

# INSPECTION REPORT

## ST THOMAS MORE RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Peterborough

LEA area: Peterborough

Unique reference number: 110854

Headteacher: Mrs A M McElhinney

Lead inspector: Mr G Bassett

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> July 2005

Inspection number: 267958

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 aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	332
School address:	Park Lane Eastfield Peterborough
Postcode:	PE1 5JW
Telephone number:	(01733) 566 005
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Ann Parkin
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

## **CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL**

St Thomas More RC Primary school is voluntary aided and is situated on the eastern side of the city of Peterborough. It is larger than other primary schools. It serves its immediate locality and also admits children from all parts of the city and often beyond because the parents prefer to send their children to a Catholic school. The socio-economic status of the area served by the school is much less advantaged than other areas. There are 332 pupils on roll (146 girls and 186 boys). Almost a half of the children are white with the rest of the school made up of children from Asian and African ethnic backgrounds. Nearly half the pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. There are eleven classes in the school. There is one newly qualified teacher. Twenty four pupils have joined the school and 30 have left during the past year, which is about average. The proportion of pupils registered for free school meals is slightly above the national average. The proportion of pupils identified with special educational needs (SEN) and with statements is above the national average. The children join the Reception class full time in September of the school year in which they become five. The school's assessments show that the children's attainment on entry into the Reception class is well below average with many children attaining below this level in literacy and numeracy.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21500	Mr G Bassett	Lead inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology
15181	Mrs M Hackney	Lay inspector	
10144	Mrs M Marriott	Team inspector	Music Geography Foundation Stage
17756	Mrs H Monaghan	Team inspector	Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education
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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **OVERALL EVALUATION**

**The effectiveness of the school is satisfactory.** Under the good leadership of the headteacher, the staff are endeavouring to make learning more meaningful and purposeful to the pupils, especially those with special educational needs (SEN) and English as an additional language. The quality of teaching and the curriculum are satisfactory overall. The staff are committed to providing a caring environment and the school's ethos is good. The pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6, despite attaining standards in English and mathematics that are below average. The parents expressed positive views about the school. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

#### **The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:**

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.
- The pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is good but standards in English and mathematics are still below average but well above in science.
- Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good and often very good.
- The school does not provide sufficiently well for literacy in Years 1 and 2.
- The teachers' plans in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 are often not precise enough to show what skills, knowledge and understanding they intend to teach.
- The ongoing assessment records are too unwieldy and cannot be used easily to identify what each pupil needs to learn next.
- Pupils enjoy their learning; their behaviour in and around the school is good because of effective relationships with each other and adults.
- Pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory because too many parents take holidays during school time.

Improvement since the last inspection in 1999 has been good. The school has dealt well with the issues raised at that time. By the end of Year 6 the pupils' achievement is good. Standards are still below average and the same as at the last inspection, but it must be noted that standards on entry to the Reception class have declined. Pupils' behaviour in and around the school has improved significantly. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved and is now very good. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are now in line with expected levels. The pupils' attendance has dropped.

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED**

**Pupils' achievement is good.** Pupils by the end of Year 6, including those with special education needs and with English as an additional language, achieve well. Those in Year 2 achieve satisfactorily overall apart from in literacy where achievement is unsatisfactory. The children enter the Reception class with standards in literacy and numeracy that are well below expected levels for their age. By the time they enter Year 1 standards are still well below the expected levels for their age but their achievement is satisfactory. Currently, the pupils' standards in reading and writing at the end of Year 2 are well below average and achievement is unsatisfactory. Their standards in mathematics are well below average and in science they are average but achievement is good in both subjects. The good and often very good teaching in Years 3 to 6 ensures that pupils achieve well overall by the time they leave the school. Even so, the standards in Year 6 in English and mathematics are currently below average. The targets set by the school for 2004 were met. Standards in science are above average and achievement is very good. This is a strength of the school. Standards in information and communication technology are now average.

**The pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.** Their attitudes and behaviour are good both in and around the school. Attendance is well below average as too many pupils are absent for holidays during term time.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2002	2003	2004	2004
English	D	E	D	C
mathematics	E	D	D	D
science	E	C	B	A

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average.  
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION

**The quality of education provided by the school is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall and good overall and often very good in Years 3 to 6.** In the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 the teaching is satisfactory. The teaching of mathematics and science throughout the school is good and often very good. Teachers in the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 do not always plan precisely enough to enable the pupils to learn the skills, knowledge and understanding required in each subject. The provision made for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is good. There are good procedures at the end of each term to formally assess and track what each pupil has achieved. However, the ongoing assessment records are unwieldy and cannot be used easily to identify common patterns in pupils' learning. The curriculum is satisfactory overall but is weakened in Years 1 and 2 because the school has chosen to teach several subjects including literacy, under a topic theme. The care, welfare, health and safety of all pupils are very good. The annual reports lack details to show how each pupil can improve. The links with parents and the community are satisfactory and those with other schools are good. The accommodation and resources are good overall.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.** The headteacher provides good leadership and a clear direction to the work of the school, especially in the improvements made to the pupils' personal development - including their behaviour. The school improvement plan is comprehensive and good strategies are in place to raise and maintain pupils' standards and achievements. The headteacher is strongly committed to inclusion of all pupils in the life of the school. Management is satisfactory; many decisions made improve the pupils' enjoyment of lessons. Although evaluation of the quality of planning and use of ongoing assessment records was undertaken before the topic approach to teaching was instigated, insufficient evaluation of the quality of pupils' learning was carried once the new arrangements had been established. The leadership and management of the provision made for pupils with SEN and for those with English as an additional language are good. The teaching assistants are deployed well and give good support and guidance to the pupils. The governance of the school is good and the governors, led by a knowledgeable and dedicated chair of governors, give good support to the school. All statutory requirements are met.

## PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents express positive views about the quality of the education and about the way their children enjoy their lessons. Parents are satisfied that their children are well cared for because the school develops their sense of wellbeing and desire to learn. The pupils are proud of their school and have confidence that the school values their ideas and listens to them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important things the school should do to improve are:**

- Raise standards in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school.
- Improve the provision for literacy in Years 1 and 2.
- Improve the quality of learning in all subjects in the Reception class and in Years 1 and 2 with improved planning and teaching of the skills, knowledge and understanding that build upon what each pupil already knows.
- Adjust the ongoing assessment records for each subject so that they are simple to maintain and easy to use to identify what each pupil needs to be taught next.
- Improve the pupils' attendance.



## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning and subjects**

Children enter the Reception class with standards that are well below the expected levels for their age. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6 they achieve well. Standards in Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics although over three quarters reach or exceed the expected Level 4. Standards in science are above average and pupils achieve very well. Standards in Year 2 are well below average in reading and writing, where achievement is unsatisfactory. In mathematics, standards are below average and in science average with pupils achieving well.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' standards in literacy and numeracy are well below average at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' standards in science are above average at the end of Year 6 and they achieve very well.
- Pupils achieve well by the end of Year 6 but their standards overall are below average in English and mathematics.
- Children enter the Reception class with well below average standards.
- Very few of the children are on course to reach the goals set for children of this age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Standards in ICT have improved since the last inspection and are now broadly average.
- Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve well.

#### **Commentary**

1. The results of the national tests for 2004 at the end of Year 2 showed that standards were well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 or above in reading and writing was approximately two thirds and in mathematics it was much higher. Considering the very low standards on entry to the school most pupils have achieved well up to this time. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 3 was below average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. A significant proportion of the pupils did not reach the expected Level 2 in reading, writing and mathematics so reducing the school's overall performance. The trend in the school's performance over the past three years is below the national trend. When standards are compared with similar schools based upon the entitlement to free schools meals, then the performance is well below average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. In science, the results show the standards were average and well above average when compared with similar schools.

