Years 5 and 6 used laptops effectively to research the properties of common gases.
120. The subject contributes well to children's personal development encouraging them to treat living things with care, as was seen in a Year 1 lesson when children carefully tested the leaves of living and synthetic plants to identify difference. The subject enhances children's social skills as they work collaboratively in groups and pairs. The establishment of good relationships with children has motivated the very good attitudes particularly in junior classes where children co-operate well when working in groups or pairs. They usually listen well, contribute sensibly to class discussions and follow instructions carefully.
121. Teachers make good efforts to keep track of progress recording individual assessments in their daily diaries and using pre-task assessments where appropriate. Termly reports for parents summarise achievements and targets for improvement. Parents articulate their appreciation of the teaching of science and children often bring in science books from home to share with others.
122. Leadership and management of the subject are good – reflecting the position at the last inspection. The subject leader is a trained science specialist who attends training to maintain her own knowledge, advising and supporting colleagues. Her monitoring has led to the identification of strengths and weaknesses across the school – particularly the need to raise achievement by Year 2 especially in scientific enquiry. However this will be more secure when she is able to observe learning in lessons directly. This will also enable the subject leader to share the good practice that exists in some classes more effectively to raise standards across the school. The subject is well resourced.

ART AND DESIGN

123. There has been a considerable improvement to this subject since the last inspection. At that time standards were generally typical of what would be expected for age but this is not the case now. Much of the work seen in lessons, on display and in the samples provided by the school was of good quality and some outstanding work was seen in both the infant and junior classes. Overall, the standards are now better than is usually expected for age by Year 2 and by Year 6. All groups are achieving very well. Given that the school has a very high turnover of children and art skills improve because teachers build on them year-by-year this is a commendable achievement.
124. Overall, teaching is very good resulting in very effective learning. Some teachers have specialist skills, which are used well. For example, in a Year 1 class the children were learning

to make a sculpture from natural materials. An earlier visit to a local sculpture park was used effectively in helping children understand that sculpture does not need to be a representation of an object but can be abstract. This is a difficult idea for such young children but the very good use of demonstration by the teacher, by building up a stream using objects to symbolise different aspects of water had their rapt attention and their comments of “that’s beautiful” clearly indicated a sense of wonder and a spiritual dimension to their task. The results were good overall but some were outstanding and ranged from the fire inspired by a camping trip with parents to upright three-dimensional work that is an advanced conceptual ability for such young children.

125. By Year 2 children are using a range of media and other materials such as twigs, for example, to make winter pictures and the use of different sized brushes and an information and communication program helped produce some very good results. Well-used resources resulted in some very good observational drawings inspired by nature. The ways that teachers use literacy for inspiration challenges children to produce their best work as when children had researched and written poems about snakes and their love of such words as *slippery*, *scary*, *spitting*, *stupendous*, *smooth*, *slimy* and *slinky* had totally engrossed them in representing some wonderfully vivid creatures using a range of media. So often there were examples of how effectively this subject is used to extend children’s spiritual development. Year 3 children had visited the Burghley Sculpture Park and their word-processed accounts of what they liked indicated which sculptures had inspired them. One such piece entitled ‘*Butterfly Wall Blue*’ was made from musical metal and a child had written, “It is like touching a real piece of grass”.
126. Teachers make effective use of support staff who are well briefed and know just how much support to give to those with learning difficulties to maintain their interest and leave the teacher free to work with the whole class. The difficult task of contour drawing was introduced to a Year 4 class and children failed to appreciate how difficult this was until they tried to practise the skill without it emerging as a page of scribble. It would have been difficult to maintain the interest of a few children with challenging behaviour without the support of the assistant who immediately attempted the same task alongside them and this technique gained their attention resulting in sustained effort. There was pride in what they achieved and a great willingness to talk about the task.
127. By Years 5 and 6, children are tackling the difficult task of creating landscapes using many types of media and discovering which are best when seen at a distance. Teachers are keen to use the outdoor area when weather permits and building on previous landscape work they now used viewfinders to learn how to observe and record details of the environment in the way that artists do when producing landscapes of outstanding quality. In a class of Year 5 and 6 children there are a number of slower learners but this changes when they have art lessons because they enjoy the activities so much and know that they too can achieve work of good quality. All children made very good efforts and it was evident from their discussions and outcomes that they found such activities very valuable. At Year 6 there is a mature desire to learn and teachers plan lessons in ways that encourage their independence. They take pride in evaluating, analysing and improving work and this is clearly a factor in driving up standards.
128. Good support and advice from the co-ordinator is providing good direction for the work of this subject. The work is supported by visits to places of interest and by such visitors as artists to the school to work with children. The good range of resources and very effective teaching, including that of specialists, has been used particularly well at helping children extend their art skills in a systematic way.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

