

INSPECTION REPORT

Peasehall Primary School
Saxmundham

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique Reference Number: 124603

Inspection Number: 189002

Headteacher: Miss A Corrie

Reporting inspector: Susan Walker
21045

Dates of inspection: November 15 – 17 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707806

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | First |
| Type of control: | County |
| Age range of pupils: | 5 - 9 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Hackney Road Peasenhall Saxmundham Suffolk IP17 2HS |
| Telephone number: | 01728 660296 |
| Appropriate authority: | Governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs S Gallagher |
| Date of previous inspection: | March 1996 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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|--|---|---|
| Susan Walker Registered inspector | Mathematics Science Information technology Art Design and technology Geography History Under fives | Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management Staffing, accommodation and learning resources |
| Peter Dannheisser Lay Inspector | | Attendance Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Equality of opportunity |
| Christine Richardson Team inspector | English Religious education Music Physical education Special educational needs | Curriculum and assessment Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Efficiency |

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| MAIN FINDINGS | |

What the school does well

Standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than average and pupils make good progress.

- Pupils make good progress in art, geography, information technology and religious education.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and have good attitudes to their work.
- The quality of teaching is good.
- There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' work and progress.
- The school pays very good attention to the welfare of the pupils.
- There are good links with parents and the local community.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and governors.

Where the school has weaknesses

I. There is not enough provision for pupils' personal and social development within the curriculum.

II. The provision for music is not as good as that for all the other subjects because teachers' skills and confidence are insecure.

This is a good school providing a rounded education for all its pupils. The few weaknesses are far outweighed by what the school does well but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be distributed to all parents.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The few weaknesses identified as key issues in the last inspection have been overcome and the school has improved considerably since that time. The length of the school day has been reviewed and lengthened and arrangements have been made for swimming to ensure that the time taken for travelling to the swimming baths does not impinge on teaching time. The monitoring of teaching and standards has been addressed in a number of ways. Both full-time teachers now monitor each other's teaching regularly and also scrutinise work samples and planning. Careful consideration is given to the analysis of results of national tests to provide the headteacher and

governors with comprehensive information about standards, trends and areas for further development. The quality of teaching has been not only maintained but also improved, and teachers' planning now makes good provision for the needs of pupils of all levels of ability. The accommodation continues to pose limitations and its use remains a minor issue. Standards have risen in art, geography, information technology and religious education. Taking into account the quality of teaching, the effective leadership and the continuing support of the local education authority, the school is well placed to continue its improvement.

Standards in subjects

Standards achieved in national tests for seven-year-olds are not reported as only nine pupils took the tests in 1999 and there is a risk that individual pupils can be identified. Similarly, reliable comparisons with schools of a similar type cannot be made. In this school, although results can vary from year to year because of the very small numbers of pupils involved, the general picture is that standards in English and mathematics are above the national average. In reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and science all pupils taking the tests achieved the expected level for seven-year-olds, placing the school well above average. In reading and spelling over two thirds of the pupils achieved Level 3, which was above average. In writing one third of the pupils reached Level 3. Whilst this is still higher than average, it is an area that the school intends to improve. In science the proportion of pupils at Level 3 was about average. Results in 1998 showed a 'dip', results in reading, writing and mathematics falling to well below national averages and in science they to below the national average. This was an untypical year group however, and the data should therefore be treated with caution as the performance of only one or two pupils out of a total of six can dramatically affect the overall percentages.

Standards in music are adequate but the school is aware of the need to develop this subject further as pupils' experiences within the subject are rather narrow and teachers' expertise in this field is limited. Pupils make good progress in information technology and religious education, and they attain standards that exceed expectations. In geography they make good progress and in design and technology, history and physical education the progress they make is sound. In art they make good progress in Key Stage 1 and very good progress in Key Stage 2.

Quality of teaching

| Teaching in: | Under 5 | 5 - 7 years | 7 - 11 years |
|------------------------|---------|-------------|--------------|
| English | | Good | Good |
| Mathematics | | Good | Good |
| Science | | None seen | Good |
| Information technology | | Very good | None seen |
| Religious education | | Good | Good |
| Other subjects | | Good | Good |

The quality of teaching is a major strength of the school. The quality of teaching was good in 67 per cent of the lessons observed and very good in a further 19 per cent. In the remaining 15 per cent of lessons teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Though the school is small, collectively the staff have a broad range of skills that equip them well to teach all the subjects. Particular strengths lie in the teaching of religious education, information technology in Key Stage 1 and art in Key Stage 2, in all of which teachers have considerable expertise and enthusiasm. Teachers are careful to ensure that tasks are well matched to the needs of the pupils and their lesson planning is thorough. As there were no children under the age of five in the school at the time of

the inspection the teaching of them could not be judged. The indications are that the teaching of such children is good, effectively establishing early foundations of learning that contribute to the overall good progress pupils make.

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

Other aspects of the school

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| Behaviour | Good. Pupils are polite, industrious and show mature attitudes to their work. |
| Attendance | Very good. Above the national average. |
| Ethos* | Very good. This is a strength of the school. There is a purposeful atmosphere and a strong commitment to raising standards. Relationships are good within the 'family' atmosphere. |
| Leadership and management | The school is very well managed by the headteacher with the loyal support of staff and governors. There is a clear educational direction for the school and a continuing drive for improvement. |
| Curriculum | Good. It is broad and balanced and enriched by additional features such as educational visits. A particular strength lies in the quality of planning. |
| Pupils with special educational needs | These pupils are well integrated into the life of the school and make good progress. |
| Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development | The school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the pupils. Provision for social development is very good. |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation | The school is exceptionally generously staffed. The small class sizes are a major contributory factor to the standards achieved. Accommodation is satisfactory and resources are good. |
| Value for money | Satisfactory. Though the costs per pupil are very high they are justified by the quality of education provided. |

* *Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

The parents' views of the school

| What most parents like about the school | What some parents are not happy about |
|--|---|
| III. The family atmosphere IV. The way the school encourages parents to take part in school life. V. The standards of work achieved VI. The behaviour of the pupils VII. The values promoted by the school | VIII. A few parents would like to see more IX. A few parents would like more |

Inspection findings support the parents' positive views of the school. Concerns about a lack of extra-curricular activities are not upheld. For such a small school the staff provide ample additional enriching activities to complement the curriculum and pupils are encouraged to participate in activities provided within the village. The school provides good information to parents concerning the progress of pupils.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

In order to improve further curricular provision staff and governors should work together to:

1 Devise and implement programme to improve personal and social education.
(See paragraphs 31, 43, 59)

2 Improve the quality of provision for music by;

- broadening the expertise and confidence of the staff,
- extending the range of musical activities,
- providing a clear framework for the teaching of the subject.

(See paragraphs 24, 35, 171)

In addition to the key issues governors may wish to consider the following less important weaknesses when drawing up their action plan.

- Develop the use of the home/school reading and homework diary to involve parents more in dialogue with the school. (See paragraphs 63, 101)
- Give consideration to making better use of space in the school, particularly the prefabricated room. (See paragraphs 80, 87)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1Peasenhall Community Primary School is a first school, taking pupils aged between five and nine. It is much smaller than other first schools with only 21 pupils on roll. The school is situated in a rural environment near to the market town of Saxmundham. Most of the pupils are drawn from the villages of Peasenhall and Sibton, which comprise mainly privately owned and rented housing. Most pupils live within walking distance of the school. The small number of pupils on roll fluctuates from year to year giving rise to understandable parental concerns about the likelihood of closure. These are exacerbated by the proximity of other primary schools near by which take pupils from four until the age of eleven. A significant proportion of parents in the Peasenhall school's catchment area choose to send their children there in order to avoid the disruption caused by changing school at the age of nine.

2The socio-economic background of the pupils is mixed. Though the proportion of adults who have higher educational qualifications is slightly higher than the national average in the Yoxford ward, the proportion of pupils who come from homes where the adults are in professional occupations is low. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average.

3 The majority of children have attended the local nursery prior to starting full-time education, though some of the older pupils did not benefit from this provision as it has been open for only three years. Children start school in the term before their fifth birthday. At the time of the inspection there were no children under the age of five, though a few are expected in the new year. Children start school with levels of attainment that are broadly average. Assessments made when children currently in Year 1 entered the school show that their attainment in mathematics, reading and writing is above the county average. In speaking and listening and personal and social development attainment is lower than the county average. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes; one with pupils in reception, Year 1 and Year 2 and the other with pupils in Years 3 and 4.

4 All pupils are of white ethnic origin and none of them come from homes where English is not the first language spoken. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average when compared with that of schools of a similar type. None of the pupils have statements of special educational need, a figure well below the national average.

5 The school aims to 'create a happy, secure, caring and stimulating environment in which each child can develop intellectually, emotionally and physically to reach the highest levels of achievement according to his/her potential'. Educational priorities for the forthcoming year are the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the development of information technology, which includes upgrading computers.

6 Key Indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1999 | 2 | 7 | 9 |

Results of national tests are not published when the number of pupils taking the tests falls below ten as this may cause individual pupils to be identified.

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

| | | % |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Authorised Absence | School | 3.9 |
| | National comparative data | 5.7 |
| Unauthorised Absence | School | 0.0 |
| | National comparative data | 0.5 |

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

| | | Number |
|--|--------------|--------|
| | Fixed period | 0 |
| | Permanent | 0 |

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

| | | % |
|--|------------------------|------|
| | Very good or better | 19% |
| | Satisfactory or better | 100% |
| | Less than satisfactory | 0% |

¹

Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

2 **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

7 At the time of the inspection there were no children under the age of five. However, assessments made on children when they start school indicate a range of skills that are typical for their age. Almost all children entering the reception class have attended the local nursery. By the age of five most children at the school meet the desirable learning outcomes in the six nationally agreed areas of learning; language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, personal and social development, physical development and creative development. Through mixing with the older children in the class they become increasingly confident to express themselves and to answer teacher's questions and join in with class discussions. They quickly establish good foundations for literacy and numeracy, learning to count and to recognise letters and the sounds they make. They make good progress in all the areas of learning.

8 In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science attainment overall exceeds the national average at the end of Key Stage 1 and the pupils make good progress in all three subjects. In the writing component of English however, attainment is average.

1 In the national tests in English at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, results in reading and spelling were above average; all pupils taking the tests achieved the expected level for seven-year-olds and almost two thirds of them reached Level 3. In writing, though all pupils achieved the expected level, the proportion reaching Level 3, one third, was less than for reading. This has been a consistent trend over the three-year period and one which concerns the school. The performance of pupils in reading in 1996 and 1997 was above the national average but in 1998 the results were much lower than in the previous two years, dropping to well below the national average. A careful analysis of results indicates that results are likely to return to above average performance in the forthcoming year. Performance in writing has been average in 1996 and 1997, showing a similar 'dip' in 1998 to well below average. This trend is similar to that for reading.

10 In mathematics, results for 1999 show that all the pupils attained the expected level, and a few reached Level 3. The results of national tests in 1996 and 1997 were above average. In 1998 there was a drop in performance and results for that year were well below the national average, although the proportion of pupils at Level 3 was above average.

11 In teacher assessments in science in 1999 all the pupils achieved the expected level for their age and about one fifth reached Level 3. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 in science was well above the national average.

