

INSPECTION REPORT

BILLESDON PAROCHIAL SCHOOL

Billesdon, Leicestershire

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120115

Headteacher: Mr M J Kirk

Reporting inspector: Mrs V Ward
19028

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 4th December 2002

Inspection number: 248093

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Gaulby Road Billesdon Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE7 9AG
Telephone number:	0116 259 6327
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Radcliffe
Date of previous inspection:	19-20 June 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
19028	Mrs V Ward	Registered inspector	English Music Art and Design Design and Technology Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	What sort of School is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
09510	Mrs C Murray-Watson	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27541	Mr J Collins	Team inspector	Mathematics Science Religious Education Geography History Information and Communications Technology Physical Education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small Church of England school serves a wide geographical area in Leicestershire. The pupils travel to school from about seven surrounding villages. There are currently 46 pupils on roll, aged between four and eleven years, which is a smaller number than at the last inspection. There are equal numbers of boys and girls, all of whom are white and speak English as their first language. Generally, the children are admitted in September when they are four years old, but for the first time, a second intake will be admitted in January 2003. The children's attainment on entry varies, but overall it is similar to that normally expected of four year olds. At the time of the inspection, there were three children in the reception class. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals (four per cent) is below the national average. Thirteen per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs, a figure that again is below the national average. None of these pupils has a statement of special educational need. There have been considerable recent changes in the staff of the school, with all except the headteacher having been appointed within the past two years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective and improving school. The headteacher has been very successful in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses and in generating a shared vision for the school. Continuous improvement is being achieved through a stimulating curriculum and consistently good teaching. Standards are rising across the school and often exceed the national averages. The school provides very well for the pupils' personal development. The children enjoy coming to school and show very good commitment to learning. The school offers good value for money.

What the school does well

- The teaching ranges from good to very good in all classes.
- The pupils, including those with special educational needs, show very positive attitudes to learning, and achieve well.
- The leadership of the headteacher is very effective in bringing about school improvement and provides clear educational direction for the school.
- The school provides very well for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The management of the youngest pupils helps them to settle into school quickly and to become enthusiastic learners.
- The partnership between home and school is very strong and supports the pupils' learning.
- Relationships are very positive amongst the pupils and between the pupils and their teachers.

What could be improved

- The leadership and management roles of the co-ordinators in relation to their subject responsibilities.
- The process for the Performance Management of the teachers.

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 June 2000, when it was judged to have serious weaknesses. This is no longer the case. Since then, the school has worked diligently and with a sense of urgency to address the identified weaknesses and to bring about considerable improvement. The teaching, learning and standards have improved throughout the school, significantly so for the four to seven year olds, where the main weaknesses were previously identified. An effective planning system that pays due regard to the Foundation Stage curriculum is now in place for the reception children. The management of the children in the Foundation Stage is successful in providing rich and

stimulating learning. Computer hardware has been purchased and the teachers have received training in its use. In information and communication technology, good progress has been made in both the teaching and learning, and detailed planning identifies how this progress is to continue. An effective policy for assessment has been implemented and is working satisfactorily. The teachers are now much more aware of how to use assessment information in their planning. In addition to making good progress with these former key weaknesses, the school has made substantial improvement in several other areas. For instance, there is a strong sense of teamwork that contributes significantly to the positive ethos of the school. The pupils' personal development is very well provided for. Relationships within the school and with parents are now stronger. The physical surroundings, both inside and outside the building, have been improved. Resources have been replenished and increased, and now enrich the pupils' experiences and their learning. There is strong commitment amongst the staff and governors to work for further improvement.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	A	B
mathematics	D	B	C	D
science	E	D	D	E

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

As the year groups are small, the balance between the proportion of higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs inevitably fluctuates from year to year. Since this year group comprised only 12 pupils in 2002, each carried around eight percentage points. Therefore, comparisons with other schools should be treated with caution. However, the trends in the national test results show continuous improvement since the last inspection and this is supported by evidence from the school's own records. The school has focused intently and with considerable success on setting challenging targets and improving standards in English. The results in mathematics and science were very close to the next higher grade. In the tests for the pupils in Year 2 in 2002, the results were well above average in writing and mathematics and in the top five per cent nationally for reading. Although there were only six pupils in this year group, they all achieved very well.

During the present inspection, standards in English, mathematics and science were found to be above average in Year 2 and average in Year 6. The pupils in Year 6 have achieved very well since they were tested in Year 2, when their results were well below average. Standards in other subjects match the expected levels overall. Evidence from the pupils' work shows that they achieve well over time.

In the reception class, the children have settled very happily and are well on course to achieve the expected goals by the end of the school year. In their personal and social education, they are likely to exceed these goals.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are enthusiastic and approach learning with confidence.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. The pupils understand and abide by the school rules. They move around the school in an orderly manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships are harmonious. The pupils develop a positive self-image. They care for each other and take on responsibilities willingly.
Attendance	Very good. The pupils enjoy coming to school. No pupils have been excluded.

The parents agree that their children behave well and show very positive attitudes to learning. The pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are fostered well by the caring staff, who show that they value the children as individuals. The very good relationships encourage the pupils to care for each other. All of these aspects are notable strengths of the school and contribute significantly to the quality of the pupils' learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of the teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. During this inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching and some very good teaching was seen in all classes. The teachers use the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very effectively and are successful in helping the pupils to learn well. Throughout the school, the teachers are clear about what they want the pupils to learn, and make this plain to the pupils. At the end of lessons, the teachers help the pupils to recall what they have learned, and also use this time to assess how much the pupils have achieved. In both the planning and the teaching, careful consideration of the needs of all pupils takes into account their gender, prior learning, background and special needs. The pupils with special educational needs are helped to think positively about their learning and to make good progress towards their targets. The resources to assist learning are used well. The teaching assistant and nursery nurses make good contributions to the pupils' learning. The teacher and the nursery nurses in the reception class work together very effectively. They plan the learning diligently, always bearing in mind the individual needs of each child. Consequently, the variety of tasks provided helps to sustain the children's interest and to foster in them positive attitudes to learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for all of its pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Careful consideration is given to the needs of pupils with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	No pupils are learning English as an additional language.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides very well for all aspects of the pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The pupils are well supported in a happy and caring environment.

The way in which the school involves the parents in both the life of the school and in their children's learning is a strong feature of its provision. It also offers a good range of extra-curricular opportunities for the pupils through clubs, visitors to the school and educational visits within and beyond the local community. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection in the way that the school analyses its data about the pupils' achievement. A system for tracking the pupils' academic achievement is being implemented effectively. The teachers have good knowledge of their pupils and all members of staff are vigilant as regards the health and safety of the pupils.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides very good leadership to bring about school improvement. He is supported well by the teachers, but their skills in managing their subject responsibilities need further development.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors are working hard to support school improvement and are developing a good oversight of the curriculum. However, the performance management process for the teachers is not fully in place.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher guides the staff and governors well in identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school makes good use of its delegated budget, linking its spending decisions to the priorities in its development plan.

The school has sufficient teachers and support staff to meet the demands of the curriculum. The accommodation is well maintained and has been improved substantially since the last inspection. The quality and range of materials and equipment are now good. They are beginning to assess the effect of their spending decisions on the quality of education. Some progress has been made in enabling the

subject co-ordinators to gain a better overview of the strengths and weaknesses in their subjects and to take action to raise standards. The school has identified that more remains to be done in this area and has suitable plans in place.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school. • The teaching is good. • The teachers are approachable. • Their children make good progress. • The school is well led and managed. • The children behave well. • The school promotes their children's personal development very well. 	<p>A very small number of parents claimed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not provide sufficient extra-curricular activities. • The amount of homework set is either too much or too little. • The school does not work closely enough with parents.

