

INSPECTION REPORT

ARDEN GROVE FIRST SCHOOL

Norwich, Norfolk

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120927

Headteacher: Mrs Amanda McCarney

Reporting inspector: Ms Jo Stevenson
15628

Dates of inspection: 17 – 20 January 2000

Inspection number: 190949

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 - 8
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Arden Grove Cottingshams Drive Hellesdon Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR6 6QA
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Alan Young
Date of previous inspection:	13 May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Jo Stevenson	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Religious education	How high are standards? The school's results & pupils' achievements
		Equal opportunities	How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Mike O'Malley	Lay inspector		How high are standards? Pupils' attitudes & personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Elizabeth Lewin	Team inspector	English	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Art	
		Design and technology	
Sue Moxon	Team inspector	Music	
		Physical education	
		Special educational needs	
		Areas of learning for pupils under five	
Chris Power	Team inspector	Mathematics	
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		Geography	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Arden Grove First School, on the edge of the Hellesdon district of Norwich, is an average-sized school for boys and girls aged from 3 to 8 years. It serves a relatively prosperous and socially advantaged area. There are 216 full time pupils of whom 52 children attend the nursery unit part time. This unit is the designated nursery for the area and almost all children stay at the school having entered statutory education. The main school is slightly under-subscribed overall, although some year groups are full; the nursery unit is heavily oversubscribed, with a long waiting list. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and no pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is, at 5%, below average. There is a small amount of pupil mobility arising from a nearby RAF base.

Pupils' attainment on entry is slightly below that found nationally. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and appropriate programmes are set up. There are 35 pupils at Stages 1-5 of the Code of Practice special educational needs register, which is above the national average. Twenty-six pupils are at Stages 2-5 and 6 have statements of specific need (Stage 5).

Almost all most pupils are taught in mixed aged classes. There are 41 pupils in reception classes, in which there are also Year 1 pupils. In the rest of Key Stage 1 and early Key Stage 2, classes contain two year groups, with additional single year group classes in years 1 and 3. As there are ninety-five boys and seventy girls, all year groups have an imbalance as regards gender. Boys are predominant in Years 1 and 2 particularly but in the nursery unit and in Year 3 there are more girls.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, with many good features, which continues to improve. It has significant strengths and these outweigh the weaknesses. Standards are high in English in particular and in no subject are they below what is expected. The school is well led and managed effectively. There is a substantial amount of good teaching, particularly with the youngest pupils. It provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in writing, reading, speaking and listening and aspects of information technology are high
- The nursery provides a very good start to children's education
- Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive, their behaviour is good and relationships generally are very good
- The headteacher and governors provide strong leadership and purposeful direction to the school's work
- There is a welcoming, caring ethos through which all are made to feel valued and part of the school community
- The provision for and the co-ordination of special educational needs support is very efficient and pupils make good progress
- There is very effective attention to the health, safety and well-being of pupils
- The promotion of and the monitoring of good behaviour is very effective
- The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good
- There are strong partnerships with parents and the local community
- Annual reports to parents are excellent

What could be improved

- There are shortcomings in some of the teaching in the upper part of the school
- There are too few opportunities for pupils to carry out investigative work and problem-solving activities in mathematics and science
- The time allocated to different aspects of science is imbalanced, especially for older pupils
- There are gaps in continuity of planning between the Nursery Unit and the Reception classes

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in May 1996. Not all the issues from the last report were addressed as soon after the inspection as would normally be expected. The current headteacher was appointed two years ago. Since then she, the staff and governors have brought about significant improvement, including in some areas that were identified in addition to those highlighted through inspection. There has been considerable improvement in the resourcing and teaching of information technology. Staff expertise and confidence continues to increase and standards are now high in respect of communicating and handling information. Similarly, design and technology has improved and the subject leader continues to develop the range of skills taught. There are still some weaknesses in the teaching of design and technology skills to the older pupils.

Governors now play a much more active part in the development of strategic plans and in monitoring progress towards them. They are well informed and work effectively with the headteacher and staff to secure high standards and quality. Teachers with management responsibilities are given a clear brief and the time in which to carry out review and monitoring. The roles of existing senior staff have been extended and developed so that they now have a distinct contribution to make. Some developments have been undertaken to encourage pupils to take more responsibility for their learning and to initiate the planning and organisation of their work. These approaches have yet to be established across the school as a whole. There is ample evidence of the effectiveness of their consistent application in the nursery and, to a lesser extent, with under fives in Reception classes. A particularly successful change is the greatly improved partnership with parents. Parents now feel welcomed and involved in the school and share its values.

Standards in core subjects have improved considerably since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching has been maintained in many lessons, although there is a minority of lessons that are unsatisfactory. Many of the previous strengths of the school continue and the breadth of experience offered to pupils has increased.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	C	A	A	B	Well above average A
Writing	B	A	A*	A	Above average B Average C Below average D
Mathematics	C	A	B	C	Well below average E

A* = within the top 5% of schools nationally

When compared with all schools, standards achieved in national tests for seven-year-olds have improved over the last three years in reading, and in writing especially. Results in mathematics show greater variation. Standards were average in 1997, well above average the following year and were above average in 1999. Teacher assessments in science show results above those in most schools. When compared to similar schools – based on the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals - achievement in writing is very high (among the best five per cent of schools nationally), in reading it is above average and in mathematics it is average. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls over the last three years, although girls' mathematics results were close to the national average while those of boys were above average. The school has targeted mathematics as an area for development with some success to date. Further, challenging targets have been set for 2000.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school and to their learning are very good. Their eagerness to learn and to please has a positive impact on their progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils form constructive relationships with each other and with adults; these enhance the quality of learning. Pupils show care and consideration for people and property.
Attendance	Attendance is good. Punctuality is a problem for a few families.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-8 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

Teaching is satisfactory or better in 89% of lessons and in 18% it is very good. Teaching is unsatisfactory in 11% of lessons. The teaching of both English and mathematics is usually at least satisfactory with some good lessons in Key Stage 1. In a very few lessons in these subjects the teaching is unsatisfactory. All of the teaching in the nursery is at least good with some very good lessons.

Strengths: There is very effective organisation and management of pupils and use of support staff and voluntary helpers. Teachers know pupils well and meet their needs effectively; they give good explanations and demonstrations and provide helpful feedback to pupils. Most lessons have a brisk pace.

Weaknesses: Some learning intentions are unclear, there is a lack of attention to detail and there are gaps in teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers' questioning does not always extend pupils' thinking. Some activities do not present sufficient challenge, particularly to higher attaining pupils.

The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented. Teachers and pupils respond positively to the structure of lessons. The importance of writing has not been overlooked and, as results show, the approaches are having a beneficial effect on standards. The National Numeracy Strategy is gradually becoming established. A daily mathematics lesson takes place in all classes, although in some there is insufficient emphasis on developing strategies for mental calculations.

The school meets the needs of most of its pupils well. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported. Some higher attaining pupils are not always given work that is challenging enough.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is sufficiently broad and balanced, although there are gaps in investigative and problem solving work in science and mathematics. There are no extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There is very effective support in class from trained assistants. The overall provision is well managed by the co-ordinator.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory and for social and moral development it is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	All members of staff help to maintain a caring environment, in which pupils are valued. The school provides good support and guidance for pupils and promotes the health, safety and welfare of pupils effectively.

The school now works very well in partnership with parents. Parents find that they are listened to and that they are given good quality information, especially within the excellent reports on their children's achievements and progress. They are actively involved in classes and in the Home / School Association.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides a clear vision and sense of direction to the school. She and key staff show a consistent commitment to high standards of work, behaviour and promotion of the school's values. Everyone is valued, relationships are very good and there is a strong sense of teamwork.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are actively involved in planning and decision making. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively in most cases. There are some omissions in the annual report to parents.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Clear systems ensure that monitoring of the school's performance takes place. Assessment outcomes are thoroughly analysed and strategies put into practice to address weaknesses. The headteacher, the deputy and subject co-ordinators carry out classroom observations regularly and they give useful feedback to teachers.
The strategic use of resources	The resources available are used effectively. Improvements in the levels of resources for information technology, using funds linked to the National Grid for Learning, have enhanced standards of achievement and staff expertise. Resources for literacy and numeracy are plentiful, of high quality and they are well used. High quality support staff are employed using funding specifically for pupils with special educational needs.

Staffing is sufficient to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. There is a reasonable balance of expertise and experience to meet the needs of children in the nursery and pupils up to age eight. Accommodation is generally adequate but the library area is not well sited and is not well suited to the teaching of library skills. Resources are generally good.