12 The year groups in this school are very small and thus analysis of statistical data can be very misleading. In very small groups of pupils the performance of individuals can significantly affect the overall results. This makes comparisons with schools of a similar type unreliable and misleading. Closer examination of trends and pupils' individual performances reveal that the apparent fall in standards in 1998 was not typical for this school and that standards in most years exceed national averages except in writing, in which standards match the national average. Taking into account samples of pupils' current and past work, inspection judgement indicates that attainment in English, mathematics and science in both key stages is above average overall. There is no evidence to suggest variations in attainment between boys and girls. The school has set realistic targets for improvement in the future and is well on course to achieve them.

13 Even though the assessment of children when they enter the school shows that skills in speaking and listening are lower than the county average, they make good progress and by the

time they reach the end of Key Stage 1 and at the end of Year 4 they achieve standards that are above national expectations. Most pupils become confident speakers, participating readily in class discussions and talking about their work. They often give thoughtful and well-expressed responses to teachers' questions. Listening is consistently good. By the time they leave the school pupils are able to use spoken language for a range of purposes; for example, to work on group tasks in science or to share ideas about how Jewish home life differs from their own.

14 Standards of reading are above average. In Key Stage 1 pupils increase their knowledge of letter sounds and develop effective strategies to tackle unfamiliar words. They soon become fluent and expressive readers and show understanding of what they have read. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are keen to share their views about the stories and characters in their books and older pupils are becoming familiar with the work of a range of authors and can explain why they like the work of a particular writer. They use reference books confidently, referring to contents and indexes in their research. Good use is made of dictionaries and thesauruses for reference.

15 Standards in writing are about average in both key stages. In Key Stage 1 pupils establish confidence in writing and learn to form letters correctly. By the end of the key stage most are independent writers, spelling common words reasonably accurately and using simple punctuation. The presentation of their work is satisfactory throughout the school. Information technology is used well both as a means of presenting writing in an attractive format and as a source of reference. Pupils are confident enough to draft their work before producing a final, amended version. By the end of Year 4 spelling and punctuation become more secure and pupils use their writing skills frequently in varied and interesting tasks.

16 In both key stages pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in English. In particular pupils make good progress in speaking and listening, gaining in confidence and developing vocabulary as they move through the school. The secure early reading skills established in the Key Stage 1 class are built upon steadily as pupils grow older. They use their reading frequently in almost all subjects and this consolidates their technical skills and skills of comprehension. Through frequent use of the library to access information pupils make good progress in acquiring retrieval skills. Pupils' writing shows clear improvement from the communication of meaning in single words and phrases in the Key Stage 1 class, to the more lengthy and sophisticated presentation of ideas in Years 3 and 4.

17 By the end of Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 4 pupils have acquired a good understanding of number and competently use their skills in problem-solving. They can collect, interpret and record data in a variety of ways, sometimes using information technology for this purpose. In the numeracy hour pupils in both classes demonstrate quick and accurate mental recall. Throughout Key Stage 1 pupils develop an understanding of measures and shape and begin to understand the concept of time. In Key Stage 2 they build on this knowledge and understanding and use it in more complex situations, such as calculating decimals and the perimeters of shapes. Mathematical skills are used appropriately in practical investigations, for example to find out the most commonly used letters in the alphabet.

18 Progress in mathematics is good in both classes. Through regular practice and consolidation in the numeracy hour pupils deepen their understanding of number and increase their strategies for swift mental recall. Skills that are established in the reception/Year 1 class are built upon steadily as pupils grow older. They develop competence in using numbers of increasing size with greater accuracy. Older pupils improve their ability to look for the relationships and patterns in number, to correct their own errors and to measure with increasing accuracy.

19 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have gained simple scientific knowledge through covering a broad range of topics. They are beginning to use investigative skills, such as observation and predicting, for example when growing beans and seeds. They develop good recording skills and begin to learn to work collaboratively. Early skills and knowledge are built upon well in Key Stage

2 through more complex practical activities. There is a particular strength in the way in which pupils use subject-specific language as a matter of course. Literacy and information technology are used effectively to record work in science.

20 In science, progress is good. In both classes pupils gain a good body of knowledge and a range of investigative skills which they use for practical purposes. Samples of work indicate that pupils complete considerable amounts of work over time, and there is clear evidence of a deepening understanding of scientific processes and skills. The quality, range and complexity of recording their experiments become increasingly sophisticated as they move through the school.

21 In religious education pupils make good progress in both key stages in meeting the requirements of the locally Agreed Syllabus and their attainment exceeds expectation. They acquire knowledge and understanding of Christian festivals and stories from the Bible through an interesting programme of practical activities. They gain an insight into other world faiths such as Judaism and Islam and are able to make connections with their own lives. Not only do they know some of the major similarities and differences between Christianity and other faiths, but they also recognise the symbolism expressed by religious artefacts and practices.

22 Standards in information technology exceed expectation and pupils make good progress both in their acquisition of skills and in their deepening understanding of the capabilities of technology. They acquire skills in a systematic way and use computers frequently. They make good progress in building up a repertoire of skills, which they use in subjects such as science, English and music. All the pupils are confident and proficient in handling computers and benefit from small teaching groups and from the direct teaching of skills followed up by independent practice and consolidation.

23 Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards their targets in reading, writing, speaking and numeracy. Attainment in reading and spelling is sometimes good for the pupils' abilities. Pupils make good progress in the development of self-confidence. Attainment overall is as expected for pupils with special educational needs.

24 In the foundation subjects of art and geography pupils in both key stages make good progress. They are knowledgeable about the subjects and show considerable interest in what they have learned. In geography they express well-informed views about environmental issues. In art their work shows an increasing refinement as they get older and their ability to use materials, especially watercolours, becomes more confident and proficient. In design and technology, history, and physical education pupils make sound progress in developing skills and knowledge. In all these subjects they follow a well-planned curriculum and cover a suitable range of topics. Pupils make adequate progress in music although their experience within the subject is rather narrow and teachers' expertise in this field is limited.

25 The literacy and numeracy lessons are now well established as part of the curriculum and their effects are seen in the high standards in English, especially in spelling, and mathematics. Literacy and numeracy are both used well to support other subjects. For example, pupils use their knowledge of graphs to record their findings in science. Skills in literacy are used extensively to record work in geography, history and religious education.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

1 Children under the age of five settle quickly into school routines and learn to persevere with tasks. Through mixing with the older pupils in the class the under-fives develop a mature and sensible attitude to learning from their very first days in school. They begin to develop independence and they respond well to the range of activities provided for them. By the time they are five their behaviour is good and they are well launched into the National Curriculum.

2 Pupils' have good attitudes to their work in both key stages. They show an interest in what they are doing and there is a calm and purposeful working atmosphere in the school. Pupils demonstrate an ability to work with minimal supervision and usually succeed in concentrating well on the work in hand. They remain active and challenged, for example when weaving patterns with paper strips or discussing river pollution with each other. The previous inspection reported that pupils were generally polite and considerate and that relationships were good. Current evidence confirms these findings. There is a high level of enthusiasm among the pupils. A very small minority of pupils can be a little restless in some lessons, especially when the pace is less stimulating than they require. However, they are easily brought back to the work in hand by gentle encouragement. Class teachers follow a clear behaviour policy and consistently monitor and guide the pupils.

28 Pupils enjoy coming to school and are well adjusted to the daily routines. They are confident and relate well to each other and to teachers. Some pupils are a little shy and diffident with visitors, but in a small closely-knit school this is neither surprising nor inappropriate. Pupils react well to the many opportunities the school provides for them to broaden their experiences; for example when a visitor talked about and showed toys which their parents or grandparents had as children the pupils were enthralled.

29 Behaviour is good. Around the school pupils are orderly, polite, friendly and considerate and they respect the building, equipment and grounds. At play times pupils play together amicably. The younger pupils share play space with those from Year 4 and the combination successfully supports the youngest and gives responsibility to the oldest. There is no evidence of bullying but pupils know how to deal with problems should they occur, and whom to go to for help. There have been no exclusions.

30 Relationships are good between pupils, and between adults and pupils. Parents appreciate the friendly atmosphere in the school. Pupils carry out responsibly their allocated duties both in class and around the school. For example they manage energy conservation by switching off unused lights and appliances, ring the school bell, and look after the library. They enjoy these tasks, which help to prepare them for the next phase of their education by providing them with responsibility. The older pupils have developed confidence and some maturity.

31 Pupils' personal development is effective though achieved incidentally since there is no policy or curriculum time allocated to this aspect. People and property are respected and pupils play their part in maintaining a clean and orderly environment. Pupils consider the needs of others in the wider world and develop a caring attitude. They have recently raised funds for an overseas UNICEF charity. They enjoy the feeling of being part of this small community, which is almost an extended family. When a pupil recently had a birthday party, the whole school was invited!

Attendance

32 The level of attendance at the school for the year 1998-1999 was well above the national average for primary schools. This contrasts with levels in the school year 1997/8 when the persistent absence of a very small number of pupils adversely affected the percentage for that year. The rate of unauthorised absences is well below the national average. Pupils really like their school and are eager to attend. Their punctuality is good and lessons start on time.

27 QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

33 The quality of teaching was good in 67 per cent of the lessons observed and very good in a further 19 per cent. In the remaining 15 per cent of lessons the teaching was satisfactory. The teaching is one of the school's strengths and contributes significantly to the standards achieved. Together the staff form a professional and committed team. The relationships that the teachers have with the pupils are very positive and have a direct impact on the quality of life in the school and the standards achieved.

1The provision for children under five in the reception class is good. The teacher has a secure understanding of the needs of young children and provides an appropriate range of activities that are well organised to lead into the National Curriculum, although there is not enough provision for imaginative play. Progress is carefully monitored and there is a suitable emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy, balanced well with creative and practical activities. Assessment is used appropriately to group children and plan suitable work for them.

35 The staff are good 'all rounders' and have good levels of knowledge and understanding in all subjects. Because of the demands of a small school, in which responsibility for most of the curriculum lies with just two full-time teachers, staff have had to develop their expertise in all subjects. As a result the quality of teaching is consistently good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science and in most other subjects. It is very good in art in Key Stage 2 and information technology in Key Stage 1. In both these areas the teachers' subject knowledge and enthusiasm have a positive impact on the motivation of the pupils and the standards achieved. The quality of teaching in religious education is consistently providing an interesting range of practical activities that bring the subject to life and give it relevance to the pupils. Teachers' confidence to teach music is less secure though good use is made of resources to compensate for this.

36 Teachers' expectations of what the pupils should achieve are generally very high. Not only do they present a challenging range of tasks that match the needs of the mixed age groups within each class, but they also expect high standards of behaviour and maintain good class control in a low key, unobtrusive manner. Just occasionally, however, pupils become over-excited by what they are doing and noise levels rise. When this is not checked it escalates until the atmosphere of the lesson is lost and the impact of the lesson diminishes. In most lessons there are opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills and exercise independence.