The findings of the inspection fully endorse those features of the school that please the parents, but showed no inadequacies in the aspects which a small minority of parents would like to see improved. A wide range of activities beyond the regular curriculum is provided from Year 1 to Year 6. The teachers give willingly of their time and energy to enrich the children's learning in this way. Homework is set regularly and in reasonable amounts for pupils of different ages. The inspection evidence also shows that the school's relationship with parents is a strong feature of the school. The staff appreciates the time and effort which parents give to fund-raising and supporting the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The small numbers of pupils in each year group means that statistical evidence from the national test results has to be treated with caution. The effect of one pupil's results in a year group of twelve or fewer can make a significant difference to the overall scores. There has been variation in achievement over the past five years, as might be expected when cohorts are small. However, the results over the last four years show year-on-year improvement broadly in line with the national trend. This is the case for both Year 2 and Year 6.
2. In last year's national tests in English, the pupils in Year 6 achieved standards that were well above average. These results reflect the school's focus on literacy. The results in mathematics were average, and in science they were below average. The school's results have generally been lower in science than in English and mathematics, and science is currently a priority for improvement. Appropriately challenging targets are set for each pupil, taking into account the best that they might achieve.
3. The pupils' attainment in Year 2 was a key issue at the last inspection, but since then there has been a very marked improvement. The most recent results achieved in the national tests by the six pupils in Year 2 were well above average in writing, and very high in reading and mathematics. Although the numbers were small, these results are part of the continuing improvements which have taken place since the last inspection. At that time, standards in Years 1 and 2 were identified as an issue for improvement.
4. The attainment of the children when they enter the Reception class varies widely, but taken overall is broadly similar to that expected of four-year-olds. The children achieve well in all areas of learning and are on course to reach the expected goals by the end of the school year. In their personal, social and emotional development, they are likely to exceed these levels.
5. The school pays close attention to the attainment of individual pupils and takes this into account in both planning and teaching. This enables all of the pupils to achieve as well as they can. The parents expressed appreciation of the individual attention that is given to their children. The pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in lessons, in relation to their previous learning. When taught in small groups with the close support of learning assistants, their progress is often good because they are then able to make the important steps in their learning more quickly. The targets in their individual education plans are in attainable steps that are small, clear and measurable. Although the analysis of the performance of boys and girls reveals slight differences, there are no significant trends. The inspection evidence revealed no gender differences in attainment.
6. In English and mathematics, the pupils in Year 2 attain standards which are above average. The school's focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning in the literacy hour has clearly had a positive impact on standards. Similarly, in mathematics, the more effective teaching in the numeracy hour is enabling the pupils to achieve more. A comparable effect is seen in Years 3 to 6, where the pupils' work shows that they achieve well over time. The teaching has improved in Years 3 to 6 and is often very good, but the pupils in Year 6 are currently attaining only average standards. This reflects the abilities of this particular group

of children. However, when comparing these standards with those achieved when they were seven-year-olds, these pupils have made very good progress.

7. At the time of the last inspection, the pupils were not receiving their entitlement to the curriculum in information and communications technology (ICT). This issue has been conscientiously addressed and the pupils are now attaining the levels expected by the time they finish Year 2 and Year 6. The pupils' work in religious education meets the standards suggested in the locally agreed syllabus. In all the remaining subjects, standards are average. Although there is the potential for improvement here, the school has rightly focused on literacy, numeracy and ICT since the last inspection. The staff have worked very hard to make significant improvements, especially bearing in mind the relatively short period of time since the last inspection and the turnover of staff in that time. Suitable plans are in place to raise standards across the curriculum.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The pupils have very positive attitudes towards their school. They take great pride in their surroundings, in what they are achieving and in their contribution to the smooth running of the school day. Consistently good teaching that makes the lessons interesting and challenging and the pupils' enthusiastic approach to learning have positive effects on the standards achieved. In a mathematics lesson on weights, for example, the pupils' willingness to experiment and work independently meant that a wide range of different practical activities could be undertaken. Moreover, the links made between these different experiments enabled the pupils to broaden their understanding of the application of mathematics to the everyday world.
9. The overwhelming majority of pupils with special educational needs show positive attitudes to learning. They listen well, respond to questioning and take pride in their performance. The good support that they receive enables them to take a full part in the lessons and encourages them to respond as well as other groups of pupils.
10. The levels of attendance are very good, being well above those levels found in primary schools nationally. There is no unauthorised absence.
11. Throughout the school, the children's conduct is consistently good. They are polite, behave well in lessons and treat books and equipment with care. The school premises have been greatly enhanced since the last inspection to provide attractive surroundings that the pupils treat with respect. For example, one of the older pupils who helped to supervise the library took great pride in explaining how good it was. A very few of the younger pupils display more boisterous behaviour and sometimes find it difficult to match the thoughtfulness and self-control of their peers. The behaviour of pupils with special educational needs is as good as that of other pupils and they are fully accepted as members of the class. Any occasional misbehaviour is dealt with well and does not inhibit the learning of others.
12. The pupils' relationships with each other and with all of the staff are very good. The school's emphasis on mutual respect and the way that every child's contribution is greatly valued have promoted a secure and confident response from the pupils. As a result, they express their views freely and clearly and have due regard for the feelings of others. This confidence extends to every area of school life. For example, a group of the oldest pupils volunteered to show an inspector around the school and took great pride in displaying not only their own work, but also the achievements of the very youngest. The small class sizes and overall small numbers of children in the school mean that everyone is known well and there is a strong sense of "family", with older children taking an active interest in the care and wellbeing of the younger ones.

13. Many of the pupils are involved in the day to day running of the school, assisting in the library, on the playground, with the daily act of collective worship and with a range of other routine tasks. Each class agrees its own class rules at the start of the school year. This active partnership with the adults in the school promotes a strong sense of “ownership” amongst the pupils. This colours both the way they behave and the effort they put into their own independent learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching has improved substantially since the last inspection, particularly for the Reception children and those in Years 1 and 2. The improvement in teaching and learning in these years was a key issue at the last inspection. During this inspection, the teaching was good overall throughout the school, and twenty-five per cent of the teaching was very good. Some very good teaching was observed in all classes.
15. There is consistency of approach amongst the teachers, and they enjoy very good relationships with their pupils. This helps the pupils to feel secure and encourages them to take part. The teachers value their efforts so that they become confident learners who are not afraid to try.
16. In the reception class, the teaching was never less than good, and had many very good aspects. The teacher and nursery nurses have very good knowledge of the needs of young children and provide a wide range of experiences which cover all areas of learning. They interact with the children very effectively, encouraging them to think, explore and benefit from these many opportunities. The staff gives suitably high priority to personal development, language and literacy and mathematical development. They work very well as a team and provide a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities that are very well organised and managed. This provides a very good balance between integrating them with the pupils in Years 1 and 2 for parts of some lessons and teaching them separately in their own adjacent room at other times. The staff set suitably high expectations of what the children can achieve and use praise and encouragement well to motivate them and generate confidence.
17. Overall, teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good because the planned activities are appropriate to their needs. This helps them to learn well. Good planning and support in literacy and numeracy lessons enable these pupils to follow the same range of work at an appropriate level based on their prior learning. The well-trained support staff plan a detailed programme of work with the class teachers and are effectively deployed across the school. By asking further questions and giving useful clues, they support these pupils well. Examples were seen, for instance, in a Year 5/6 religious education lesson and a history lesson in Year 3/4 where effective support was available to the pupils as required. It also gave them the opportunity to talk purposefully about their work. They developed in confidence as the lessons progressed and were able to play a full part in later discussions. The work of support staff is valued by all other staff at the school and by the parents of pupils with special educational needs.
18. The teachers’ planning has improved since the last inspection. They now identify what they want the pupils to learn and make this clear to them at the start of lessons. They link new learning with what has gone before so that the pupils can understand how today’s work builds on what they learned previously. The pupils enjoy their learning in school because the teachers introduce lessons in lively ways, thereby immediately gaining their interest. In a

Year 3/4 literacy lesson, for example, the pupils were excited at the prospect of producing their own information books about the Greeks.