#### ***Standards in national tests at the end of Year 2 – average point scores in 2004***

Standards in:	School results	National results
reading	13.5 (12.8)	15.8 (15.7)
writing	12.2 (11.5)	14.6 (14.6)
mathematics	15.0 (14.2)	16.2 (16.3)

*There were 49 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

2. The national tests results for 2004 show that standards at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics were below average. In science, standards were above average. When comparisons are made with similar schools whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2, then the school's performance is average in English, well above average in science and

below average in mathematics. It is clear that their progress was well above the national average for their age. This is a significant achievement for these pupils. The targets set for both English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 in 2004 were met. There is no significant difference between the performance of the boys and girls.

**Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2004**

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	26.5 (25.0)	26.9 (26.8)
mathematics	25.8 (26.0)	27.0 (26.8)
science	29.6 (29.0)	28.6 (28.6)

*There were 38 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.*

3. The children enter the Reception Year with standards in literacy and numeracy that are very low for their age. A high proportion has standards that are very low because they have special educational needs or have English as an additional language (EAL). The standards on entry to the Reception have declined over the past three years and are now much lower than at the time of the last inspection. The pupils with EAL make good progress learning English and this helps them to achieve well during their first year in school. By the end of the Reception Year the children achieve satisfactorily even though very few reach the goals set for children of this age.
4. Currently the Year 2 age group has slightly more pupils with special educational needs (SEN) than was the case for Year 2 last year. The results of the most recent tests, in 2005, are yet to be confirmed but early indications show that standards in reading and writing have dropped significantly since last year and are the lowest for several years, with less than half of the pupils achieving the national expectations. This performance stops the steady improvements that have been achieved over the past three years. It is clear from the scrutiny of the pupils' books that standards are well below average in writing and below average in reading by the end of Year 2 because the skills, understanding and knowledge set out in the literacy strategy have not been planned and taught sufficiently well. Consequently, many pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in their reading and writing but in mathematics and science achievement is good. The achievement in ICT is satisfactory.
5. Currently, the standards in mathematics in Year 2 are well below average because the proportion of pupils not reaching the expected Level 2 is above average, decreasing the overall performance. However, it must be remembered that, by the end of the year, over three quarters of the pupils reach the expected Level 2 or above. Consequently, most pupils achieve well considering their well below average and very low standards in numeracy when they enter school. The good quality of teaching and the good structure to the mathematics lessons provide a good basis upon which to develop the pupils' mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding.
6. The standards in science in Year 2 are broadly in line with the expected Level 2 and, because of the good and often very good teaching in science in Years 1 and 2, the pupils' achievement is good considering their well below average attainment on entry to the school. The pupils' standards in information and communication technology are broadly in line with expected levels and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
7. Currently, the pupils' standards by the end of Year 6 are below average in English and mathematics because of the large number of pupils with special educational needs who do not reach the expected Level 4. Nevertheless, these pupils' achievement is good. Standards are above average in science and pupils achieve very well. Literacy lessons in Years 3 and 6 follow the National Literacy Strategy, and the teachers plan well-structured tasks and the pupils achieve well considering their well below average attainment on entry to the school.

The standards in ICT have improved well since the last inspection and are currently in line with the expected level for pupils in Year 6.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. However, the changes in curriculum provision in Years 1 and 2 have slowed down the progress made by these pupils in the development of their reading and writing. Pupils for whom English is an additional language achieve satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 and well in Years 3 to 6. There are good systems in place to support them in lessons and effective individual and small group teaching to ensure that they make good progress in all areas of their development.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

The pupils' attitudes, values and behaviour are good. Their personal development is good and social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is very good. Attendance is unsatisfactory and punctuality is satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils have positive attitudes to their school life and are keen to learn.
- Behaviour is good and pupils enjoy the very good relationships they have with staff and other pupils.
- The staff work hard so that the school is a friendly community in which the pupils care for others and in which pupils rarely experience bullying, and know what to do if this happens.

### **Commentary**

9. There is an improved picture from the previous inspection. The pupils' personal development is promoted cohesively throughout the school, through a strong focus and common approach of the Catholic ethos. Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. Pupils are interested and responsive and enjoy their learning. They settle down to work quickly and most concentrate well, even when they are working independently. The pupils work well both individually and collaboratively and are supportive of classmates.
10. Behaviour is good and leads to a calm environment that is conducive to learning. Staff provide good role models and their high expectations of behaviour and the unified approach to its management contribute much to the schools' friendly atmosphere. The learning mentors help pupils who experience problems and this is very effective in supporting them through difficult times. The creation of the buddy system effectively helps children who are new to the school to settle in quickly. Pupils from Years 3 to 6 help the younger children at playtimes and buddy classes share their work with each other. They also invite their buddy class to their assemblies. There have been no exclusions of pupils during the past year. Pupils enjoy good relationships with staff and with their peers and a genuine spirit of community and co-operation exists within the school. Pupils say that they rarely experience bullying and they are confident about what to do if problems occur.
11. The school makes good provision for pupils' personal development. Their spiritual development is supported very well through the curriculum and themed assemblies that develop spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness. Lessons and clubs provide a good range of experiences that stimulate a desire to learn. Lessons in personal, social, health and citizenship education, coupled with assemblies and discussions in class, help pupils to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong and establish a good framework for life within a community. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility, both for themselves and to undertake a useful range of duties that help in the smooth running of the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the needs of others, exemplified through their links with children in Gaba, Uganda. Pupils' cultural development is very well supported through visits to the local community, through visitors to the school and through listening to pupils from the school

community who come from a wide range of different countries and cultures. Pupils' understanding of life in a multi-cultural society is very good and is enriched very well because the school community is rich in cultural experiences.

### Attendance

12. Attendance is very low, with unauthorised absence being well above the national average. Some parents do not fully support the school in its efforts to encourage attendance and take their children away from school for holidays. This restricts the progress their children make. Punctuality is satisfactory and lessons start on time. The school does everything it can to improve pupils' attendance and currently, unauthorised absences are lower than last year but authorised absences have increased.

#### **Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.9	School data	1.3
National data	5.4	National data	0.4

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

### Exclusions

13. There were no exclusions last year.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is satisfactory overall. Teaching is satisfactory overall and the curriculum is broad and well balanced. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall and often very good and lessons are well planned. There are some weaknesses in the curriculum coverage in Years 1 and 2. The school cares for its pupils very well and listens to their views carefully. Accommodation and resources are good overall. The links with parents and the community are satisfactory and there are good links with other schools.

### Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good overall and often very good and, as a consequence, these pupils learn well, having a good capacity to work both independently and with others. When several subjects are covered simultaneously in Years 1 and 2, there are weaknesses. The ongoing assessment records for English, mathematics and science are unwieldy. There are no ongoing assessment records for some subjects.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching in mathematics and science is good.
- Teachers have improved their quality of teaching effectively.
- Pupils are well motivated and enjoy lessons.
- Teaching opportunities are missed when several subjects are taught in the same lesson.
- Pupils are well managed, they work well together and their behaviour is good.
- The systems for recording day-to-day assessments are too complex to be used effectively in planning.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and achieve well in relation to their capability.

### Commentary

14. The quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the Reception classes and in Years 1 and 2 the teaching is satisfactory and the pupils' achievement is satisfactory.