Application of best value: The school applies principles of best value in all aspects of its work, ensuring good value from the services it receives and in the ways it uses available funds.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The quality of the teaching • The standards of behaviour • Their children like school • The progress made by their children • The high expectations of hard work and high achievement • The personal development of their children • The quality of leadership and management • The way in which they find the school approachable and that they feel valued and actively involved in the life of the school • The support for pupils with special educational needs • The quality of provision in the nursery 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities • The mixed aged classes

The inspection team supports parents' positive comments, particularly in relation to the nursery and to the valuable partnership that now exists. The inspectors have no concerns about the mixed aged classes. They are working well and pupils in parallel classes have very similar learning experiences, often working alongside others in the same year group when this is appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 The standards achieved in the national end of Key Stage 1 tests taken by seven year olds in reading are well above the national average and above those of similar schools. Standards in writing are very high when compared with all schools and are within the top five per cent of schools nationally. The results of mathematics tests are above average and similar to those of like schools. Statutory teacher assessment shows that standards in science are above average. Standards have improved in reading, writing and spelling over the last three years. Results in mathematics have been more volatile, having improved from average in 1997 to well above average in 1998 then dipping to above average in 1999.
- 2 There is no major variation between the attainment of boys and girls in English. The attainment of both genders is high in reading and writing. Boys' results were above average in mathematics, while those of the girls were average.
- 3 Specific targets to raise attainment further have been set for 2000. The school has set suitably challenging targets, particularly focusing on raising achievement in mathematics, improving the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2B and above from 63% to 72% and at Level 3 from 22% to 28%. The targets for English are intended to raise the results in reading to the level of the top 5% of schools; writing results are already extremely good and the aim is to reduce the numbers of pupils achieving below Level 2B.
- 4 Attainment in English in the school matches the end of Key Stage 1 results. Pupils attain high standards in all aspects of English. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully. Standards in speaking and listening and reading are high throughout the school. Pupils listen well to adults and teachers and express their thoughts and ideas effectively. By the time they leave the school most pupils are fluent readers, with a good understanding of what they have read. They are confident when discussing reading habits and offer opinions and preferences for specific stories and authors. Many pupils develop expression and use punctuation effectively when reading aloud. Writing is very well developed and there are good examples of sustained writing for different purposes and in a variety of styles. Pupils present work neatly, using correct letter formation and accurate spelling by the end of Key Stage 1.
- 5 Current standards in mathematics do not quite match those achieved last year at the end of Key Stage 1. Standards are average throughout the school. Some elements of the daily mathematics lesson have been well established. Pupils respond well to activities during the oral and mental starter to lessons. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 recognise the importance of place value in two digit numbers. Older pupils can add such numbers successfully. However, they rely too heavily on counting on and back, often starting from the smaller number, rather than applying efficient strategies using what they already know about numbers to help solve new problems. Pupils can sort numbers using given criteria, showing a basic understanding of the number system.

- 6 Teacher assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 indicates attainment in science that is well above average. Evidence from discussions with pupils and samples of work indicate that current standards are not in line with the outcomes of last year's assessments. Pupils demonstrate some knowledge and understanding at a basic level of how plants and animals live and grow, about the properties of materials and physical forces. Their skills and understanding in experimental and investigative work are insecure, as there are too few opportunities for them to be developed appropriately. Year 3 pupils demonstrate similar gaps in knowledge and understanding and investigative skills.
- 7 Pupils make good progress in information technology and there is high achievement in communicating and in handling information. Pupils work with computers confidently and talk freely about what they are doing, showing good understanding about the day to day uses of technologies. Pupils work effectively with word-processing and painting programs. They can save, retrieve, draw using the mouse, modify the format of text, edit and print work independently by the end of Key Stage 1. These skills are extended further in Key Stage 2. The clear, direct teaching of information technology skills on a regular basis throughout the school is having a beneficial effect on standards.
- 8 Pupils attain satisfactory standards in religious education, geography, history, art, and physical education and in performing and composing in music throughout the school. Standards in design and technology are high in Key Stage 1. There is insufficient evidence upon which to make judgements on standards in music as a whole or in design and technology in Key Stage 2.
- 9 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans (IEPs). Effective support from teachers and learning support assistants, particularly during literacy and numeracy lessons, is raising pupils' levels of achievement and their confidence. Higher attaining pupils are not always provided with work that is suitably demanding. Some activities, particularly in mathematics and science, lack challenge.
- 10 Children make a very good start in the nursery in language and literacy, mathematics, creative development and in knowledge and understanding of the world. Their personal and social development is very good. Physical development is satisfactory. Children leave the nursery well on the way to achieving the desirable learning outcomes for pupils under five. Progress in some of the areas of learning slows slightly during the year in reception due to the limitations on the range of experiences on offer.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 11 Pupils have good attitudes towards school. Relationships are good and pupils' personal development is sound. Behaviour and attendance are good. The school has maintained the high standards noted at the last inspection.
- 12 The pupils are happy at school. They are interested and motivated and take pride in their work. This makes a significant contribution to their progress and attainment. The foundation for these good habits starts in the nursery. For example, the four-year-old children were keen to show visitors their observational drawings of "special things". They were proud of their achievements, and confident to explain what they had done and why.

- 13 The pupils respond willingly and listen attentively to their teachers. They are eager to answer questions, engage in discussions and develop ideas. The pupils concentrate well and, when given the opportunity to work independently, respond positively. They work hard and persevere to improve their skills.
- 14 Pupils behave well and this has a positive impact on their learning. This confirms the view expressed by parents. Pupils respond well to class rules. They behave well at lunchtime and around the school. There is some lively play in the playground and this leads to some “bumping and bruising”. However when there are accidents the children are quick to look after each other. There is no bullying. There have been no exclusions to date.
- 15 Pupils’ relationships with each other, teachers, and other adults are good. This enhances pupils’ learning and supports their progress. Pupils work and play together well. They ask each other for help and they collaborate well in group work.
- 16 Overall pupils’ personal development is sound. The pupils are sensitive to the needs of others, and respect each other’s contributions. They are well aware of the impact of their behaviour on others. A Year 3 girl confidently explained that, “we say sorry if we upset anybody”. Pupils develop increasing levels of responsibility by carrying out duties in class, and helping with routines such as collecting registers and tidying away. The pupils take turns as “computer buddies”, helping the teachers and giving advice to each other in setting up the computers and running the programmes. Older pupils take turns as playground helpers and looking after the younger children. The pupils in reception take responsibility for choosing the “extra special person”. However, although there has been some improvement since the last inspection there is still insufficient opportunity for the pupils to take responsibility and initiative in planning and organising their own work.
- 17 Attendance is very good. At 95.9 % attendance is well above the national average. Registers are completed accurately and efficiently. Punctuality is satisfactory. A few families have problems getting their children to school on time. This lateness can be distracting as it can interrupt the smooth start to the day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 18 The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In nine out of ten lessons the teaching is at least satisfactory and almost half of lessons are good. Teaching in the nursery unit is never less than good and, in most cases, it is very good. The teaching of under fives in Reception classes is also consistently good. In Key Stages 1 and 2 much of the teaching is at least satisfactory and good teaching can be seen in most classes at some time. A minority of lessons with Year 2 and Year 3 pupils is unsatisfactory. There is no poor or very poor teaching. Teaching was described as a strength during the last inspection. Many of the good features identified still exist but the requirements of the literacy and numeracy strategies and the demands of mixed age classes are proving to be a considerable challenge for some teachers.
- 19 Teaching in the nursery is particularly successful. Children’s individual needs are given priority and the teaching team works very well together to ensure that the children take part in a wide range of high quality learning experiences. From the moment a child enters the class, he or she is made to feel part of the group and,

within a short time, it is difficult to make out who is the new entrant. Staff encourage the children to welcome their new friends and to include everyone in all activities. The staff make effective use of ongoing observations of children and other assessment to plan activities that meet the needs of individuals successfully. Alongside encouraging children to develop skills of decision-making, independence and co-operation, the adults extend learning with direct, skilful intervention. For example, children working on cutting and sticking are shown the correct, safe way to use scissors and the most efficient way of using glue spreaders without interrupting their creativity. Similarly, when a child is making a construction with interconnecting cogs, both the teacher and nursery nurse, at different times, extend his understanding by encouraging him to explore, hypothesise and investigate how the cogs work. There is always an exciting range of activities on offer and adults join in with all aspects of learning through play and experimentation. The teaching team places emphasis on children's individual development while establishing good learning habits, routines and personal responsibility. Children respond well by taking part with enthusiasm in activities, trying their best at all times. They produce work at a fast rate – parents have arms full of items to take home at the end of each session! The children concentrate for lengthy time periods, they think for themselves and they are discovering the joy of learning. They describe what they have done and they share their work with others confidently and supportively. The children are making good progress towards the Desirable Learning Outcomes.