129. Standards in design and technology are in typical of those expected of children by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is similar to the previous inspection. All children, including those with learning difficulties achieve satisfactorily. Designing and making skills are at least satisfactory and occasionally better, but there was only evidence of Year 6 children using evaluation as a means of improving finished products.
130. Displays in classrooms and around the school show that children successfully translate their designs into finished products. In a Year 1 class children made badges using air-hardening clay. These were completed from designs and the finished badges were carefully made showing control over the use of tools. A Year 6 project where children were designing hats for fictional characters showed that original designs were modified before a two-dimensional model was made using a range of materials.
131. Children successfully develop their skills in designing and making a range of products and Year 6 have developed the ability to evaluate their designs and change and modify their original thoughts so as to improve the finished product. For example, when reflecting upon a model of a moving vehicle, a Year 6 child said, "our vehicle would have worked, but we had a bit of a problem when fixing the motor to the frame". He went on to talk about how this could be improved next time.
132. Only three lessons were seen in this subject so no overall judgement is made about teaching. Two lessons were satisfactory and one was good. Teachers make very successful links between design and technology and other subjects including literacy, science and art. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, children were discussing how pneumatic levers work. Their use of technical vocabulary was developed by the teacher whose skilful use of questions made them reflect and think about forces in science lessons. Children from a Year 2 class demonstrated and talked about winding mechanisms and how they could be applied to practical use like a reel on a fishing rod or getting water from a well. In a Year 4 class, chairs were made as part of an art project. The finished chairs, designed for different people, showed successful use of a variety of materials and construction methods.
133. Teachers have established very good relationships with children which results in them having very positive attitudes to their work, and results in good learning. In a Year 3 lesson, following a discussion about using compressed air to move a hinge, the children set about designing a 'monster' that would incorporate this moving hinge. The children had a good understanding of what was required of them because the teacher had involved them in the preliminary discussion. The produced designs were imaginative but also showed that the children had considered which parts could move. Everyone concentrated hard. Those with special educational needs are very well supported in their learning giving them confidence to succeed in their tasks. The use of information and communication technology, particularly in extending design opportunities, developing ideas and using control and sensor programs, is not yet an established part of the teaching.
134. The management and leadership of design and technology is satisfactory. The co-ordinator provides advice on technical aspects of work to be undertaken in classes and maintains an overview of the safe use of tools and materials. Good planning ensures carefully selected activities to offer children a variety of designing and making opportunities. The facilities for teaching food technology are very good, the school has a dedicated kitchen area for this, and resources for other areas of the subject are good. The regular monitoring of lessons ensures full

coverage of the planned work but there are limited opportunities to assess standards and provide a clear picture of the progress children make.