Teaching is good overall in Years 3 to 6 and pupils achieve well. Teaching in mathematics and science is good throughout the school. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the Reception and most of the very good teaching seen was with the older pupils in Years 3 to 6. The quality of teaching and learning is slightly better than that found at the last inspection. About half the lessons seen were good or better with an increase to one in five being very good.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 41 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0 (0%)	8 (19%)	12 (29%)	19 (46%)	2 (5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

15. In the Reception classes teaching is satisfactory overall across all the areas of learning. When teaching is unsatisfactory the children are not given sufficient support and are not challenged rigorously enough with new learning. Skills to be taught to each child are not identified precisely enough in the teachers' planning and consequently many children do not make enough progress in the early stages of learning reading, writing and number skills. This has a detrimental impact upon the teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy. In one lesson, the teacher was unsure of mathematical knowledge when teaching about 'longer and shorter'. When children use the out door areas there is often a lack of direction and the activities lack purpose. As a result, the children do not achieve as well as they could.
16. Throughout the school where the teaching is good and very good, the teachers maintain a brisk pace to the lessons and the skills taught are relevant and appropriate for each pupil. The work is sufficiently challenging for the different groups of the class, with the lower-attaining as well as the higher-attaining pupils being set tasks that build upon what they already know. Teachers' questioning is skilful in developing pupils' thinking and the teachers promote new words and pupils' answers are modelled and extended effectively. Good emphasis is put on the development of the children's speaking and listening skills, especially for the pupils with English as an additional language. This has a positive impact on the children's progress and enables them to communicate their ideas and opinions effectively.
17. Good aims are identified in the school improvement plan which identifies areas of the curriculum where pupils' achievement is below national expectations and support from outside agencies is used to improve teaching. For example, the numeracy consultant worked with some teachers to develop more effective teaching methods. Consequently, the teaching of numeracy throughout the school is now good, pupils make good progress in their learning and achieve well. The development of ICT was also identified as a weakness and a computer suite is now well established. The teachers have undertaken training to use ICT to enhance their teaching in other subjects. As a result, standards are rising, the pupils have more opportunities to develop their ICT skills, and they are gaining confidence when working with computers.
18. Since January 2005, the school has begun to introduce a topic based approach to teaching. Several subjects are linked together by a common theme. This has been effective in making teaching more relevant to many pupils. Consequently, they enjoy lessons and are eager to learn. However, the pupils in Years 1 and 2 are taught several subjects, including literacy, in the same lesson. This means that the teachers' time is divided between the different subjects. Time is not well used in these lessons because some pupils wait unoccupied while other groups are taught. Some of the pupils work for most of the lesson without the benefit of direct teaching because the teacher is mainly involved with other pupils, for example, those following the science work. This means that in some subjects such as art and design, music and design and technology, teaching opportunities are missed and consequently pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. The teaching of literacy is often insufficiently planned and does not receive an adequate amount of taught time. In Years 3 and 6, literacy is taught in separate

literacy hour lessons and in these classes the teaching is more effective and pupils achieve well.

19. The school has identified the need to improve the recording systems for the day-to-day assessment of pupils' work in order to raise attainment. The staff have begun to work together with a group of local schools to introduce strategies of assessment which will improve pupils' learning. Teachers explain to pupils what they are going to learn in each lesson and some work out with the pupils how they will know when this has been achieved. This means that pupils are beginning to be able to evaluate their own work and to know what they need to do to improve. Teachers mark written work regularly and pupils find these remarks encouraging. They are confident to ask for help if they do not understand.
20. The records for ongoing assessment for English, mathematics and science are detailed. Teachers make notes about pupils' daily progress on their lessons sheets and often on pieces of paper put into their record files. Each pupil has several record sheets for each subject and the teachers highlight each element of learning that each pupil has completed. With so many record sheets for the whole class, identification of similar learning patterns and the formation of groups of pupils with similar needs are very difficult. The current system is unwieldy and very time consuming to complete and not easy for teachers to use when planning what each pupil needs to learn next. The school is aware that there are problems with this system and is investigating a simpler system. There are no ongoing assessment record sheets for the some subjects.
21. The end of year assessment records for English, mathematics and science are better and are used to record the level that each pupil has reached in the standardised tests at the end of each term. The results of these tests are recorded as a National Curriculum level and are analysed to show strengths and weaknesses for each pupil. The school is introducing a new computer program to analyse these results so that they will be able to check whether each child is making the expected progress throughout the school. The school does not yet have long-term assessment records for the other subjects.
22. The teaching and learning of pupils for whom English is an additional language are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The co-ordinator and bilingual support staff provide consistently good teaching and ensure that pupils are able to access the same curriculum as the rest of the pupils. However, there is some variation in the way that teachers use support staff and in the extent to which the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of the range of pupils in the class.
23. The teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6. The co-ordinator and support staff provide consistently good teaching across the school. Teaching assistants are skilled at helping pupils access the curriculum, although they are not used in every class to best advantage. The work of the learning mentor is valuable in developing pupils' social skills and in addressing behaviour problems.

## **The curriculum**

The overall quality of the curriculum is satisfactory. The school provides a broad and well-balanced curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils in Years 3 to 6 and the requirements of the National Curriculum are met effectively. However, there are some weaknesses in Years 1 and 2 when the subjects are grouped under a theme. A well-planned and very broad range of visits and visitors provides very good enrichment of the curriculum and makes it more interesting and relevant to the pupils. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- In Years 1 and 2, there is insufficient time allocated to literacy.

- Teachers do not always plan the curriculum for the children in the Foundation Stage sufficiently well.
- In Years 1 and 2, teachers' planning for the foundation subjects does not indicate what skills and knowledge are to be taught.
- The provision for pupils' personal and social education is good.
- Residential and other visits, together with a wide range of other activities, enrich the curriculum.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- The provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good.

## Commentary

24. At the time of the last inspection the school provided a rich and varied curriculum incorporating all subjects of the National Curriculum. Recent changes to curriculum planning in Years 1 and 2 have replaced the literacy hour with a cross-curricular approach, which aims to meet the needs of the pupils by addressing the literacy objectives through other subject areas. Evidence from the inspection indicates that literacy targets are not being met through this approach and that current planning does not focus sufficiently on the necessary task of raising standards in all aspects of English.
25. Planning for the numeracy and literacy lessons for the children in the Reception classes is based on the early learning goals. However, it is clear from the evidence seen that teachers do not always plan the curriculum work in sufficient detail as they do not identify in their plans the small steps that lead towards the achievement of the early learning goals. As very few children will reach the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception class it is vital that the teachers plan these small steps to ensure purposeful learning. Consequently, the teachers are unable to assess accurately what each child knows. This means that some of the well-planned and resourced activities lose impetus and the children do not get the best out of them to develop independent learning strategies.
26. The current policy of teaching the foundation subjects in Years 1 and 2 in a carousel of activities is also proving difficult to manage. Although teachers are keen to group subjects thematically, in order to provide a more relevant and interesting curriculum, in practice many of these links are tenuous and do not add up to a coherent and meaningful topic approach. Moreover, the fact that several subjects are being taught simultaneously stretches the capabilities of teachers and does not allow for sufficient direct teaching of the foundation subjects. When taught alongside science, other subjects were seen as low-teacher-input activities and science received the lion's share of direct teaching. Lesson planning indicates a variety of activities but the learning objectives are unclear.
27. In Years 3 to 6, curriculum planning succeeds in making meaningful cross-curricular links without sacrificing the necessary focus and dedicated teaching time for literacy. Teachers create a coherent, interesting and challenging curriculum with timetabling for separate foundation subjects and a proper focus on the key learning objectives for all subjects. For example, in Year 6 in connection with a focus on Peterborough past and present, pupils design and produce their own estate agents brochures.
28. The school's provision for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good. There is a scheme of work to provide progression and full coverage of topics. This has been adapted and extended and every class has timetabled sessions each week. The school gives a high priority to pupils' personal and social education and the PSHE curriculum underpins much of the work in all subjects and permeates the life of the school. There are close links with the church and a range of specific initiatives such as helping to fund an orphanage in Uganda. The school has received a Healthy School award and a drugs awareness programme is in place. The school prepares the pupils well for the next stage in their secondary schools.

