

INSPECTION REPORT

Ringshall First Community School

Ringshall Stowmarket

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124604

Headteacher: Mrs Sally Green

Reporting inspector: Martin North
17078

Dates of inspection: 10/01/2000 – 14/01/2000

Inspection number: 189953

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Offton Road Ringshall Stowmarket Suffolk
Postcode:	IP14 2JD
Telephone number:	01473 658307
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Julia Shawe-Taylor
Date of previous inspection:	7-10-1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Martin North	Registered inspector	English, Art and Geography	English as an additional language. The School's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils' taught?
Ron Ibbitson	Lay inspector		Equal Opportunities. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils'? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Pat Holwill	Team inspector	Science, Information Technology, Design and Technology, Music.	Under Fives. How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Phil Willavoys	Team inspector	Mathematics, History, Physical Education and Religious Education	Special Educational Needs. How well is the school led and managed?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Ringshall co-educational first school with 166 pupils aged from 3 to 9 years old which is smaller than the average size primary. The school serves the rural community of four small villages and approximately 60% of the pupil's come from a Ministry of Defence base about 1 mile away. Only 12 pupils walk to school, the rest are bussed in or brought by car. There is significant movement of pupils in and out of the school, mainly of children whose parents work on the base. Last academic year over 37% of the school's population changed as families from the base were posted elsewhere. The attainment on entry is broadly average and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is close to the national average. There is very little ethnic diversity, 98.5% of pupils are from white UK heritage.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school that provides its pupils with a good standard of education so they make good progress. Most pupils attain standards expected for their age across all subjects although writing is a little below the standard expected. The proportion of pupils who attain the expected standards for reading and numeracy is above average when compared with all schools and with similar schools. Standards in writing, however, are below national and similar school averages. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school in each phase. The leadership and management of the school are good throughout, and focuses on providing the best opportunities to bring about improvements for the pupils. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in speaking and listening, reading, mathematics, science and ICT are on an upward trend.
- There is very good achievement in pupils' personal development that inculcates good attitudes and behaviour between pupils.
- There is very good social, moral, cultural and spiritual development.
- It cares very well for its pupils and provides a stimulating place of learning.
- It provides a very good start for pupils with a good foundation stage of education.
- Across all year groups pupils of all abilities are taught well including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs.
- The good quality leadership gives a clear sense of direction for the medium term. The school monitors its performance well.
- It enables pupils to develop good skills of research using ICT.
- It uses assessment data well to identify pupils' learning needs.
- Teachers plan in teams to ensure progress and continuity from year to year.
- Manages the frequent change in its population well so all are made to feel welcome and rapidly become included as part of the school community.

What could be improved

- Standards of presentation and layout of work need to be more consistent.
- The quality of writing in its variety, structure and complexity across the curriculum.
- Establish clear criteria by which the school can judge the effectiveness of its own spending decisions and make value for money judgements.
- Long term strategic planning and the process by which governors have input to the development plan.

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

The strengths of the school significantly outweigh those issues that need improvement.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected 7-10 October 1996. The school has made good progress over all in addressing the key issues identified in the last inspection report. Standards overall have improved and there is an underlying upward trend of rising standards. There is a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining higher than nationally expected standards overall in English and mathematics. Teachers plan very effectively for all the ability levels in the class to ensure challenging tasks are set. Marking of work is clear and pupils have good feedback from teachers about their progress. There remains a need for improvement in standards of presentation and layout of work to be consistent across all classes. There is a very effective monitoring system and thorough analysis of the information gained to improve the areas of weakness.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
reading	B	B	A	B
writing	C	A	D	D
mathematics	D	D	B	B

Key

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

The pupils make good progress in the time they are in school. Each year a significant number of pupils change schools other than those that would normally leave to go to the next phase of education. This interrupts their progress and has some effect on limiting the extent of attainment levels in the school. Most pupils attain standards broadly in line with national expectations for English, mathematics, science and information technology. They attain the expectations for the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education.

By the time they are 7 the proportion of pupils attaining national standards in speaking, listening, reading and mathematics is above that compared to national averages and compared with standards found in similar schools. Their attainment in writing is below the average found nationally and in similar schools. There is an upward trend over time for reading and mathematics but writing is more variable. The targets set for pupils' performance by the school, and agreed with the local education authority are challenging and show continuous improvement. The pattern of attainment seen at the end of Key Stage 1 parallels that attained by pupils by the time they are 9 when pupils attain broadly in line with standards expected for their age. There is difficulty in setting targets because of the transient nature of school's population.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are very good; they like coming to school. The ethos of the school encourages responsible attitudes. The school council is a good example of how pupils demonstrate mature and considerate attitudes to school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good. Caring teachers continually reinforce the values of the school and children need little reminding of the rules of behaviour which they helped to formulate. Very occasionally some pupils can be distracted in lessons by others.
Personal development and relationships	There are good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school. Children are friendly to visitors. They cheerfully and willingly take on responsibilities appropriate to their age in the everyday running of the school
Attendance	Pupils are punctual and there is a low level of unauthorised absence

The development of pupils' attitudes values and personal development is very good and a particular strength of the school. There are no significant aspects for development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is one of the school's strengths and has a very positive impact on helping pupils to make good progress. Overall approximately two thirds of teaching is good or better and about one fifth is very good. Almost invariably the teaching is at least satisfactory or better. Two new teachers had joined the school three days before the inspection and the good quality of the school's guidance for their teaching particularly in literacy and numeracy ensured continuity of the pupils' learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils is good. The curriculum is relevant and broadly based. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils take a full part in the work and life of the school. Individual education plans successfully provide appropriate targets for their future learning, especially in English and mathematics.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. These aspects of the curriculum are carefully planned to be included in assemblies and other subjects of the curriculum. Very good use is made of visits to enrich this aspect of study.

How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a caring school that offers its pupils a pleasant and stimulating place of learning. The very good support and guidance given is a significant contribution to pupil progress and development as it enables learning to take place in a secure and supportive environment. Children form close relationships with teachers and can readily approach them with any personal concerns. In a class discussion on relationships a girl in Year 4 said that being in class with her teacher and classmates felt like being in a family.
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Parents feel that the school encourages them to participate in the life of the school and many of them do by helping in classes, taking part in school visits and assisting with extra curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. . The headteacher leads effectively and is able to communicate a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff. They all work effectively as a team
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory obligations in a responsible thoughtful way and satisfy requirements. Development planning is mainly for a year and governors have limited input to the construction of the plan. Governors look for best value in any spending decisions.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is thorough analysis of information about the schools performance and there is a useful monitoring programme through which that information is gathered.
The strategic use of resources	Learning resources are used well throughout the school. All members of staff are deployed according to their experience and expertise. Accommodation is maintained and used well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pleased with pupils' progress; children are happy to come to school. • Higher attaining children's needs met. • Good attitudes and values. • High standard of behaviour through the use of positive strategies • Good support and guidance for pupils including those with special educational needs (SEN). • Easy access to information • Value dedication of staff • Nursery is valued 	