GEOGRAPHY

135. Standards in geography is similar to that reported at the last inspection. By Year 2 standards are typical for age but by Year 6 standards are higher than those expected for this age group. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys and those with learning difficulties are well supported. Children make at least good progress and occasionally progress is excellent when outstanding teaching occurs.
136. In developing geographical skills Year 2 children know how to use globes and atlases to locate places. They draw maps of their way to school using simple keys and compass directions. Their understanding of geographical enquiry is promoted when they produce a questionnaire to undertake a survey relating to holiday destinations. They ask geographical questions such as 'What is the weather like where you have been?' and communicate their findings in pictures, speech, writing and data. For example, class graphs showing types of places people have visited. Children's knowledge and understanding of places are developed through such activities as describing landscapes when they study the mountains and rivers in the United Kingdom.
137. By Year 6, geographical skills are well developed. For example, comparing rainfall and temperature of places in India with those of the United Kingdom. The use of comparisons is an effective way for children to learn about contrasting landscapes and land use. Teachers make effective use of geographical features in Wittering and Stanton in the Derbyshire Peak district in studying types of farming, quarrying, houses, hills and rivers. They use indexes, keys and grids in atlases and maps at a range of scales to find and investigate places such as the precise location of such landscape features as Post Offices and churches using six-figure reference numbers on Ordnance Survey Maps. Particularly good work has been done in investigating the ways human activities change the environment and their understanding of geographical patterns. For instance, the positive and negative views about quarrying and how the kind of environment in the United Kingdom and abroad influences the pattern of types of houses and settlements.
138. Children with learning difficulties make good progress because lesson tasks are well matched to their abilities and they regularly receive well-directed additional classroom support. For example, in a Year 4 lesson a group of children were able to extend their observational skills when discovering how street scenes have changed over time. This, and the good quality of questioning and discussion, makes sure that all take an active part in the lessons.
139. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and the one excellent lesson was taught by the headteacher. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject; their lessons are well prepared and have interesting content, which motivates the children to behave well and work hard. An outstanding feature of the excellent lesson with Year 2 was children's involvement in their own learning. For instance, through setting up a questionnaire, undertaking a survey, constructing graphs and using computers to produce a data file on the information. Both literacy and numeracy skills are used well in geography through listening and speaking skills, to numeracy in work on graphs and reference figures and cultural development through studying life in other countries.
140. Teachers make effective use of short sessions at the end of lessons. For example, in Year 4 classes the perceptive discussion at the end of the lessons enables teachers to identify the

improvement in geographical skills. This is from a task as children investigate the difference in street scenes in photographs from 1950 and the year 2000, which was rich in opportunities for children to express their views and observations and provided clear information for the starting point for the next lesson. Good teaching is also apparent in a Year 3 lesson when teachers reinforce knowledge of important place names in India and differences in climate and life-style of villages. Another good feature in teaching is the effective use made of resources such as maps, pictures and photographs.

141. The co-ordination of geography is good. The subject leader is well informed about standards and, through observing lessons has improved the quality of teaching. For example, by improving the better use of resources such as maps and photographs to support more practical work in learning. She also influences the work by checking planning and the progress children are making.

HISTORY

142. Standards by Year 2 and Year 6 are typical of those found in other schools and this is similar to that of the last inspection. Children achieve well and overall make good progress but in a few lessons the progress was very good. There was no evidence of difference in standards for boys and girls and in the work seen and during lessons those with learning difficulties achieved well because they were well supported.
143. By Year 2, children can distinguish between that which is old and that which is new. They have looked carefully at toys and common household equipment to decide why one object is older than another and can give reasons for choice. They are developing a good knowledge of past and present as seen in the lesson at Year 1 comparing seaside features and understand how to look for clues that will help them make judgements. They are learning about well-known people of the past and the way they influenced events such as Florence Nightingale, Dr Barnado and Guy Fawkes. They are beginning to use a range of historical evidence to study the past as was seen in the Year 2 class when children were introduced to different diaries and books about the life of Samuel Pepys in order to learn about the Great Fire of London. Children now have a better understanding of what is meant by '*eye witness*' and that there are many sources of information they can use when being history detectives. By Year 6 they have extended the use of the Internet to research topics. They use a range of other resources such as books and CD-ROMS with confidence to find out about the past and are able to recount their own versions of past events in various forms such as newspaper reports. They give reasons why certain things happened in the past and the factors that influenced events.
144. The quality of teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. The teachers plan interesting lessons, which capture the children's interest from the very outset of the lesson. For example, in one Year 2 lesson the teacher used the original school logbook and her mother's old diaries to illustrate how such documents can be a valuable source of information when learning about the past. One child described the logbook as awesome. Similarly in a Year 6 lesson the teacher had prepared accounts of eyewitness reports about a bombing raid on the local RAF base, which again caused great interest because of the local connections.
145. Teachers possess good subject knowledge, which enables them to maintain the children's interest. The lessons are taken at a good pace and teachers have high expectations of both behaviour and work output and for the most part the children respond very positively to both. In the junior classes very good use is made of information and communication technology. When

using this resource the teachers make sure that children with learning difficulties are paired with more able children to enable everyone to access the activities successfully.