19. The teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. Overall, the teaching in ICT, music and religious education is satisfactory. This reflects the developing knowledge of the teachers. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement about teaching in design and technology. The teaching in all the other subjects is good throughout the school. The teachers are well informed about the national strategies for literacy and numeracy and this has beneficial effects on how well the pupils acquire new skills and knowledge and practise and reinforce their previous learning. The lessons progress at a brisk pace, and tasks build well on what the pupils already know and can do.
20. The teachers choose teaching methods which take good account of the pupils' increasing concentration, the ways they learn best and what they already know and can do. This is also reflected in their planning, which is thorough and takes account of pupils' prior learning. This quality of provision makes the pupils want to work hard and concentrate well. In most lessons, the needs of the higher attaining pupils are well catered for. Just occasionally, however, the pace of learning is insufficient for these pupils and at times, particularly in more creative subjects, the teaching is too prescriptive and does not allow them room to experiment.
21. The closing sessions are used especially well to consolidate what has been achieved in the lessons and to help the teachers to assess how successfully the pupils have learned. The use of the teachers' assessments of the pupils' learning was a key issue at the last inspection. It is now very apparent that the teachers monitor the pupils' achievement rigorously and apply that information well in their planning.
22. The teachers mark the pupils' work conscientiously and give praise and encouragement in their comments. However, there is some variation in the consistency with which they help the pupils to know what they need to do next in order to improve. Homework is provided in line with the homework policy and is used well to extend the learning in school.
23. The parents are unanimous in their appreciation of the good teaching that the school provides. Likewise the pupils speak very positively about how they enjoy learning. Although they have favourite subjects, there is general agreement that their work is interesting.

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

24. The range and quality of experiences in the curriculum are good and meet all the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is as rich and exciting for the pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 as it is for the children in the Foundation Stage. Religious education is taught following the guidance of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. There are appropriate arrangements for the teaching of sex education and raising the awareness of older pupils to the dangers of drug abuse. A particular strength of the school's curriculum is the emphasis placed on the pupils' personal development, as well as their academic development. For many pupils, the curriculum is further enhanced by the good range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, in addition to visits and visitors to school.
25. Throughout the school, the long and medium term curricular planning has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is now securely established in all subjects and is regularly monitored to ensure consistency. The planning for the Foundation Stage now

clearly identifies specific areas of learning for these children. Most subject policies have been successfully updated and there are schemes of work for all subjects using either national or Local Authority guidance. The school has also successfully established themes and topics that bridge several subjects, for example, history, geography, art, design and technology and science. Similarly, many themes in the scheme of work for religious education are integrated well into the curriculum for personal, social and health education, alongside the teaching of citizenship.

26. The school now follows, more closely than at the last inspection, the national frameworks for literacy and numeracy. The use of literacy and number skills in other areas of the curriculum is well established, with opportunities for extended writing being regularly provided in other subjects. In science, for example, the pupils express their own ideas and opinions about what they have found out in their experiments and record data in the form of graphs. The time and focus given to information and communication technology since the last inspection has improved the pupils' skills, and its use in other subject areas in class work is becoming more firmly established. For instance, good use of computers was seen in a history lesson in Year 3/4 when three pupils used the Internet to research information about the Battle of Marathon in their topic on the Ancient Greeks. This has been an area of improvement for the school.
27. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is a strength of the school. The support for these pupils is wide ranging and well tailored to their different needs. They are taught within the class as a whole and taken in small withdrawal groups for well-focused work in literacy and mathematics by the well-trained and qualified assistant. Consequently, these children receive their full curricular entitlement and along with all other pupils have access to extra-curricular clubs and activities. The needs of higher attaining pupils are met by a range of specifically planned activities in most areas of the curriculum. All groups of pupils are set tasks appropriate to their abilities within the classroom.
28. The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and is better than that found in most schools of this size. A wide range of sporting, musical and other clubs take place at lunchtimes, after school and out of school. The previous sporting clubs, such as football, rounders and swimming, have been retained, and other clubs devoted to the arts, such as music, story telling and art and craft have been introduced. They help to extend the experiences of a considerable number of the pupils from Year 1 to Year 6.
29. Strong links with the community also extend the curriculum and give very good support to the work of the school. Local ministers take assemblies on a regular basis. The school now uses a local church hall to improve its provision for physical education, and makes good use of a wide range of visitors to school, such as local theatre groups. The parents of many pupils support a soccer-coaching scheme that has raised funds for games equipment for the school.
30. The school has worked closely with the local education authority in bringing about school improvement. It has also established good links with local primary and secondary schools. For instance, many joint sporting and musical events are held with other primary schools. In addition to the usual visits by Year 6 pupils and their parents to local secondary schools, the school is also involved in using 'transition work units' in mathematics and information technology to help prepare pupils for their transfer to secondary schools. The school has established strong links with Leicester University and has benefited from their expertise and support in science and history.

31. The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school. The pupils' spiritual development is very good. In assemblies, they explore a range of values and beliefs that influence their lives. Times for quiet reflection are given for all the pupils to think about things that affect their daily life in school. For example, the pupils were asked to consider the difference between how we celebrate Christmas as a Christian festival and as a secular festival. This was very effectively developed in a later lesson in Year 5/6 when the pupils produced their own 'raps' and poems on the theme. Through the ways in which the teachers value their answers and contributions to lessons, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs, acquire a sense of respect for themselves and others. Older pupils demonstrated their creative thinking in a lesson on similes and metaphors in literacy. After hearing a poem on the weather by Ted Hughes, they came up with phrases such as '*as rare as a rainbow*' and '*a sunset is like a big dimmer switch in the sky far away*'.
32. The provision for the children's moral development is also very good. The school has a clear code of behaviour that teaches right from wrong and all the staff act as good role models. The pupils are clear about the school and class rules, which all members of staff reinforce consistently, fairly and with sensitivity. This helps all pupils across the school to establish their own set of moral rules by which to decide what is right and wrong. Displays around the school reinforce these values and provide models for consideration for others; for example, the raising of funds for local and national charities. The awareness of older pupils has been enhanced through topics on the environment; for example, the topic by Years 5 and 6 on 'Water Aid' in Africa. A notable feature of assemblies and many of the lessons is the way in which pupils are pleased to celebrate the achievements of others as much as their own.
33. Similarly, the pupils' social development is very good. The school provides very good support for the different groups of pupils to ensure that they are fully included in all aspects of its provision. The pupils have opportunities to participate in community experiences that help to develop their social skills. They visit local churches for Harvest and Christmas festivals. The Year 6 pupils help staff at lunchtimes by acting as 'friends' for the children under-five. Two Year 6 pupils help to prepare for assemblies and also act as 'Road Safety officers' in reporting back to the whole school on safety issues. All pupils of all ages have opportunities to take responsibilities for acting as register monitors and helping around the classrooms, tasks they do willingly and with enthusiasm. Paired working and group activities in lessons also develop a co-operative and collaborative spirit. The pupils participate with a sense of fairness, listening to each other's views, taking turns and supporting each other in their work. Small games in physical education help pupils to develop a team ethic and partnership, as was evident in a Year 3/4 lesson on netball skills.
34. Overall, the pupils' cultural development is very good. The daily assemblies offer a positive experience for the pupils so that they are able to feel part of the school community. All talk with pride about 'our school' and its achievements. This is particularly so when the successes of the pupils are shared in assembly. The pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own cultural background is enhanced through their work in geography, history, art and music. Visits to a Hindu temple, a mosque and places of Christian worship enhance the children's sense of other cultures and beliefs. All the pupils recently visited Leicester for the Diwali Light Festival. Consequently, their awareness of other cultures is good and is enhanced by the colourful, informative displays around the school and by a good selection of relevant books in the school library.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school has worked hard to improve the school premises since the last inspection, so that it now provides a secure, safe and attractive environment for the pupils' learning and personal development. The arrangements for child protection are now in place, supported by clear policy documents and recent staff training. Active liaison is maintained with the relevant outside agencies. Following recent parental concerns about the children's safety during playtimes, the areas for play have been re-designated and the pupils are well supervised during playtimes. The school being relatively small, the staff are able to know each child well and to give prompt help and support where needed.
36. The good teaching throughout the school promotes good behaviour and very high levels of attendance because the pupils are interested in their lessons and enjoy the wide range of activities on offer. Underpinning this are the consistently applied policy of positive praise and the way every child is treated as a valued member of the school community. At all levels, this engenders confidence, good behaviour and hard work, which are positive factors in the standards being achieved. For example, the pupils take pride in the stickers and award certificates they receive. This reward system is equally valued by the parents, who appreciate the way effort and good behaviour are as much commended as academic achievement.
37. The assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection and are now satisfactory. They include statutory and non-statutory tests for finding out what the various groups of pupils already know, understand and can do. This information is being combined with teacher assessments to enable the school more effectively to track the progress of pupils from year-to-year. It is passed between teachers at the end of the summer term and is used as a basis for grouping pupils for the start of the new school year. The assessment and monitoring of the attainment and progress of pupils with special educational needs is good. Reviews of their individual education plans are carried out as appropriate. The local education authority has also carried out analyses of the school's test data, with the co-ordinators for English and mathematics, in order to find out which specific areas need to be addressed in order to continue to raise standards.
38. Current use of assessment data is good because it is used to determine appropriate starting points for pupils of differing levels of ability, mainly in English, mathematics and science. At present, however, the co-ordinators in other subjects have limited information to enable them to identify what needs to be done in order to raise standards. The monitoring and support for the personal development of the pupils is good. Target setting for individuals and groups of pupils is used well across the school to raise the pupils' awareness of what they must do to improve their performance and to identify what the teaching needs to focus on next to enhance their learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39. The parents' and carers' views of the school are very positive. A much higher proportion of parents is in agreement about what the school does well than at the time of the last inspection. That eighty per cent of the questionnaires returned expressed these positive views indicates the degree of parental involvement now in support of the school. In particular, the parents appreciate the fact that their children like school, and that they are making good progress. They feel that the teaching is good and are comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. They also feel that the school expects their children to work hard and is helping them to become mature and responsible individuals. A small number of parents are less happy about the amount of homework being set, do not consider that the school works closely with them, and think that the activities provided outside of lessons are insufficient. The results of the inspection endorse the positive views