29. The school's intention of creating a vibrant curriculum which will engage pupils' interest and provide a stimulus for pupils' language development is very effectively promoted through a wide-ranging programme of visits and visitors to the school. These include residential visits and at least one visit to support topic work each term for each year group. Visiting artists and musicians provide cultural enrichment and a range of sporting and other extra-curricular activities are very well attended. Extra-curricular provision has improved since the last inspection and is now good.
30. The school's provision for pupils with special educational needs and for pupils for whom English is an additional language is good. They are fully integrated into the life of the school in line with a strong emphasis on inclusion and equal opportunities. In both of these areas provision has improved since the last inspection. A good balance has been established between helping pupils access the curriculum and in addressing their specific learning difficulties. Provision is carefully monitored by the two co-ordinators and what is already good practice is constantly refined and adapted as the intake of the school changes. The school demonstrates a commendable ability to adjust to the changing school population and a degree of flexibility in its approach, which responds rapidly to pupils' learning needs.
31. Resources are generally good with good facilities for ICT throughout the classrooms and in the computer suite. The match of teachers and teaching assistants is good to meet the needs of the pupils. Accommodation is good with the added advantage of two halls and good space for group work with pupils with SEN and for those who have English as an additional language. The Reception class facilities are good and the out door space is very good.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is very good. Pupils receive satisfactory advice. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to have a voice in the life of the school.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' health and safety at school is assured through very good procedures and pastoral support.
- Good procedures to improve pupils' attendance.
- The school is a safe environment where pupils are happy and feel valued.
- The very good relationships effectively support pupils' academic and personal needs.
- Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language receive good support through well organised individual education plans.
- The monitoring and recording of pupils' personal development is not firmly based on secure formal assessment.

### **Commentary**

32. Since the last inspection the school has improved its procedures for the care and welfare of pupils. Parents are satisfied that their children are well cared for because the school develops their sense of wellbeing and desire to learn. The staff and governors are committed to ensuring that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. The pupils are frequently reminded about the safe practices in the playground and they are encouraged to take care of themselves and each other. The pupils benefit from the school's involvement with the Healthy Schools initiative and they are developing a good awareness of healthy eating. The school follows very good procedures to monitor all aspects of health and safety and all issues are well recorded. Formal risk assessments are completed regularly. Child Protection procedures are very good and all staff are fully aware of the school's responsibilities.



33. The school has set up good procedures to improve attendance. The recently introduced Breakfast Club is proving effective in promoting attendance and punctuality. This good initiative supports the pupils' well being and nurtures positive self-esteem, helping them to settle quickly into the routines of the school day.
34. Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils well and information about their personal achievements are regularly shared on an informal basis. However, the lack of a secure formal system for monitoring personal development limits the quality of advice and guidance available to pupils. The school is currently working to establish a record of achievement to provide a formal system to record each pupil's personal development. Pupils have very trusting relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants and this makes a strong contribution to their progress and achievements. The learning mentors provide good support and encouragement for pupils with special educational needs and emotional problems and this helps them to gain confidence and self-esteem. Pupils with English as an additional language, working with bilingual teaching assistants, are well supported during lessons and other activities. The school's strong commitment to inclusion ensures that all pupils are involved well in all activities and opportunities. The induction arrangements for the children entering the Foundation Stage are good and the staff in the Reception classes work closely with parents to ensure that children settle quickly into school routines. Pupils joining the school at different times are welcomed and supported by the pupil 'buddy' system and the good pastoral care they receive from the staff.
35. Good arrangements are made through the well-organised programme for personal, social and health education for pupils to share their views and suggestions for improvements to the school environment. Pupils are proud of their designs for renovations to the playground and their role as house captains and monitors. Older pupils are confident that the school listens to what they have to say and that it values their ideas, which are acted upon. It is evident that a School Council is to be introduced next term in order to give pupils a more formal forum in which to express their views and opinions.
36. The gifted and talented pupils in the school are identified and clubs and events are organised especially for them. They visit neighbouring schools to join up with other similarly talented children and pursue tasks together that extend their range of advanced work.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The school has a satisfactory partnership with parents. Links with the community are satisfactory, and there are good links with other schools.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Most parents are supportive and satisfied with the quality of education provided by the school.
- Regular communication keeps most parents well informed about activities and curriculum topics.
- Some arrangements are established to ensure that parents with English as an additional language receive regular communication which they can always understand.
- Links with other schools provide good additional opportunities for joint learning activities.

### **Commentary**

37. The school welcomes parents and encourages them to be involved in its work and their children's learning. Most parents are supportive but there is a significant number who find it difficult to help children at home and to enter into a partnership with the school. The inspection found that the views of parents are valued and that they are given good opportunities to meet with teachers. Parents agree that they find the school approachable and ready to answer queries and to discuss any concerns. The governors and headteacher have both recently invited parents to complete a questionnaire and this has resulted in a change of time when

pupils are allowed to come into school. A very small number of parents help regularly in classrooms, but more help is available with visits and other activities. The Friends of the School is a small group of parents who organise regular social and fund-raising events providing the school with additional resources to support teaching and learning.

38. The school has recently improved the amount of information it provides for parents. Communication is regular and includes helpful and attractive newsletters and curriculum information with guidelines to help parents to assist children at home. The school has the services of translators readily available to parents and some of the letters and other school documents are translated to ensure that all parents receive and understand important information. Parents are involved well as children join the Reception class, and a helpful amount of clear information is provided for them as part of the well-organised induction programme. Consultation evenings with translators are held each term and parents have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress and targets for improvement. Individual education plans are shared with parents of pupils with special educational needs and the school involves them well in assessment and review meetings. Although most parents feel well informed about progress, the inspection finds that the annual reports are inconsistent and often lack clarity in the amount of information provided about progress and how pupils can improve.
39. The school's links with the community help to support the curriculum and to foster pupils' personal development and experience. The strong links with the local Catholic churches and the parishes, support teaching and learning well through a contribution to religious education and personal, social and health education. The school Chaplain is a regular visitor to lead assemblies and visitors from the local community help to support special topics. A national supermarket helped the school with resources and the development of the Breakfast Club. The nearby Play Centre works closely with the school to regularly organise a range of games and activities, which encourages pupils to work co-operatively and helps to raise their confidence and self-esteem.
40. There are good links with other schools and this makes a strong contribution to the quality of education provided. In partnership with other local schools, pupils have taken part in a dance festival and art and science weeks. The learning network provides staff with the opportunity for good interaction to support the curriculum and to share in the development of new initiatives and good practice. Good links with the Nursery contribute effectively to the well-organised induction programme. There are effective links with the adjacent secondary school, which supports the transition arrangements well, and students from the secondary school visit to plan and organise physical education (PE) activities for the younger children. The school welcomes students from Homerton College as part of their initial teacher training.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. She has a clear sense of purpose and provides clear direction to the improvements made in pupils' personal development. Management is satisfactory. The recent decision to develop topic work has not been evaluated sufficiently well. The governance of the school is good. The subject leaders are providing a satisfactory direction to the development of their subjects overall.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher provides a clear direction to the work of the school, especially for the improvements made in the pupils' personal development.
- There is a good team feeling across the school that fosters a fully inclusive school in which every pupil is valued.
- The governance of the school is good.
- Responsibilities of the senior management team and co-ordinators are established effectively, providing a good role model for other staff and the pupils.