146. The co-ordinator has done much to improve standards and promote the subject, including scrutinizing all the planning and observing teaching and learning first hand. A good range of resources has been developed including CD-ROMs, books and historical artefacts. Very good use is made of the history of the local area to extend interest in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

147. Standards in information and communication technology by Year 2 and Year 6 are typical of those in other schools overall and is similar to that identified at the last inspection. However, there are indications that standards are rising and at the Foundation Stage children reach higher than expected standards.
148. In the infant classes, children manipulate the mouse confidently. They switch on the computers, log onto the program and open their own files. They work using drop-down menus and are becoming increasingly confident in the whole area of technology. They are familiar in the use of word-processing to create text, amend and save their work. They use a database program and create graphs to show information gathered earlier. They are beginning to understand how this information can be put into a data file for further use. For example, they create pictures of their houses by using a paint and draw program.
149. In the junior classes, the children are becoming very confident and competent in using a wide range of information and communication skills. They are particularly skilled at using the Internet as a research tool and are learning how to refine their searches in order to be more precise about what they need to know. They select information and move it to a word file using the techniques of *copy and paste*. As yet, the use of the Internet as a communication tool is not as well developed. Graphics skills are well established to create their own pictures, as is the use of a database to create graphs and utilise information. Children are familiarising themselves with PowerPoint software in creating multi-media presentations.
150. Overall the quality of teaching is very good. In the infant classes lessons ranged from excellent to satisfactory while in the junior classes teaching was never less than good and mostly very good. The one excellent lesson at Year 2 was attributable to the headteacher. In the best lessons the teachers planned activities, which immediately seized the children's interest. These varied from a lesson in Year 2 on databases to a Year 6 lesson researching Peterborough on the Internet. Both these lessons allowed the children to progress at their own level and gave room for them to explore the programs.
151. In the best lessons teachers had good subject knowledge, which enabled them to deal with any hardware or software problems. This knowledge instilled confidence in the children and encouraged greater effort. In one lesson in Year 2 the level of challenge was insufficient to maintain the interest of the children for long enough. In most lessons the teacher made time at the end of a lesson to assess the children's learning and to reiterate some of the main teaching points. In every lesson the learning objective was shared with the children so that they had a clear idea of what was expected of them. The children were very motivated by the tasks set for them and this ensured that behaviour was very good. Children tried extremely hard to complete the set tasks and took pride in doing so. Encouraged by the teachers, the children showed a great willingness to co-operate in pairs and help those experiencing difficulties.

152. The headteacher provides very good leadership of this subject. He has very strong ideas based on his understanding of the strengths and weakness of the subject. He has correctly identified that the use of e-mail needs extending for communication and that one element of the subject needs development to meet National Curriculum requirements. Despite these weaknesses he has had a positive impact upon the subject, is promoting it well in the school and ensuring that resources such as CD ROM and digital cameras are used effectively.