- 20 The teaching of children under five in the Reception classes is always at least satisfactory. Seven out of ten lessons are good and almost half of lessons are very good. There is a high level of consistency in the quality of experiences across the classes. A good range of activities is provided, although it does not build effectively enough on that offered to children in the nursery. Teachers plan together in detail and work to their strengths. Direct input to groups of children is organised effectively to take full advantage of teachers' expertise. Clear learning objectives are shared with pupils who then know what they are doing and why they are doing it. In a design and technology lesson, for example, the teacher introduced the children to the use of paper fasteners to join paper. She explained carefully how fasteners work and, by asking suitable questions, was able both to involve pupils and to check their understanding. They then set about selecting how they could use such joins, remaining engaged in the task for a considerable time and showing a mature attitude to their work.
- 21 Teachers use imaginative ways of managing pupils; in one class the merest touch to some metal chimes causes everyone to stop and listen. Specific, direct teaching enables pupils to gain skills, knowledge and understanding at a good rate. Teachers and learning support assistants target named pupils while allowing others to develop autonomy and independence. Teachers show that they know their subjects and their pupils very well, using informal assessment to match tasks to prior attainment. The ethos for learning is very positive. Very good relationships between adults and children contribute significantly to the learning process.
- 22 Teaching in Key Stages 1 and Key Stage 2 (Year 3) is satisfactory, with one in four lessons that are good. Many of the good features described above are present in lessons in Key Stage 1. There is good quality teaching in geography, information technology, design and technology, English, mathematics, music and physical education. Pupils are enabled to make good progress in these subjects by clear, direct teaching focused on developing specific skills.

- 23 The unsatisfactory teaching at the top end of the school arises mainly from unclear objectives and insecure subject knowledge. Teachers do not consistently use questions effectively to extend pupils' learning. They set some tasks that are undemanding and that restrict pupils' choices of how to record their thoughts and findings. These weaknesses occur in some lessons in science, design and technology, mathematics and English. Considerable efforts have been made to address the issue of planning lessons with clear learning intentions and most lessons now have this clarity. To date, lack of experience and expertise in subject leaders has not helped with developing subject knowledge. The re-organisation of subject responsibilities and increased opportunities for professional development offer a more secure structure for improving the quality of teaching in subjects where there are weaknesses.
- 24 In the school as a whole the teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is satisfactory. There is a sound understanding of the teaching of phonics and the basics of reading, spelling, writing and an understanding of number. Teachers have a clearer understanding of the development of aspects of English than for some elements of mathematics. For example, teachers systematically develop the different elements of interesting stories such as characterisation, varied vocabulary and the use of direct speech separately. They then encourage pupils to bring these together when writing within a variety of contexts. The using and applying of mathematical understanding are not drawn together as effectively.
- 25 Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively together and achieve considerable success with pupils who have special educational needs. The additional literacy support for targeted Year 3 pupils is of high quality, enhancing the overall quality of English teaching. The progress of all groups of pupils is generally at least satisfactory. There are some occasions when higher attaining pupils are not provided with sufficient challenge in mathematics and science.

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

- 26 The curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 is broad and balanced and, overall, meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The requirements for religious education are fully met; the school follows the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus. However, there are some gaps in the range of learning opportunities provided for pupils in mathematics and science. Insufficient emphasis is placed on using and applying mathematics and on experimental and investigative science. Information technology does not include enough data handling.
- 27 Sufficient time has been allocated to all areas of the curriculum except for science. Too little time is given to experimental and investigative work, particularly for the oldest pupils. Extra time is effectively allocated to the teaching of personal, social and health education across the school. Time is also given for the teaching of recorders to Year 3 pupils. Policy documents have recently been developed or updated. These contribute to the consistency of approach being developed across the school. There are also recently developed or adopted schemes of work of sound quality to support progression in learning for most subjects. The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy and is currently introducing the National Numeracy Strategy.

- 28 The curriculum for the under-fives is appropriately planned using the nationally prescribed areas of learning. The curriculum provided for the children in the nursery is very good. The staff understand the needs of the children and provide a relevant and stimulating curriculum with a wide range of learning experiences. There is, however, no long-term curriculum plan to ensure continuity and progression between the nursery unit and the reception classes. The teachers in the reception class take into account the areas of learning for children under five in their planning but the learning experiences provided are narrower in range than for the nursery children.
- 29 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and fully meets the requirements for those pupils on the school's Code of Practice special educational need register. They receive good support and the planned programmes of work are well matched to pupils' needs. This enables them to make good progress in meeting the targets set for them. Pupils' work is well planned according to their individual needs. Support from classroom assistants is of good quality. As a result, pupils make good progress in meeting specific targets within their individual education plans. There is good support from outside agencies such as a speech therapist and a teacher of the deaf who work effectively with class teachers and classroom assistants to plan appropriate programmes of work for the pupils.
- 30 Under the leadership of the new headteacher the school has recently and effectively addressed curriculum planning which, although not identified as an issue during the last inspection, was not fully established. There is now a whole school curriculum map outlining subject coverage, often linked to topic work, for each year group. Planning successfully caters for the needs of pupils in mixed age classes. Teachers are involved in planning for more than one age group to ensure that pupils in different classes but in the same age group have similar curricular experiences. Some subjects, such as history, geography and physical education, are taught in year groups rather than in mixed aged classes, which is facilitated by the involvement of the headteacher. Pupils transfer to two local middle schools at the end of Year 3. There is good liaison between the local first schools and the middle schools. Opportunities are provided for pupils to visit the middle schools. Teachers, headteachers and governors meet regularly to ensure a smooth transition for pupils and to discuss relevant issues, leading to shared objectives across the cluster of schools.
- 31 The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, physical, personal and social development and provides a good basis for the next stages in their education. Appropriate provision is made for health, sex and drug education. All pupils have equal access to the curriculum and equality of opportunity is a positive feature of the school. Although there are no extra-curricular activities, the curriculum is enhanced by a range of educational visits, including a three-day residential visit for Year 3 pupils to an environmental centre in the Norfolk Broads. Good links have been established with the local community and the school regularly has visitors to talk to pupils in the classroom and in assemblies. These include people from local churches and other places of worship, musical ensembles and theatre groups. The older pupils visit the local library and the local librarian, in turn, visits the school.
- 32 The provision for pupils' social and moral development is good and the provision for their cultural and spiritual development is satisfactory.

- 33 The governors, headteacher and staff work well together to create a positive ethos that permeates strongly through the work of the school. Pupils become familiar with Christian principles through assemblies and through religious education. They are encouraged to take an active part in corporate acts of worship. Although Bible stories and accounts of other people's lives offer ample opportunities for pupils to reflect quietly on their own experiences and those of others, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to do so. There are too few opportunities for pupils to extend their spiritual development through subjects other than religious education. However, a good example of pupils' developing sense of wonder was evident in the nursery when pupils found hidden treasure in the sand!
- 34 Expectations of behaviour are consistently high and pupils acquire a good understanding of moral principles. They are developing a growing sense of right and wrong and an increasing awareness of fairness and respect for others. Relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils have ample opportunities to share, co-operate and contribute to the school and the wider community. They respect and value each other and celebrate the achievements of others, such as in the 'sharing' assembly. Achievements are recognised not only by teachers but by support staff, lunchtime supervisors and the pupils themselves. Strategies to involve pupils in supporting each other across the school and for fund raising for charitable purposes locally, nationally and internationally are well implemented. School visits and the residential visit organised for the older pupils provide further opportunities for social development.
- 35 Activities for the development of pupils' cultural awareness and to increase their range of experiences in a school and community with a narrow range of cultures are well planned through religious education when pupils have opportunities to learn about other faiths. Opportunities exist within the curriculum for them to learn about other cultures through the reading of stories, poems, fables and myths as well through music, art and religious education. However, this is not well developed nor is it sufficiently systematic to ensure that all pupils acquire a real depth of understanding of cultural diversity.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 36 The school cares well for its pupils. It is an orderly and supportive community in which pupils feel valued, secure and happy. The standards for welfare and guidance, noted at the last inspection, have been maintained and improved. There are sound procedures for child protection and very good arrangements for promoting pupils' wellbeing, health and safety.
- 37 Staff expect high standards of behaviour and provide good role models. Overall, there are good arrangements for promoting, rewarding, and monitoring behaviour. In particular, the weekly award assembly is very effective. Achievements in both schoolwork and personal development are properly recognised. Teachers and mid-day supervisors give awards and the older children take responsibility for nominating the best-behaved child in the playground. One five year old boy was given an award for helping his friends settle an argument, and explained to the whole school that the "skill" is learning how to share.