of the vast majority of parents. The evidence does not match the views of the small minority of parents expressing these concerns.

40. Since the last inspection, the school has greatly improved the level of information given to the parents, both formally and informally, and it is now very good. The induction procedures for children joining the reception class are very effective and the parents are appreciative of the sensitivity of the staff to their children's needs. The school has sought to involve the parents much more directly in their children's learning. For example, the targets set for each child are regularly shared and reviewed with the parents, so that they can support them with activities at home. The good use of homework diaries promotes the regular exchange of information between home and school. The diaries also contain information on the rewards that each child has earned, so that the parents can see how well they are doing from day to day. The school ensures that parents are involved from the outset in any plans for the pupils with special educational needs. The parents know the teacher and governor responsible for special needs provision and the parents' meeting expressed its support for the schools' work. Through discussion with the parents, the headteacher and staff have been able to develop a shared vision for the aims of the school that provides the basis for each new initiative.
41. A significant proportion of the parents is directly involved in supporting the school and their children's learning, both through practical help and with active fund raising. The Parents' and Friends' Association raises considerable funds for such a small school, provides social events for the children and their families, and is a source of parental views in discussions with the school staff. Prior to the inspection week, for example, a Craft Fair had been held in school. Many of the parents had been involved in this well-supported event. The Christmas decorations that had been placed around the school made it particularly attractive for the last few weeks of term and provided a focus for assemblies and end of term activities.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

42. The headteacher provides very good leadership and management. His clear vision for school improvement and understanding of how it can be achieved have steered the school successfully through a period of rapid development. He has been very successful in establishing a strong sense of teamwork among staff and governors, and in winning commitment to a shared vision. This has been particularly challenging because of the rapid turnover of teachers during the last two years.
43. One of the main improvements in the school's management has been the effective use by the headteacher of a good range of assessment information, including comparative data provided by the local education authority, results from national tests and the school's own test and assessment results. This facilitates the close monitoring of each pupil's achievements in English, mathematics and science. The headteacher evaluates the quality of the planning and teaching regularly and works with the teachers to bring about improvements.
44. The roles of the teachers in managing the subjects for which they are responsible are being developed, and progress has been made since the last inspection. For instance, some lesson observations have taken place and some samples of pupils' work have been analysed. The co-ordinators also scrutinise the planning for their subjects and offer valuable support to other staff. They also contribute to school improvement planning and monitor progress with initiatives relating to their subjects. They take some responsibility for managing resources, but do not yet control a budget. Overall, however, the teachers lack sufficient information

about standards and about the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects across the school. Discussion with them indicates that they are enthusiastic about developing their subjects, but the processes are not yet in place to enable them to influence standards and provision. This is currently identified as a priority by the school **and is a key issue for action from this report.**

45. The leadership and management provided by the co-ordinator for special educational needs are good. He knows the pupils and their parents well and discusses needs, support and progress regularly with other staff. Records are accurately maintained and updated regularly so that he has a good overview of pupils' achievements and progress. The work of the support staff for pupils with special educational needs is valued by all members of staff. They are used very effectively across the school and work closely with class teachers to support learning in all subjects. The governing body gives good financial support to the provision for special educational needs. There is a governor with special responsibility for special educational needs who takes a keen interest in the process.
46. Since the last inspection, the planning has been very effective in moving the school forward. The various initiatives in the school improvement plan are carefully considered, prioritised and set in a realistic timeframe. This is a detailed and comprehensive document that involves appropriate consultation with staff and governors, who also closely monitor the progress of its priorities.
47. The governors are very supportive of the school, and work with commitment to fulfil their responsibilities. Many are new and are working hard to understand their roles and to contribute to the school. A system of committees is being established and individual responsibilities have been allocated in order to share the work load. The governors receive regular and detailed reports from the headteacher, enabling them to focus sharply on progress being made within the school improvement plan. As a result, they too have a good knowledge of the current strengths and weaknesses of the school.
48. The school has enough teachers and support staff to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The professional development needs of each teacher are currently addressed in an annual meeting with the headteacher. There is a policy for performance management, which describes a suitable process. However, due to frequent staffing changes, the statutory requirements are not yet being fully met. The implementation of this policy is **a key issue for action.**
49. The strategic use of resources is good. The school's finances are effectively managed and monitored, and allocations of money are carefully considered in relation to the school's educational priorities. A significant under-spend, which existed at the time of the last inspection, has been put to good use to replenish and extend the school's resources. The governors and staff have carefully monitored the use of these resources so as to evaluate their impact on the teaching and learning. The principles of best value in relation to spending decisions are beginning to be applied. When pupil numbers fell in the current financial year, a deficit budget of eight thousand pounds was agreed with the local education authority in order for the school to maintain its staffing levels. Budgetary planning allowed for this to be repaid over two years, but prudent spending is expected to reduce this amount to between one and three thousand pounds by the end of the current financial year. A small grant to fund teaching in the arts has been spent well to enhance learning.
50. The accommodation is satisfactory overall, its condition having been greatly improved over the past two years. Good use is made of the available space, and the school compensates for the lack of a hall by using a local church hall. The outdoor area is very spacious and is

used well when the weather is fine. Attractive displays brighten the walls. There is a good range of learning resources, including books and computers, which are used well to enhance the pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51. In order to continue to raise standards, the headteacher, staff and governors should:
- a. develop the co-ordinators' roles, so that they gain greater knowledge of teaching and learning in their subjects, become more analytical and are able to influence standards and provision across the school. (*Paragraphs 38, 44, 70, 87, 92, 102 and 106*)
 - b. fully implement, monitor and review the school's policy for performance management so that the teachers receive their entitlement to support for their professional development (*Paragraph 48*)

Other issues to which the school should give early attention

- More opportunities for pupils to be creative in art and design and technology. (*Paragraph 84*)
- Better development of the pupils' skills in using information and communications technology. (*Paragraph 95*)
- Increased attention to the 'composition' element in the music curriculum. (*Paragraph 86*)
- Greater consistency in the marking of the pupils work (*Paragraph 22*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	22