37 Throughout the school lessons are precisely planned and organised, well rooted in the National Curriculum. There is usually a suitable blend of formal tasks that promote the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and more open-ended and creative work that allows pupils to be imaginative and collaborative. In all lessons learning objectives are explicit and generally achieved through an interesting and appropriate choice of activities. The school's medium-term plans pragmatically include activities, resources and assessments so that teachers are not required to plan the same work year on year. Teachers' daily plans effectively customise these medium term plans to pupils' individual needs and are effective and efficient in saving time. A particular strength is the way in which planning provides suitable tasks for pupils of all abilities within mixed age classes. This successfully enables pupils to be challenged at an appropriate level. There are isolated occasions when insufficient provision has been made for pupils who complete their work before the rest of the class. When this occurs pupils' time is unproductive, particularly if the teacher is pre-occupied with individuals.

38 The teachers use a good range of methods and organisational strategies that bring about a suitable balance between teacher input and activities on the part of pupils. In the best lessons the teachers successfully capture the interest of the pupils. Carefully chosen and often imaginative activities, frequently of a practical nature, lead pupils to achieving the objectives of the lesson. Direct, whole-class teaching is most effective when it involves all pupils and allows them to interact, hypothesise and ask their own questions. A good example of this was seen in a geography lesson when pupils discussed the effects of pollution. They were able to share their

thoughts and learn new facts during the class discussion and then follow up their ideas in a challenging, practical assignment that required them to continue the debate in their groups, thus, incidentally developing their speaking and listening skills. Most lessons proceed at a suitable pace that maintains the interest levels of the pupils. On occasions, however, the pace of a lesson is too slow, or explanations by the teacher are over-long. When this happens some pupils lose interest and become restless, particularly towards the end of the day when younger pupils are tired.

39 Pupils with special educational needs are well-integrated into lessons. Pupils have regular times during the week when they have individual or small group work on specific programmes. They work in the classrooms or in the information technology room with the classroom assistant. Teachers plan their work carefully to take account of the targets and needs of these pupils. The school works well with the Teaching Support Service and programmes are reviewed regularly and monitored carefully. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is of high quality and enables the pupils to make good progress towards their targets and to grow in confidence.

40 Good lessons are carefully structured to make the best use of time. Often there is an effective plenary session that draws the lesson to a close by reminding pupils of what has been learned. On the few occasions when the timing of a lesson has been misjudged the ending is abrupt and the valuable opportunity for pupils to reflect on what has been learned is lost. Resources are used efficiently and often creatively to promote learning. Teachers prepare suitable materials such as work sheets to meet the needs of their pupils and these are generally of a high quality.

41 The quality and use of day-to-day assessments are good. Teachers are conscientious in assessing pupils' work regularly to measure the progress that has been made. The marking of pupils' work is thorough and constructive, enabling pupils to learn from their mistakes and praising good efforts. Homework in the form of reading and learning spellings is given regularly and it is beneficial in extending work being done in lessons.

34 The curriculum and assessment

41 The school provides a well structured and organised curriculum that is broad and balanced, and includes all subjects of the National Curriculum. Pupils under the age of five are taught in a class with Year 1 and 2 pupils. Although there were no under fives in the school at the time of the inspection, teachers' planning shows that the curriculum that they follow enables them to meet successfully the nationally agreed desirable learning outcomes and leads them into the National Curriculum.

42 Since the last inspection teaching time has been increased for all pupils and there is now no slippage of time during the day, as was reported at the last inspection. Arrangements for travelling to swimming and physical education lessons at another school have been amended and ensure that the physical education curriculum is covered in full, without affecting the balance of the curriculum adversely. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

43 With the aim of providing a continuity of experience for all pupils from first to middle school, the school provides a curriculum that meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education in full. Pupils of all abilities benefit from a curriculum that meets their social, intellectual and physical needs well. However, there is no separate time allowed for personal, health and social education to ensure that it is taught as a regular part of the curriculum and that experiences are appropriately planned for each age group. There is no formal policy for this aspect, but it is covered informally and sex education and drugs awareness are taught effectively within science. The content and organisation of the curriculum provide equal opportunities for all pupils. The literacy hour is now well established and the school and the Local Education Authority is monitoring this development carefully. The Numeracy

Strategy has been introduced effectively this term.

44 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they enjoy full access to the breadth of the curriculum. The recommendations of the Code of Practice are implemented successfully by the special needs co-ordinator, who keeps detailed records and monitors the provision well, and the Teaching Support Service. Targets are reviewed regularly and programmes amended, where appropriate. Individual education plans are clear and suitable so that they can be incorporated effectively into teachers' planning.

45 The curriculum is planned effectively and thoroughly. Specific details about what is to be taught and how this will happen are planned carefully by staff each term. This enables staff to share expertise and knowledge and helps to ensure that all of the programmes of study are covered appropriately. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Long and medium term planning clearly identifies the curricular content and focus of lessons, and much thought has gone into planning interesting activities. The curriculum is specifically designed to ensure that work is appropriate for the mixed age classes and to identify the correct level of key skills for each age group. There is a clear focus on skills and learning in teachers' planning

46 Communication is good with the middle school to which most pupils will transfer and the nursery that most young children have attended. Opportunities for careful induction into the school and for transition to the middle school are provided. This helps to ensure that pupils move on with confidence to the next stage of their education.

47 The curriculum is enriched in several ways. There are sporting and musical events and festivals with other schools, and the school hosts visits from pupils from other schools. There are regular visits over the year, which enrich pupils' learning, and many visitors who come to school. All of these have a positive impact on pupils' learning. With such a small staff and wide age-range it is difficult for the school to arrange suitable, regular after-school activities for pupils although there are opportunities for pupils to join in village activities after school.

48 Overall assessment procedures are very good. The arrangements for the administration of formal tests during the year, including assessment on entry into the school, are good. The school is aware that continual review of the curriculum is required to ensure that levels of progress and attainment are maintained and improved. Information gained from a study of statutory assessments and national data over a period of time is used very effectively to identify areas of weakness and to raise standards. The school has good systems of assessments for all subjects and is able to check precisely what pupils know, understand and can do in all subjects. The information is used very well and the school monitors progress rigorously.

49 Day-to-day assessment is used very effectively by teachers to ensure that work is appropriately matched to pupils' capabilities. Assessment of pupils with special educational needs is good. Pupils are identified at a young age and action is taken to clarify their needs if teachers have concerns. Teachers keep careful records of pupils' progress and reading in school. Reports meet statutory requirements and pupils' targets are discussed fully with parents at open evenings.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

50 The provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils, including that of the under-fives, is good. High standards in moral and cultural development have been maintained and spiritual development has improved since the last inspection. The provision for social development is very good, and has also improved since the last inspection. The provision overall has a positive impact on the quality of education provided. Pupils with special educational needs play a full part in the life of the school and are fully involved in all school activities. Parents believe

that the school effectively promotes positive values and attitudes and this is endorsed by the findings of this inspection.

51 Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Acts of collective worship are well led and pupils appreciate the opportunity to sing and listen to stories. Pupils join in the School Prayer and grace at lunchtime with respect. Assemblies are broadly Christian in character and the chosen themes encourage pupils to reflect on moral values and to share in the achievements of pupils in the school. The planned themes provide regular opportunities to consider the significance of religious celebrations and the meaning and purpose of life. The themes are linked well with the planning for religious education. For example, pupils listen to the stories of the Old Testament and learn about people such as Abraham and Isaac whose names they will hear when they discuss the Jewish celebration of Shabbat in their religious education lessons. In religious education lessons, and on visits, pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. Lessons are often planned to provide pupils with an understanding of the spiritual dimension of life. For example, pupils reflect on colours in paintings and what is special about the work of Picasso or Cézanne, and consider the effects of pollution on the environment. In English they consider the plight of the tiger and fears that the species may become extinct. Teachers' enthusiasm and positive approach to literature and language, for example in the reading of stories and poetry, often generate a sense of wonder.

52 The school provides a clear framework of its values and expectations and this is the basis of the good provision for pupils' moral development. The school aims to provide a supportive atmosphere for all its pupils and to encourage good behaviour. Pupils are polite and welcoming to visitors. They have a clear understanding of what is right and wrong. There are rules for behaviour in the playground and the classroom, which have been negotiated thoughtfully between pupils and their teachers and are reviewed every year. Pupils understand the system of rewards and sanctions. Assemblies celebrate pupils' achievements and this makes a valuable addition to the raising of self-esteem of pupils. Everyone would dearly like to win a certificate or cup. Smiles are broad and praise is generous when a pupil gains his head teacher's badge.

53 Provision for social development is very good. There is a sense of community in the school and pupils' relationships are positive and supportive. Pupils are encouraged to listen to others and older pupils value the work and contribution of the younger pupils. For example, the older pupils listen to and read the sentences written by the younger pupils in their English lessons. This gives them a greater awareness of, and respect for, the level of work the younger pupils reach. Pupils are encouraged to work well together. They sit side by side at the computer, older pupil with younger one, and share the program and activities well. Pupils work well in groups in music, singing their parts in a round enthusiastically. This has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils as they share ideas and learn from each other when they work in mixed age groups on projects. They move around the school sensibly, taking care not to hurt one another. Pupils in both key stages are offered, and willingly accept responsibilities around the school, for example, as energy, water and library monitors. Ex-pupils remember their school with affection when they collect money to give a gift to each present member of the school. Parents are invited to share in the Christmas lunch celebration with their children and this encourages the family atmosphere within the school. Many visits are made to places of educational interest and there are frequent visitors to the school to talk about their childhood, their work or their interests. The regular contact with the church and the local village community is important to the children and their families.

54 Provision for pupils' cultural development is good. A wide range of activities, in and out of school, provides pupils with an appreciation of their own cultural traditions. For example, visits are organised to Sizewell, and to farms and museums. Teachers make a particular effort to use the local environment and a group of children from Lowestoft visits the school so that pupils may share experiences and learn from each other. In history and art pupils learn about famous people and events and they are aware that their own school is a rich source of history for them. Looking to the future, pupils talk of contact with others through the Internet and look forward to their visit to the

Millennium Dome. Sporting activities and country dancing with pupils from other schools are encouraged. In physical education lessons pupils learn the skills necessary to play hopscotch and practise these enthusiastically at playtimes. After lunch they are eager to learn traditional skipping and singing games with the lunchtime supervisor. All of these activities make a good contribution to pupils' learning and social development. Teachers give pupils a wide range of opportunities to study their own and other cultural traditions. They are aware of many of the celebrations of other cultures during the year, making cards for "Happy Eid" and recognising the celebration of harvest in other cultures. Displays around the school and an interesting collection of photographs highlight many of the events and connections.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

55 Provision for pupils' support, guidance and welfare is very good, an improvement from the previous inspection, which judged it to be good. The school is a very caring one in which the personal needs of the pupils are met. The academic needs of pupils are being assessed very well and in detail throughout their time at the school. This is done in a number of ways, including formal tests, regular marking and collection of examples of work. The staff of this small school know how much their pupils have learned and they set challenging targets for all pupils, including the more able. Pupils with special needs are identified and are given appropriate support. The school works well with the local authority's support services, the school adviser and the Teaching Support Service.

56 Attendance and punctuality are monitored well. Any unexplained absences are followed up immediately by office staff. The registration procedures are quiet and efficient and are completed in accordance with legal requirements. The school has carefully considered parental attitudes to the importance of attendance in achieving the present good levels.