- 38 The procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are effective, and all unexplained absence is followed up. However, although the home-school agreement encourages good punctuality, too many families arrive late to school.
- 39 Overall the systems for assessing pupils' achievements and progress are sound. Baseline assessment using Performance Indicators for Primary Schools (PIPS) and the Bury Infant Check gives useful information about attainment on entry to the main school. As they start statutory education, pupils are assessed against the Desirable Learning Outcomes. The information from these assessments and from end of Key Stage 1 statutory assessment is analysed and used for planning. Pupils with special educational needs are identified early and suitable individual education plans are drawn up. Teachers and support assistants carefully monitor progress against targets within the plans. Reviews are carried out regularly, statements of special educational needs are kept up to date and targeted support in lessons gives pupils full access to the curriculum.
- 40 There is very good assessment practice in some classrooms which includes the systematic recording of achievement in all core subjects, and recent training has taken place to further develop these systems throughout the school. Assessment information is used effectively to plan future work and monitor the progress of individual pupils in some classes. A systematic approach to the use of assessment is becoming well established in the nursery and with the under fives but it is not applied consistently across the school. The teachers know the pupils very well and they understand their needs. They give effective guidance to ensure that the pupils make sound progress with both their personal development and their schoolwork.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 41 The school has a good partnership with parents and this contributes well to the pupils' education. Parents are very satisfied with what the school provides and what their children achieve. They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on, and they are confident to raise questions and concerns. Some parents have reservations about the range of activities offered.
- 42 The school is committed to developing a strong partnership with parents and has developed effective links to achieve this. The information provided is good. The prospectus, regular newsletters and leaflets for guidance are inviting and informative. However, the prospectus and governors' annual report do not meet statutory requirements. The school seeks parents' views and takes action to improve communication. For example parents asked for more information on what is being taught, and they now receive a summary of the half-term plans for teaching. Parents are kept well informed on their children's progress through regular consultation evenings and reports. The reports are excellent. They make it clear how well the children are doing and what they need to do to improve.
- 43 Parents are involved very well in their children's learning and this contributes significantly to the work of the school. Home visits and a sensitive induction into the nursery have a positive impact on a smooth transition from home to school. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in discussions about provision for their children. A large number of parents regularly help in school. They are given good guidance and therefore they are able to support the work of the teachers and help many pupils make better progress. The Home

School Association is keen to develop its role beyond just raising funds and organising social events, and plans to encourage all parents to get involved with the work of the school. The Association works closely with the headteacher and already has a large committee with representatives in each class. Many parents get involved by coming to concerts, sports days, and special events such as the “ICT week” and “Music Day”. They give good support to their children with homework and make very good use of the school lending library to help with their children’s reading at home. However, there is no homework policy, and some parents would like the way homework is set to be clearer and more consistent.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 44 Since taking up the post two years ago, the headteacher has established a clear commitment to improving the standards achieved and the quality of education provided by the school. She has managed effectively a significant number of changes, based on the key issues of the previous inspection report, additional issues identified once she was in post and, more recently, the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. These changes have brought about improvements in the school’s overall performance. There is a clear commitment to providing equality of opportunity. Detailed analysis of standards in relation to different groups of pupils is carried out. Joint planning and the monitoring of curriculum delivery ensure that pupils in parallel classes have equal access to curricular experiences.
- 45 By increasing the responsibilities of key staff, the headteacher has enabled innovative teachers to become directly involved with school improvement, thus providing inspiration and motivation to all staff. Senior members of staff have also been encouraged to extend their roles and responsibilities, with specific targets against which they can measure success. The headteacher has taken a leading role in building up honest, open and supportive partnerships with parents and in enabling governors to play an increasingly active part in the school. She also played a key role in the re-structuring and re-organisation of the school improvement development plan, creating a very useful tool for improvement and a model for the management of change. The school is well placed to improve further, given the shared commitment to improvement and its capacity to succeed.
- 46 Tasks are delegated successfully amongst staff. Those with management responsibilities clearly understand what is expected of them. The school improvement development plan contains a detailed action plan for each initiative and regular reviews ensure that progress is made at a suitable rate. Co-ordinators are allocated time and resources to carry out monitoring of classroom practice and standards in their subjects. They report their findings to all staff and governors in written form on a regular basis and lead professional development activities as required. All members of staff have job descriptions. Targets for improvement are set during annual review meetings with the headteacher. The headteacher and deputy have agreed performance targets with the governors.
- 47 Communication within and beyond the school is very effective. All connected with it are fully aware of and committed to the values that the school promotes and an ethos of high expectations and the value of each individual flourishes. All are made to feel welcome and part of the school community. Effective use is made of new technologies, including information and communications technology within classrooms, in producing school documentation, newsletters, notices and displays

and in communicating with others through Internet connections and e-mail. The school secretary supports the headteacher well in ensuring the smooth running of the school. She greets visitors warmly and she works efficiently and effectively in all aspects of her work, often under considerable pressure. She is particularly effective in keeping governors well informed by providing financial and other information.

- 48 Financial management is highly effective in supporting school improvement. Grants and external funds are used wisely, particularly for supporting pupils with special educational needs. Staff and governors identify strengths and weaknesses clearly through monitoring and evaluating exercises. The school effectiveness sub-committee is particularly active in this respect and the finance and general purposes committee supports well in trying to ensure that sufficient resources are made available. Thus the governing body fulfils its statutory duties in shaping the direction of the school and in calling it to account for standards and quality. Governors with specific curriculum responsibilities such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, work closely with teachers and there are plans to give a sharper focus to the regular visits they make during the school day. Each governor is linked to a specific class, which they track as the pupils move through the school; in this way they become familiar with the pupils and see them grow and learn over time. The governors hold the headteacher in high regard and, while fully supportive of her work, expect her to be accountable to them. Consequently, they have set her challenging targets.
- 49 The headteacher has worked hard to improve the quality of teaching throughout the school. She has appointed skilled staff and monitors all teachers by direct observation and through scrutiny of planning and completed work. Considerable progress has been made in developing curriculum planning in the long, medium and short term, which was not well established prior to her appointment. Necessary action has been taken to improve the performance of those whose teaching has weaknesses. Schemes of work and a common planning format have provided support and suitable professional development, organised either within school or by external providers, has addressed weaknesses. There is an appropriate induction programme that enables all new members of staff to become familiar with the school and its values. The school has the potential to become a provider of initial teacher training.
- 50 The school is well staffed with teachers suitably qualified for the ages of pupils, although the range of initial subject qualifications is too narrow. Teachers temporarily co-ordinating science, for example, lack formal qualifications in the subject and, therefore, are not in a strong enough position to lead others confidently without further training. The learning support assistants are well qualified – most have nursery nurse qualifications – and they complement the work of the teachers very well. All staff work successfully in small teams; they plan together and capitalise on particular strengths. The nursery staff is an especially strong team that ensures high quality experiences for all children. Accommodation is generally good, although the siting of the library makes it inappropriate for the teaching of research skills to groups of pupils. Resources are at least adequate for all subjects. Literacy resources are plentiful and of good quality; hardware and software for information technology are also good, each class having continual access to two computers.
- 51 The school building and its site are well maintained and free of litter and graffiti. Pupils have recently worked with local environmentalists to create attractive willow bowers over seats, a tunnel and a dome through which adults and children can

make their way to the main entrance. The playground, while deemed adequate for the numbers of pupils, is rather cramped for much of the year, when the larger grassed area is unsuitable for use. Some outdoor play equipment is available to keep children occupied and the youngest pupils have a separate play space so as to avoid overcrowding. Occasional accidents do occur, however, despite careful supervision.