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	16	2	0	0	0
Percentage	0	25	67	8	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 four percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	46
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
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 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	6	6	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	83 (75)	75 (83)	92 (92)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total			12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (92)	75 (75)	100 (83)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. Separate results for boys and girls are not published when there are 10 or fewer pupils in a gender group. Results are not published for Key Stage 1 because there were only six pupils in the year group.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group

No of pupils on roll
43
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0
0

Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0
0	0

No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0
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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

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	14
Average class size	15

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	52.5

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	208823
Total expenditure	206255
Expenditure per pupil	3175
Balance brought forward from previous year	16877
Balance carried forward to next year	19445

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	46
Number of questionnaires returned	31

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	20	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	61	36	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	32	62	6	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	45	45	10	0	0
The teaching is good.	61	39	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	46	3	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	16	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	29	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	52	38	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	55	36	0	3	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	36	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	42	10	3	0

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

Personal, social and emotional development

52. At the time of the inspection, there were three children in the reception class. A second group of four children will be admitted in January. The children are taught in a room which is connected to the classroom of the pupils in Years 1 and 2. The teaching observed during the inspection was consistently good, shared between two nursery nurses and the teacher of Years 1 and 2. The teacher leads the early years team very effectively. At certain times, the Reception children are included with the older pupils. This is very carefully planned and not only helps them to socialise in a bigger group, but also enriches their learning considerably. For example, in a dance lesson, the reception children were very well integrated and benefited greatly from sharing this learning with the others. The organisation is very successful and represents a significant improvement since the last inspection.
53. The adults plan and evaluate the teaching and learning together. There is an effective system for recording the children's development and for planning subsequent work to meet their individual needs. The children are on track to attain all of the expected goals by the end of this academic year, and are likely to exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development.

Personal, social and emotional development

54. The very good relationships and the high levels of care which are provided by the staff enable the children to achieve very well in this area. They arrive confidently in the mornings and show that they are very happy to be coming to school. Independently, the children get out the materials and equipment they want to use, and tidy away willingly and efficiently at the end of the lessons. For instance, they fetch painting aprons and wash their hands without the need for adult supervision. They understand the daily routines in the reception class and respond very positively. For example, when they noticed that more than four children were playing in the role-play area, the last child to participate left and played elsewhere. The children's concentration is developing well; one child became absorbed in wrapping and then delivering Christmas parcels and remained on task for twenty minutes. Others also showed good levels of perseverance, for example, when driving a remotely controlled car around a specified route. Two children playing with walkie-talkies co-operated well with each other. The children are confident to ask questions. This was evident, for instance, when one found that the paper he was wrapping around a parcel was too small and sought assistance. The nursery nurse intervened well to help him solve this difficulty by suggesting that he might look in the post office for a larger piece. The children mix with the older pupils very well, both during lessons and at playtimes. They stand in line when moving around the school and when walking to the church hall.

Communication, language and literacy

55. The children readily engage in conversation with each other and with the staff. The staff successfully encourage the children to increase their vocabulary by suggesting, for example, that a child could '*reverse*' his car in order to drive it away from the table and that he might need to carry out a '*second delivery*' because he had so many parcels to put in his van. Whilst the children were painting leaves, the nursery nurse questioned them about the feel

of the leaves, and what might have eaten the berries from the holly. This drew on the children's existing knowledge and enabled them to share their ideas.

56. The children ask questions confidently, for example, when inviting an adult to '*Come and buy a card*' in their "Post Office". They enjoy listening to stories and looking at books. They turn the pages one at a time and are beginning to get an idea that stories contain a sequence of events. They can read some of the labels around their room and can read each other's names. They know the sounds of many letters and enjoy the actions that they learn to represent each sound. They write their names and are beginning to form a range of letters correctly. The staff successfully encourage the children to write independently, and provide suitable resources such as pads for shopping lists and card to make labels. They value the children's attempts at writing and give them confidence to regard themselves as writers.

Mathematical development

57. The adults take every opportunity to extend the children's mathematical thinking and skills. Well chosen, interesting activities help them to recognise numbers and to count. For example, the children learn to count forwards and backwards as they sing number rhymes. When skittles bearing the numbers from 1 to 5 were placed around the room, the children had a wonderful time using a remotely controlled car to knock them down in the correct sequence. They recognise the numbers 1 to 9 and attempt to find the answers to simple subtraction sums on a computer programme. They know that the scales in the post office are used for weighing parcels and show some understanding of terms such as *heavier* and *lighter*. The adults draw the children's attention to the different sizes of parcels as they load them on to a trailer. They also help them to learn the language of position by using terms such as *underneath* and *next to* in relation to their play.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

58. The children are aware of some of the ways in which they have changed over time and know that they can do things now which they could not do as babies. They engage in meaningful role-play in their "Post Office". They sell greetings cards and stamps to customers and use the cash register to store money and to give change. The nursery nurses make good use of opportunities to extend the children's understanding. For instance, whilst investigating different leaves and twigs, the children were engaged in discussion about where the holly berries had gone. The children have good opportunities to use computers. They type their name and age on the computer each morning when they arrive, using the space bar effectively to separate their name from their age and delete any mistake that they make. They show confidence in using the mouse to click on icons.

Physical development

59. The children practise handling tools and small equipment dextrously in many different ways. They fit together construction apparatus and thread beads on to a stick. In the "Post Office", they persevere to fit a card into its envelope and then to place it in a paper bag. They use scissors competently to cut sticky tape. They enjoy painting and are being helped to gain greater control over the equipment and materials. For example, the children followed a demonstration by the nursery nurse when they were painting pictures of holly leaves. This enabled them to make the correct movements with their brushes and as a result all managed to produce some sort of curved lines to represent the shape of the leaves. The children enjoy riding wheeled toys and playing outdoors on a daily basis. Opportunities to use climbing apparatus are restricted at the moment, but there are plans to rectify this

shortly. The children join the pupils in Years 1 and 2 for lessons in dance and show good levels of spatial awareness. They twist, turn, run and jump with good control and sense of direction.

Creative development

60. The children thoroughly enjoyed a lesson in dance. They listened carefully and interpreted the music very well as they pretended to be falling snowflakes or were dressing to go out to play in the snow. The children engage in role-play with enthusiasm. A visit to the local post office followed by a visit from the post mistress helped the children to base their play on real-life situations. They play in their "Post Office" in the classroom with great seriousness, mimicking real-life activity, such as writing labels for parcels, sticking on stamps and then placing the parcels into a sack. The children enjoy singing and join in familiar songs, with actions. The adults provide the children with a good range of creative experiences in using different types of paint, adhesive, paper, card and clay.

ENGLISH

61. In the most recent tests for seven and eleven-year-olds, the pupils attained standards which were well above average. The reading scores for the seven-year-olds were in the top five percent nationally. At the last inspection, raising the standards of the pupils in the infants was a key issue for action. These latest results show a dramatic improvement and reflect the very hard work that has been carried out in this area. Although there are fewer higher attaining pupils in the current Year 2, overall the children are achieving standards that are above average.
62. The current pupils in Year 6 are attaining average standards. When these pupils were tested at age seven, their results were well below average. The fact that these pupils are now attaining average standards indicates that they have progressed enormously during the last four years. Analysis of the tests over several years shows that boys have slightly outperformed girls, although the differences between results have been very small. There is nothing within either the provision or the teaching that might favour one gender over the other.
63. The improvement in performance throughout the school is due to very hard work on the part of all of the staff. The literacy strategy is now well established. The teachers make effective use of the Additional Literacy Support learning materials to help the lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4. These lessons are taught very effectively by the support assistant, who makes the learning both interesting and challenging for the pupils. This motivates the pupils, and their success provides them with a sense of achievement. The progress of the pupils with special educational needs is conscientiously monitored, and suitable work is provided to help them meet the targets in their individual education plans.
64. Following the analysis of test results, relevant targets are set for each class and individual targets are agreed with each pupil. The teachers make effective use of these targets, which are also made known to the parents. Most pupils can remember their targets and can describe what steps they are taking to achieve them.
65. By the end of Year 2, most pupils have good speaking and listening skills. They express themselves well in explaining their answers and opinions. They make appropriate responses to questions and sustain a conversation. When choosing a book from the school library, the pupils explained what attracted them to a particular volume. The pupils listen very well to stories and can talk about them afterwards. They also listen attentively to instructions and

this enables them to settle to their work quickly. For instance, some pupils sequencing cards into a list of instructions got on with their work quickly and co-operated well to agree how to proceed. The different tasks in this lesson were very well planned to build on the pupils' prior learning. As a result, each pupil learned a lot about writing a list of instructions and gained a sense of achievement.