MUSIC

153. Standards in music in both the infants and the juniors are similar to those found in most schools. No comparison can be made with the previous inspection as no clear judgement was given except for singing and here the good standard has been maintained. Throughout the school singing is well developed. Children sing tunefully with feeling and clear diction in lessons and assemblies. The older children are particularly good and examples were seen of confident singing in two parts.
154. In the infant classes the children identify strong and weak beats and are able to maintain a regular beat to accompany their music. They identify the different sounds made by different instruments and have some understanding of why this is so. In the juniors, listening skills are well developed. When listening to a range of music from different countries they are well able to identify the tempo, dynamics and mood of the pieces. They identify and know about different instruments from different countries and talk about how they are played. They learn new songs easily, sing them well and with feeling. Their response to music is good and they express opinions backed up by sound reasons and show respect for the views of other children.
155. The teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good and overall, the teaching was good. In the infant classes one lesson was good and the other satisfactory. In the satisfactory lesson a lack of pace meant that children did not progress as fast as they might. In the other lesson there was lack of variety in the activities. The teachers enjoyed good relationships with the children and used their knowledge of them effectively in selecting pairs to co-operate together, which ensured that all were engaged in the activity successfully. The teachers managed the children very well, dealing with any minor misbehaviour efficiently to prevent any negative impact upon the lesson. However, most children were well behaved and interested in their work.
156. In the junior classes teaching was good in one lesson and very good in the other two. Lessons were taken at a good pace and teachers used their knowledge confidently so tasks were challenging and kept children interested throughout the lesson. In those lessons seen the teachers and assistants had very good relationships with the children, which enabled a very relaxed atmosphere to be developed and children clearly enjoyed the work. Lessons are well prepared and teachers choose interesting music for the children to sing or listen to such as that from Africa and India. This captures the children's interest immediately and they display very positive responses to the activities. The teachers are very skilled in using questions and answer sessions to draw out what children already know and understand.
157. Assistant staff are deployed well by teachers and the best use is made of their expertise and experience. In a Year 6 lesson very good use was made of a support teacher who had specialist music knowledge. In other lessons assistants give support to children with learning difficulties so that they are able to participate fully.

158. Although it was not possible to see any composing during the week of the inspection evidence from other documentation indicates that good use is made of information and communication technology as a tool for learning. The instrumental teaching of brass and woodwind instrument enhances provision for the subject. In addition there is a singing club taken by a parent and a learning support assistant, and recorder clubs organised by two teachers. Visiting orchestras and musical groups also add to the provision.
159. The co-ordinator is having a positive impact upon standards in music by her efficient monitoring of both planning and teaching. Through this monitoring she has identified strengths and weaknesses in the teaching programme and has tried to correct any problems observed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

160. Standards in physical education are in line with those expected of children by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. This is much the same as in the previous inspection. There is no difference in standards between girls and boys. The achievement by children with learning difficulties and those whose mother tongue is not English are very good.
161. Year 1 and Year 2 work with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn. They understand the importance of warming up and join in discussions about why exercise is good for you. For example, a Year 1 games lesson was well organised and challenging. Children used eggs and spoons and had to develop skills of hand and eye co-ordination but with the additional challenge of having to compete with one another. The most successful children learn that they need to concentrate on a variety of skills and move slowly with deliberate care. In a Year 2 lesson, careful planning resulted in a range of equipment used to offer different challenges. This was very successful because the match between the choice of equipment and the needs of the child were correct, as when a child with special educational needs was given a larger ball to hit with a tennis racket. This meant that this child could take part fully in the lesson alongside others.
162. By the end of Year 6 children show a great enthusiasm for all aspects of physical education. In a Year 6 lesson the teacher used this enthusiasm to make a games lesson move along quickly. The teacher had very high expectations constantly setting time limits for activities. During this lesson, which was based around the striking/fielding game 'Stoolball', children used and refined their skills showing control and precision when hitting and fielding.
163. The teaching ranged from satisfactory to very good. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and tended to be better in the Year 6 classes. The better lessons were well organised and planned with teachers using well-prepared resources matched to the needs of the children and lesson requirements. For example, in a Year 1 lesson a range of equipment, including skipping ropes, beanbags, bats and balls and hoops were used to offer children a variety of activities. The planning enabled them to rotate between the activities giving them a variety of opportunities to develop their skills. The movement between activities was also well managed and time was used productively. During the best lessons children learned very well because their teacher demonstrated skills. For example, in a Year 6 lesson they were shown how to hold a bat so as to hit a ball downwards to avoid being caught out. In this very good lesson children were expected to adapt existing skills and learn new ones. However, in other lessons, there was a tendency to practise existing skills rather than develop new ones. In some lessons there was insufficient emphasis placed on developing skills because of the available time teachers had to move children through the lesson.