- The impact of the change of direction for planning the curriculum has not been completely evaluated.
- Financial management is good.

### Commentary

41. The headteacher provides a good direction to the work of the school, especially the improvement to the pupils' behaviour and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These aspects of pupils' development have improved significantly since the last inspection because of the concerted and continuous efforts made by all staff under the good guidance of the headteacher.
42. The headteacher has established clear lines of responsibilities for the senior management team, the co-ordinators for subjects, SEN and EAL and all staff. The strong team feeling that is fostered by the headteacher across the school, has enabled the school to develop a very strong commitment to the inclusion of all pupils. The leadership and management of most subjects are satisfactory but for the provision for the pupils with SEN and for those with English as an additional language, it is good. The leadership and management of mathematics are very good, but, unsatisfactory for English because many opportunities to monitor and evaluate the planning and teaching of literacy have been missed.
43. The headteacher, in co-operation with the staff and governors, has developed a comprehensive improvement plan for the years 2004 to 2007. It contains priorities for the future that are appropriate and procedures are in place to advance the main objectives. It is clear that improvements made have had a good impact upon raising standards and maintaining pupils' achievement. Priorities to promote writing through other subjects and establishing assessment records for all subjects have not been developed effectively and progress has been restricted. The ongoing assessment records for English and mathematics are too unwieldy to make it easy for teachers to plan what each pupil needs to be taught next. The school has good procedures to monitor the teachers' performance and this is bringing about improvements. The continuing professional development of the teachers and the teaching assistants is structured well and is raising the standards of teaching and support.
44. The management of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher, senior management team and staff have decided, quite correctly, that there is a need to make learning more relevant and enjoyable for pupils, especially for the boys. After discussions with the LEA advisor and following visits to other schools, the staff in these year groups have been inspired by the headteacher to combine several subjects under a topic theme.
45. Following the initial evaluation of monitoring of lessons, the headteacher and senior management team report that the pupils are now more enthusiastic about their learning and the inspection team can see that this is true, especially in the creative activities. However, it is evident from lesson observations that there are often too many subject activities being covered in the same lesson, restricting the quality of teaching in all of these subjects. The inspection found that much of the planning for this cross-curricular work is activity based and does not identify what skills, knowledge and understanding the teachers intend to teach. The planning for literacy in these lessons is often unsatisfactory. The school no longer runs a National Literacy Hour for pupils in Years 1 to 2 and has not replaced it with a comparable and appropriate alternative. Consequently, it is clear that key elements of the National Literacy Strategy are often not given sufficient emphasis through this topic approach. In other subjects, although the activity is planned well, there are no precise details to identify what skills and understanding the pupils are to be taught.
46. The school has carried out some evaluation of the teachers' planning and put in place additional support. This has helped to improve the quality and depth of planning. However,

during the inspection, some teachers were still not planning cross-curricular lessons in sufficient detail to improve pupils' writing and reading skills and consequently, the coverage of literacy was not good enough in Years 1 and 2.

47. In most lessons the teaching assistants are used well to support pupils' learning.
48. The governing body is well informed through its visits to the classrooms and also through the individual governor links they have with subject co-ordinators. They manage the fulfilment of their statutory requirements well and keep up to date with most of the school's progress. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and dedicated to raising standards. She takes a very active role in shaping the direction of the school and gives a good lead to the governors. She is very aware of the need to strive continually to encourage strong links with the parents, especially those with children with special educational needs or with English as an additional language. The committees of the governing body meet frequently and the finance committee presents accurate records of expenditure.

### Financial information

#### *Financial information for the year April 2004 to March 2005*

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	973,009	Balance from previous year	55,194
Total expenditure	972,505	Balance carried forward to the next year	55,698
Expenditure per pupil	2,929		

49. The school administrator manages the budget well and the carry forward to next year is appropriate for the size of school. Some of the carry forward is set aside to improve the computer facilities, with additional interactive whiteboards and to improve the playground. The school makes the best possible use of the money allocated each year and ensures that it gets the best value for money. For example, the fencing erected around the whole school site recently has added a good level of security for the pupils and staff and has stopped vandalism. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

## **PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS**

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

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and provides children with a secure start to their school life. The school has a clear vision of how the provision for the children can be further improved and is currently taking part in an LEA initiative. The last report judged provision as good.

All children come into the Reception classes at the beginning of the autumn term. There is a broad range of attainment but overall when children join the Foundation Stage, their attainment is well below that expected nationally. Children with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are identified early and their needs are well met. They achieve satisfactorily.

Currently, nearly all children have achieved satisfactorily bearing in mind the low standards they attained when they entered the Reception class. Even so, very few children reach the goals set for children of their age in all areas of learning. Only a small number will be working within the early stages of the National Curriculum by the time they enter Year 1.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory across all the areas of learning with some significant strengths in the teaching of personal and social area of learning. The teaching of basic skills of literacy and numeracy is not thorough enough and this results in a lack of progress seen in the early stages of learning reading, writing and number skills for most pupils. However, there is a good emphasis put on strategies to develop the speaking and listening skills of the children. This has a positive impact on the children's progress and enables them to communicate their ideas and opinions as well as gain knowledge and understanding. These strategies do not always extend to the outside area, when there is often a lack of direction and activities lack purpose so that children do not achieve as well as they could.

There is an appropriate balance planned for adult-directed and child-chosen activities, which promotes the children's personal, social and emotional development, although some impetus is lost when the children are unclear about choices they can make to undertake different activities. The balance in other areas of learning is not always appropriate with too much emphasis on child-chosen activities that are insufficiently monitored.

The arrangements to check what the children know, understand, and can do are satisfactory, and help teachers to plan the next steps in children's learning.

The highly committed and hard-working teacher in charge of the Foundation Stage has a clear vision of how developments can be made, how improvements in planning and assessment can be further developed to promote the progress of each child, and how standards can be further improved. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory overall.

### **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in personal, social and emotional development is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children develop a good understanding of how to behave and look after themselves in school.
- Relationships are developed well between the adults and the children and between the children themselves.
- Planned activities do not enable some children to develop enough independence.

## Commentary

50. The children settle happily and confidently when they come into school because the adults create a positive atmosphere that fosters their constructive attitudes to taking care of themselves and to learning. The adults have very high expectations that the children will behave well and be thoughtful towards each other by making sure that the children have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The children's personal and social skills are developing well because they are provided with good opportunities to work and play together and to reflect on the effect of their actions on others. The children speak confidently to adults and to each other and play and work both co-operatively and collaboratively. They share and take turns happily and will often organise themselves to do this. However, some children do not always understand what is expected of them and do not achieve as well as they should. Consequently, they do not reach the goals set for children of this age.

## COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Provision in communication, language and literacy is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of opportunities is provided for the children to develop language and speaking skills but adults do not always make the best use of these opportunities to promote the children's learning.