The inspection team supports the positive comments made by the very significant majority of parents who made comments to the team either at the meeting or through questionnaires. There were only two returns where issues for improvement were noted.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. In the foundation stage children's overall standards of attainment are above average. In personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, standards are good and are likely to be beyond the standards expected nationally of children by the time they are five years old. In creative and physical development, standards are satisfactory and are likely to be in line with the national expectations.
2. By the time they are 7 most pupils attain standards in English in line with those expected for their age. Although most make good progress building on earlier experiences, their levels of attainment are often affected by the length of time they have in school and many pupils have frequent changes of school. Attainment is best in speaking and listening and in reading. Compared with all schools the proportion of pupils attaining above the national standards for reading is well above the national average and above that in comparison with similar schools. Pupils' attainment in writing is below average when compared with both national and similar school averages. This is shown by a lack of fluency in pupils' writing across the curriculum.
3. Most pupils achieve standards by the age of nine that are broadly in line with those expected nationally for their age and make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs have well structured and resourced guidance and make good progress against the clear expectations set in individual education plans. Higher attaining pupils achieve good standards and make good progress as high expectations are set for their achievement. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
4. Standards in numeracy are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in mathematics are improving. The trend from 1997 to 1999 shows the attainment of seven years old pupils in national tests has risen from below to above the national average. The percentage of pupils achieving level 3, the higher level, was well above the national average. Progress overall is satisfactory and pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress.
5. Pupils' achievements in science are at least average levels of attainment by the end of the Key Stage 1 and by Year 4. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs have well focused support and make satisfactory progress.
6. In art, pupils' work is broadly in line with expectations for their age at 7 and 9 and progress is good overall. In geography and history pupils attain in line with standards expected nationally by the ages of 7 and 9 and achieve well. Pupils' standards in information technology are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Most of the Year 4 pupils are working comfortably at Level 3 and in some aspects of communication beyond that. Overall pupils achieve well in information technology. It is not possible to make statements about standards of attainment or the quality of teaching and learning in standards for music in Key Stage 2, but in Key Stage 1 standards of attainment are broadly average. In physical education pupils in Key Stage 1 standards are broadly in line with national expectations. In Key Stage 2, standards are broadly in line with what might be expected from pupils at this age. Progress in lessons for most pupils, including special educational needs, is good. Standards of attainment for religious education at the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Suffolk Syllabus and most pupils make sound progress. It is not possible to make judgements about standards in Design and Technology as no lessons were observed during the inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good.
8. Children like coming to school because of the support they receive and their overall level of attendance is very good. Pupils are punctual and have low levels of unauthorised absence. Registers are marked promptly and accurately at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions and no time is wasted in starting lessons.
9. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to acquire responsible attitudes to learning and to relate well to others. In a personal, social education lesson the teacher encouraged three boys who had been name calling to see the benefits of working together. In an assembly the head teacher used the example of two boys who had been fighting in the playground to emphasise that their behaviour was unacceptable and would not be tolerated. Caring teachers continually reinforce the values of the school and children need little reminding of the rules of behaviour that they themselves helped to formulate. Class rules are permanently displayed in all classrooms. Some children are boisterous at playtimes and at other times when moving around the school but behaviour overall is good and well intentioned. The school generally follows a positive behaviour policy where good conduct is rewarded. Teachers deal with any inappropriate behaviour promptly and firmly. No incidents of bullying were observed during the inspection and in the year under consideration there were no exclusions.
10. Pupils' learning and personal development is greatly aided by the good relationships they have with their teachers and ancillary staff. They also form good relationships with one another although these are sometimes abruptly terminated because of army families moving away. Pupils are willing to listen to others and recognise one another's efforts. They show a developing ability to reflect and discuss their feelings towards each other especially when given opportunities to do so, as in class discussions. The good relationships between staff and pupils promote a positive learning environment that enables pupils to trust and respect their teachers. Children are friendly to visitors and give a warm greeting when meeting them in the corridors or in the playground.
11. In assemblies children are given opportunities to reflect on what they do and how this may affect others and through this they gain a respect for the values and beliefs of others. The school also encourages all children and in particular Year 4 children, to show initiative and to accept responsibility for their actions. All Year 4 children are put into pairs and each pair have particular duties during the week, for example manning the telephone at lunch times. Children in other years are given tasks appropriate to their age, for example taking registers to the office. The tasks are willingly accepted by the children and cheerfully carried out.
12. The school has a 4th Year Council where pupils under the guidance of the headteacher meet once a week to discuss a variety of topics concerning the school. Pupils take these meetings seriously and make use of the opportunity to voice their views. In a council meeting the question of having a school mascot was fully looked into and the advantages and disadvantages considered. At this meeting children showed their maturity by listening patiently to the opinions of their classmates and while not always agreeing with them they attempted to understand their feelings. The council members also demonstrated a consideration of what the best outcome would be not only for themselves but also for the school as a whole when, for example, discussing who would look after the mascot in the school holidays.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of teaching is one of the school's strengths and has a very positive impact on helping pupils to make good progress. Overall approximately two thirds of teaching is good or better and about one fifth is very good. Almost invariably the teaching is at least satisfactory or better. Two new teachers had joined the school three days before the inspection and the quality of the school's guidance for their teaching particularly in literacy and numeracy, ensured continuity of the pupils' learning.
14. Teaching in the foundation years is at least good or better for almost all lessons and very good in half of lessons with no unsatisfactory teaching. In Key Stage 1 the teaching is frequently good or better for approximately four fifths of lessons with about fifth being very good with an isolated unsatisfactory session. In Key Stage 2 teaching is never less than satisfactory and good or better in close to half of lessons.
15. In all classes there are particular strengths in the ways teachers prepare lessons with very clear identification of what the pupils are to gain in new knowledge, the skills they are to develop and how pupils demonstrate their understanding of the focus of the lesson. There is good use of ongoing assessment and effective feedback to pupils that helps them improve. Good use is made of targets set for improvement in both literacy and numeracy. Through their planning teachers show they have good subject knowledge of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Frequently, there is good use of resources in both literacy and numeracy sessions to make the lessons interesting for the pupils. There are good choices of texts in literacy to engage the pupils' interest and very effective use of probing questions that extend pupils' understanding of the texts. The pace of the sessions is lively and pupils respond well, usually making good progress. The good discipline and relationships between pupils and staff enable pupils to concentrate on tasks and work co-operatively. In a few sessions there is insufficient time given to developing word level work..
16. In numeracy the quality of teaching is overall at least satisfactory, and often good or very good, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and their expectations of pupils' work are high. Planning is good and teachers are very clear about the learning objectives that they regularly share with the pupils. Consequently, pupils know what to expect, and what they should achieve from the lesson. Work is clearly differentiated for pupils of different ages and abilities. Teachers manage pupils in lessons well and they make effective use of the time available to them. Satisfactory use is made of homework to reinforce and build on concepts and skills. Where the teaching is just satisfactory and rarely unsatisfactory, too much time is spent on introductions to sessions, which limits the extent of pupils' response.
17. Teaching in science is mainly good and some times very good in both key stages, the rest is sound and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching of information technology is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. The quality of teaching of history and geography is good across the school. In the music lesson seen the quality of teaching was good. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in other areas of the curriculum with some that is good.
18. Pupils respond well and the overall good quality of teaching meets the range of needs for all pupils including higher attaining pupils and those with special educational needs. There are planned opportunities for good development in pupils' personal, social and health education and for co-operative and collaborative working. Pupils generally sustain concentration on their work and show enjoyment.