164. The leadership and management of physical education is good. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and has organised the scheme of work well to give children a well balanced range of sporting activities covering the required elements of the subject including games, dance, gymnastics, swimming, athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities. In addition, there is a hockey club and a netball club available to Years 5 and 6 only. The co-ordinator monitors the scheme of work well to ensure that the planned skill development is built on as children move from year to year and staff training opportunities are sought. Since the last inspection staff have been involved in 'Tops' training and it was evident during lessons that this has helped to give games lessons a clear structure. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about developing the subject and during the forthcoming review wants to introduce a formal assessment of skills, extend staff training and provide more sporting opportunities through links with local community organisations. The facilities for teaching physical education are excellent enhanced by sufficient resources for teaching the subject.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

165. There has been good improvements since the last inspection and standards are now higher than is expected for age by the time children leave school. Children generally achieve well. A good start has been made at the Foundation Stage and the steady progress at Years 1 and 2 is built on from Year 3 and there is faster progress. Standards are at least in line with the expectations of the Peterborough Agreed Syllabus and by the time they leave school children have done well to extend their knowledge and understanding of six world faiths.
166. Overall, the quality of teaching was good. At Year 1 it was satisfactory and at Year 2 teaching was good and supported well by a specialist. No teaching was seen at Years 4 or 5 but at Years 3 and 6 it was very good. Strengths in teaching showed well planned lessons that related well to activities identified for the age group and clear learning objectives that were shared with children. This meant that the class understood the tasks and knew what they were expected to achieve by the end of the session.
167. Teachers' planning was very good and appropriate care had been given to find links from this subject to others. For example, in the Year 3 class where children had been studying creation stories the teacher had carefully linked what was being learned in religious education to science (creation of the universe) to information and communication technology by using a video for information and by planning use of CD-ROM to research Charles Darwin. In addition there was use of historical skills to work as detectives to find clues about what was true. They realised that finding evidence to support ideas was difficult in both science and religion and extended their understanding of what is meant by 'theory' and 'belief'. The teacher encouraged free discussion and children confidently expressed thoughts in class discussion about the scientific version of creation and religious creation stories. This was a highly challenging lesson but the teacher's assistant was deployed well to support those with learning difficulties by focusing on understanding and simplifying questions as the lesson progressed. This worked well. The high challenge and skilful questioning of this lesson made children think hard.
168. The very good relationships that encourage openness in discussions were a feature of several lessons. Children listened attentively and even the youngest children posed questions such as "what does *religious* mean?" The teacher explained it well as her knowledge was secure. This too was a lesson with high challenge because these young children were learning about how we recognise that people belong to a religion. Discussion was used well but time ran out before children could really understand the subject because only a short session had been

planned due to timetabling constraints. This organisation would benefit from review, as children cannot progress well with such a restriction.

169. Effective use of a specialist on a visit to a local Christian place of worship extended Year 2 children's knowledge and understanding very skilfully. The Padre from the local RAF base led their thinking about the features of the church and how they would know it was Christian. His good knowledge was used very effectively as children learned about architecture, church furniture, the use of stained glass windows, signs and symbols, worship practice and such rites as baptism. Children had very good attitudes and behaved very well asking sensible questions about the spire, the age of the building and use of the font. They were particularly interested in memorials and the RAF chapel that commemorated those who had died in previous wars. The Padre who brought the subject alive had inspired the children to talk extensively about it all as they walked back to school and in the plenary session that followed.
170. A difficult concept of understanding 'meaning beyond the literal' and discussion about what Jesus meant by the use of 'neighbour' caused much discussion with the Year 6 class. They are very secure with their teacher and freely expressed views and opinions as the lesson progressed and used their literacy skills effectively when realising that in the story of *The Good Samaritan* the hero is the despised and afflicted person. The skilful questioning and subsequent discussion enabled the teacher to bring this to a modern setting, providing well for children's moral development. They put their artistic skills to good use by creating a modern cartoon story to illustrate their understanding. The teacher had enabled very good discussion in an atmosphere of mutual respect that resulted in a mature understanding of socially acceptable behaviour when there is care for others.
171. Good support and advice from the co-ordinator is providing good direction for the work of this subject. The work is supported by visits to places of worship and by visitors to the school. Good range of resources and effective teaching has been used particularly well at helping children explore the thoughts and feelings of others and of helping them understand the religious significance of what they studied.