## Commentary

51. Very few children have reached the goals expected of children of this age by the time they leave the Reception class. However, sound teaching helps children to learn at a satisfactory rate. Children who are learning English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are sensitively and effectively supported. Children enjoy books and have opportunities to listen to stories. Adults read these in a lively manner, often with additional resources that capture children's imagination. In one session, the teacher included role play in the storytelling about a banquet for a king and queen, using dressing up clothes for a King, Queen, Jester and Entertainers. Children quickly and excitedly dressed in appropriate clothes and acted out their roles very well to the delight of the rest of the class.
52. The development of reading skills is sound and many children are beginning to read simple books by the time they leave the Reception class. Teaching of sounds and letters of words is satisfactory, although teachers take opportunities when reading stories to develop this skill, it is not always sufficiently focused or structured to give consistency in approach, which would help children with their spelling. Similarly, writing skills are not taught sufficiently well and most children, by the time they leave the Reception class, are still making marks on paper rather than writing simple words and sentences. This does not prepare them well for the next step in their learning. Again there is a good range of role-play scenarios for the children to use in their play, but adults rarely join in to promote the children's understanding and vocabulary.

## MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT

Provision in mathematical development is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children are learning the basic skills of counting, recognising and ordering numbers, satisfactorily.
- There is a range of interesting activities but it is not always clear what the children are expected to learn.

- Assessment is not used well enough to group the children and match activities to their needs.

### **Commentary**

53. Teaching and learning in this area of learning are satisfactory and children achieve soundly. Very few children reach the early learning goals by the time they start in Year 1. In one lesson seen the emphasis on developing mathematical language was not successful because incorrect terms and mathematical vocabulary were used. This confused children and consequently they did not achieve as well as they should. Similarly when they play outside, adults do not always join in to promote the children's understanding and vocabulary. Although teachers provide a range of interesting things for children to do, few of the activities provided build on the purpose of the lesson. Consequently, children often do not understand what is expected of them.

## **KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD**

Provision in knowledge and understanding of the world is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children are making satisfactory progress in learning to use computers.
- There is an exciting range of activities through which children learn to express and explore their ideas.

### **Commentary**

54. The teachers' planning ensures that there are appropriate opportunities for the children to experience each of the strands within this area of learning. However, very few will reach the goals for children of this age by the time they enter Year 1. The children use the computers confidently to support their learning and can point, click and drag items, moving them to the correct part of the screen. The children learn about the faith and customs of the Christian year and experience features of other cultures in a planned and organised way, often using children of different faiths in the school, who talk about their own faith and customs.

55. Classrooms are bright and interesting places with plenty of activities that encourage children to explore how things work or grow. Children learn to cook and excitedly prepared vegetables for a vegetable stew to eat later in the day. They learn about healthy eating and how to prepare food in a safe and hygienic way. Discussion helps them to understand where and how vegetables grow. They have opportunities to use water and sand to develop different scenarios and explore the ways materials behave in different forms. When playing in the garden area they look to see if their beans have started to grow into plants and this captures their imagination.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in physical development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The children have good opportunities to develop both fine and large movement skills through a range of activities.

### **Commentary**

56. Very few children reach the goals set for them by the time they enter Year 1. The children develop sound fine motor skills when using pencils, scissors and brushes. They use them with care and precision and have opportunities to develop fine manipulative control by completing

jigsaws and using construction kits, joining and manipulating pieces. The outdoor area provides them with facilities for climbing and using an appropriate range of small apparatus. Good use is made of the school hall for indoor games and dance lessons and the children enjoy hopping, skipping, running and jumping, developing a sound level of skill and quality of movement. There is no soft all-weather surface outdoors and this limits the opportunities for the children to explore, climb and clamber independently. Children have a good range of wheeled toys to drive and steer and they learn to share these with children from Years 1 and 2 when they play in the playground at break times.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

Provision in creative development is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children are encouraged to express their ideas through a satisfactory range of media.
- There are a few occasions when children's scale of work or its design is over-directed.

### **Commentary**

57. Most children do not achieve the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception classes. However, teaching and learning are satisfactory and so is children's achievement. There are role-play areas in which children can act out parts, for example in the Castle. They use props well to sustain their play. Children's creative work brightens the teaching areas and they are proud of what they have achieved. They work with an appropriate range of media, including paint, dough, collage and recycled materials, often showing appropriate control over these, that reflects their sound physical development. Children often choose materials to fit their ideas. There are a few times, however, when adults impose templates and children have too little choice over the scale in which they work, resulting in everyone producing similar end results and this reduces the extent of children's learning.

## **SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 AND 2**

### **ENGLISH**

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- There is insufficient dedicated time for literacy in Years 1 and 2.
- Attainment is below average at the end of Year 6 but pupils' achievement is good in Years 3 to 6.
- Pupils enter Year 1 with standards in reading and writing well below the expected levels for their age.
- Attainment is well below average in speaking and listening and writing at the end of Year 2 and pupils do not achieve as well as they might.
- The quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good.
- Leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

### **Commentary**

58. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall but has declined since the last inspection in Years 1 and 2. This is because the school no longer implements the National Literacy Hour in these year groups and the amount of time dedicated to English in these years is very limited. The benefits of the structured framework for teaching and learning currently seen in Years 3 to 6, and noted in the previous report, have been lost in Years 1 and 2 without anything more beneficial introduced to replace it. Although there are regular guided reading sessions and



some sessions devoted to spelling strategies, there are too few opportunities for pupils in Years 1 and 2 to write.

59. The results of the national tests in 2004 at the end of Year 6 show that the standards overall were below the national average, although over three quarters of the pupils reached Level 4 or above. When compared with similar schools the performance was average. The proportion reaching the higher Level 5 was below the national average. A significant proportion did not reach the expected Level 4 and this consequently lowers the school's performance overall. Even so the pupils' achievement is good considering their well below attainment on entry to the Reception class. Early indication of the results for the current year 2005 show that the school's performance has remained similar to last year but, with a substantial improvement in the boys' results. The results for the last two years are a significant improvement since the last inspection.
60. The results of the national tests in 2004 for Year 2 show that standards in reading and writing were well below the national average and also when compared with similar schools. However, achievement at this time was satisfactory. The proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was below average. There was no significant difference in the performance of the boys and girls. The boys' performance has improved significantly since 2002. The unconfirmed results for national tests in Year 2 for the current Year 2, indicate that attainment in both reading comprehension and writing is the lowest since 1998 and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory.
61. Pupils enter the school with very low standards of language and literacy. Nearly half the pupils have English as an additional language. This is a significant barrier to the early development of their speaking skills, reading and writing.
62. Currently, standards in reading are below average by the end of Year 2. Although about half the pupils in Year 2 have reached the nationally expected level in reading, only one or two pupils are reading at the higher level. Pupils' understanding of what they read is limited and most pupils struggle to read unfamiliar text or books by well known authors written for their age group.
63. Pupils' reading by the end of Year 6 is below average. Nearly all pupils by this stage are confident, independent readers but largely of undemanding texts. Guided reading sessions are not timetabled in Years 5 and 6 and opportunities for developing pupils' reading skills are being missed. Most pupils express an enthusiasm for reading and the texts chosen are well matched to pupils' reading abilities.
64. Standards in speaking and listening are well below average by the end of Year 2. This is reflected in pupils' writing, which is also well below average with no evidence of higher attainment. More-able pupils write in simple sentences with basic punctuation and largely accurate spelling. Lower-attaining pupils are not yet independent writers and cannot write without adult support.
65. Standards in speaking and listening improve through Years 3 to 6 but by the end of Year 6 are below average. Pupils' writing is below average but achievement is good. Spelling and punctuation are firmly established within a framework of interesting and motivating activities, which give an overall sense of purpose to pupils' work. Standards of presentation are high across the ability range and pupils write in a legible joined style. Pupils have regular opportunities to write for a variety of purposes and across all subjects of the curriculum. What is lacking, except in the work of a few pupils, is evidence of complex ideas, a wide vocabulary or imaginative ways of structuring their ideas.
66. Those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented in literacy achieve well, exceeding the expected levels for their age.
67. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In Years 3 to 6 teaching is good overall. The teachers still structure their literacy teaching through a regular daily English lesson. This is

often planned to reflect the main topic being studied but with clear literacy objectives in place. For example, pupils in Year 5 are looking at persuasive writing.