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

19. The quality and range of learning opportunities offered to pupils is good. The curriculum is relevant and broadly based. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and religious education. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and these pupils take a full part in the work and life of the school. Individual education plans successfully provide appropriate targets for their future learning, especially in English and mathematics.
20. There is appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and science. The school has successfully implemented its strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills. This has a good impact on teaching and learning and is consistent across all areas of learning. Increased emphasis on the literacy hour and mathematics has resulted in a review of the time allocated to other subjects, but these have now been successfully included to ensure a well-balanced curriculum. The school's curriculum aims are supported by subject policies, some of which are being reviewed in line with the new statutory requirements. The schemes of work already in place assist the teachers in their planning for continuity and progression. They include specific guidance for teachers at each stage so that they directly affect the quality of the learning outcomes for the pupils.
21. Planning for the foundation stage successfully meets the needs of all children in the nursery and reception classes. It covers all the areas of learning and provides the children with rich and worthwhile experiences to develop their understanding and skills. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the curriculum is well planned using a cycle of two yearly topics, to ensure coverage and balance within each year of the National Curriculum. Teachers in both key stages plan in detail for each half term and then weekly. These plans are checked carefully by the curriculum co-ordinators. This helps to ensure consistency, to enable suggestions to be made for future learning and for resources to be carefully targeted to the teaching. The policy for information and communication technology (ICT) is being implemented and the subject gives good support to all other curriculum subjects.
22. Good provision is made for pupils to take part in extra-curricular activities and clubs. The impressive programme extends and complements the curriculum. Activities include aerobics, short tennis, choir, recorders, French and computers. Clubs take place on a regular basis and all pupils have access to them. These activities contribute positively to the breadth and range of the school curriculum.
23. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum at their own individual level and based on their needs. The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. Sex education, drug awareness and personal, social and health education are included within topic work and science. Pupils are taken on trips to places of educational interest; visitors come into the school to share their knowledge and expertise and by using the Internet and information and communications technology, pupils have very good opportunities to link with others further afield. Good, constructive links have been made with the local first and middle schools.
24. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall. Provision for children's spiritual development is good. Assemblies each day incorporate an act of worship and this makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Worship is carefully planned and always includes time for pupils to reflect upon a current theme. There are also planned opportunities in the wider curriculum for pupils to reflect upon their own spiritual experience and that of others. During the inspection week the theme was 'You and Me'. Staff had taken care to talk about the topic in their classes so that pupils could express their thoughts and experiences to others during assemblies. Teachers also provide planned opportunities for pupils to observe and develop a sense of wonder at the world around them through their work in science, music and literature. Staff work hard to create an atmosphere in which spiritual values may grow.

25. Provision for moral and social development is very good. The members of staff are consistent in the way they teach the knowledge of right and wrong behaviour. Expectations are clear from the staff's own conduct and, whenever pupils make a misjudgement, they are gently but firmly made to consider how they should have acted. The staff also provide good examples of honesty and care. Snack times and lunchtimes are used well to bring children together in a friendly and supportive social mix. School routines are used to teach pupils to help clear away after lunch, and look after younger pupils when they go outside. They learn to share activities and co-operate in games. Older pupils are keen to take on additional responsibilities in the school, for example by helping with assemblies and by answering the telephone in the office at lunchtimes. These are just two of many opportunities staff provide to foster pupils' sense of responsibility and constructive sociable learning. These successful approaches to moral and social development also contribute to the good provision for children's personal and social development.
26. Provision for cultural development is good. An equally good range of visits and visitors, including a drama group supplements a good range of stories, pictures and music. Work in history and geography also give pupils an opportunity to compare their own lifestyles and traditions with that of others, as for example in their learning about Greek civilisations and studying an Indian village. The main festivals of Christian, Indian, Judaism and other faiths are recognised in pupils' activities. They are learning to value other's beliefs and cultures through the books, activities and the good role models provided by staff. Visits in the local area and sometimes further afield make rich contributions to children's knowledge and understanding of their own locality, its traditions and of the wider society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

27. This is a caring school that offers its pupils a pleasant and stimulating place of learning. The very good support and guidance given is a significant contribution to pupil progress and development as it enables learning to take place in a secure and supportive environment. Children form close relationships with teachers and can readily approach them with any personal concerns. In a class discussion on relationships, a girl in Year 4 said that being in class with her teacher and classmates felt like being in a family.
28. There are good arrangements for pupils' welfare and health and safety. There is a designated governor for health and safety matters and the school generally has good health and safety procedures. Fire drills for example are held every term and these are carefully recorded. The keeping of some other health and safety records however is unsatisfactory because they are either not being kept or cannot be easily retrieved. Tests of the fire alarm system for example are not being recorded.
29. The headteacher is the named person dealing with child protection issues and regularly attends training in this subject to keep abreast of changes. The school maintains a close liaison with the Educational Welfare Officer and does not hesitate to request help when it is needed. Records are maintained of child protection matters and these are securely held.
30. There are good procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour. The ethos of the school encourages pupils to development awareness of right and wrong and through the implementation of the school's behaviour policy to understand that good behaviour is rewarded and unacceptable behaviour penalised. Teachers and ancillary staff make good role models for pupils to emulate. The school has effective procedures for dealing with any incidents of harassment or bullying.
31. Attendance is carefully monitored and cases of absence without reason are effectively investigated using the services of the Educational Welfare Officer where necessary. Registers are carefully and accurately maintained.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32. Parents feel that the school encourages them to participate in the life of the school and many of them do by helping in classes, taking part in school visits and assisting with extra curricular activities.
33. The school brochure contains insufficient information on pupils' absence to enable parents to know the overall attendance rate.
34. The school has benefited considerably by its good relationship with the nearby army base, from where most pupils come. For example the school has a superior adventure playground that was supplied and installed by the army. The army has also been closely involved in assisting the school to participate in charity work. For example the army delivered Teddy Bears which pupils brought to school to give to orphans in Bosnia. The army subsequently sent photographs of the orphans receiving the toys. Later in the year the army returned to the orphanage with gifts of pencil cases from the school.
35. The school maintains satisfactory contacts with a local playgroup that enables them to liaise with parents of children about to enter the school and both parents and children are invited to the school for pre-school visits. There are satisfactory arrangements too for the older children who are about to enter middle school. By these means a smooth transfer between the two stages of education is assured.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

36. Overall the leadership and management of the school are good. Throughout the staff and governors, leadership and management focus on providing the best opportunities possible to bring about improvements for the pupils. The school has made good improvement in addressing the issues from the last inspection report, in for example, providing more challenging work for more able pupils, making better use of information collected through monitoring and the quality of planning. The headteacher leads effectively. She communicates a clear sense of purpose and educational direction to all members of staff who work effectively as a team. This is supported by clear policies, management structures and practices, which enable the school to operate smoothly. There is a clear, shared commitment to the notion of continuous improvement in the school, to which all subscribe.
37. There is a straightforward and explicit set of aims, which has been devised collaboratively. These are understood and recognised by the community and demonstrated in practice throughout the school. Governors, parents and staff have the opportunity to discuss and contribute to the school policies, examples being the behaviour policy and the homework policy. The commitment, given to the school by the governing body, headteacher, all members of staff and parents, is a strength, and provides a very positive ethos and stability, in a school with such a high turnover of pupils.
38. The governing body consists entirely of current or past parents and good communication exists between the governors and the headteacher. The chair of the Governing Body visits the school regularly and is well informed. Governors are keen to develop and extend their own skills and attend training and briefing meetings provided by the LEA. Termly formal and informal meetings take place, in addition to the meetings of working parties. The governors receive information from the headteacher at these meetings on a range of issues, including the school development plan and the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Nominated governors have also attended specific training on these two initiatives. Governors with responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs liaise with staff. Governors have sound understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but do not have a structured monitoring and school visits programme, nor contribute to the formulation of the development plan in order to help shape the longer term, strategic direction of the school.