57 Pupils' good behaviour is through positive encouragement, good adult role models and, in these classes of mixed age groups, the valuable example of older pupils. There is a clear system of rewards which pupils respect. All pupils win stars for good work and good behaviour and there are further rewards available, celebrated at weekly assemblies. When sanctions are needed they are appropriate and mainly involve the removal of stars.

58 There are no formal opportunities for pupils to discuss feelings, attitudes and behaviour with each other through 'circle time' or other special lessons. There is no personal and social curriculum plan to provide a framework to enable staff to make sure that all aspects of this important area are covered. However, the school has plans to develop these shortly and in the meantime the head teacher reviews all lesson plans to ensure that the elements of personal education are covered within science and religious education lessons.

59 The headteacher is well aware of child protection issues. There is a good policy and staff have been trained to recognise signs of possible concern and take appropriate action.

60 The premises provide a clean, bright and welcoming environment. The playground and field are well maintained. Staff take great care of their pupils and both staff and governors regularly monitor health and safety issues through accident records, risk assessments and regular audits. Action is taken rapidly if problems have been identified. The previous inspection reported that provision for pupils' support, welfare and guidance was good. This standard has since been maintained and improved.

Partnership with parents and the community

61 The previous inspection reported favourably on the school's relations with parents, the

information they received, the induction of pupils into the school, their subsequent transfer to middle school and links with the community. The present inspection supports these findings.

62 Parents receive a considerable amount of information about school activities and also some information about the curriculum. There are plenty of informative newsletters, and the school produces the 'Peasenhall Press' to which pupils make significant and entertaining contributions. There are no home-school diaries to help parents to understand better what is expected of their children for homework or to give parents and staff an opportunity to comment on the pupils' progress in reading. Some parents would welcome such an opportunity.

63 The annual reports on pupils' progress are very informative and give parents a clear indication of the level of their children's efforts and attainment. However, they give insufficient detail about pupils' targets for the coming year and parents said they would welcome such information.

64 Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. The school actively encourages their contribution. Parents have opportunities to visit special assemblies and see their children take part and they are encouraged to take an active part in school. They help in class and on school visits. They feel well briefed and appreciated by the staff. There are regular review meetings about the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

65 There are very good links between the school, the local nursery school, and all parents of pupils about to come to the school. The school provides useful information for Year 5 staff at the middle school about the children coming into their care. Pupils have plenty of opportunity to visit the school of their choice before starting and the transition is easily accomplished. A 'buddy' system ensures that pupils going to the local middle school have met one of its pupils who will help them when they first arrive.

66 The links with the wider community are very good. The school recognises that a small village school in a rural area needs to broaden the experience of the pupils, and they make every effort to do so. There are many visits and visitors. Pupils respond well to such extra opportunities, which are well planned to fit in with their regular lessons.

67 Pupils enjoy visits to farms, museums and the Broads, and visits by employees of the power station, former pupils, and elderly people from the village. Opportunities for pupils to meet pupils from other schools for sporting or other events are limited, although some activities have been arranged through a group of local schools. The school is appropriately involved with several charitable causes.

68 There is an active and well supported Friends of Peasenhall Association, which organises events which raise useful funds and which contributes significantly to the spirit of the community. This school is very much at the heart of the village and considers the village in all it does.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

69 The quality of management is a major strength of the school. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher supported by the governors and other staff. This results in an effective and collaborative team. The headteacher is well organised and leads by example. She gives a clear direction for the school's development, based on a commitment to continuing improvement and encourages a collegiate approach to decision making. The governors have a good overview of the school though several are new to the role and have yet to familiarise themselves fully with their responsibilities. Governors are well informed of the work of the school

through regular meetings which are well attended, through the headteacher's regular reports and the reports from the working groups. They understand clearly their role of being 'critical friends' to the school. Almost all are regular helpers in the school and have opportunities to observe at first hand teaching and learning. This gives them a helpful insight into standards through observing lessons and liaising with teachers. Governors maintain an overview of standards of work through the careful analysis of data such as test results. All statutory requirements are met.

70 The school development plan is comprehensive and clear and is an improvement on the previous year's plan, which had too many objectives to be realistic. It has been drawn together in consultation with staff and governors and presents a realistic formula for the school's future growth. The plan appropriately projects forward in detail for the forthcoming year but lacks a broader reference to tasks for the years beyond. Staff development and budgetary implications are carefully considered and the criteria for measuring the success of each development are made clear. The plan identifies appropriate targets for development and is rooted in the aim of improving education in the school. Literacy and numeracy are appropriately included as priorities for development.

71 The curriculum is organised and managed well. School documentation is of a high standard and is accurately reflected in classroom practice. Some policies have been recently reviewed and updated, though staff are aware that others have not been updated for some considerable time. Curricular documentation is extensive and helpful in guiding and supporting teachers.

72 At the time of the previous inspection monitoring of standards was under-developed. Since then considerable progress has been made in improving and implementing effective systems. Results of national tests and the school's own assessments are carefully analysed to identify any areas of weakness or trends. The teaching staff have devised a system of exchanging classes in order to regularly monitor standards in such a way that takes account of the full-time teaching commitment of staff. In addition teachers monitor standards through the scrutiny of work samples and teachers' plans.

73 Despite the fact that both full time teachers are responsible for several subjects the subject co-ordinators' role is well established and teachers are effective in supporting each other and influencing teaching in their subjects. They are aware of the relative strengths and weaknesses within their subjects and work hard to maintain the quality of the curriculum and the standards in each subject.

74 Governors meet in full their statutory requirements with regard to pupils with special educational needs. The designated governor is involved in the life of the school and supports the provision well in consultation with the special educational needs co-ordinator

75 Issues from last inspection have been successfully addressed through an effective action plan. The length of the school day has been reviewed and modified to ensure that time is not lost. Monitoring of teaching and the curriculum is now regularly undertaken, though systems are not made explicit in written form. There is a closer match of tasks to pupils' needs in teachers' plans. The school's capacity to continue with its improvement is good.

76 The ethos of the school is strong. Relationships are very good and there is a busy and purposeful atmosphere. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good, enabling such pupils to make good progress. The school is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity. The school has clear and appropriate aims, which are set out appropriately in the prospectus. The school's commitment to improving is evidenced in the continuing high standards.

77 Since the last inspection the management of the school has become secure and well established. The strengths highlighted in the previous report have been sustained and improved

and the school has developed well since that time. Taking into account the continuing commitment of staff and governors, the quality of teaching and the determination of staff to raise standards the school is well placed to make further improvements.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

78 The school is exceptionally generously staffed, enabling class sizes to be small; indeed, there are only seven pupils in the Year1/2 class and fourteen in the Year 3/4 class. This is a major contributory factor to the good progress made by the pupils, since they benefit from much adult support both in small groups and individually. In addition to the two full-time teachers there is a part-time teacher for religious education. Her particular expertise in the subject ensures good progress and standards. The teaching staff are all appropriately trained and experienced for their roles. They are ably supported by the classroom assistant, herself a qualified nursery nurse. She is well deployed to work with groups of pupils in both classes. Staff are committed to developing their skills and knowledge. The range of training events attended in the past year is extensive, and this is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching. Training for the literacy and numeracy strategies has been particularly effective. There are clear job descriptions for all staff defining their roles and responsibilities, although they have not been updated recently. Appraisal of staff is now in its second cycle and its effects are felt in the quality of teaching. The headteacher is appraised effectively through an arrangement with the local education authority.

79 The accommodation in a Victorian building has been modernised and adapted over the years. It provides adequate accommodation for teaching the National Curriculum although there are some limitations. The absence of a school hall limits the extent to which physical education lessons can meet fully the requirements of the National Curriculum. The headteacher's room doubles up as the staff room and office, but this arrangement provides little privacy and frequent interruption. There is limited storage space anywhere in the school, although the very large classroom lends itself to providing additional space for this purpose. A small prefabricated room away from the main building, which is currently used for storage and small meetings is not used to best advantage. The recently re-furnished technology room is a useful additional facility that is effectively enhancing the quality of provision.

80 The school grounds are extensive and are used well to support the curriculum. The large field provides plenty of space for play and physical education lessons and the fine adventure playground provides facilities for pupils to climb and balance. There is a small wooded area which is useful for promoting science, geography and art.

81 The school is generally well resourced to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. Resources are well chosen and in good condition. They are frequently supplemented by additional items funded by the Friends organisation. The ratio of computers to pupils is generous and this contributes well to the standards in information technology. Though the library is small and unsuitable for pupils to use as a space for reading it is stocked with a suitable range of books.

34 The efficiency of the school

82 The efficiency of the school is good overall and has been improved since the last inspection. Planning is now linked well to the raising of standards and the school has exceeded the targets set. Longer term planning is on a more formal basis and there are success criteria and targets within the school development plan. The governing body has terms of reference and persons delegated for each of its working parties. The headteacher monitors teaching and planning closely.

83 The school's financial planning is good. The governors are fully involved in the strategic

management of the school. They receive regular information about the finances of the school and are able to assess the cost-effectiveness of decisions made, for example, about the decision to let pupils have swimming lessons for one term and to send pupils to another school in the spring term for physical education lessons. Governors come into school to see literacy lessons, to see how effectively money has been spent on resources and in-service training and the impact on pupils' progress.

1The school has carefully sought to keep within its budget and to maintain a small amount for contingencies. The recent deficit caused by the long-term sickness of a member of staff has been transformed into a small surplus since the school received insurance money to cover the absence. Specific funds are used appropriately, for example on staff training to support such priority issues as literacy and numeracy, and the small amount of money remaining is spent on other important staff training. There is no additional funding for pupils with special educational needs this year and the school directs money within its own budget towards meeting the needs of these pupils appropriately.

85 The teachers and classroom assistant are deployed well and they have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. Supply teachers who come into the school follow the school's programmes appropriately and ensure that as little disruption as possible is caused when teachers are absent on essential courses, for example on literacy. The school makes good use of parental and voluntary support to help in classrooms and on visits, and to support pupils who are learning to play the recorder, or to accompany singing in assemblies and performances. The people of Peasenhall are very supportive and the Friends organise a number of fund-raising events to provide extra resources for pupils. The support is valued by the staff and has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

86 Classroom resources are used effectively, especially books and computers. The school makes good use of the outside areas for games and physical education, using trails in the school grounds for environmental education and adventurous activities. The adventure playground is used well for physical and social development. The library is small, not an area where pupils sit and read, but there is an appropriate range of books and pupils are happy to select their books and take them into the classroom to read. The computer room is of a suitable size to be used for assemblies and one of the classrooms is particularly spacious. Some of this space is used for storage of equipment. The small, prefabricated room provides valuable additional space but is not currently used to best advantage.

87 School administration and financial control are very good. Clear daily routines and procedures are understood and carried out very efficiently and effectively. When the school was audited in 1997 many areas were said to be "excellent" and the few recommendations made were immediately implemented. There has been a short audit in September 1999 when favourable comments about the school's systems were again expressed. The daily running of the school is smooth and the efficiency of the clerical assistant ensures that the headteacher, who has a heavy teaching commitment, is able to concentrate on teaching.