68. Teachers' planning in Years 1 and 2 does not focus on key literacy objectives and is unsatisfactory. Opportunities for speaking and listening and writing in the planning for other curriculum areas, are inconsistent and insufficient to compensate for the loss of the literacy hour. The lack of a structured approach to literacy in Years 1 and 2 compounds the difficulty that most pupils experience to retain their learning. Overall, there is insufficient focus on developing pupils' writing skills and too few opportunities for pupils to write in other curriculum areas. Much of the topic work is consolidated through labelled drawings rather than extended writing.
69. Support for those pupils at an early stage of their learning English as an additional language is good. It is carefully targeted and pupils make rapid progress in learning the language. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 and good progress in Years 3 to 6. The quality of support is consistently good across the school and the provision strikes a good balance between helping pupils access the curriculum and addressing their specific learning needs. However, the limitations of the curriculum provision in English also have an impact on the learning of these pupils in Years 1 and 2.
70. Ongoing assessment records are completed frequently but are too complex and time consuming to make them easy to use to identify what each pupil has learned and what needs to be learned next. The more formal assessment records completed at the end of each term show the level each pupil has reached but these do not predict what standards they are expected to reach by the end of Year 6. The school is aware of this and is planning to set up a more reliable tracking system.
71. Leadership and management are currently unsatisfactory. There has been insufficient monitoring of the impact of abandoning the literacy hour. The effectiveness of curriculum changes has not been sufficiently evaluated. The emphasis on pupils' enjoyment and motivation in lessons is commendable but it has resulted in a loss of focus on the overriding need to raise standards in all aspects of literacy. In particular, there has been inadequate monitoring of teachers' planning to ensure English learning objectives are of paramount importance. The co-ordinator has no clear overview of teaching and learning across the school.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

72. Teachers' planning for other subjects of the curriculum in Years 1 and 2 currently identifies too few opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. In Years 3 to 6, the more effective cross-curricular approach gives frequent opportunities for pupils to write for specific purposes within a meaningful context. There is also an appropriate emphasis on the development of subject-specific vocabulary, which promotes pupils' speaking skills and understanding of concepts. This is particularly effective in science. However, many pupils continue to have difficulty with more abstract language and this affects their ability to apply their knowledge in a range of different circumstances. In many classes, ICT is used well to develop literacy skills.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Currently the standards at the end of Year 6 are below average even though the pupils achieve well.
- In Year 2, the standards are well below average but all pupils make good achievements.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school.
- The presentation of the pupils' work in Years 3 to 6 is very neat and tidy.
- The co-ordination of mathematics is very thorough and very well organised.

## Commentary

73. The results of the national tests for 2004 for the pupils in Year 6 showed that the pupils' performance was below the national average and also when compared with similar schools. Even so, considering the well below average standards attained when these pupils entered the school in the Reception class, nearly all achieve well with over two thirds reaching the expected Level 4 or above. The standards seen in the national tests for 2004 in Year 2 were well below average, but yet again the pupils achieved well to reach these standards, with over three quarters reaching the level expected for their age.
74. Currently, the pupils' standards in Year 6 are below average overall even though all pupils, including those with SEN and EAL, achieve very well. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected Level 4 or above is broadly average, but the overall standards are lowered because a higher than average number of pupils does not reach the level expected. There is no difference between the performances of the boys and girls. Those pupils who are identified as gifted and talented in mathematics achieve well, exceeding the expected levels for their age.
75. Currently, the pupils' standards in Year 2 are well below average. The pupils all achieve very well but the large proportion of pupils with SEN who attain standards that are much lower than those expected for their age, reduces the overall performance of the year group significantly.
76. In all the lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good or better. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when it was satisfactory. The lessons objectives are planned well and all teachers follow the National Numeracy Strategy well. The recent improvement to the plenary sessions at the end of each lesson has had a good impact and is a noticeable improvement. This has raised pupils' understanding of what they learn. The tasks are planned well to provide appropriate tasks for the different ability groups within each class. The teaching assistants give pupils good support, especially those with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs. Where the teaching was very good, the teachers planned each step very effectively to build upon what each pupil had previously learned. The pace of the lessons was brisk and the teachers planned their structured lessons taking into account the national guidelines.
77. The pupils in all classes showed enthusiasm for their work and were often overheard discussing how to solve problems as the lessons progressed. Their work is presented very neatly in Year 3 to 6 but the pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 is not neat enough.
78. The co-ordinator provides very good leadership and management of the subject. The results of all assessment tasks are analysed extremely well to find out strengths and weaknesses across each year group. She then plans particular tasks for each year group to raise standards in these weaker areas of the subject. This has a very good impact upon raising standards and helps all pupils to achieve well. The ongoing assessment records are completed thoroughly by all teachers who highlight what each pupil has learned. However, the records are very unwieldy and make it very time consuming and difficult to use the information to regroup pupils, either because they need extra support or require extension tasks. The formal records completed each term show the level reached by each pupil in the assessment tests. Currently, these records are not used to predict the standards each pupil should reach by the end of Year 6.

## **Mathematics across the curriculum**

79. Mathematics is used well in ICT lessons to draw shapes using Logo or programming a control vehicle around a given course. The pupils understand the properties of symmetrical shapes with the use of ICT. Graphing is used well in science such as when investigating the colours of eyes and hair.

## **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve very well and science is a strength of the school.
- Teaching is good overall with a strong emphasis on practical scientific investigations.
- Pupils are consistently taught scientific language and are confident in its use.
- Tests are analysed and the data used effectively to improve teaching.
- Day-to-day assessment records are time consuming and cannot be used easily in planning.

### **Commentary**

80. When pupils enter Year 1 their knowledge and understanding of the world is below national standards. The teachers' assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2004 show that standards are in line with those nationally and achievement is good overall, with a high percentage of pupils achieving at the higher Level 3. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 6 show that standards are above those nationally and, when compared with similar schools, they are well above. The pupils' achievement is very good.
81. Currently, the standards in Years 2 and 6 confirm the national test results for 2004. This represents an improvement at the end of Year 6 since the last inspection when results were in line with those nationally and inspectors found that experimental work was too tightly controlled and directed by the teachers. The school has increased teachers' skills in the teaching of scientific investigations through training and by the introduction of science week, where the school links with a neighbouring school to plan a series of science activities. The school has also increased the amount of time spent on scientific investigations. The programme of teaching now ensures a strong emphasis on pupils' planning and carrying out for themselves a variety of scientific investigations, consequently they develop a good understanding of scientific methods and processes and achieve well.
82. Teaching is good overall with very good lessons being seen throughout the school. Pupils are taught scientific language throughout the school and this, together with the booster classes, means that they are well prepared for the national tests. Pupils of all abilities achieve as well as they are able. Pupils co-operate well together in practical groups and take pride in the presentation of their work.
83. The leadership is good. The co-ordinator supports teachers in planning and checks what pupils have been taught, but there is no time allocated for her to share her expertise by supporting teaching in classrooms across the school. She has worked with teachers to standardise marking and assessing the levels at which pupils are working and has identified the need to develop an assessment system to record what pupils know, understand and can do. The one currently being trialled is too detailed and time consuming. It is not sufficiently related to the learning objectives for each lesson and consequently it is not useful when planning the next steps in pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The quality of provision has improved since the last inspection.
- The pupils' standards at the end of Years 2 and 6 have improved and are now in line with expected levels.
- The pupils' attitudes towards the uses of ICT are very good.
- The co-ordination is good.
- ICT is used well to support the teaching in other subjects, especially mathematics.