39. The annual school development plan is a practical working document, constructed by the headteacher and staff, and focused almost exclusively on curriculum issues. It helps the school manage essential changes. It identifies appropriate targets with success criteria, timescales, who is responsible, the costs and who will monitor progress against the action. However, it does not reflect the evaluation of the successes and progress from the previous year. It is short term and does not express a longer term view beyond the immediate year, nor include other aspects of school life and activity, for example pupil support and welfare, parents and the wider community, professional development and induction for both new and experienced staff.
40. The school has new policy for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning. There are clear guidelines, which identify roles and responsibilities and an annual timetable for the headteacher to monitor against. Responsibilities are delegated appropriately. Curriculum co-ordinators help and support colleagues, manage resources, share planning and undertake some scrutiny of work to judge standards and progress. Co-ordinators do not manage their own budgets. A clear review cycle of school policies has been produced. Teaching is monitored in the literacy strategy and feedback given to individual members of staff.
41. The school is staffed appropriately with suitably qualified teachers but there is currently no deputy headteacher in post. Teachers know their pupils very well and offer high quality care and support. There is a good blend of, experienced, and new colleagues, with a sound range of curriculum expertise, and there is a high level of commitment from both full and part-time members of staff. The special educational needs co-ordinator is undertaking further extended professional study. Learning support assistants, all of whom are also undertaking further professional development, in their own time, are of high quality and give very good support to pupils with special educational needs. The smooth running of the school is enhanced by the school secretary, who extends a warm welcome to visitors, in addition to her other responsibilities. The midday and kitchen staff, further support the school ethos along with the caretaking and cleaning staff who maintain the building to a good standard. All members of staff are clear about their responsibilities and carry out their duties effectively.
42. Arrangements for the professional development of staff, both within the school and off-site are good. Provision from the LEA is used frequently, but also opportunities are sought from other providers, for example at the Cambridge School of Education. The induction of new members of staff and newly qualified teachers is well considered and effective. Statutory requirements are being met in terms of teacher appraisal and newly qualified teachers.
43. Accommodation in the nursery and reception classes is spacious, light and airy and well organised. There is a secure, fenced outdoor area attached. Together with a range of large equipment, and access to the adventure playground, it ensures that physical development is well catered for. The accommodation for Key Stage 1 and two pupils is maintained to a good standard, is spacious, clean, warm and well resourced. Overall, the accommodation is very good and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The conversion of a toilet area into a library and computer suite is a particularly effective use of the space available. The remodelled main entrance hall is well thought out and welcoming, in addition to being an additional working area for small groups. Communal areas and classrooms are bright and cheerful and displays of pupils' work are well presented and add to the learning environment. Good use is made of the accommodation throughout the school. The school has an appropriate range of very good quality teaching resources to support the curriculum, which are carefully stored and labelled and are readily available. Classrooms are well managed and organised, with resources for children easily accessible.
44. The school site is spacious, attractive, has well maintained grounds, includes a playing field, a large adventure playground, a swimming pool, a pond, a garden for playing in, a garden for sitting in and a large hard surface playing area. Good use is made of these facilities, which enhances the quality of provision for the pupils.

45. The school's administration systems work smoothly and efficiently. The budget is managed efficiently by the governors, who are well supported by the headteacher and school's administrative staff. Financial planning is good in supporting educational priorities, particularly in light of the rapidly changing school population. However, major spending decisions are not reviewed after implementation and judged in terms of their impact on pupil outcomes. The finance committee receives regular monthly budget reports for monitoring purposes and reports back to the whole governing body at the termly meeting. There has not been an audit in the last four years but one is due in the month of inspection. Specific grants made to the school for special educational needs and information and communication technology have been used appropriately managed and effectively used. Although the school has a significant carry forward figure in its budget this is largely designated for staff salaries to cover the latest appointment made.
46. The governors fulfil all their statutory responsibilities effectively and apply the principle of best value satisfactorily. Taking into account the full range of criteria, the standards achieved by the pupils, the quality of provision, the leadership and strong ethos, the school is judged to be giving good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The governors, headteacher and staff should build on the school's strengths in order to raise standards further by: -
- (1) improving the quality of writing throughout the school so the variety, structure and complexity of work and use of language matches more closely the pupils' attainment in reading and speaking. Make fuller structured use of writing opportunities in other areas of the curriculum,
 - (2) improving the consistency between classes and subjects of the presentation and layout of pupils' work,
 - (3) extending the schools' process of development planning further so governors have a greater role in helping to determine the priorities for the school's future actions and the planning has a strategic overview for a longer period than one year,
 - (4) developing strategies to enable the leadership and management to be able to judge the effectiveness of its spending decisions on improving pupils' attainment so secure value for money judgements can be made.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	19	45	34	2	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	162
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	0	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	4	32

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	38
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	30

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.2
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	19	16	35

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	15	14	18
	Girls	15	13	15
	Total	30	27	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86	77	94
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	14	17
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	28	29	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80	83	91
	National	82	86	87

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	124
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.3 :1
Average class size	18.7

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	4.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	93

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.0 :1

Total number of education support staff	0.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Number of pupils per FTE adult	4.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998 to 1999
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	£
Total income	287771
Total expenditure	281425
Expenditure per pupil	1530
Balance brought forward from previous year	35387
Balance carried forward to next year	41733

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	167
Number of questionnaires returned	53

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	32	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	43	2	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	57	42	2	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	50	13	4	2
The teaching is good.	53	43	2	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	32	13	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	75	21	2	2	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	34	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	68	26	4	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	67	23	2	4	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	40	6	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	33	40	10	2	15

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

48. Since the last Ofsted inspection the nursery has been established. It caters for the youngest four-year-olds on a part-time basis. Both the nursery and reception classes provide a busy, caring and stimulating environment in which to promote purposeful play in all areas of learning. Children are provided with a firm foundation for later achievement.
49. Children's overall standards of attainment are above average. In personal and social development, language and literacy, mathematics and some aspects of knowledge and understanding of the world, standards are good and are likely to be beyond the standards expected nationally of children by the time they are five years old. In creative and physical development, standards are satisfactory and are likely to be in line with the national expectations. The main contributory factor to the children's good standards of attainment is the quality of teaching and the impact that this has on the children's learning. Teaching is very good in over 50 per cent of lessons and it is good in 40 per cent. It is satisfactory in the other 10 per cent. Good teamwork is another significant factor contributing to the overall good standards of the children's work and play.
50. Provision for children's personal and social development is particularly good. Staff are aware that some children may have experienced at least one house move or change of location before they start school. For example, during the inspection period, three new children were admitted to the nursery and reception classes. Of these, one child was expected to be in school for only three weeks before his family was to move again. This is one reason why the planned programme for children's personal and social development is given strong emphasis by all staff, both in the activities and in the daily routines. They ensure that children are happy and have very good relationships with adults and one another. Staff make good use of praise, encouragement and explanations to promote children's self-confidence and independence. They have secure knowledge of how young children learn and children's behaviour is handled in a caring and sensitive manner. Staff are consistent in the way they help children to recognise the difference between right and wrong. In response, children are helpful to each other when sharing equipment and the resources. Through ongoing activities and special celebrations, children are learning about other cultures and traditions.
51. Children's overall attainment in language and literacy is good, especially in the development of their listening, speaking and early reading skills. Children listen attentively to adults and other children when taking part in activities such as story times and sitting together at snack-times. They join in enthusiastically with repetitions in well-loved stories and can sing a number of nursery rhymes. Staff have high expectations of children's abilities to communicate their ideas and express them to others. They provide regular times for children to work with them on reading and writing activities. They ensure that children take some responsibility for their own choice of activity during each session. Children's own language is valued and staff take every opportunity in planned and spontaneous activities to extend children's vocabulary. Effective provision is made for reading and writing. Children enjoy sharing stories and retelling them from pictures and from memory, using many of the correctly remembered phrases. Older children write down their ideas, often writing letters, and then putting them in envelopes to give to others. They successfully write their names and copy words and letters well, often without adult help.
52. In mathematics, children attain good standards and are likely to exceed those expected of similar aged children by the time they are five years old. Staff exploit opportunities to reinforce main teaching points and consolidate and extend mathematical learning thoroughly. A good example of this occurred in a mathematics lesson following a Cinderella role-play session, when the older children took turns to match buttons onto pictures of Prince Charming's waistcoat. They learnt to count, add on and subtract using numbers to twenty with increasing confidence and skill. Some of them wrote the correct number symbols. Children are taught an appropriate mathematical vocabulary through rhymes, games, stories and songs. They match objects one to one, arrange items in sequences, make patterns and comparisons, and solve simple problems in practical

situations. Staff provide many chances for children to learn about amounts and ordered sequencing when they cook, use sand, puzzles and games.