88 The efficiency of the school and the value for money provided have improved since the last inspection, although the cost of educating the pupils is above the average for small schools. Pupils' attainment on entry into the school is broadly average and, by the end of Year 4, is above what would be expected for their age. Attainment in the national tests at Key Stage 1 over the last three years has been well above the national average in reading and mathematics and below the national average in writing. The quality of teaching is good and pupils' respond well, with good attitudes to work. There is good provision for pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural development and the provision for social development is very good. There is a positive ethos in the school. The school, therefore, provides satisfactory value for money.

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

89 There were no children under five in school at the time of the inspection. Provision for children of this age is in the reception class, where they are taught with pupils in Years 1 and 2. Children under the age of five are not yet of statutory school age and are not subject to the requirements of the National Curriculum. Instead they follow a curriculum based on the areas of learning for under fives; language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical, personal and social development. Children make good progress in all the areas of learning and by the time they are of compulsory school age, when they are five, most achieve the desirable learning outcomes.

90 By the age of five children have settled well into school and are familiar with routines. In their personal and social development they benefit from the presence of the older children, who demonstrate through their behaviour the expectations in the class. The children become increasingly independent in their personal hygiene, using the toilet and dressing themselves for physical education lessons with the minimum of adult help. They listen attentively and concentrate on written tasks for increasing amounts of time. They begin to develop good attitudes to learning, becoming increasingly more independent and confident.

91 Children gain increasing confidence in speaking clearly to each other and to the teacher. They use a developing vocabulary and take part enthusiastically in class discussions. They benefit from the small size of the group, which enables all children to be heard and to contribute more frequently than would be the case in a larger class. They are becoming familiar with letter sounds and recognise simple words when reading a shared text. They know how to handle books correctly. They are beginning to write simple words and sentences independently.

92 In mathematics children can count up in twos and fives, and know what number must be added to another to give an answer of ten when they throw a dice. They can place numbers in correct order, from the smallest to the largest, and calculate in simple multiples, for example to find out how many ears there are on four rabbits. Through playing in sand and water they learn some of the language associated with capacity and volume.

93 In knowledge and understanding of the world the children experience a good range of activities. They can operate the computers confidently, using a mouse. They know some of the differences between the past and present through looking at toys used in bygone days and comparing them to those used nowadays. They begin to know about different physical features such as lakes, mountains and cliffs through the story of 'Shipwreck Sam'. Through growing a range of different seeds they come to understand some of the elements required by plants for healthy growth.

94 Children develop appropriate physical control through play and in lessons when they practise hopping, running and jumping, changing direction on command. Through using the school's large outdoor climbing apparatus they develop large muscle control when climbing and balancing in different ways. Fine motor skills are developed effectively through the handling of pencils, scissors and needles. Opportunities for children to develop balance on wheeled toys through outdoor play are limited.

95 Creative skills have developed well through the frequent use of a variety of materials. Children paint pictures of their own choice, sometimes mixing their own colours. They can draw colourful and detailed pictures of flowers from close observation. With adult help they stitch felt pictures to a background and learn to weave paper and fabric with developing dexterity. They sing with enjoyment in assemblies, though opportunities for musical development are limited.

96 As there were no children under five in school at the time of the inspection the teaching of them could not be judged but the indications are that the teaching for the under fives is good. Teacher's planning is based mainly on the National Curriculum, although it is carefully modified to cover the 'areas of learning' and to suit the needs of the under-fives when there are any in school.

There is a suitable emphasis on literacy and numeracy, balanced out with creative and practical activities. An initial assessment of children when they start school forms part of the school's continuous monitoring of pupils' progress and establishes a base-line from which to plan for individual needs. The classroom assistant is used effectively to provide additional individual support and to complement the work of the teacher and this has made a positive contribution to learning. There are very good links with the local nursery which most of the children attend prior to starting school. Before starting school children come for afternoons only for a two-week period and this makes the transition to school smooth and sensitive.

97 Resources for children under five are appropriately chosen and generally in good condition. The classroom is very large and bright and promotes learning, though it has a cluttered appearance and the organisation does not make best use of storage space, which is at a premium in the school. There is a home corner for role-play but this resource is not exploited fully enough to aid imaginative play and language development. More could be done to make the book corner inviting and to promote the status of books and reading.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

1The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicated that the level of attainment in reading was above average, with a significant number of pupils achieving a higher level than this. All pupils taking the tests achieved the expected level for seven-year-olds and almost two thirds of them reached Level 3. In writing, though all pupils achieved the expected level, the proportion reaching Level 3, one third, was less than for reading. This has been a consistent trend over the three-year period and one which concerns the school. Results of national tests in 1998 were well below national averages in reading and writing. Attainment in speaking and listening in 1998 was in line with the national average. This, however, was "a dip year" and performance over the three years from 1996 was well above in reading and below in writing. Variations in results are largely due to the small size of some year groups and the number of pupils with special educational needs in some year groups. Meaningful comparisons with the performance of pupils in similar schools cannot be made as the number of pupils in a small school can have a disproportionate effect on overall results. Inspection judgement places pupils' attainments at above average in speaking and listening and reading and broadly in line with national averages in writing.

99 Standards in speaking and listening are above national expectations at Key Stage 1 and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively and ask and answer questions confidently. They participate well in discussions and explain spelling patterns, for example magic "e" and silent "k", clearly. They discuss photographs and relationships well in religious education and evaluate types of lists in literacy as a group, offering individual opinions and finding evidence to explain their thinking. A Year 3 pupil explained the meaning of camouflage well and all Year 3 and 4 pupils looked at the information in an article about tigers, rephrasing points accurately in their own words. Pupils savour the use of technical vocabulary and commented during a spelling test, "Oh, that's a homonym," and when describing the flow of a river from its source, spoke of it as "meandering".

100 Standards in reading are above national averages. At Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy reading and make systematic, appropriate use of letter sounds to help them read unfamiliar words confidently and effectively. They have the confidence to apply these effectively. Pupils have a

developing sight vocabulary and read simple passages, showing understanding of what they read. They express opinions concerning events in stories and poems. Pupils can read and order a series of instructions, for example for getting dressed and washing hands. They read instructions for making sandwiches accurately and respond to any instructions or information on the computer screen sensibly. When pupils read a text together in the literacy hour, and when they read a book, they use expression and intonation. From Year 1 pupils know that print in bold, italics and capitals requires emphasis and that they have to take into consideration punctuation when reading. They know how to make reading interesting to the listener. Pupils make inferences and deductions about stories, poems and lists, and name authors they like or whose work they have read on other occasions. They use a contents list sensibly, and, when asked to write down information about animals, their immediate response is, "Can we get books out of the library?" Throughout the school pupils use word lists and dictionaries well to check meanings and spellings of words. Pupils know the systems that exist for reading in school but not enough use is made of the home and school reading system to encourage more dialogue between teacher, parent and child about reading skills.

101 By the time pupils reach the ages of seven and nine, standards in writing are broadly typical for their age. Pupils in Year 1 make good progress as they move from "practice" writing to the writing of properly spaced words in sentences. By the end of Year 2 pupils write complete sentences and use capital letters and full stops correctly. Joined writing is practised regularly and improved presentation of this in all written work is a target for pupils. Pupils plan and redraft their work, sometimes on the computer, and this helps them to extend their vocabulary and develop a sense of style. There are interesting examples of extended writing in the first and third person in English and religious education, for example the story of Easter as it could have been reported in a newspaper. Pupils know how to construct a story and use a beginning, middle and end. Some use speech marks and commas confidently. Spelling and punctuation are becoming more consistent and pupils are encouraged to spell aloud or find words that rhyme on a word list so that they may substitute another initial letter, for example, finding "mug" to spell "jug". Pupils benefit particularly from the careful learning of selected spellings each week.

102 In both key stages, pupils make good progress in English. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans. There is clear evidence of progress in speaking and listening from the limited but enthusiastic response of pupils in Year 1 to the activities in Key Stage 2, where pupils discuss the environment, people's beliefs and customs and ask questions about the world around them in a growing vocabulary. Pupils progress from learning to read familiar words in Year 1 to reading with good understanding and an ability to make comparisons of books in book reviews. Pupils' writing shows clear improvement from the communication of meaning through simple words and phrases to writing for a range of purposes with the development of sustained ideas in Year 4. The very good teaching in the literacy hour enables pupils to make good progress in lessons and consolidate previous learning well.

103 The school has been very effective in its planning for the literacy hour and the use of this time for teaching literacy skills. The very good support and monitoring of this by the Local Education Authority have enabled the school to focus on specific elements, for example spelling and writing. The development of pupils' literacy skills is supported well throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils record investigations in science and write down a hypothesis. In geography they record their findings and observations about sources of rubbish and waste. In history pupils write about their experiences and formulated questions for a visitor who came to talk to them about the toys and games he had when a child. Pupils have individual targets for literacy and they refer regularly to these during lessons. Pupils with special educational needs receive well-focused support so that they can use their literacy skills to best effect and make progress towards their targets.

104 Pupils have good attitudes towards literacy. They concentrate well when someone else is

reading or when writing down words in a spelling test. They help each other by offering suggestions or finding words on a word list for each other. Pupils are confident that they may ask any questions and are settled and ready for work. When asked by the teacher if he would like her to spell a word, a Year 1 pupil replied, "It'll be in the dictionary," and proceeded to find the word. Pupils like to use dictionaries and reference material. Some, however, are still adapting to the requirement for independent working and require regular reminders that there are times when the teacher is not able to deal with their enquiries and how to help themselves.

105 The teaching of English is good overall and in literacy lessons is very good. Lessons are planned well for the mixed-age groups and the choice of text is suitably challenging for everyone. Activities are carefully matched to the ages and abilities of the pupils. Practical activities, for example the making of sandwiches, are purposeful and relevant. Teachers skilfully encourage pupils to think of alternative words to change what they read into their own words. The technical language so appreciated by pupils is used consistently and correctly so that pupils add it to their own vocabulary. Pupils are made aware that the teacher recognises when targets are reached and praise for success is clear. Lessons are well structured and balanced and there are some helpful comments in books to indicate to pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. Teachers and the classroom assistant work well together and use resources thoughtfully.

106 There is a comprehensive policy for English, which has been adapted successfully for the literacy hour. The literacy hour is having a positive impact on the development of pupils' literacy skills. Procedures for formal assessment are in place and the school makes very good use of analyses of results to correctly identify priorities for action. Resources are good overall and include a suitable selection of books for group reading. The library has a satisfactory stock of non-fiction books and is accessible to pupils, although it is not an area where they may sit and read quietly. There have been positive improvements to the English provision since the last inspection. As a result standards have risen and the quality of pupils' progress has improved significantly.

Mathematics

107 In national tests for seven-year-olds in 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 and above (100%) was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 (22%) was also above the national average. Results in 1996 and 1997 were above the national average but in 1998 there was a dip in the results, although the percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 in that year was twice the national average. In 1999 results have risen again, exceeding the results of any previous years. The size of the groups of pupils taking the test each year is very small and so results can be affected dramatically by the performance of one individual. It is for this reason that statistical data in small schools should be interpreted with caution and comparisons with similar schools cannot be made. The improvement in attainment is due to the school making a thorough analysis of the results of national tests and the good attention given to the planning of the subject. There is no significant difference in attainment of boys and girls.