- 52 Best value principles are applied to much of the school's work. Comparisons of its performance are made with that of other similar schools. There is constant questioning and challenge as to how best to provide what is needed. Parents are fully consulted and involved in discussions about key initiatives. There is continuous self-appraisal of the service the school provides and established practices for ensuring that services provided to it are the most economic, efficient and effective.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 53 In order to raise standards of achievement and to improve further the quality of education provided the headteacher, governors and staff should:

- (1) Improve the quality of teaching in the upper part of the school so that all lessons are at least satisfactory by ensuring that teachers:

i] plan all lessons with precise objectives that clearly show what they intend the pupils to learn during the lesson;

ii] include direct teaching of specific skills, knowledge and understanding;

iii] check that all activities planned have a clear purpose and relate directly to the objectives and

iv] introduce, explain and reinforce precise, subject specific vocabulary

(refer to paragraphs 20, 21, 22, 23, 83, 90, 100)

- (2) Increase the range of opportunities for pupils to carry out experimental and investigative work in mathematics and science by:

i] including more occasions for pupils to plan, carry out and evaluate experiments and investigations in science, leading to enhancement of their skills and in greater independence and
(refer to paragraphs 88, 89, 91)

ii] allow for planned and spontaneous opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills to solve problems individually or in groups.
(refer to paragraphs 81, 85)

The governors, headteacher and staff may also wish to consider the following minor issues:

- ensure that the school prospectus and governors' annual report to parents meets statutory requirements
(refer to paragraph 42)
- review the siting of the library with a view to implementing a more structured approach to the teaching of research skills
(refer to paragraph 76)
- clarify the school's approach to homework so that parents are fully aware of what is expected
(refer to paragraph 43)
- consider offering a range of suitable extra-curricular activities
(refer to paragraph 41) and
- provide greater continuity in the curriculum for pupils under five by teachers planning together to ensure a closer match of experiences in the areas of learning
(refer to paragraphs 28, 57)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	55
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	18	25	46	11	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 – Y3
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	162
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	-	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y3
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	6
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	35

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.19
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	20	21	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	20	19
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	38	41	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93(96)	100(92)	98 (96)
	National	82 (80)	83 (82)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	19	20
	Girls	21	21	21
	Total	40	40	41
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	98 (96)	98 (94)	100 (88)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87(86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	120
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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: Y1 – Y3

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	27.5

Education support staff: YR-- Y3

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	135

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	13
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	320210
Total expenditure	314418
Expenditure per pupil	1542
Balance brought forward from previous year	7988
Balance carried forward to next year	13780

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	173
Number of questionnaires returned	71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	72	23	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	73	24	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	54	42	3	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	49	7	0	6
The teaching is good.	76	23	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	34	13	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	72	25	1	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	51	39	10	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	30	1	3	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	38	1	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	15	17	11	39

Other issues raised by parents

A few parents raised concerns over mixed aged classes. Others gave praise for and appreciation of the quality of special educational needs provision. Many parents welcomed the ways in which the school now involved parents and keeps them well informed. Individual annual reports and the work of the nursery unit were described as excellent.

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

- 54 The education of the youngest children in school takes place in the nursery class which children attend on a part-time basis and in two mixed Reception and Year 1 classes, which the children attend, full time.
- 55 The provision in the nursery is very good and is a strength of the school. The children make a very good start to their education, provided by a caring staff team for whom meeting the individual needs of each child is the priority. Parents and carers are made to feel very welcome and are invited to stay each day to help their child settle for as long as this is needed. Staff have created a secure, calm, relaxed and purposeful environment.
- 56 The attainment of children in the nursery and reception classes in relation to age-expectations is very good in personal and social development, good in language and literacy, mathematics and creative development and satisfactory in knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Baseline results, on-going observations and other assessment information are used effectively to inform the short-term planning for individual children to ensure that progress is made.
- 57 The teaching of the nursery children is consistently good and often very good. The staff work together as a very good team. They are totally committed to the progress and welfare of the children and to producing high quality education. The staff have a thorough knowledge of what constitutes a good curriculum for children under five and are successful in implementing it. They liaise well with the reception teachers in discussing the individual development of each child on transfer but do not share long-term curriculum planning in order to ensure continuity and progression. Teaching in the reception classes is always satisfactory and often good. In many of the most effective lessons children are given opportunities to explore and investigate. Teachers use praise well to motivate children and share their clear learning objectives with the children. In less effective lessons, while the teaching is satisfactory, the range of learning experiences offered to the children is limited and there is over-direction by the teacher. Children's levels of involvement, interest and concentration and therefore, their levels of attainment are directly affected by these factors in a small minority of lessons.

Personal and Social Development

- 58 The provision for the personal and social development of the children is very good. They achieve above age-related expectations and make very good progress. The sensitive induction process planned for entry into the nursery class makes each child feel very special and the discussions between nursery and reception staff about each individual on transfer contribute to this. Other factors are the welcoming atmosphere created by the staff and the security of routines. Children develop a sense of self worth, independence and the ability to co-operate well with other children and adults.
- 59 The children come confidently into school and their behaviour is very good. They have positive attitudes to work and join in all activities with enthusiasm. They are

independent in looking after their own needs, for example in the reception class in dressing and undressing for physical education and in the nursery in making choices and in selecting and putting on an apron for a “messy” activity. The children show care and consideration for others such as in looking after a new child in the group.

- 60 The teaching for personal and social development is very good. Teachers have high expectations and make clear what is an acceptable way to behave and what is unacceptable and why. They praise kind and considerate behaviour and value every child.

Language and literacy

- 61 Children achieve standards above those expected for their age in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The children are able to listen attentively to adults and to other children. They take part in group discussions by both speaking and listening and communicate with their peers in role-play situations. During the week of the inspection, for example, reception class children had the opportunity of working in the role-play situation of a baby clinic. The children communicated well with each other in the roles of doctor, nurse or parent.
- 62 The children enjoy books, handle them with care and delight in sharing them with an adult. The nursery children love to join in stories, can discuss the pictures and predict what might happen next. Reception children have made a good start in learning to read. Many children know the shape and sound of individual letters and can read a number of words. The provision of attractive books and library areas by the staff and the home-school reading diary contribute to the high standards achieved. From their earliest days in school teachers have high expectations of children as they are encouraged to recognise their own names and register themselves by selecting their name and placing it in a box.
- 63 Many opportunities are created for the children to develop writing skills. There is a writing area and clipboards, pens, notepads etc are provided in each class. Children write their names on their paintings in the nursery and, during the inspection, reception children were making books about a story they had heard and were beginning to form letters and words with accuracy.

Mathematics

- 64 Attainment is above average. Most children in the reception classes can count, recognise and match numbers to ten, are beginning to write numerals and understand the principles of addition. They are beginning to develop an understanding of positional language. In the nursery children develop an understanding of liquids and amounts through play with sand and water and some demonstrated an understanding of pattern when playing with beads. The mathematical display in the nursery encourages the children to explore and investigate concepts of number, shape, size and time and contributes to the high standards of attainment. Teachers plan carefully a wide range of activities to reinforce and extend children’s mathematical understanding. They also take advantage of appropriate opportunities that arise spontaneously to develop this further. The quality of teaching in this area of learning is good, particularly in the nursery.

- 65 The children demonstrate high levels of involvement, concentration, enjoyment and curiosity in mathematics, when involved in appropriate experiences. Where the range of activities provided is limited and not based on practical experiences, the children are less involved and learning is slower.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 66 The children's skills in information technology are well developed. They are confident in using a computer and develop good skills of mouse control. The nursery children learn skills such as cutting, folding, joining and sticking through sensitive adult support and good quality teaching. Scientific understanding is also gained through ongoing nursery activities; for example, one child built a complex construction using a kit. This involved cogs and wheels that worked to move the construction. The effective intervention by adults, involving praise and carefully worded questions, led to the child developing greater understanding of how the cogs worked. The reception children have too few on-going opportunities to experience, explore and investigate construction materials and the properties of natural materials such as sand and water.

Physical development

- 67 The nursery makes well-planned use of its very good inside and outside facilities for physical development. The reception classes share the nursery's secure outside area for the children to engage in either physical play and extend and develop other areas of learning. In physical education lessons the reception class children learn to use space, to move with increasing control and to develop skills such as throwing and catching. They also have useful opportunities to use equipment such as bikes, trucks, balls and bats on a regular daily basis and, therefore, consolidate and extend their physical development from the nursery. Teaching in this area of learning is satisfactory.

Creative Development

- 68 In the nursery the children represent and interpret their own ideas and observations through a range of experiences such as paint, playdough, collage, music, movement and role-play. These experiences are planned for daily for the children, who respond well and explore the range of media with enjoyment and enthusiasm. An example of this was when two children were engaged in an extended piece of role-play which involved dressing up – packing bags (to go on holiday) a journey – arrival (at their caravan) – unpacking and the preparation of a meal. They demonstrated creativity in the use of their imagination, sustained concentration and good skills of communication. Teaching is of good quality. The nursery staff use observation followed by skilful intervention and/or planning to extend and develop situations such as these. In the reception classes the children develop creatively, for example in music lessons where they are given opportunities to play percussion instruments and consider musical elements such as loud and quiet in their playing. The children enjoy these lessons and respond well. Good quality role-play opportunities such as the baby clinic and dance lessons, are also planned and provided in the reception classes. There are, however, too few opportunities planned for on a daily basis for the children to respond creatively, communicate feelings and experiment and explore with a range of experiences such as paint, dough, clay and collage materials.