53. Overall, children's attainment in knowledge and understanding of the world is sound and in some aspects it is good. A strength of the teaching is that staff provide many opportunities for children to talk about their homes and families and past and present events so that they develop an understanding of the differences and similarities between past and present times. A good example of this is the adult led discussion about the way Cinderella travelled to the ball and the differences in travel today. Children know about the different building properties of wet and dry sand and how these substances and playdough behave when poured or moulded. Through cooking activities, children learn to recognise different smells and tastes. They know that if they bake biscuits to eat at snack time, the ingredients cannot be separated after they have been mixed together. They develop their understanding of the school grounds, local area and the wider world beyond, often by making visits to local places of interest, for example, to a nearby farm. The staff ensure that children have opportunities to build and join by using construction kits and making models. They measure, fold and cut paper and materials to make wands for the fairy godmother in their play. Another significant feature of teaching and learning is evident in the way that children are able to use the computer and 'mouse' with confidence, matching and counting objects, using the menu to change the program and playing a wide variety of games. They also know how listening stations, telephones and other home-based electronic equipment is controlled.
54. In the creative area of learning, children's attainment is sound. Effective questioning helps children to think about what they are doing, respond with observations and express their own ideas, feelings and opinions. They express these with growing confidence and skill through drawing, painting, imaginative play and music. They apply paint in various ways and successfully mix their own colours to produce patterns and prints, which they are pleased to share with others. Children readily initiate drama activities in the home and role play areas which help to capture their imagination and add a great deal to their all round development. Children sing songs and nursery rhymes with enthusiasm. They listen and respond well to music, exploring sounds and rhythms using musical instruments and have very good listening skills. They are able to follow a tune, sing well and join in with appropriate actions.
55. Children's attainments in physical development are sound. Staff design activities to help promote the well being of the children and support their physical development. Indoors children move around the classrooms confidently. Activities enable children to work at different heights, on the floor, at tables and while standing. Children handle jigsaws, construction kits, writing and drawing pencils and tools, and manipulate materials such as dough with increasing precision and fine hand and finger control. They use scissors with confidence and skill. A good range of outside activities is provided to help children develop their skills, control of their bodies and awareness of space and direction. Staff encourage children to gain confidence by using all the space and equipment imaginatively, without pressurising the less confident to attempt more than they are ready to do. Safety procedures are good. Children take part in and enjoy physical play at their own rate and pace.
56. Teachers' planning shows that they have a good knowledge of the desirable learning goals, which promotes children's attainment. A full range of activities and resources is used effectively to promote learning suitable for boys and girls and those with special educational needs. In their planning, staff ensure that all aspects of the desirable learning goals are covered during a week. The planned activities help to capture children's interest and often challenge them to think for themselves. Assessments are unobtrusive, yet made on a daily basis. These are regularly shared with other staff and successfully help to plan the next day's activities. Both classes are well resourced and staff ensure that children have easy access to them.
57. The partnership with parents is very good. Staff welcome parents into the classrooms to discuss their children's progress and achievements at the start and end of each day's session. Parents also receive a written report on their child's progress. Comprehensive records are also kept and shared with parents. They appreciate the efforts made to keep them informed and encourage their full participation in their children's learning.

ENGLISH

58. By the time they are 7 most pupils attain standards in line with those expected for their age. Although most make good progress building on earlier experiences, their levels of attainment are often affected by the length of time they have in school. Many pupils have frequent changes of school as their families move from the area with their work. Attainment is best in speaking and listening and in reading. Compared with all schools the proportion of pupils attaining above the national standards for reading is well above the national average and above that in comparison with similar schools. Pupils' attainment in writing is below average when compared with both national and similar school averages. This is shown by a lack of fluency in pupils' writing across the curriculum.
59. Most pupils achieve standards by the age of nine that are broadly in line with those expected nationally for their age and make good progress. The attainment in speaking, listening and reading in KS2 is above that in writing. Pupils are confident readers of a range of books. They talk with good knowledge of the work of different authors and show understanding of plot, characterisation and different genre of books. They share their knowledge of books readily with each other. One little girl was heard to enthusiastically recommend Harry Potter to her friends and give good reasons why the book should be read. They use the library well including the information technology situated there. Overall pupils' writing develops well but presentation need improvement including handwriting as does the more extended use of a greater range of vocabulary. There is limited editing and redrafting of text for meaning and accuracy by pupils although this is being encouraged.
60. The literacy strategy is suitably planned and generally implemented well throughout the school. There are some classes, where as yet, insufficient time is given to developing word level work. The literacy strategy has the most beneficial effects on raising pupils' standards of reading across all age groups and improving pupils' confidence in listening and speaking. Overall most pupils develop good skills of interpretation of stories and articles and are able to express an opinion about what they have heard or have read. They can recognise different types of texts and can use reference material well. Many pupils including Key Stage 1 can use a content page and index to research information for use in other aspects of the curriculum. This was seen very clearly in the use of atlas indexes in geography. Pupils use their skills of locating information very effectively on ICT applications. Although there is some inconsistency with word level work, most pupils develop strategies to read new words using the sounds made by different parts of the words.
61. Pupils with special educational needs have well structured and resourced guidance and make good progress against the clear expectations set in individual education plans. Higher attaining pupils achieve good standards and make good progress as high expectations are set for their achievement. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.
62. In all key stages the teaching is never less than satisfactory and frequently good or better. This has a beneficial affect on the good rates of progress throughout the school especially when many pupils spend a relatively short time in the school before moving elsewhere. All teachers are confident in their knowledge of the literacy strategy and teach it well with good pace. Their planning is for the full range of ability and is consistently very good, strengthened in its effectiveness by the team planning approach. In all planning the purpose of each part of the session is very clear and the activities for pupils and the teachers' methods are explicit.
63. There is good use of questions frequently building on pupils' knowledge of the stories studied in the previous day's lesson. Questions are carefully tailored to the varying needs of the range of pupils' understanding and previous attainment. Some interesting work on alliteration and use of suffixes shows the clear link between the knowledge pupils gain in understanding how words may be read phonically and how those words are spelt and written. Teachers chose good teaching strategies to enable pupils to achieve the good expectations of progress set for them.
64. All teachers make effective ongoing assessments to judge how well the pupils understand the main teaching points in each element of the literacy sessions. This is done particularly

effectively in the use of the plenary sessions when for instance judging how well pupils recognise adjectives. From the good knowledge teachers have of their pupils they set challenging individual targets for improvement for each pupil and monitor the progress towards those targets effectively. All teachers have effective classroom management and their discipline is good. They make very good use of resources including ICT to support pupils' understanding and progress.