108 Inspection judgement places attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 and in Years 3 and 4 above average. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils have a secure foundation in the use of number. They can quickly place numbers in correct order, knowing which numbers combine to make ten and what must be added to a particular number to make an answer of ten or more. They understand that 2×3 and 3×2 mean the same and are able to choose the correct symbol to make a mathematical statement. In their daily mental lesson they can double numbers accurately or split numbers into equal parts, counting up in multiples of twos, threes and fives. Pupils are suitably developing their mental recall and mental strategies to find methods for adding and subtracting numbers with at least two digits.

109 By the end of Year 4, most pupils are successfully ordering, adding and subtracting

numbers. Most pupils see patterns and sequences in numbers and can count on according to the pattern. For example, pupils can count on from 78 in hundreds or multiples of 15. They are developing effective strategies for mental calculation of addition and subtraction, though their speed and accuracy of calculation are sometimes hindered when they have insufficient recall of basic mathematical terms. Samples of work show pupils attaining well with the use of money, measurement, length, perimeters and decimals. They classify two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and communicate and interpret data through bar charts and histograms. Pupils use mathematical language confidently and higher attaining pupils use the correct language when explaining their work. Pupils use information technology well to support their learning in the subject, for example to make graphs of data they have collected.

1In both key stages progress is good both over time and in most individual lessons. Pupils are making good progress in the increasing speed and accuracy of their calculations and their widening mathematical vocabulary, recognising the terminology and symbols used in mathematics. They consolidate their skills through daily practice, often in practical applications that become increasingly difficult. Pupils with special educational needs are making good progress because tasks are carefully matched to their needs. Pupils' progress in both classes is well supported with good teaching and the benefit of small teaching groups, which provide each pupil with plenty of individual attention. Samples of pupils' work show that over a period they have covered a considerable amount of work and there is appropriate variety in the range of mathematical tasks, with an appropriate emphasis on developing skills of mathematical investigation. For example, pupils in Year 4 investigated and recorded how frequently particular letters of the alphabet were used in a text. The previous inspection reported that although standards in number were good they were rarely applied in problem solving and investigations. The school has successfully overcome this shortcoming.

111 Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good; they are often highly motivated, concentrate well, and work with interest and enthusiasm at a good rate. They are very well behaved and respond very quickly and willingly to the teaching. Their attitudes and responses support their progress very well. When oral sessions are too lengthy they become a little restless but soon settle when given a written task. In both classes pupils are not afraid to ask for adult help and any talking is appropriately related to the task in hand. They are aware of the need to complete their work within a limited time. Pupils in Key Stage 1, for example, enjoy the challenge of completing their work before the teacher's alarm clock goes off. When the mathematics lesson takes place at the end of a busy day some younger pupils become tired and lose interest and they make less progress.

112 In both key stages the quality of teaching is good. Lesson plans contain clear learning objectives that are well rooted in the National Numeracy Strategy. In the best lessons there is a good balance between number work and the other aspects of mathematics. In both classes there is a mix of ages and levels of attainment but both teachers are skilful at pitching questioning at appropriate levels. Tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities, enabling them to make good progress. In most lessons, for example, work is prepared and taught to meet at least three different levels of attainment. When individual pupils' interest wanes they are sensitively drawn back into the lesson. Teachers make good use of resources, choosing materials to stimulate pupils and providing challenging work sheets. Practical tasks effectively reinforce what has been taught directly in both classes. In a good lesson in Key Stage 1, when it became clear that individual pupils had not fully understood a particular point, the teacher patiently repeated and reinforced the point until the pupils had understood. Marking in both classes is not only supportive but also diagnoses pupils' needs. Both class teachers have high expectations of their pupils and good knowledge and understanding of the subject.

113 The school has successfully adopted the National Numeracy Strategy, and pupils are starting to show a suitable understanding of the number system and have a repertoire of accurate computational skills. Pupils apply their numeracy skills appropriately in other subjects across the curriculum, as in science to record temperatures, or in history to sequence time.

114 The planning of mathematics is suitably evaluated and the co-ordinator has a good overview of standards in the subject and the quality of teaching. There is a good range of resources to support teachers. The subject has recently benefited from expenditure to purchase relevant materials to support the National Numeracy Strategy, including a structured commercial scheme. Information technology is used well to support the subject.

115 At the time of the previous inspection in 1996 standards were judged to be in line with national expectations. Since then standards have improved, being now consistently above average. The investigative element of the curriculum is now well addressed and there was no evidence of excess time being spent in class discussion as was reported previously. The school has set itself appropriate targets for the year 2000 to reflect appropriately the prior attainment of the pupils who will be tested.

Science

116 In end of Key Stage 1 teacher assessments in 1999 the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2 and above (100%) was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 was about average. Results in 1998 were below the national average at Level 2 or above, although the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3 was above the national average. Results in 1998 show a variable picture: attainment in physical processes was very high when compared with the national average; attainment in materials and their properties attainment was below average; and in investigative science and the study of life and living processes it was well below the national average. Inspection judgement based on evidence from all year groups and the observation of one lesson in Key Stage 2 is that standards in science are above average.

117 By the end of Key Stage 1 the majority of pupils have a broad knowledge and understanding of simple scientific processes. Pupils make a good start on experimental work, for example by planting beans and observing their growth and becoming familiar with parts of a plant, recognising the roots, stem and leaves. Not only do they learn simple scientific facts but they also develop a range of scientific skills, which they use in their investigations. For example, they record items that are attracted or repelled by magnets, adding a further refinement by testing the magnets through materials such as cotton wool or tissue paper. They investigate how materials can change shape by categorising them when bent, squashed or stretched. Through heating chocolate, butter and wax they learn that substances change when heated. Samples of work show that pupils are able to use scientific vocabulary such as 'transparent', 'floating' and 'sinking' with accuracy and understanding.

118 By the time they leave the school pupils have covered a wide range of topics that build well on their experiences in Key Stage 1. They understand reflection and can suggest which sources of light are artificial or natural or which objects are reflective or non-reflective. When devising investigations they understand the need to make a test fair and they use practical skills with confidence. They have good levels of scientific knowledge and understanding and use the appropriate words to describe their

experiences. For example, one higher attaining pupil was able to explain concisely several scientific concepts within one experiment when describing how particles of sand, salt and iron filings were mixed together and then separated using magnetism, filtration and evaporation.

119 Pupils make good progress in the subject both in individual lessons and over time through increasing gains in knowledge and a widening range of scientific skills in experimental and investigative science. Through practical activities pupils' understanding of scientific concepts increases as they learn to categorise objects and recognise and describe properties of materials. Their repertoire of skills such as predicting, hypothesising and recording is developing well. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their prior attainment. Their skills are built upon effectively as pupils grow older. Literacy and numeracy skills are used well to record work in science.

120 Pupils respond enthusiastically to their work. Most pupils have good attitudes to learning and particularly enjoy practical activities. They think hard about the answers they give to teachers' questions and are keen to make suggestions. Practical tasks are tackled sensibly. They remember well the things they have learned in previous lessons and apply that knowledge in their practical work. They work co-operatively on group tasks.

121 The previous inspection judged that standards were in line with national expectation and the quality of teaching was sound. In the one lesson seen during the current inspection the quality of teaching was good. The teacher had secure subject knowledge and the lesson was well organised and had clear objectives that were achieved. New material was introduced effectively and challenging open-ended questions built well on pupils' previous learning. The teacher had high expectations of behaviour and managed the class well. The end of the lesson was less effective than the beginning because insufficient provision was made for pupils who had completed their task early and they were not occupied productively while the teacher was preoccupied with individuals. In both classes planning is thorough and the tasks set are appropriately matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Assessments of pupils' progress are an integral part of teachers' plans and are made regularly to establish what has been learned.

122 There is a policy for science but it is outdated and in need of review. Staff are aware of this and plan to update it in line with the pending new National Curriculum. Other documentation for the subject is of good quality and supports teaching effectively. In particular the medium-term planning is comprehensive and carefully thought out, and key assessments are built in to save teachers valuable time. The subject is well resourced and meets requirements fully. Although the teaching of the subject is not monitored systematically a careful analysis is made of test results.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

110 Information technology

123 In information technology standards are above those expected nationally and pupils make good progress in developing their skills through using a range of software that is well matched to their needs. Pupils with special needs also make good progress.

124 Pupils in Key Stage 1 are becoming familiar with some of the things computers can do and beginning to learn simple keyboard skills; for example, they give commands confidently and choose colours and shapes which they fill with colour. They can click onto a shape and drag the cursor across the screen to enlarge the size of the shapes. They can then use some of the additional functions to enhance their pictures, such as stippling to make the effect of hair. All pupils in the key stage word-process directly onto the screen. They know how to correct errors and use capital letters and full stops. They save their work onto their personal floppy disk using the 'quit' and 'store' instruction. By the end of the key stage pupils are confident in using listening centres, programmable toys and computers to assist their learning. They use computer programs to help consolidate their work in most subjects of the curriculum, particularly in mathematics, science and English.

125 In Key Stage 2 word-processing skills become more developed and pupils can change the style and size of the font, delete and highlight text. Higher attaining pupils can correct spelling errors. Most know how to get into programs and set up the computer ready for use. They use a graphics program to create attractive circular designs, giving commands to change colour and pattern. They compose their own music, recording in simple notation and selecting the instruments of their choice. In a mathematical investigation they collected data about the distance travelled by their snails and recorded it in a graph to show which one travelled the furthest.

126 In both key stages progress is good. Early confidence in using computers develops into assured attitudes, which enable pupils to experiment and try out their own ideas. As they move through the school pupils use information technology in applications that become increasingly demanding. They broaden their repertoire of skills and consolidate them through the regular and frequent access they have to computers. When supported by adults with good knowledge of information technology pupils make very good progress because of the individual tuition they receive and the suitability of tasks for their levels of skill and their interests. Pupils gain their knowledge and skills in a systematic way and in an appropriate sequence.

127 Pupils' attitudes are good. They enjoy working on the equipment and concentrate well on the tasks they are given. They willingly help each other and are keen to explain what they are doing on the computer. They watch carefully and try hard to copy what their teacher has demonstrated. They make sensible suggestions, for example ways in which the patterns they have created on screen could be used to make a frame for a picture or a design for a card. Collaborative work is good and pupils are keen to share their knowledge with each other, particularly in Key Stage 2.

128 In the one lesson seen in Key Stage 1 the quality of teaching was very good, underpinned by a high level of expertise and enthusiasm. Pupils were encouraged to be independent but were supported well when they needed assurance or further explanation. The teacher had very high expectations of what the pupils could achieve in the lesson and all rose to the challenge successfully. The direct teaching was clear

and authoritative but it was also presented in a lively manner that aroused the curiosity of the pupils. Both classes benefit from being taught by the member of staff with good subject knowledge and this impacts well on standards. In both classes the teachers ensure that the time used on computers is productive, and good use is made of the classroom assistant to supervise pupils as they work. Staff are confident in their use of information technology and are committed to further developing their expertise. Pupils have regular well-monitored access to equipment.