### **Commentary**

84. Since the last inspection, the provision for ICT has improved throughout the school. There is now a well established computer suite containing sufficient computers for one between two pupils and an interactive whiteboard that is used purposefully by teachers and pupils. The teachers have developed their skills and understanding of ICT and this is having a beneficial impact upon raising standards. They also have a secure knowledge of what skills, knowledge and understanding they need to teach to build upon what the pupils have already learned.
85. The standards in Year 6 and Year 2 are now broadly in line with the expected levels for pupils of their ages. Pupils, including those with SEN and English as an additional language, achieve well. The pupils in Year 6 were observed preparing a PowerPoint presentation to support their writing tasks in literacy. They competently import photographs and use hyperlinks to connect different slides in their presentations. This is most challenging and they succeed effectively.
86. In other classes, the pupils use Logo to program a screen turtle around a given route and to draw a variety of shapes. The younger pupils use a Roamer effectively as they key in commands that move the control vehicle forwards backwards or to turn left and right.
87. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and is an important factor in raising standards and improving the pupils' attitudes. The teachers have undertaken national training to improve their uses of ICT in the teaching of other subjects and this is having a good impact on enhancing their ICT skills. In the lesson in Year 6, the teaching was very good. The pupils were set demanding tasks and the lesson was planned well to lift the level of challenge as each pupil completed a particular phase in their work.
88. All the pupils respond well and work with determination. From discussions with pupils across the school, it is clear that they have very good attitudes to their ICT work. They pursue their tasks enthusiastically and also make good use of their ICT facilities to find out information for their topics in Years 5 and 6.
89. Leadership and management are good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the future developments of the subject. The weakness in the management of the subject comes in the lack of evaluation to show the impact that the new interactive whiteboard has had upon the quality of teaching and learning. As yet there is no system to record what skills, knowledge and understanding each pupil has achieved in ICT even though the co-ordinator has selected a model to be introduced.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

90. The Internet is used in school to support the teaching of mathematics especially well and one class was observed exploring symmetrical shapes. The use of the ICT improved the pupils' understanding and they worked very quickly to solve the problem whilst gaining confidence in

their mathematical work. Many older pupils use their home computers to research information for their history topic work in school. Sometimes this information is taken solely from an Internet site and the pupils do not use it to write their accounts in their own words. Digital photographs are displayed around the school to show visits and school events, these are often incorporated into pupils' PowerPoint presentations.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **History and Geography**

91. No lessons were seen in history and geography during the inspection. There was too little evidence to make overall judgements on standards, achievement, teaching or learning in either subject. However, display shows that the curriculum for both is satisfactory. Colourful and imaginative displays engage pupils' interest in Year 5 where pupils are studying the City of Peterborough, linking both geography and history together. Research skills are used well to find out about the cathedral and the construction. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 find out effectively about the history of entertainment and enriched their understanding through a visit to a theatre. This first-hand experience enthused pupils to want to find out more and suitably enriched the curriculum.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

During the inspection because of the timetabling arrangements, very few lessons were observed in design and technology, music and physical education. It is not possible to make judgements about the quality of provision made for these subjects.

### **Art and design**

Provision in art and design is **satisfactory**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are motivated and they enjoy their lessons.
- Where several subjects are taught simultaneously, teaching opportunities are missed and pupils do not always achieve as well as they could.
- Pupils' self-evaluation is not well developed.
- Extra-curricular activities enhance the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

92. From the displays around the school it is clear that the standards in art and design throughout the school are in line overall with those nationally. This is similar to findings at the last inspection. There were examples of very good work in batik and large-scale, three-dimensional models on display around the school. However, the standards of work in the four lessons seen during the inspection were below those nationally because direct teaching was limited and pupils were not taught skills effectively. Art and design has been identified by the school as a subject for development.
93. The planned curriculum ensures that pupils have the opportunity to work in a variety of media including pastels, paint, fabric, clay and a range of materials for collage.
94. Art and design is taught as part of cross-curricular topics which also include science, design and technology and music. This is effective in giving a meaningful context for pupils' learning and they enjoy painting and making. In the lessons seen during the inspection, art and design was taught in the same lesson as two other subjects. This meant that the time for teaching was limited and pupils worked mainly by themselves unaided. Consequently, the teaching of skills during group work was limited and pupils did not always make the progress expected.

Teachers are beginning to develop pupils' self-evaluation of their work and identify learning objectives for each lesson. These were often related to what the pupils would do and not what they would learn so pupils related their evaluation to how difficult they had found the task to complete rather than to the quality of their work

95. The leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The subject leader checks resources, helps teachers with their planning and organises art clubs. She has introduced Arts Week, which links with other schools in the area and has been very successful in sharing expertise and raising the status of art in the school.

### **Design and technology**

96. Due to timetable constraints only two lessons were seen during the inspection.
97. The school has a policy for design and technology and teachers select some ideas from a nationally recommended scheme of work. The school is adequately equipped with tools and materials to teach design and technology in the contexts of food, fabric and resistant materials. In the lessons seen, the teaching was satisfactory overall. Design and technology was taught in the same lesson as two other subjects. Pupils were supported during the practical part of the lesson by a teaching assistant while the teacher was engaged with teaching another subject for most of the time. This meant that although pupils were helped to carry out their work, teaching opportunities were missed and pupils did not always achieve as well as they could.
98. The management of design and technology is satisfactory. The subject leader ensures resources are adequate and supports teachers in their planning.

### **Music**

99. The existing provision for music covers all aspects of the music curriculum and pupils have regular opportunities to sing in assemblies. Extra-curricular provision is good and pupils take part in local music festivals. Visiting musicians include a string quartet and a samba band as well as peripatetic tuition for individual pupils learning instruments.

### **Physical education**

100. Due to timetable constraints only one lesson was seen during the inspection.
101. The school has a policy for physical education which ensures that all aspects of the subject are taught but there is no subject leader appointed at present. The school has identified physical education as an area for curriculum development and has planned training in the teaching of gymnastics. The curriculum is enhanced by clubs which are available out of school time. These include football, hockey and gymnastics. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 take part in an annual dance festival and pupils identified as talented by a professional hockey coach have been encouraged to represent the county. Swimming standards are in line with expected levels by the end of Year 6.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

102. The programme for personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE) is good and contributes well to the quality of pupils' personal development. A new scheme of work is currently being introduced which matches the particular needs of the school. The school promotes healthy living well, through areas of the curriculum and its Health Promoting School status. PSHE and 'circle time' are timetabled and are an integral part of the school's work.

Pupils discuss a range of issues and are encouraged to explore their own feelings and emotions and to show sensitivity and tolerance towards the feelings of others. Good procedures are in place for pupils to be made aware of the dangers of drugs and other substance abuse.

103. Pupils show a keen sense of citizenship as members of the school community and their moral and social skills are developed well through PSHE and assemblies. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 have responsibilities as house captains, and other pupils act as monitors and buddies for younger pupils. Pupils are confident that they have a voice in the school and that they have many opportunities to express their views during lessons.



## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

### *Inspection judgement*

### *Grade*

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	4

<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>4</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>3</b>
Attendance	5
Attitudes	3
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	4
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	4
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	4
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	3

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>4</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*