65. Suitable use is made of homework so pupils make progress and it is appropriately planned and often linked to the pupils' individual target for improvement. This involves reading texts, learning spellings and practising handwriting. Parents give the school good support.
66. Pupils respond well and are attentive, work with understanding and confidence. Many are showing good measures of independence in their use of dictionaries and reference material and some redrafting of work. Many can talk fluently about their achievements and about areas for improvement linked to their individual targets in literacy. Their behaviour in class is invariably good and they are very understanding and supportive of other pupils who have particular difficulties.
67. The subject is managed very effectively. There is a good management strategy for evolving the two-year cycle of schemes of work for the mixed-aged classes. These are on track for completion by the end of the summer term 2000. The schools' monitoring has rightly identified writing as an aspect to develop further especially in the range and structure of writing as well as the application in other areas of the curriculum.
68. There is a good range of books and other resources, such as taped stories, that are well managed to help pupils make progress in the subject. The library is well stocked with reference material and there are many good quality books for a broad range of readers to be found in corridor areas. The school has been careful in its book selection to ensure issues of equality are addressed.

MATHEMATICS

69. Standards in mathematics are improving. The trend from 1997 to 1999 shows the attainment of seven years old pupils in national tests has risen from below to above the national average. Results of the National Curriculum tests for pupils aged seven in 1999 show the percentage of pupils achieving level 2, the expected level, to be above the national average and above average when compared to schools of similar type and background. The percentage of pupils achieving level 3, the higher level, was well above the national average. Teacher assessments indicated a similar level of attainment although were slightly lower than the actual test results. Taking the four years, 1996 to 1999, the performance of the boys has been above that of the girls and has always exceeded the national average.
70. Standards in numeracy are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1 and pupils can carry out simple problems, using numbers of two digits. Many pupils have good mental recall of addition and subtraction number facts to ten. They add and subtract with confidence and can carry out the doubling of numbers, up to 10 +10 successfully. They demonstrate an understanding of place value and can read, write and order numbers up to 100 and beyond. They have a good understanding of the value of a digit according to its position in the number and can successfully manipulate and partition numbers into hundreds, tens and units. Many pupils work well orally, and can recall the multiplication tables for two, five and ten. They can recognise patterns in numbers and continue them.
71. In Key Stage 2, pupils at the end of year four are achieving in line with national expectations and are able to understand and manipulate with confidence multiples of ten for two and three digit numbers. They show understanding of place value up to 1000 and make realistic approximations. They are able to count forwards and backwards in tens, hundreds and thousands and can add three and four digit numbers by taking the largest number first. They are able to add three, two digit multiples of ten and recognise the associated number patterns. Evidence of data handling using ICT provision showed survey information on pets being represented in both bar and pie charts, in addition to participation in a calculator challenge.

72. Overall, pupils in mathematics make satisfactory progress, with pupils able to build on skills and knowledge previously acquired to complete new tasks. Pupils with special educational needs and those of lower ability make, at least satisfactory, and sometimes good progress, through identification of clear targets in individual education plans, in good grouping arrangements and good quality support from teachers and learning assistants.
73. In both key stages pupils are generally attentive and have good attitudes towards to their work. They have good listening skills and communicate their answers effectively and enthusiastically. Pupils enjoy whole class sessions, which focus on quick response mental calculations, where there is challenge and the pace of input from the teacher is brisk. They are keen to answer questions and do not fear or expect ridicule from their peers if they should answer incorrectly. Pupils are confident and not afraid to make errors and can correctly use mathematical vocabulary successfully. Teachers give pupils plenty of opportunities to explain how they calculated their answers. The majority of pupils work effectively and diligently on their own, can stay on task and achieve sufficient work in the time allowed, although standards of presentation and layout of work vary from class to class. During the inspection there were good examples of pupils working collaboratively, when for example, discussing a range of solutions to a number problem.
74. The quality of teaching was, overall at least satisfactory, and often good or very good, particularly in Key Stage 1. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject is good and their expectations of pupils' work are high. Planning is good and teachers are very clear about the learning objectives that they regularly share with the pupils. Consequently, pupils know what to expect, and what is expected of them. Work is clearly planned for pupils of different ages and abilities. Teachers manage pupils in lessons well and they make effective use of the time available to them. Satisfactory use is made of homework to reinforce and build on concepts and skills.
75. The subject has been well led in the school. There is a new draft mathematics policy. (December 1999) The co-ordinator for mathematics has recently left the school to take up a promotion. A new member of staff, with responsibilities for managing the subject, has joined the school this term. There is a good foundation from which to build. The school has made effective use of materials from the National Numeracy Project before the introduction of the Numeracy Strategy this year. Consequently, they were well placed to begin this new approach and this was evident from the inspection. Implementation of the strategy has begun well. The structure of the lesson, with a mental and oral starter, a main section and a plenary is well established, although more effective use could be made of some plenary sessions to further challenge pupils and assess progress. Collaborative planning in both key stages helps also with monitoring, and ensures consistency of content and entitlement to pupils. Some work sampling has also taken place and the co-ordinator has, over the past three years, carried out extensive analysis of data, from both national and school tests, that has informed practice. Appropriate targets for action have been identified in the development plan. Resources and equipment for teaching mathematics are of good quality and easily accessible. An audit of equipment was undertaken at the outset of the Numeracy Strategy. Links and work with other schools in the local pyramid continues to be useful and supportive to the future development of mathematics in the school.

SCIENCE

76. In the 1999 teacher assessed tests at age 7, pupils' attainments were in line with the average for similar schools. Evidence from lesson observations and a scrutiny of written work, shows that the present Year 2 pupils in the school are likely to reach at least average levels of attainment by the end of the Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 4 have a good understanding of life processes, the human body, skeletons, how blood circulates and the effect of exercise and rest on their pulse rates. The present topic, 'The earth and beyond' has provided rich opportunities for pupils to communicate and present scientific information in a variety of ways. Pupils with special educational needs have well focused support and make satisfactory progress.

77. By the time they are seven, pupils have a broad knowledge of natural and physical science. They know about the range of animal and plant life, have studied the five senses, can identify materials and know that some exist naturally, and can carry out simple experiments and draw conclusions from the results. Pupils have a good general knowledge of how electricity is used in the home, suitable building materials, the main parts of plants and the mechanisms of seed dispersal. This term's work on the topic 'Light and Dark' has already extended their understanding and knowledge of the different sources of light and how some of these are used in everyday life. Their oral skills are good and they have very little difficulty in understanding or making accurate predictions of the outcomes. However, often the pupils have higher levels of understanding than their writing skills allow them to show in their recording.
78. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress and much of the work builds systematically on their existing knowledge and understanding. Many have a good basis of general knowledge that adds edge to their curiosity. By age nine, pupils have studied some of the Key Stage 2 National Curriculum programmes of study in great depth. Pupils have a satisfactory grounding in conducting experiments under conditions of fair testing. They have very good research skills and are able to find information about their topic, 'The earth and beyond' by using a wide variety of sources, including the Internet. In one lesson, pupils worked well with a partner to gather information about their chosen planet. They carefully organised their findings and then brought their work to share and discuss with the rest of the class group.
79. The quality of teaching is mainly good and sometimes very good in both key stages. The rest is sound and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. In the best lessons, teachers prepare conscientiously and there is effective co-ordination of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs. Tasks are well chosen with a good balance of information giving and opportunity for pupils to find things out for themselves. Explanations are clear and, as a result, pupils show a good commitment to learning and co-operate well with their teachers. In all classes, pupils are willing to work co-operatively when required to do so, take some responsibility for their own learning, and show very good initiative when given the chance. Topics such as 'The earth and beyond' are considered in a depth that allows pupils to explore their understanding. Teachers make good use of correct names and scientific vocabulary and expect pupils to do likewise. While teachers plan the work together, their expectations of the standards of presentation of pupils' written work varies from class to class in Key Stage 1, but it is more consistent in Key Stage 2. The good teaching seen is often characterised by teachers carefully closing lessons by reinforcing the main teaching points and setting targets for the next session.
80. In both key stages, science is taught in a series of units, which are planned around the programmes of study and the Local Education Authority's guidance. Assessment of pupils' attainment is good. Teachers use the learning outcomes at the end of each unit. The subject is well co-ordinated with clear policies and effective guidance provided for teachers. The policy is to be reviewed later this term to take account of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) document. The subject is well resourced and organised. Information and communication technology is used well to support work in the subject, especially in Key Stage 2.