129 Information technology is effectively co-ordinated and there is a high ratio of computers to pupils. There is a good range of peripheral resources such as printers, programmable toys and software, although the variation in types of computer means that the systems are not always compatible and this hinders teaching. The clear documentation for the subject gives good support to teachers for planning and ensures that pupils develop skills in an appropriate sequence as they progress through the school. The school has a varied range of software, well chosen to develop a range of skills. The previous inspection judged standards to be in line with national expectation and the quality of teaching sound. The evidence of teaching in one lesson, teachers' planning and pupils' range of skills suggests an improvement in standards and the quality of teaching since then.

Religious education

130 At the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4, their attainment is above the expectations of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.

131 By the age of seven, pupils have a good knowledge of major Christian festivals. They know in which season of the year different festivals are celebrated. They have a growing understanding of seasonal change and how it affects the world around them. Pupils have a good understanding of family relationships and of what is special about them. They give many instances of the important role of mothers who care for them, look at books with them, and buy things for them. Pupils are beginning to understand that all members of the family, however extended it may be, are special and unique in their own way. Pupils are gaining an understanding of some of the practices and beliefs of Judaism and Islam. They produce detailed and attractive drawings of a range of topics, for example, Mendhi patterns and Eid cards.

132 By the age of nine, many pupils can give detailed accounts of stories from the Bible. Pupils recall the stories and the meaning or moral within the stories, for example the relationship between Jacob and Esau and that between Joseph and his brothers. They are aware of the stories of the Old and New Testaments and have a good understanding of the similarities and differences that exist between Christianity and other faiths. For example, they become familiar with the artefacts and symbols of different religions, such as Sikhism, and know the meaning of Pentecost for Christians. Pupils know why Jewish people celebrate Shabbat and they understand the symbolism of the cloth, candles and salt. They have sensitivity for "the natural, beautiful and amazing things in our world." Pupils paint sunsets, trees, water and landscapes in water-colours and ask their own questions about the Creation, for example, "Is God a magician?" or "Was there really an explosion that made the earth?" They make their

own promises to care for the environment.

133 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They gain confidence in asking questions and sharing opinions. Pupils consolidate their knowledge and understanding of artefacts through displays and lessons such as the informative and interesting lesson related to the Jewish Shabbat. Pupils develop skills in recording their own feelings and thoughts about their work. They draw conclusions about, for example, how much there is to say “thank you” for in the world. They observe any time for reflection well.

134 Pupils’ attitudes to religious education are good. They sit and listen well, enjoy discussions and contribute willingly to the lesson or in assembly. Sometimes they find it difficult to remember to take turns in speaking and noise levels rise as excitement builds during the lesson. Older pupils make sensible and sensitive suggestions, for example explaining that Jewish people “may wash their hands to wash away their sins.”

135 The quality of teaching is good. The teacher is confident and very clear about what the pupils are to learn in the lessons. The very good range of artefacts is used well and the use of role-play, to give first-hand experience, deepens pupils’ understanding and reinforces new gains in knowledge in the lesson. Literacy skills are reinforced well in the lessons and there is a good range of interesting activities for the pupils.

136 The scheme of work is linked well to the Suffolk agreed syllabus and the range of artefacts has been improved since the last inspection. These support the curriculum well. Visitors and visits to places of worship enrich the curriculum and religious education makes a good contribution to assemblies and to pupils’ spiritual and social development.

Art

137 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in their acquisition of skills such as painting, printing and collage-making. In the Key Stage 2 class progress accelerates and by the end of their time in the school pupils make very good progress, and their knowledge of artists and the quality of their work in painting often exceed those typically found in similar schools. Pupils with special educational needs are well-integrated into groups and make good progress. Judgements are based on the evidence of two lessons seen, one in each key stage, the work on display, teachers’ plans and the scrutiny of pupils’ past work.

138 In Key Stage 1 pupils become familiar with a range of materials and techniques. Through regular practice they make good progress in developing their skills. They deepen their awareness of colour and explore its potential in paint and in weaving. They create effective woven patterns in fabric and paper, becoming increasingly adept at manipulating the threads. They use subject specific vocabulary accurately, referring for instance to the ‘warp’ and ‘weft’. When describing shades of colour pupils refer to ‘hot’ and ‘cold’ colours. They recognise that colours have degrees of shade, which they try to introduce into their weaving work, for example by ordering shades from dark to

light.

139 In Key Stage 2 pupils make good gains in knowledge about the work of the Impressionists. They can talk confidently about artists such as Cézanne and successfully capture the characteristic features of his pictures in their own work. Most pupils in the class accurately re-create the colours used by the artist and reproduce his style in still life drawings of high quality. Higher attaining pupils are able to show shading and tone. Through experimentation with charcoal they become familiar with the potential of the medium, discovering how to create a softer line by smudging it with a finger. They then make good progress by applying their new skills in effective line drawings. When working with watercolours most pupils can confidently create a colour wash as a background for their pictures and apply paint with control and often fine detail.

140 Through regular practice as they become older, pupils improve their ability to use a paintbrush correctly to achieve the best results and they become more adept at mixing watercolours accurately. They broaden their repertoire of skills with a range of different techniques and materials and extend their ability to evaluate their work. Pupils with special educational needs progress well, particularly with tasks that allow them to achieve success.

141 The attitudes of pupils throughout the school are good. Indeed, when a group of pupils in Key Stage 2 were discussing the curriculum they were unanimous that art was their favourite subject. They enjoy their art lessons and show considerable maturity when selecting materials, for example, paying particular attention to choosing the correct size of brush. The behaviour and levels of concentration of pupils were especially good in a lesson in Key Stage 2, when they were thoroughly absorbed with painting, taking great care and pride with their work. They listened carefully to the teacher's advice and tried hard to follow it up in their own work.

142 The teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and very good in Key Stage 2, where the teacher has a personal interest in the subject and very good subject knowledge. In both classes teachers have high expectations of their pupils' performance and this has a positive impact on pupils' attainment, progress and attitudes. Both teachers consistently encourage the pupils to look closely at the subject of their work and to talk about the colours and effects they wish to achieve, using the correct vocabulary. This was exemplified in a very good lesson in Key Stage 2. The teacher's direct teaching style and her constant active support and advice brought the best out of the pupils, many of whom consequently produced work of high quality.

143 The co-ordination and management of the subject are good. There is a policy in place with appropriate guidelines for its implementation. Medium-term planning is detailed and indicates the skills that are to be taught. The recently introduced sketchbooks have the potential to raise standards further when their use is fully established and evaluated. Display is a good feature of art throughout the school, for instance as seen in the attractive work depicting the beauty of the world. At the time of the previous inspection standards were judged to be in line with national expectation and the quality of teaching sound. The current evidence indicates that standards have risen since then.

110 Design and technology

144 Although only one lesson was seen during the inspection, from samples of pupils work, displays, teachers' planning and school documentation pupils are judged to be making satisfactory progress in the subject and to achieve standards that are typical for their age.

145 In Key Stage 1 pupils begin to learn and apply some of the skills needed for designing and making things. They can explain, with adult prompting, how they used several skills to make their attractive wall hangings. They first designed them on paper, then cut round them using the paper pattern as a template. They then stitched them to the background using two different stitches, before gluing on a wooden hanger. The pupils show an understanding of the need to design before making. They sew with developing dexterity and handle scissors, paper and glue sensibly.

146 By the end of Year 4 pupils develop more sophisticated skills and ideas for designing and making tasks. They recognise the importance of the design process and apply their ideas to tasks such as making pop-up puppets. They employ a range of skills such as cutting accurately and sticking fabrics and re-cycled items effectively to create a range of characters for their puppets, such as a lion, pirate or rabbit. The end products are attractive and robust and work well. Measuring skills are used effectively when pupils cut wooden doweling to exact lengths to produce a wooden photograph frame. They take care to glue the corners in neat right angles and then stick on sequins to embellish their work.

147 Pupils make sound progress in broadening their skills, knowledge and understanding in design and technology as they move through the school. They gain experience of working with a range of different materials and tools and learn to evaluate and improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into the design technology activities; they attain appropriately and make satisfactory progress.

148 In the one lesson seen the pupils showed good attitudes to their work. They enjoyed their technology experience and demonstrated concentration and a willingness to persevere with the task until it was completed. They have come to realise that some projects that are worthwhile last over several weeks and cannot be completed in one lesson. They work safely, handling needles, glue and scissors sensibly and showing appropriate levels of resourcefulness. They take great pride in hanging up their finished work for display.

149 The one lesson observed was taken by the classroom assistant from plans provided by the co-ordinator. Expectations of what pupils would achieve resulted in a productive and interesting lesson, and pupils produced worthwhile items. The lesson was well planned and managed. Resources were carefully prepared and the task was explained clearly. Good support and advice were given as the pupils were working and this enabled them all to produce something of which they were proud. The support for pupils with special educational needs was particularly effective. Good discipline was maintained, yet pupils were allowed freedom to discuss and work together. In general

there is little evidence of pupils benefiting from opportunities to design and make items of their own choice with more scope for individuality and creativity.

150 The school has a good range of documentation that supports teaching well. This comprises medium and short-term plans with detailed lesson notes for each class and built-in assessment tasks. There is an appropriate range of resources to implement the current curriculum. The sound standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.

Geography

151 Only one lesson of geography was observed during the inspection. Evidence was therefore gathered from the scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work, and also from discussion with teachers and pupils. Pupils are judged to make good progress in the subjects.

152 Pupils in Key Stage 1 broaden their geographical vocabulary and come to know about physical features such as hills, woods, lakes, mountains and cliffs through the story of 'Shipwreck Sam'. They understand simple uses for maps when recording key places from the story. Through following routes around the school building they learn positional vocabulary which they use to describe their route from home to school. Following a walk round the village of Peasenhall pupils were able to compare the buildings and record their route in a three-dimensional model map.

153 Pupils in Key Stage 2 have a good knowledge of the physical features of a river. They knowledgeably explained how a river changes in character on its journey from its source to the sea, defining such features such as tributaries, estuaries and oxbow lakes accurately and confidently. They are very aware of the effects of pollution and concerned about the effects it has on the environment. They can name several pollutants, differentiating between materials that are biodegradable and those that are not. They are familiar with the symbols used on Ordnance Survey maps as well as how to use a scale and key. With a little help higher attainers are able to orientate a map correctly. By the end of Year 4 they gain an insight into an overseas locality through their study of St Lucia.

154 Progress is good. Pupils increase their knowledge and understanding of geography through a variety of practical activities and visits that enable them to gain first-hand experience of the area in which they live. The basic skills of reading and drawing maps develop as pupils pass through the school and the vocabulary necessary for the study of geography increases over time. Pupils' knowledge of geographical facts increases and their skills of enquiry develop well. For example, in a lesson on pollution they hypothesised about where items of waste in a picture had originated. They discussed their ideas maturely and drew inferences from the pictures.

156 Pupils' attitudes to their work are good. The majority of pupils recall with enthusiasm what they have seen and learned. They listen attentively to their teacher and are eager to contribute to the discussion. They use the classroom responsibly, quickly moving into their groups, in which they discuss the work maturely. They use the subject-specific vocabulary they have learned particularly well. Most are sensitive to

the effects of global warming and pollution on the environment and express their concerns candidly.