66. The pupils' reading skills are above average. They read accurately and with increasing fluency, and usually recognise and correct any errors that they make. Pupils of all abilities sound out difficult words, using their knowledge of letter sounds to help them. Most of the pupils are enthusiastic about books and enjoy information books as well as stories. The lower attaining pupils find reading hard and show less positive attitudes. The teachers make reading fun by using such things as jumbled sentences which the pupils have to rearrange. The pupils recall favourite stories and express preferences. They are familiar with the terms 'author' and 'illustrator' and can use simple dictionaries as well as the contents and index pages in reference books. Most of their writing shows correct letter formation and they begin to develop a neat, cursive script. An analysis of the pupils' work since the beginning of this term shows a marked increase in the quantity of writing they produce and in the correct use of capital letters and full stops. Their spelling of commonly used words is generally accurate and they make good attempts at more difficult words, 'assembler', for example.
67. By year 6, the pupils join in discussion with confidence and express their opinions clearly. They listen to the ideas of others and make relevant comments. Standards in reading are currently average in Year 6, which is an accurate reflection of the overall abilities of these particular pupils. Nevertheless, the pupils read with accuracy and expression, use word-building skills to help them read unfamiliar words, and are competent to research information using contents and index pages. They express preferences for certain authors and regard reading as a source of pleasure and information. There is variation in the presentation of written work, with some pupils clearly showing greater pride than others do, but overall it is satisfactory. The pupils write for a wide range of purposes, including autobiographical, narrative, play scripts, note taking and summary. This stimulates their interest in writing and reading, as well as broadening their knowledge. When writing about metaphors, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 chose imaginative language to illustrate their meaning; one pupil wrote, "*Thick fog is like candy floss hanging in the sky*". The teachers also provide good opportunities for the pupils to use their writing skills in other subjects, such as in scientific reports or historical accounts. Satisfactory use is made of computer programmes to support learning. This was evident, for example, in a lesson on homophones in Years 3 and 4.
68. The quality of the teaching is good, and often very good. The teachers make learning interesting and this encourages the pupils to learn. In a Year 5/6 lesson, for instance, a short clip from a cartoon film to introduce a lesson about the role and technique of a narrator immediately captured the pupils' attention. Moreover, it sustained their interest when they were making comparisons between the narrator's role in the film and that of a narrator within a written text.
69. At the start of lessons, the teachers make very good links to what has gone before. For example, in a lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, the teacher reminded them of previous work about non-chronological reports. This helped them to understand how their new learning would build on this. The teachers value the pupils' attempts and their good relationships with give the children confidence to offer ideas, even though they may not be correct. The last part of lessons is used very well to reinforce what has been learned and to allow the teachers to assess how much the pupils have achieved.

70. The co-ordinator has worked hard to audit and replenish the resources. She has analysed results, observed teaching and examined the teachers' planning for the other classes. Her overview of standards is developing, but she still needs to have greater influence over the teaching and learning in English throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

71. The numbers of pupils taking the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are small and variable from year to year. They do not provide a reliable guide to the trend of standards in mathematics in comparison with either schools nationally or those of a similar nature. However, the overall quality of the pupils' work in mathematics has improved since the last inspection.
72. The current inspection evidence indicates that standards are likely to be above average by the end of Year 2 and in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. There is no significant difference between the performances of boys and girls. The pupils are well taught and make good progress in the development of their numeracy skills and in other aspects of the mathematics curriculum. These improvements, since the time of the last inspection, have been brought about by more secure planning based on the National Numeracy Strategy and an improvement in the teaching, particularly in the infant classes.
73. An analysis of infant pupils' work shows that they are making good progress and achieving well. They can correctly name common 2-D and 3-D shapes and use a decimal point in recording sums of money. During the inspection, the pupils in Year 1 were observed learning to record times using the "o'clock" format. The more able pupils could record half-past times. All groups of pupils were able to make steady progress during the lesson and develop their knowledge and understanding of time. The pupils in Year 2 were observed learning to measure accurately the lengths of lines in centimetres and were careful to measure from the zero mark of their rulers. The lesson was characterised by well-organised and well-resourced activities that were closely matched to the pupils' differing levels of ability. The teaching makes good use of mental calculating sessions to start each lesson. All ages of pupils thoroughly enjoy their mathematics lessons because the teachers are very good at directing the right question, at the right level, to the right pupil. This enables all to participate and contribute to the lesson. The pupils enjoy games involving counting forwards and backwards in 2's, 5's and 10's.
74. Scrutiny of previous Year 6 work and that of other junior classes shows that attainment matches expectations for the majority of the older pupils. The pupils in Years 3 and 4 are currently attaining well in line with the expected levels for their ages. They were seen rounding three-digit numbers to the nearest 10 and the higher attaining pupils were able to extend this to rounding numbers to the nearest 100. The lesson in Year 5/6 also developed the pupils' understanding of money, and their previous work showed they can use this knowledge in calculating answers to money problems. In the lesson seen, all groups of pupils were confident users of calculators to check their answers. Their work also shows that they can use protractors to draw angles accurately and know that the angles inside a triangle add up to 180 degrees. They know how to find the perimeter of a regular shape, such as a rectangle, by counting squares. Lower attaining pupils are less secure in their understanding of recording large numbers containing thousands, but all groups are secure in recording and sequencing 3-digit numbers.
75. The teaching of mathematics has improved since the last inspection, and is now good throughout the school. The pupils are encouraged 'to work things out' for themselves and to try alternative methods. They explain clearly and accurately their methods of working.

This is the result of well-focused teaching that values all pupils' responses and ideas and encourages them to try for themselves. A noticeable feature of all lessons is the emphasis on the correct use of mathematical language. The planning now identifies clearly what the teachers want the pupils to learn, and this is always made plain to them at the start of the lesson. This leads to a good pace of learning because the pupils are clear about what they are going to do and what is expected of them. The activities are well resourced and managed, and this enables pupils to settle quickly to their tasks. They are further helped by the way in which the teachers use their own subject knowledge to give good explanations and instructions.

76. The subject coordinator leads and organises the subject well. He has monitored the teaching and learning of mathematics across the school. The current assessment of the pupils' attainment and progress as they move through the school is satisfactory, and good use is made of these data to set targets for groups of pupils within each year group and to plan subsequent work for them. The pupils use their numeracy skills in other subjects, mainly in recording information and data in the form of graphs. The current range of resources is good. They are well organised and readily available for all staff, and this is having a positive influence on the raising of standards across the school.

SCIENCE

77. The numbers of pupils taking the national tests and assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are very small and vary from year to year. They do not provide a reliable guide to the overall trend of standards when compared either with schools nationally or with those of a similar nature. The evidence from the inspection indicates that by the end of this academic year standards in science in Year 2 and Year 6 are likely to be in line with the national averages. This is an improvement from the time of the last inspection, when the attainment of the pupils at the end of Year 2 was below average. This change has been brought about mainly by an improvement in the planning and teaching of science based on an action plan drawn up by the school. The quality of the teaching is now good throughout the school, and some of it is very good.
78. The planning for science is now much more securely supported by nationally approved units of work that address all the requirements of the National Curriculum. It is based on previous learning and helps the pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding in a systematic way. For example, scrutiny of the previous work of Year 2 pupils shows they have a good understanding of a healthy life style. They know that exercise is good for us and that we need to eat a balanced diet. When choosing a sensible '*lunch box for Susie*' they know that fruit, milk and vegetables form part of such a diet. They have been able to build a simple circuit to light a bulb and know of the ways in which we use electricity in the home and at school.
79. In the two lessons seen in the junior classes the teachers demonstrated a secure knowledge of their subject in the way they planned interesting and varied activities that built on pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The lesson in the Year 3 / 4 class made good use of the pupils' previous knowledge and understanding of forces. Very good use of resources and the support of a classroom assistant enabled all pupils to play an active part in the lesson. They were able to test '*the feel of the force*' of springs and elastic bands. '*It pings out of your hand*' said one pupil, and another noted that '*This one's harder because it's got more turns in it*'. Carefully directed questioning by the teacher enabled all groups of pupils to discover that the stronger the force, the tighter the spring. The discussion sessions at the start and end of lessons are notable features of how pupils are led to consider the '*how*' and '*why*' questions of their experiments and investigations. For example, in the Year 5/6

lesson on pitch and sounds, the teacher made very good use of a guitar to lead the pupils to consider the difference between volume and pitch. This was followed by a successful investigation in which the pupils designed and made their own musical instrument to show this difference. The more able pupils were able to relate the thickness and stretch in elastic bands to the variations in pitch of the sounds they produced. The lesson built very successfully on the pupils' previous knowledge and understanding of sounds and how they are produced.