ART

81. During the inspection it was only possible to see two sessions of art so much of the judgement is based on informal discussion with pupils, scrutiny of displays and of work completed previously to the inspection and planning.
82. The work seen generally relates to themes studied by the classes, as in the work on Greeks when pupils explored the design of a Greek pot in two dimensional media. The work is planned well using the school's guidance for teaching art. There is clear identification of the skills the pupils develop in the planning. This clearly shows progression throughout the school rooted in the expectations of the National Curriculum programmes of study.

83. Pupils' work is broadly in line with expectations for their age at 7 and 9. They could talk about a number of famous artists and their work, such as Lowry. They had knowledge of techniques using different media, so were familiar with collage, weaving, printing. Pupils understood how one medium could be used in any number of ways as in some pictures showing shading, line drawing and other forms of mark making with a pencil to create an effect of texture and form. They used ICT in their art from an early age to find out information about artists and also to draw and design. The pupils' work also reflects art of other cultures as for instance their work on India with good quality displays. Some of the work is also linked to other elements of the curriculum as in the "Hundred Cats" collage linked to numeracy.
84. The teachers are well organised and make very effective use of a wide range of well managed resources to ensure pupils have a broad and balanced art syllabus. Pupils work with confidence as they are encouraged by their teachers to experiment knowing their first attempts can always be revised. The teachers have good knowledge of the subject and this helps pupils make good progress. The school has made good use of a professional artist to work with children. This results in high quality work being produced by the pupils with the artist that is seen throughout the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

85. No judgement about the pupils' standards of D & T work or the quality of teaching and learning can be made in either key stage because no lessons were observed during the inspection period. In addition, the subject was not timetabled for two classes in Key Stage 1. Additional evidence was sought from scrutiny of the teachers' planning and record keeping, pupils' written work and discussions with pupils and teachers. Because the inspection took place early in the spring term, there were no examples of pupil made objects on display around the school. However, an examination of the pupils' books in Key Stage 1, show that they understand the need to make choices and plan before trying to make things. They are also acquiring the basic skills of cutting, shaping and joining as, for example, in making a rain hat for a teddy bear. This work is closely linked to a science topic based on materials. In Key Stage 2, pupils apply a widening range of techniques and knowledge in order to design cards and picture frames.
86. The newly appointed co-ordinator for the subject is keen to work with colleagues to produce schemes of work which will ensure continuity and progression in the subject through the school. She has already begun to review the D & T policy and is to look at the teachers' planning to decide how best the subject can be used to support the pupils' learning at both key stages. The range of resources available is broadly adequate and well labelled but there is little central storage space for larger items and equipment.

GEOGRAPHY

87. It was only possible to see two sessions of geography both in the same key stage, so judgements are largely based on discussions with pupils, observations of previous work and scrutiny of teachers' planning.
88. Pupils attain in line with standards expected nationally by the ages of 7 and 9 and achieve well. Many pupils have significant experience of travel and are able to relate these experiences to their work in class. Teachers recognise these experiences and make good use of them to help pupils understand other places. The school's work is based on a two year rolling cycle of topics developed from the Local Education Authorities guidance documentation and is intended to link with the middle school syllabus. The syllabus reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum and is made relevant by many practical activities and good use of visits. Pupils very ably demonstrated their skills of interpreting different sources of geographical information including maps, photographs and graphs to develop an understanding and appreciation of life in Chembakolli, a village in India. They also show good facility in the use of tools of enquiry including computers, internet access and reference material such as atlases. They understand complex concepts of maps including symbols and scale.

89. The pupils have good attitudes and enjoy the work. They speak with confidence about what they have learnt. Pupils co-operate well and work collaboratively to look for reasons for the location and development of places. The teachers plan well and effective use was made of questions to extend pupils' understanding and assess their understanding of the lessons.
90. The subject is managed well and resources suitably. The library is limited in the range and number of books to support the development of geography.

HISTORY

91. History is organised as a two year, rolling programme in the school and, due to timetable arrangements during the inspection, only two history lessons were observed being taught. Both of these were in Key Stage 2. Judgements are based on a scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils.
92. Pupils across the school make satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs, and standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectation.
93. The teaching of history in the school is well organised, thoroughly planned and at a good stage of development. History is organised into units of work in both key stages with clearly defined topics of study and also topics which successfully link with other subjects, some personal history in the science unit 'Growing Up' being an example. Teachers support each other with shared planning. The subject is co-ordinated effectively by an experienced member of staff. Pupils' work is assessed, against differentiated learning outcomes, at the end of each unit.
94. The teaching is good, with clear introductions, and is enthusiastic, which generates a keen response from the pupils who are able to work collaboratively, discussing sources of evidence such as music, photographs, memories and buildings which might be linked with an historical period. Pupils sustain their interest well, focusing on the task for an extended period. The work is characterised by a good balance of teacher input and questions, and sufficient time is allowed for pupil activity, which is clearly differentiated. Pupils' attitudes and response to history are positive.
95. Pupils in Key Stage 2 are keen and knowledgeable and able to demonstrate sufficient gains in historical knowledge and understanding, have a growing curiosity in the past and a developing concept of chronology to support their enquiries about historical events. In starting their studies on the Ancient Greeks, pupils are able to investigate their position on a timeline from a variety of source materials, including books and a computer programme. Pupils enthusiastically undertake and report back a homework task to identify the place of the Vikings on the timeline.
96. History in the school focuses on the key enquiry questions and whenever possible is activity based, making use of first hand evidence. Visits are considered an important element of the history curriculum and are included in most topics, with good use made of local resources. Parents and governors assist regularly with these visits.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

97. During the inspection, there were limited opportunities to observe the direct teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) in the school. Evidence of pupils' work was gathered from the planning and other documentation, lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' work, examination of the displays, and discussion with pupils and staff. On the basis of this, standards of attainment are in line with national expectations by the end of Key Stage 1. Most of the Year 4 pupils are working comfortably at Level 3 and in some aspects of communication, for example, familiarity with e-mail, fax and the Internet, many are working beyond this. There is equal access for boys and girls, and pupils with special needs are given good access to ICT facilities with sensitive adult help. They are well motivated, confident and make good progress in the subject.

98. In Key Stage 1, pupils are introduced to word processing that continues to be used in the juniors, and older pupils extend their skills by changing fonts and font size. In Key Stage 1 all pupils have opportunities to use keyboard and mouse controls on computers. They gradually become familiar with cursor controls and the use of the click and drag mouse techniques. A good range of programs is employed. Young pupils can use computers to solve problems with numbers and paint pictures. Older pupils can use word processing programs, do simple design exercises and solve problems in adventure games. Pupils can program a Roamer turtle to carry out a sequence of travel and turning movements. Pupils apply themselves well and do not waste their time at the computer. They are very co-operative when it is necessary to share computer facilities and freely help each other without prompting.
99. In Key Stage 2 a good start has been made in using the Internet as a resource for learning, as for example, when pupils were asked to find information about the earth and the solar system in science. However, data handling and work with word processing, desk top publishing and interpreting information held on systems is being developed very effectively. Pupils are consolidating skills with keyboard and mouse to undertake word processing changing fonts and finding different styles of presentation of their work. Some pupils are experienced and already confident because they have a computer at home. This level of expertise is being fully exploited by the school to explore software and pass on their knowledge to others. Pupils are proud of their output and like to see it displayed when this is appropriate.
100. The quality of teaching is sound in Key Stage 1 and good in Key Stage 2. Good features of the teaching are an appropriate use of parents and classroom assistant to support Key Stage 1 pupils and the co-operative sharing of computers in the library. In Key Stage 2 teachers have high expectations of pupils' ability to co-operate well and work at a good pace, independently of the teacher. Their planning ensures that ICT is used to support teaching and learning successfully in many other subjects such as English, mathematics, art, geography and science. Teachers often supply additional learning resources such as maps, photographs and information sheets to give a different level to pupils' understanding. Introductions to tasks, and to new ways of using ICT are clear and direct and when ICT is directly taught, there is good and sometimes very rapid progress. Teachers also organise the work of teaching assistants and parent helpers so that they all work well together to give pupils confidence in their use of ICT.
101. There is an adequate resource in the number of computers available and the range of software being used to teach the National Curriculum. The subject co-ordinator has prepared an excellent policy document that provides teachers with clear details about how the subject is organised in the school and the resources available. Schemes of work have been developed with an associated assessment system and are reviewed regularly to extend teachers' confidence and skills.