ENGLISH

- 69 By the age of seven, and by the time pupils leave the school, standards in English are well above average. Standards have continued to improve each year since 1997 and are well above average in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The 1999 end of Key Stage 1 task and test results show that the performance of pupils was well above the national average in reading and very high in comparison with the national average in writing. In comparison with similar schools pupils' performance was above average in reading and well above average in writing. Teacher assessment results show that standards in speaking and listening are well above the national average. Evidence gathered during the inspection, from lesson observations, samples of work and through discussions with pupils indicates that pupils are on target to attain above the national expectation for English.
- 70 The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy Strategy. Pupils from both key stages spend an hour a day on literacy. They are confident in speaking and listening and contribute well to discussions in large and small groups, as well as individually with adults. Their vocabulary and use of words is developing through the language associated with the literacy hour and the focus on the use of correct terminology in subjects across the curriculum. Pupils have ample opportunities to practise and develop their speaking and listening skills across the curriculum. For instance, pupils in Year 1 were able to report back with confidence to the whole class on how they had made a face with a moving hat in design and technology. They used correct terminology learned during the lesson, evaluated the outcomes and considered improvements to their designs. These plenary sessions are common across all classes and subjects, enabling pupils to focus on their learning and build upon their speaking and listening skills.
- 71 Pupils read and write with increasing confidence, fluency and understanding. They read together successfully during whole class sessions, in a group with the teacher and independently. They recognise a good range of words and follow different types of text well, such as when recognising the differences between dialogue and narration when reading *Farmer Duck* by Martin Waddell in a shared reading session. They use a range of strategies including phonics and picture clues and overall meaning to work out unfamiliar words. This was particularly evident in a shared reading session when pupils made sensible guesses for missing words in the text. Many read fluently and with expression. They are keen to talk about what they have read and show an interest in books of all types. They state preferences and know why they like particular books. Pupils are familiar with terms such as fiction, non-fiction, author and illustrator. The older pupils know how to find information within books using contents and index pages as well as making good use of skimming and scanning skills. Although pupils make effective use of books in the classroom, they make little use of the recently developed school library and, as yet, are not familiar the classification system or the simplified colour coding to locate books systematically and efficiently. They are developing a good understanding of the sound and spelling system, which they use to read and spell with increasing accuracy. Handwriting is neat and legible and pupils learn to join letters from an early age. Writing covers the full range of fiction and non-fiction texts and pupils are able to write for different purposes.
- 72 Teaching at Key Stage 1 is at least satisfactory and often better. At Key Stage 2 teaching was satisfactory in two thirds of lessons seen and unsatisfactory in the other third. Lessons throughout the school are well planned. In lessons where

teaching is good, learning objectives are clearly identified and activities contribute well to pupils' acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding. For example in one lesson, Year 1 pupils clearly understood the differences between reading a story from a book and retelling a story from memory. Good links were made between books and their own writing providing them with a sense of purpose and motivation to write and improve their own spelling. Pupils were provided with effective strategies to help them to learn to spell new words correctly. Good use is made of introductory whole class sessions to recap on previous lessons to reinforce and consolidate learning. The skilful use of questioning engages pupils' interest as well as enabling the teacher to check understanding. Good use is often made of plenary sessions to facilitate the sharing and extending of ideas, to recap on learning and to further check understanding. Pupils are well managed, relationships are positive and behaviour is good. In the lessons in which teaching is less than satisfactory, there is too much emphasis on pupils completing tasks and not enough on making sure that pupils are clear about what they have learned. Although pace in lessons is generally good, particularly at the beginning and end of lessons, it is sometimes slow during group work activities when pupils apply themselves less readily to their work without the direct support of the teacher.

- 73 Teachers know the pupils well and monitor their progress effectively. Feedback to pupils during lessons is both positive and constructive. Some teachers record comments about individual pupils on weekly planning sheets to inform subsequent planning. Work is regularly marked in all classes. Marking is particularly effective in some classes where pupils are provided with constructive feedback about how well they have done, with appropriate targets for improvement. Some teachers also make useful notes on pupils' work to indicate the context in which the work is done and the level of support received.
- 74 Pupils throughout the school who have special educational needs make good progress towards the targets set for them. They are well supported by both teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils in Year 3 receiving additional literacy support are particularly well supported and are making good progress.
- 75 The English curriculum is taught mainly through the literacy hour. Two teachers, one from each key stage, have recently been given responsibility for the co-ordination of English across the school. They have supported the introduction of the literacy hour. The English/literacy policy has recently been updated to take account of the literacy hour and to reinforce equality of opportunity. Given the split-age classes, monitoring has focused on teachers' planning to ensure curriculum coverage, continuity between classes and progression in learning. Standards of attainment are closely monitored through observation of the literacy hour being taught in classes across the school and analysis of teacher assessment and test results. Governors have been involved in policy development. The governor with responsibility for literacy regularly visits the school and observes in classrooms and takes part in literacy lessons. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs has been involved in preparing materials, with the support of the Year 3 teacher, for additional literacy support. There is a strong feeling of partnership between teachers, support staff, governors and parents, that is recognised as a strength of the school.
- 76 Resources for learning are good. Pupils have access to a wide range of literature, which makes a positive contribution to the high standards attained in reading. A range of resources has recently been purchased to support the implementation of

the literacy strategy. A new reading scheme has been introduced and is centrally stored in the 'Haven of Peace'. There is a good range of big books for shared reading sessions and more are to be bought for Year 3. A non-fiction library has recently been organised along a central corridor. This has yet to be developed as an effective resource for pupils. Other subjects, such as history, geography, science and religious education make a significant contribution to pupils' competence in literacy by providing pupils with opportunities for speaking and listening, reading for information and writing for a variety of different purposes.

- 77 Since the last inspection, resources have been extended to support the teaching and learning of information technology which now makes a significant contribution to English. All pupils have access to more than one computer in each classroom and the teaching of literacy is supported by a good range of software appropriate for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Good use is also made of word processing skills to support the development of writing. The role of the English co-ordinators has been developed to include leadership and oversight of long and medium term planning which has successfully ensured that pupils in the same year group, but in different classes, have similar curricular experiences. Time and opportunity has been provided to enable them to observe in classrooms and monitor standards across the school and evaluate the impact of the implementation of the literacy strategy. There is little evidence to show that pupils have more opportunities to pose questions, select resources and solve problems within the English curriculum. Pupils are, however, encouraged to reflect on what they have learned, particularly during the plenary sessions towards the end of the literacy hour.

MATHEMATICS

- 78 Standards overall in mathematics are average at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave school. Most pupils are working near their capacity and achieving well in terms of their earlier attainment. They make satisfactory progress. Pupils of higher prior attainment are underachieving and not making appropriate progress. They are not sufficiently challenged to use and apply their skills and knowledge. Work in lessons is often undemanding. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported when engaged in classroom tasks and make good progress.
- 79 Results in national tests have been maintained since the last inspection. A majority of pupils reach the standards expected of them. Over the last three years results have been either close to, or above, all other schools. The number of pupils who achieve at a level higher than expected, matches the national average. Standards in mathematics achieved by pupils aged 7 are in line with those of pupils in similar schools. A large proportion of able pupils achieves the lower average level in the tests. Performance in mathematics differs significantly to that in reading, where it is above that of similar schools and in writing where it is well above. The school has set realistic targets for raising the standards achieved by some pupils and, in working to the programmes outlined in the National Numeracy Strategy, intends to make the necessary improvements.
- 80 Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are beginning to recognise what each digit is worth in a two-digit number and are developing their understanding when working with 10p and 1p coins. This is further extended when, in Year 3, pupils read and write amounts in pounds and pence and solve simple problems involving money.

However, many pupils rely on inefficient strategies such as counting back in ones rather than tens in finding solutions to calculations. Some are reluctant to use mental strategy, preferring to work with their fingers or other equipment. Older pupils in Key Stage 1 are beginning to build up effective ways of adding say 12 or 13, recognising that they can first add 10 then 2 or 3. They are not encouraged to consider if this is the same as adding first 2 or 3 then 10. Mathematical ideas are not always linked together but seen in isolation. Pupils in Year 2 show secure understanding of the number system when asked to sort a range of numbers into 2 sets: one of even numbers, the other of numbers less than 20. They quickly appreciate that some numbers fit into both sets, ie: the intersection, and that other numbers fit into neither.