80. Scrutiny of previous work and discussions with the pupils show that they know the life cycles of animals and plants and understand how seeds are dispersed. They can sort materials into solids, liquids and gases and know that changes to materials can be either permanent or reversible. They know the functions of major organs of the human body, such as the heart, and can distinguish between opaque and transparent materials. Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to science and enjoy the activities their teachers prepare for them. In lessons, the great majority of pupils work well together. They co-operate in using resources and listen to the ideas and opinions of others. Their enthusiasm and concentration enables the lessons to proceed at a good pace.
81. The subject has benefited from its priority in the school's current improvement plan, and is now being led and managed satisfactorily. The current systems for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress are satisfactory. Good use is made of literacy and numeracy skills in recording in science, and the use of computers is being developed. The present resources are good and are used well to improve standards.

ART AND DESIGN, MUSIC, DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

82. Since no design and technology lessons were taught during the inspection, the following judgements about standards have been made after discussion with the teachers and pupils and by sampling the pupils' previous and current work. Two lessons were observed in art and one in music. No judgements were made about standards in these subjects in the previous report. The current evidence indicates that attainment in all three subjects meets expectations for children at the ages of seven and eleven.
83. The pupils in Year 2 describe how to mix colours, mould clay and paint and draw pictures working with a range of materials. They enjoy creating pictures from computer art packages and produced colourful Rangoli patterns using one such programme. In the lesson observed in Years 1 and 2, the teaching was good. The pupils experimented with a range of materials, such as paint, pastels and felt-tipped pens, and a computer programme, to make designs similar to those of Kandinsky. The timing and organisation of the lesson enabled the pupils to try several of the options and they benefited greatly from this opportunity to investigate different media. They responded very well to this freedom of choice and moved between activities without fuss. At the end of the lesson, there was a useful discussion in which the pupils expressed preferences for different media, many stating that they liked watercolours because the paint blended together, creating an effect similar to that in Kandinsky's work. Good links are made between art and design and technology. For example, the pupils have designed wallpaper by choosing pictures of plants and flowers by William Morris from a computer programme. This has been glued to the inner walls of houses they are currently designing and making using a cardboard outer structure. The pupils understand that a paper house would not have been as strong, especially when paint was applied to the outer walls.
84. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 are aware of the work of Lowry, Van Gogh, Picasso and Clarice Cliff and can describe some of the techniques used by them. They have produced pictures in the art deco style of Clarice Cliff and can explain how they used watercolour and poster paints. The pupils use sketchbooks satisfactorily to plan such items as Christmas decorations and to make observational drawings. At times, however, they are given insufficient opportunities to make choices of materials and create their own designs. The teachers make good use of a digital camera, and a craft club is very popular and available to all the pupils from Year 1 to Year 6.

85. Although no design and technology was taught during the inspection, discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their past work indicate that by Year 6 they have a satisfactory understanding of the basic design process. For instance, they described how they planned and made a slipper using paper and fabric. Prompt sheets with questions helped the pupils to evaluate their work. They recall how they assessed both the making process and the finished article and could describe how they might have measured more accurately when designing the slippers, so as to allow for the depth of the foot. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils have made story books containing lift-up flaps and pull strips to reveal pictures. Their plans show how they considered the design process. In both art and design and technology, there is often limited opportunity for the pupils to use different materials, methods of joining and a sufficiently wide range of tools.
86. Since the specialist music teacher left two years ago, the school has been very resourceful in trying to replace that expertise. Parental help has been enlisted to play the piano, music resources have been carefully selected and a grant to promote the arts has been procured for two successive years. As a result of these grants, the school has been able to provide lessons in fife, flute, recorder and guitar. In a lesson in Years 1 and 2, the pupils listened well to music and were able to identify when a piano was playing. When learning about tempo and dynamics, they were able to put together three different rhythms using their voices and eventually perform a short piece. The teacher built up the three parts of the rhythm at a pace which kept the children challenged and interested. The pupils sing tunefully and with enjoyment. The school has a strong tradition of performing and produces a musical concert at least once each year. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 recall using a range of percussion instruments to compose music, but overall insufficient emphasis is given to composing, and the school is aware of the need to develop this area. Links between subjects are used well and the pupils in Years 5 and 6 are currently making instruments as part of their work on sound in science.
87. The school has rightly focused on the core subjects since the last inspection and these three subjects have not been priorities for development. The co-ordinators know what needs to be done to improve the teaching and learning and understand that the long-term planning needs to show how skills can be taught more sequentially. Although they see the other teachers' planning, their influence over the teaching, learning and standards in other classes is in need of development.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

88. The previous inspection report made no judgements about standards in these subjects. The present evidence suggests that standards will be in line with those expected nationally by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. As a result of improved planning for both subjects, the teaching is now more secure, particularly in the infant classes. Both subjects are taught within a two-year cycle of topics to avoid repetition and to develop the pupils' skills progressively. These are all improvements since the last inspection.
89. In geography, the younger pupils recognise some of the aspects of their local area and know what the buildings are used for. For example, as part of a whole school topic on road safety, they have walked around the village looking at safe places to cross the roads on their journeys to school. Their knowledge of the wider world has been developed well through the travels of *'Barnaby and Betty Bear'*, who go on holidays with the pupils and send cards or photographs of the places they visit. These are recorded on a large world map and help to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of other countries. In the history lesson seen, aspects of geography and religious education were also skilfully combined using the story of the voyage of the Pilgrim Fathers and Thanksgiving Day celebrations. The

pupils showed good understanding of the story as an event in history and a growing awareness of scale and distance in geography, with comments such as, *'It's a long way away across the sea'* and *'It took two months for their boat to sail there'*.

90. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils have a well-developed understanding of a wider range of places and of some of their distinguishing features. For example, they have studied the physical features of rivers and know how erosion shapes a river's passage to the sea. The pupils in Year 3/4 can name correctly the countries and capital cities of the British Isles. In a geography lesson they studied a range of maps, atlases and globes to locate countries where foods are produced for export to this country. They know about some of the exploits of the Ancient Greeks and can relate the Battle of Marathon to the modern sport of marathon running. They can independently select a range of sources from which to draw information, including books, artefacts and information located on the Internet. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 have developed their awareness of historical questions. They are becoming progressively more adept at applying their historical skills when approaching a range of topics. For example, in their work on life in Victorian times, they use photographs and other evidence to develop their understanding that historical evidence can be obtained from a variety of sources. The emphasis on the development of these skills was evident in the lesson on Ancient Greeks in the Year 3 / 4 class. The older pupils have also visited a Victorian house to develop their sense of change over time.
91. The use of recently produced national guidance for the teaching of geography and history is having a positive effect on the further development of the teaching and learning in these two subjects. Good teaching was observed in both subjects during the inspection. The planning for both subjects takes increasing account of the way learning builds upon what has gone before and the links with other subjects such as religious education and art. For example, the pupils' map-reading skills develop from interpreting simple maps and plans in the infants to using more detailed maps such as those in atlases in the junior classes. The teachers are keen and knowledgeable about their subjects, and this raises the levels of interest and enthusiasm of their pupils. The teaching assistants are used very effectively to support the work of small groups of pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are able to contribute to discussions and take a full part in all lessons.
92. Aspects of the present leadership and management of these subjects are unsatisfactory. In geography, some monitoring of resources and the work of pupils has been undertaken, but the co-ordinator has not been able to monitor work in history. The school has only just begun to assess the attainment and progress of its pupils in these subjects. For example, it does not yet collect samples of pupils' work and check these against the attainment levels of the National Curriculum so as to support the teachers' assessment of their pupils' attainment and progress. This remains an area of development for the school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

93. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, the attainment of the majority of the pupils is broadly in line with that expected nationally. This is a major improvement from the time of the last inspection, when the school was failing to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The planning for ICT is now much better, and staff training has increased the teachers' confidence and competence in the use of this equipment. The resources have been improved and are now being used effectively to make good the pupils' previous lack of skills. Most pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 are confident and competent users of computers, and the younger pupils are beginning to develop a satisfactory range of skills through the more structured and systematic planning of the subject.