MUSIC

102. During the week of the inspection it was possible to observe only one music lesson in Key Stage 1. Observation of singing at assemblies, discussions with teachers and scrutiny of planning for the subject has supplemented evidence gained. It is not possible to make statements about standards of attainment or the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 standards of attainment are broadly average. Good quality opportunities are provided for the pupils and they are able to express themselves well through singing, playing instruments and listening to music. Throughout the school most pupils enjoy all aspects of music. In both key stages pupils are attentive and responsive they make good progress in performing, composing and appraising music. All pupils are taught to handle the instruments with care and to respect the efforts of others. In the daily assemblies pupils sing with good tone and phrasing and learn new songs quickly. Most listen well and they respond with increasing accuracy to more complex rhythms.
103. The quality of teaching and learning in the one lesson observed was good. The teaching was careful planned, with clear objectives and it captured and retained the attention of the pupils. Pupils listened quietly to the story that was well told by the teacher who helped them to select musical instruments to illustrate the sounds in order to create a 'sound picture' of the story. The teacher's supportive and helpful comments ensured that the pupils enjoyed the musical 'language' that was opening up to them. The pupils responded well to the new challenge with

enthusiasm and concentration and made rapid and easily identifiable progress during the course of the lesson. At the end of the lesson, the teacher explained how the work is to be developed in the future so those pupils were fully informed about their future learning.

104. The co-ordinator has written an excellent scheme of work for music and this forms the basis for most of the work. All the class teachers have responsibility for ensuring that the pupils are given access to all aspects of music required by the National Curriculum. Pupils' work is assessed regularly. An appropriate allocation of time is given to the subject and a good balance of activities is achieved. In the music display in the school, reference is made to the provision of opportunities for pupils to compose their own musical sequences, and to produce graphic scores of music they have heard in their lessons. Scrutiny of the pupils music notebooks show that the subject is being taught in a way which will ensure that pupils have a progressive and continuous experience of the subject as they move through the school.
105. The school has a wide range of tuned and percussion instruments. Easy access to these is provided with opportunities to perform and compose. To support the teaching of appraising and listening, a wide variety of music in other styles, from different cultures, periods and genres has been purchased so that pupils can participate in listening and appraising music which is part of the National Curriculum. Music from other cultures is often played in assemblies and sometimes the children are encouraged to appreciate and discuss it.
106. The school has a sufficient supply of good quality tuned and untuned percussion instruments, which are accessible and well organised. Pupils are able to join one of the recorder clubs or the choir in their lunchtime clubs. The aims and values of the school are put into practice through the lessons and the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural development of the children.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

107. As a result of the timetable arrangements, in the week of inspection, it was only possible to observe two physical education lessons. Both were lessons taking place in the hall, one in Key Stage 1 and the other in Key Stage 2. Evidence has therefore been gained from teachers' planning, the physical education policy and discussions with pupils and the teacher co-ordinating the subject.
108. Teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good, with clear objectives and good planning. Little time is wasted in changing into appropriate PE clothing and the pupils are enthusiastic and keen to get underway with the lesson. Teachers are careful to remind the pupils of safety aspects at the outset, and throughout there are high expectations of behaviour. Good warm up exercises precede the main part of the lesson, raising the heart rate. Pupils are challenged to review their own performance, and comment on it. Attitudes in physical education are generally positive.
109. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to demonstrate good skills in controlling a ball with their feet. Practice in bouncing a large ball is differentiated for year one and year two pupils and they respond well with good control and showing an awareness of using the available space effectively. Progress in lessons for most pupils, including one with special educational needs who is very well supported by a learning support assistant, is good. In Key Stage 2, a gymnastics lesson focusing on travelling, stretching and 'freezing' demonstrates some able performances, broadly in line with what might be expected from pupils at this age. Teachers feed back useful teaching points throughout, although the use of 'critical friends' to analyse and feedback on performance to peers could be developed further. Some pupils, who benefit from gymnastics coaching outside school, are clearly able to demonstrate performances at a higher level.
110. The school benefits from good facilities with a good size school hall, a large playing field and hard surface area and an excellent adventure playground. Equipment and resources for the subject are very good with some being shared with other pyramid schools in the area.

111. The subject is well organised within the revised timetable that has placed a constraint on the time available for physical education. However, the on-site swimming pool means that the time devoted to physical education is increased in the summer term. All aspects of the subject are covered and the physical education programme includes gymnastics, dance, games and swimming for all, with opportunities for athletics and outdoor and adventurous activities at Key Stage 2. Aspects of understanding fitness are linked with the science curriculum. Extra-curricular activities further extend the opportunities with, for example, Strikers football, country dance and dance.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

112. At the end of Key Stage 1 and in Key Stage 2 standards of attainment are in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Suffolk Syllabus for religious education.
113. In Key Stage 1, pupils are able to talk about school rules, the need for them and the difference that they make in school. They can talk personally about the people who help them both in and out of school and what they do. They can recognise that each person is special and can talk about what is right and wrong. Pupils are taught the meaning of the word 'Christian', building on their knowledge and understanding of their own world. Good references are made to earlier work that they have undertaken on Jesus and the link between following Jesus and going to church. They can reflect on their environment and why it is important to care for it, they know the Christmas story and have some rudimentary understanding of the Jewish faith.
114. Pupils in Key Stage 2 explore issues of communication; they build on their knowledge of celebrations and investigate the Muslim faith. In focusing on family and friends, pupils reflect on questions that help them find out more about themselves and others. Working collaboratively, discussion helps them to construct effective questions, orally and in writing, reinforcing their skills in speaking and listening. They recognise the difference in questions that are public and private. Topics such as misunderstandings and relationships are considered through personal reflection of a range of sensitive issues. Pupils are confident in their articulation of their feelings and able to express that they feel supported at school.
115. Teaching in religious education was observed in both key stages. It was never less than satisfactory and sometimes good. Some of the best teaching encouraged the pupils to think about their own lives and consider their own thoughts and beliefs, in for example, what it means to be a 'follower'.
116. Pupils have generally good attitudes to religious education and respond well to the challenges set. They show an interest in the topics being discussed and contribute, often with enthusiasm, to class and group discussions. Pupils listen to, and respect the views of others.
117. The school has satisfactory resources to teach the subject, which are mainly books in the classrooms and in the library. Good use is also made of the LEA loan facility, which has a good range of appropriate artefacts.
118. Assemblies, which are planned from themes, are well conducted, enjoyed and bring an extra dimension to the pupils' religious education. The singing is very good which enhances the feeling of spirituality on such occasions.