- 81 In both key stages progress in numeracy skills is satisfactory. The National Numeracy Strategy Framework for Mathematics and its support material are being used alongside a commercial scheme to ensure that pupils access all aspects of mathematics. In some classes planning a unit of work from two sources is leading to lack of clarity in what it is that the pupils are to learn in each lesson. There is heavy reliance on the worksheets provided with the scheme, which restricts mental agility and limits pupils' own methods of recording their thinking. Other subjects in the curriculum support the development of numeracy skills. In one lesson pupils were using a computer programme to practise their counting skills and to reinforce their recognition of numbers.
- 82 The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school and enables pupils to improve. Other pupils are held back by over-direction and by questioning that checks what pupils know but does not extend their thinking. At the beginning of lessons, pupils are given opportunities to participate in oral work through counting activities and calculating then showing an answer by holding up a digit card or fan number. Pupils enjoy this high level of interaction and benefit by all being equally involved. They are very keen to demonstrate their understanding, in say placing one brick above another, feeling valued for making a contribution to the learning of others.
- 83 In the main part of the lesson, teachers in both key stages either introduce new learning or develop existing mathematical ideas. When explanations are thorough and ideas are demonstrated through examples, pupils show understanding. In the Year 3 class, pupils were discussing how to add on 10p to amounts like £2.97. The teacher carefully explained the effect of adding 10p to the 90p and showed the pupils how to record the total amount. In some classes explanations are unclear and imprecise and the range of mathematical language used is limited. This leads to lack of understanding.
- 84 During this part of the lesson, pupils are directed to tasks, which are appropriately matched to their level of skill and understanding. The tasks are often practical and well supported by a good range of equipment, offering pupils a chance to explore the strategy of 'counting on' with a hundred square or counting out change with coins. At times however, the task is not linked to the class discussion or the intended learning of the lesson. This leads to some pupils being unclear about what is expected of them and results in lack of progress. These sessions are well organised and are successful in encouraging pupils to work independently. Pupils in all classes settle quickly to their activities and are co-operative, happy to share equipment and take turns when playing games. This allows the teacher to focus attention on one group of pupils and further support their learning. On occasions,

the activities are covering more than one aspect of mathematics. In one class, for example, pupils were engaged in recognising numbers up to 20, understanding what each digit is worth in a two-digit number, adding 12, adding two small numbers and sorting numbers in a Venn diagram. This allowed no common ground for teacher explanation and intervention and made the teaching less effective.

- 85 At the end of all lessons observed, pupils were brought together to review their learning. This did give the lessons a well-defined structure and aided the sense of purpose. However, the teacher often used the time to run through the content of the activity, not the learning that had taken place within it. In one lesson where the plenary was used effectively, a group of pupils applied a newly acquired strategy for finding the difference between two larger numbers. They accurately found the difference between two numbers, say 49 and 52, by 'counting on', demonstrating their calculation on the class 100 square. The teachers, in the main, direct these sessions by asking more closed questions. Pupils are given too few opportunities to raise their own questions or steer their own learning.
- 86 There is a recently produced policy for the subject, which clearly aligns with the principles of the National Numeracy Strategy. This year funding has been directed towards purchasing the necessary resources. The curriculum co-ordinator and the numeracy governor are monitoring the initial implementation of the mathematics programme in all classes and the school has plans for a thorough evaluation of classroom practice. Current day-to-day analysis of what pupils can do, know and understand is good. Assessment procedures over a longer period of time have been identified as an area for immediate modification. The school also intends to set sharper individual learning targets for all pupils, to increase levels of performance.

SCIENCE

- 87 The attainment of seven-year-olds at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, as assessed by teachers, was very high in comparison with all schools and with similar schools. All pupils in the year group achieved at least Level 2 and a well above average proportion of pupils achieved Level 3. The achievement was spread evenly across different elements of the subject, although there was slightly less success at Level 2 in Experimental and Investigative science.
- 88 There is insufficient time allocated to the subject as a whole and, within it, too few opportunities for experimental and investigative work. Work in books is mostly based on worksheets and there is very little difference between tasks carried out by pupils in different year groups and of different prior attainment.
- 89 Only one lesson, in Year 2, was observed during the inspection. Additional evidence from teachers' planning, samples of work, curriculum documents, discussion with teachers and talking to groups of children about their work, indicates that current levels of skills, knowledge and understanding are no more than average. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 have a basic understanding about what science is and why they study it. They can describe physical processes such as magnetism and electricity. They know about the processes of growth in plants and what conditions are required for healthy living in humans. They have a sound understanding of natural and manufactured materials and their properties. They are less sure in their understanding of, and show that they have limited experience of, investigative work. They show minimal awareness of the concept of fair testing and

of what they would do to set up an experiment, what equipment they might need and how specific conditions could be maintained. These achievements contrast sharply with the outcomes of end of key stage statutory assessment.

- 90 The teaching that was observed in Key Stage 1 was unsatisfactory. The objectives, to identify natural and processed materials, were appropriate but the planned activities were not well matched to pupils' prior attainment, nor were they suitably scientific in focus. Specific vocabulary, such as natural and 'man-made', was not used consistently. Pupils were not given opportunities to discuss how materials could be sorted into these two categories and by what criteria decisions were made. Most choices were made based on appearance only. The viewing of a video excerpt did little to enhance the work as the teacher did not introduce it well, nor were its key points discussed sufficiently well to clarify and check pupils' understanding. The teacher's subject knowledge was not secure enough to develop pupils' investigative skills and their understanding. The class was keen to make choices, and guesses, based on their own experiences but were unsure about how they had made their decisions. They carried out tasks as directed but were not able to show initiative or independence in their work.
- 91 Planning for science follows the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority scheme of work. Overall coverage of topics is set out in a long term curriculum map so that what is expected to be covered by each year group is clear. Medium and short term planning lacks clarity in determining objectives and some activities lack a specifically scientific focus. The temporary co-ordinators have carried out an audit based on classroom observations, scrutiny of planning and discussion with staff. As neither of them has a formal qualification in science, their role as subject leaders is restricted. They offer support and guidance on planning, resources and suggested activities and have been successful in re-structuring how science is taught in the school. There is further work to be done, however, and a greater emphasis on developing scientific skills, knowledge and understanding for teachers and pupils is required. There is a general lack of clarity and insufficient attention to detail within the subject. For instance, a display on different materials uses the term 'materials' when referring to 'fabrics'.
- 92 Resources are well organised and stored centrally so that adults and children can have access to them. There is a good supply of equipment and of consumables. The school grounds offer good opportunities and are used effectively for study of the environment, the weather, minibeasts and other wildlife. Standards in science have improved since the last inspection. Recent initiatives have placed pressure on the curriculum, however, and the amount of time devoted to experimental and investigative science is limited. During the long-term absence of the co-ordinator, two teachers have worked together to oversee and develop the subject with some success.

ART

- 93 Only one art lesson was seen in Key Stage 1 and two in Key Stage 2. However, evidence from planning, finished work, photographs and discussions with pupils and teachers indicates that standards of work and progress in skills, knowledge and understanding are satisfactory at both key stages. Pupils have experience of a suitably wide range of drawing materials, media and resources and they record from experience and imagination. Their knowledge and understanding of art are less well developed than their designing and making skills.