94. All classes have computer corners, but these were not used as fully as they might have been during the inspection. When they were used, the majority of the pupils showed satisfactory levels of skills in the programs they were using. The younger pupils in the Year 1/2 class were confident about using the mouse in an art lesson to draw circles and fill them with colour. They draw their own free-hand pictures using an art package and are able to change the colour of the "paint" and style and the size of the brush they use. The pupils in Year 2 can print their work unaided and have used a digital camera to record their work in the classroom. They can describe ways in which computers are used in everyday situations in the home and elsewhere, for example, in controlling traffic lights. The pupils are also able to use the listening centre unaided to listen to story tapes.
95. Scrutiny of the work in Year 6 shows that the present pupils are not yet fully competent in certain skills, for example, in the combining of text, graphics and sound in Powerpoint presentations. The new ICT curriculum plans to address these shortcomings, though older pupils do show an awareness of these elements of presentation. They have developed their word processing skills satisfactorily and can change the size, style and colour of fonts in their writing. They know how to use the spellchecker and justify text, and have begun to combine text and clip art graphics. The pupils know how to control floor robots and can enter data such as the colour of eyes, hair, and favourite fruits onto a database.
96. The school is beginning to make good use of ICT to support work in other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a Year 3 / 4 English lesson, good use was made of computers to reinforce the pupils' knowledge and understanding of homophones. In a mathematics lesson, the pupils in Year 5/6 demonstrated good skills in using calculators to check their answers to money problems. The pupils in Year 3 / 4 entered their data on the weights of various objects prior to plotting their results in the form of a graph, and in Year 2 the pupils also recorded and printed data in graphical form. Evidence of the use of computers to support work in geography, history and religious education lessons was also seen during the inspection. For example, in a Year 3 / 4 history lesson on the Ancient Greeks, the pupils used CD-ROMs and the Internet for research purposes. The school has a secure Internet safety policy that has been approved by parents and the governing body.
97. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory. The teachers have benefited from recent training, and the new scheme of work for the subject is providing a good basis for their planning. It is helping to ensure the systematic development of skills as the pupils move through the school. All groups are now beginning to benefit from the more focused teaching of skills, although this is inevitably more apparent in classes for the younger pupils as the older pupils are still making good the deficit left by the previous lack of skills teaching. The interventions of the teachers during work using computers were confident and well directed, allowing the pupils to use their intuition rather than simply being told what key to press. The great majority of the pupils respond well to this approach and work with enthusiasm and concentration.
98. The subject is well led by the current coordinator, who has raised the profile of the subject across the school. He has begun to develop assessment procedures to track the progress of the pupils, but these are as yet under-developed and do not fully support the pupils' learning effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

99. At the time of the last inspection, the school was not meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum for physical education. This is no longer the case. The school now successfully uses a local church hall in the village for lessons in gymnastics and dance. The

teaching of the subject is now good because the teachers' planning is much more securely based on national guidance. These are all good improvements since the last inspection.

100. The inspection evidence suggests that by the end of Years 2 and 6, the majority of the pupils will be achieving standards in line with those expected nationally. Only two lessons could be observed during the inspection, and the following judgments are therefore based on these lessons, discussion with the coordinator and scrutiny of the teachers' planning. In both lessons, the teaching was good. The teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject, which they use well to demonstrate and instruct the pupils. This develops the interest and enthusiasm of all groups of pupils, who respond willingly to the tasks set. The planning for physical education lessons is good and gives detailed descriptions of what the pupils are to learn. The aims of the lessons are clearly conveyed to the pupils so that they can focus on the skills being taught. For example, in the lesson on netball skills in Years 3 and 4, the teacher built on the previous work on catching and throwing before introducing a new footwork skill to be learned. She developed this very well through practical demonstration and encouragement, ably supported by a parent helper. No time was wasted and the positive relationships between the teacher and the pupils contributed strongly to the success of the lesson. In the dance lesson with Years 1 and 2, the teacher planned a series of activities that were well matched to the ages of the pupils, so that their interest and enthusiasm was maintained throughout. The lesson built well on their previous learning and developed the imagination of all groups of pupils. The pupils' very good behaviour allows the walk from school to village hall to be managed safely and efficiently. A notable feature of both lessons seen was the enjoyment that all pupils get from their physical education activities.
101. From the age of four years, all pupils have swimming lessons and are able to swim the required 25 metres by the time they are eleven. After-school clubs and regular competitive sports matches against other local small schools are held at appropriate times during the year. Weekend sports fixtures and competitions also feature in the school calendar, and the commitment and support of many parents contribute strongly to the school's ability to ensure that as many pupils as possible benefit from these activities.
102. The coordinator plans to conduct an audit of resources so that these can be used more effectively to support the raising of standards. However, she does not yet have a clear picture of current standards across the school because she has not been able to monitor the teaching and learning in a meaningful manner. This remains an area of development for the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

103. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only one lesson in religious education in Year 6. However, from scrutiny of past work, the teachers' planning and other records, it is evident that attainment of the majority of the pupils is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Improvements in planning now ensure that the needs of mixed age classes are catered for within a two-year rolling series of topics that includes Christianity and aspects of other important religions. For example, the topic of celebrations and beliefs in various religions is undertaken with increasing complexity as the pupils move through the school.
104. By the end of Year 2, the pupils develop a sound knowledge of some important events in the Christian calendar. The youngest children are aware of some of the symbols associated with Christmas and Diwali. Their knowledge and understanding were very effectively reinforced by a visit to Leicester to see the lights of the Diwali Festival. The pupils know

that different religions have different places of worship and have visited the local church to discover some of its symbols and their meanings. In the junior classes, scrutiny of the planning for religious education shows that the pupils' knowledge of different religions, such as Sikhism and Judaism, is developed satisfactorily. As their understanding develops, the emphasis moves to personal responsibilities and relationships. The teaching of religious education underpins the school's value system in relation to the pupils' moral development. In the one lesson seen, the teaching was good. Various activities were planned, including discussion and written recording. In this Year 6 lesson, the pupils were led carefully and sensitively to consider the difference between how we celebrate Christmas as a Christian festival, and how it is enjoyed as a secular festival. Working either in pairs or small groups, they produced their own versions of a 'Christmas Rap' to illustrate these differences. Good support by the class teacher and a teaching assistant enabled all the pupils to play an effective part in the lesson.

105. A good attempt is being made to broaden the curriculum in order to include important features of world faiths. This is supported by displays of artifacts and books representing Christianity, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam. The school has used nationally approved units of work to supplement the guidance of the Locally Agreed Syllabus and these are providing good support to the teachers.
106. Some aspects of the current leadership and management of the subject are unsatisfactory. The assessment of the pupils' progress is not yet formally established and this aspect of the coordinator's role needs to be developed. The coordinator has improved resources, particularly in regard to other faiths and beliefs. They are now good and are being used well to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The school values the use of the local churches for special services such as Harvest and Christmas, and local church leaders come to take school assemblies on a regular basis. The assemblies not only enhance the pupils' religious education, but also support their personal development.