156 The quality of teaching in the one lesson observed was good. The lesson was well prepared and organised and featured well chosen, open-ended activities that were carefully matched to the pupils' needs. The 'rubbish' that pupils were asked to classify was well chosen and appropriate consideration was given to hygiene. Questioning was pertinent and well focused, extending pupils' thinking and encouraging the use of geographical vocabulary. Through framing questions in an open way the teacher was able to extend speaking and listening skills effectively by eliciting extended responses from the pupils. The teacher had high expectations not only of what the pupils were to achieve in the lesson but also of their behaviour. The direct teaching to the class was knowledgeable and interesting, giving rise to a productive class discussion.

157 Curriculum documentation provides a good level of support for planning. Literacy and numeracy are used well to support work in geography; there is less evidence of the use of information technology. Good use is made of local places of interest as a focus for learning. The subject makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. At the time of the previous inspection attainment was judged to be in line with national expectation and pupils made sound progress. This standard has been improved and they now make good progress.

110 History

158 Only one history lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on this lesson, samples of pupils' work, teachers' planning and from discussion with pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress in both key stages.

159 In Key Stage 1 pupils develop a sense of history and an understanding of genealogy through links with their own lives and those of their parents and grandparents. Through looking at old fashioned toys and responses to a questionnaire completed by their parents pupils come to recognise differences between toys past and present. They know something of the games that were played by children in the past such as hopscotch and skipping rhymes. Throughout the key stage they develop historical skills such as sequencing events, for example by placing pictures of bicycles and cars in order of the oldest to the most modern. They are aware of some of the differences between domestic life now and in the past, recognising some of the differences in household appliances and kitchen utensils.

160 Through making a study of the school building pupils in Key Stage 2 know about some of the architectural features typical of 1875, such as the outside toilets, the school house and the bell turret. They re-enacted a typical Victorian school day, recognising how school has changed since that time. They used the original school logbook and admissions register to research information. By the end of Year 4 pupils have a sound knowledge of the characteristic features of the Ancient Greek civilisation and what everyday life must have been like at that time. They know how archaeologists find out about the past from excavation and they consolidate this

knowledge in practical tasks such as piecing together pottery.

161 In both key stages pupils make sound progress in broadening their knowledge and developing their enquiry skills. They consolidate their learning in well chosen, practical activities. Pupils become increasingly aware of the passage of time and study close to home brings relevance to their work. The early enquiry skills established in Key Stage 1, such as simple pictorial recording and sequencing pictures of events are developed in Key Stage 2 with increasing sophistication. For example, pupils use primary evidence such as old documents as a source of information from which to draw conclusions about the past.

162 Pupils have good attitudes to their work. In the one lesson seen pupils sat and listened to an elderly visitor with interest as he spoke about toys and games of the past. One pupil was able to articulate a developing understanding of the passing of time by asking 'Do you think our toys will be olden days one day?' Older pupils recall some of the topics they have learned about.

163 The quality of teaching in the one lesson seen was good, making effective use of a local resident to bring the past alive for the pupils. The lesson was well planned and prepared with an interesting selection of artefacts and photographs to stimulate the pupils. Careful questioning extended the pupils' answers further and the pace of the lesson was maintained well by the frequent introduction of different toys. The teacher successfully wove in teaching points to supplement the contribution of the visitor.

164 Planning for history is thorough and covers all elements of the National Curriculum well. The curriculum planning judiciously takes account of the topics pupils will study at the middle school. Literacy and numeracy support the subject appropriately, for example when pupils make graphs of their favourite toys from the past. School resources are developing; there are plenty of reference books, posters and teachers' packs but artefacts are few and are supplemented by items that pupils bring from home. Good use is made of resources further afield such as the Roman site at Colchester and the East Anglian Museum, where pupils re-enact an Edwardian school day. The sound standards reported in the previous inspection have been maintained.

Music

165 Only one lesson, in the Year 3 and 4 class, was observed. Evidence was taken from this, observation of a hymn practice and a recorder practice session, discussions with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of planning.

166 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make adequate progress in Key Stage 1 and before they leave the school at the end of Year 4. They develop an appropriate repertoire of songs, hymns and action songs. They develop an awareness of tempo and pitch, confidently maintaining a rhythm when clapping or tapping, and singing. Pupils tap the rhythm "knife and fork" or "sp-oo-n" accurately and start or stop as directed. Pupils who play the recorder use their knowledge of notation when they follow songs in a book. They learn new tunes quickly and soon have favourite rhythms

and verses, which they sing confidently. Pupils sing a French rhyme with increasing accuracy and show a determination to learn to sing a round in two and four parts during a lesson.

167 When practising what they have learned on the recorder boys and girls demonstrate knowledge of several notes, which they combine well to play tunes. They follow the notes, or names of notes, on the page competently. In hymn practice pupils' singing is accompanied sympathetically by the keyboard and this enables pupils to maintain the mood, rhythm and tempo of the hymns well. They sing enthusiastically to a rhythmic guitar accompaniment in assembly.

168 Pupils have good attitudes to music. They enjoy playing instruments and singing. They share books well and follow the words and notes of complex songs confidently. When practising the round, they concentrate well and work together to ensure that their group holds the part properly.

169 In the one lesson seen the teaching was good, making effective use of a taped broadcast. The pace of the lesson was brisk and the teacher gave clear signals to pupils when they were to change their hand movements or to allow for a rest before coming in to sing. Well-earned praise and encouragement were freely given and the momentum of the lesson lasted until the last minute.

170 There is an appropriate curriculum for music and the resources are satisfactory but overall the quality of provision in this subject does not match that for other subjects. This is because in general teachers' subject knowledge is limited and they lack the necessary expertise to take learning beyond basic skills or to provide the necessary advice to enable pupils to improve the quality of their performance. The recorded programme is used well to compensate for teachers' lack of musical confidence. There is an interesting scheme to provide appropriately for listening to and appreciating music and pupils in both key stages have the opportunity to learn to play the recorder, but overall the school lacks a clear framework to give a structure to the teaching of the subject by non-specialists. Pupils have opportunities to compose, some of the older pupils using the keyboard and computer for this activity. Visits to theatres enhance pupils' learning but the school is aware that this is a subject that requires further development to build on pupils' interest and enthusiasm and broaden their musical experience and expertise.

Physical education

171 Only one lesson was observed in physical education, in the Year 1 and 2 class. From this, and observations of pupils in the playground, discussion with the co-ordinator and scrutiny of planning, it is judged that pupils in both key stages, including those with special education needs, make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils go swimming for one term and quickly acquire confidence in the water, some learning to swim at least 25 metres before they leave the school.

172 At Key Stage 1 pupils improve their hopping skills by concentrating well on the initial two or three steps. They extend this to hopping with reasonable balance over

small cones set out in a line. They throw beanbags with careful aim, establishing a route for their hopping before jumping the route again, but with two feet together. They jump around cones, in and out of the spaces before them. Pupils throw and catch quoits, quickly discovering that the shorter distance they throw them the easier it is to catch the quoits. They use the playground space well. By the end of the lesson pupils are able to use these skills confidently in a traditional game of hopscotch. In both key stages pupils show good co-ordination when playing ball games or having races in the playground. They play safely and with an awareness of others.

173 Pupils behave well and have good attitudes in physical education. They are dressed appropriately for games outside and are very sensible when getting out the apparatus. Pupils follow instructions well and enjoy the lesson, although initially there are groans when they are told that the warm-up will be energetic and they have to practise hopping, which they know is difficult. When actually hopping and jumping, however, they concentrate well and try hard.

174 In the one lesson seen, the quality of teaching was good and the planning of the small steps of the activities leading to games' activity was thoughtful and precise. Good use was made of the outside space and the equipment, including the games marked on the playground. The lesson proceeded at a brisk pace and the time given for each practice activity was appropriate. Pupils were praised for their efforts and encouraged to challenge themselves further. This helped them to achieve well in the lesson.

175 The requirements of the National Curriculum are met over the year. Resources are satisfactory and the use of the halls of larger schools and their physical education equipment during the spring term gives pupils good opportunities to practise a wider range of skills. Pupils enjoy these lessons and look forward to using ropes and wall bars. In the summer term the pupils in Key Stage 2 go swimming at a public pool. This ensures that all pupils have an opportunity to learn to swim before they leave the school. The school is involved in inter-school sporting and country dancing events, which provides additional opportunities for personal and social development.

176 Since the last inspection, the school has amended its arrangements for physical education off the school site and less time is used for travelling during the year. This is an improvement. Good use is made of the school's grounds for outdoor activities such as trails and the development of physical skills in the adventure playground.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

177 Three inspectors, including a lay inspector, visited the school for a total of six inspection days, totalling over 18 hours. During this time, 20 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work, listened to a sample of pupils from all classes and year groups read, and examined a sample of pupils' current and previous work. This included work completed by pupils in all areas of the curriculum and provided a representative sample from pupils of all ages and levels of attainment. Displays in classes and public areas were examined.

178 Teachers' planning, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and samples of annual reports to parents were examined. A wide range of school documentation was examined, including school policies and guidelines, minutes of meetings and the school development plan. All documents and records relating to pupils with special educational needs were also inspected.

179 Acts of worship were observed and interviews were held with teachers, non-teaching staff, the school secretary, members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and a number of parents and visitors to the school.

180 The Registered Inspector also held a meeting attended by 16 parents shortly before the inspection. In addition, 15 responses to the questionnaires completed by parents were analysed.

181 DATA AND INDICATORS

110 Pupil data

| | Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent) | Number of pupils with statements of SEN | Number of pupils on school's register of SEN | Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals |
|---------|---|---|--|---|
| YR – Y4 | 21 | 0 | 5 | * |
| | | | | |

* This information has been omitted so as not to identify individual pupils.

110 Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent) | 2.12 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 9.9 |

Education support staff (YR – Y4)

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 1 |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week | 13.5 |

| | |
|---------------------|------|
| Average class size: | 10.5 |
|---------------------|------|

110 Financial data

| | |
|-----------------|--------|
| Financial year: | 1998/9 |
|-----------------|--------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total Income | 110,462 |
| Total Expenditure | 109,809 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 5,229 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | -2,555 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | -1,902 |

PARENTAL SURVEY

| | |
|------------------------------------|----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out: | 21 |
| Number of questionnaires returned: | 15 |

Responses (percentage of answers in each category) :

| | Strongl y agree | Agre e | Neith er | Disagre e | Strongl y disagre e |
|---|--------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|---------------------------|
| I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school | 27 | 60 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 27 | 67 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school handles complaints from parents well | 7 | 40 | 47 | 7 | 0 |
| The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught | 0 | 87 | 7 | 7 | 0 |
| The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress | 7 | 67 | 13 | 13 | 0 |
| The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work | 13 | 60 | 27 | 0 | 0 |
| The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons | 7 | 20 | 33 | 33 | 7 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home | 20 | 53 | 20 | 7 | 0 |
| The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren) | 7 | 60 | 33 | 0 | 0 |
| The school achieves high standards of good behaviour | 7 | 67 | 27 | 0 | 0 |
| My child(ren) like(s) school | 27 | 60 | 7 | 7 | 0 |

Other issues raised by parents

In general parents are very supportive of the school and are happy with what it is achieving. A few expressed a desire to see more extra-curricular activities. Inspection judgement is that the provision in such a small school with only two full time teachers is satisfactory, particularly in view of the many additional activities that enrich the curriculum such as visits, and the many activities available in the village.