- 94 The younger pupils in Key Stage 1 are learning how to mix colours effectively and gaining in confidence in what they see. Year 3 pupils work with clay, using appropriate techniques to create a pot. They use tools safely and effectively and modify their work as a result of evaluating it.
- 95 The quality of teaching is satisfactory at both key stages. Teachers are well supported by detailed whole school planning and the recently developed policy. These are to be further supplemented by the QCA scheme of work for art when it becomes available. Pupils are well supported by teachers, classroom assistants and volunteer helpers. Teachers provide good demonstrations enabling pupils to learn different skills with opportunities to practise and consolidate them. Skilful questioning enables pupils to identify problems and employ strategies to solve them. The use of correct terminology and discussions about their work contributes well to pupils' speaking and listening skills.
- 96 The recently appointed co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her role and keen to support the improvement of standards in art across the school. She is well supported by the learning support assistant from the nursery. Displays of pupils' work are used to good effect around the school and greatly enhance the working environment. Resources are adequate and being developed.
- 97 Since the last inspection a co-ordinator for art has been appointed with time allocated for the monitoring and evaluation of standards. Progression of skills has been identified through careful planning and the range and scope of opportunities for pupils has been extended, particularly to include more choice and less direction in the selection of materials.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 98 Design and technology lessons were observed in each class. At Key Stage 1 the standard of work in progress was good in two thirds of the lessons seen and satisfactory in the other third. Evidence from planning, finished work and discussions with pupils and teachers indicate that standards are good. At Key Stage 2 the standards of work seen in lessons were unsatisfactory. There was insufficient evidence of other work to support a judgement on progress. Standards have improved at Key Stage 1 since the last inspection but no similar improvement was evident in Key Stage 2.
- 99 Key Stage 1 pupils have a good understanding of how simple mechanisms work and they apply this knowledge to their own designs. This was evident in the lessons seen and in the work displayed around the school. Pupils select appropriate materials from a range provided. They draw the different components for their mechanism, cut them out and join them appropriately. All pupils successfully made a face with a moving hat involving a simple lever mechanism. In one class pupils worked independently, effectively producing some very pleasing results. In another class pupils worked collaboratively in pairs, which involved a high level of discussion and negotiation. There was much sharing of ideas and careful explanations of why decisions were being made, which enabled pupils to modify and improve their work as they went along. Pupils use correct terminology and explain confidently what they have made and how it works. They evaluate the outcomes and make sensible suggestions about how they might improve their designs.

- 100 Key Stage 2 pupils are able to follow diagrams to effectively assemble components of Technic Lego. However, they lack opportunities to know or understand the purpose of the different mechanisms being assembled. Other pupils are able to design a coat but are given little guidance about its purpose. They are able to select materials from a limited range, none of which are suitable, and demonstrate appropriate skills of drawing, cutting and joining. Although they are able to discuss their designs and suggest improvements, they are only able to focus on the aesthetic features of the design rather than its fitness for purpose.
- 101 The opportunities provided for pupils to discuss their work, use correct terminology, explain what they have made and evaluate the outcomes, often to the whole class, make a significant contribution to the development of their speaking and listening skills.
- 102 Teaching was satisfactory in two thirds of the lessons seen in Key Stage 1 and good in a third. Lessons are well planned and prepared with a good range of materials for pupils to select from. Learning objectives are clearly identified enabling pupils to make good progress in combining their knowledge and understanding with their designing and making skills. Tasks are suitably challenging and exciting and maintain the pupils' interest. Questioning is skilfully used to clarify pupils' understanding and help them to tackle problems. Opportunities are provided for pupils to work effectively together and on their own. They are taught correct terminology that they use when reporting back on their work.
- 103 At Key Stage 2, teaching was unsatisfactory in all of the lessons seen. Lessons lacked focus. In the absence of clear learning objectives, pupils were unsure about what they were doing and why. Lack of intervention or questioning resulted in little gains in learning.
- 104 There has been thorough planning for design and technology to ensure appropriate coverage. The recently appointed co-ordinator has drawn up a policy statement, which is ready for formal acceptance by the staff and governing body. The QCA scheme of work has been adopted and good professional development opportunities have been provided for the staff. Resources have been extended to include an appropriate range of tools and materials. They have been reorganised, centrally stored, well labelled and are easily accessible to both pupils and adults. The co-ordinator is to be allocated time to work alongside colleagues in classrooms as part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

GEOGRAPHY

- 105 In both key stages standards achieved are average and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of places and features in the environment are sound. All pupils are developing a wide range of geographical skills at a satisfactory rate.
- 106 By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a sound knowledge of their local environment and are aware of some of the differences and similarities between their own locality and others. Fieldwork in the locality of the school leads to discussion about homes and surrounding streets, with individual pupils expressing their own views on the attractive and unattractive features of specific areas, for example Norwich Airport. A study of the school environment resulted in some improvements;

a willow tunnel and a play area have been in part designed by the pupils and then built. Pupils have a growing sense of awareness about commercial and industrial change and how it effects the quality of their environment.

- 107 Pupils in Key Stage 2 are able to name major cities on a map of Great Britain and can identify land, sea, rivers and roads on maps of varying scale. They appreciate the range of purpose of different forms of maps and enjoy locating and interpreting key information. In one lesson observed, pupils were examining a current local issue, the proposal to transfer some allotments. Many were putting forward well-reasoned arguments for either maintaining the allotments or replacing them with a leisure complex serving the wider community. They responded well to a challenging debate.
- 108 The school has established an interesting and varied curriculum, enriched by visits into the local area and beyond. Year 3 pupils develop and refine geographical skills and knowledge whilst on a residential visit to How Hill. This is well supported by governors and parents. Recent communication has been established with children in Colorado, providing a valuable opportunity to explore an overseas location. Good links are made to other subjects. The relevant, cohesive nature of the curriculum has made a notable impact on pupil achievement.

HISTORY

- 109 Progress in history is satisfactory and pupils achieve average standards. This situation has been maintained since the last inspection. History is taught within topics and is often integrated into other areas. Pupils of all ages are developing a keen sense of chronology; they correctly order key events and objects as they relate to the passing of time. They understand that evidence is gathered through looking at documents, photographs and artefacts.
- 110 Pupils in Key Stage 1 consider the changes in their own lives and those of their family. In a discussion about toys belonging to their parents, pupils recognised the indicators of age and how things of some time ago were made differently. They handled the old toys with care, appreciating their worth and valuing this first hand opportunity. Some pupils in Year 3 retold accurately the story of the Fire of London, understanding how it started and why it spread so quickly. All pupils are aware of important people and events in the last millennium and how some of these things affect how we live our lives today.
- 111 Observations were limited to Key Stage 1, but pupils' work shows that teaching is satisfactory. Planning indicates what it is that pupils are to learn and builds on previous work effectively to develop pupils' interpretations of history.
- 112 Pupils are offered a range of opportunities to find out about aspects of the past. In a study of the Second World War, grandfathers came into school to talk to Year 3 pupils about their experiences as evacuees. A display of memorabilia provides valuable information. Younger pupils visited Gressen Hall, dressed in Victorian clothes to fully appreciate a by-gone lifestyle. The history curriculum is well supported by a variety of secondary sources, including relevant subject photographs and computer programs. The variety of ways in which history is brought to life results in all pupils developing sound historical understanding and knowledge.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- 113 The school has made good progress in raising the standards reported at the last inspection. Teachers' confidence and levels of expertise are developing in an open culture of analysis and discussion. The breadth and range of curriculum opportunities has improved. Pupils build progressively on their knowledge and skills as they move through the school. Resources are sufficient to support the implementation of the full Information and Communications Technology curriculum. The school made good use of the funding available through the National Grid for Learning and is taking advantage of the staff training offered by the New Opportunities Fund.
- 114 Standards in both key stages are average overall. In some aspects of communicating and handling information, achievement is above expectation. There is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls. Most pupils are aware of the every day uses of electronic technology, such as the remote control to operate the television. In Key Stage 1, pupils demonstrate a good range of skills using painting and word processing software. Pupils in Year 1 use the mouse with confidence to select and move images and text. They can save and retrieve work and can edit the text with support. In one class some pupils were amending the incorrect spelling of their names and printing out a copy to show to the teacher. Other pupils practised using left and right hands on a paper keyboard, encouraged and challenged effectively by a classroom assistant. Pupils in Year 2 are developing their skills in word processing; they can save and retrieve work unaided. In Key Stage 2, pupils are creating pictures which are detailed and of good quality. They can use the mouse to draw, select different colours or effects and add text. They can save work under a new file name.
- 115 Some areas of learning have yet to be developed. The school is in the early stages of using information technology to sort and classify information and present the findings. Pupils in Year 3 have limited opportunity for creating their own database. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are able to control a programmable toy and understand that it moves forward, backwards and turns as a result of a sequence of instructions. Older pupils have little extended opportunity in using control equipment.
- 116 The quality of teaching throughout the school is generally good and sometimes very good. Teachers' plans identify clearly what it is that they intend pupils will know and be able to do at the end of each lesson. In one class, focused questions had been written into the plan to ensure that pupils were stimulated and challenged to think through a series of instructions. Sharp and accurate explanations lead to pupils' clear understanding. Teachers use demonstrations effectively to introduce pupils to a particular skill or new computer program. Some Year 1 pupils were being guided precisely in handling a 'Kids Ball', well supported in remembering to press the button twice; once to tell the computer what to do and a second time to say please!
- 117 Pupils are very keen to work with computers; many practise on systems at home. This has a positive impact on their ability to make effective use of the equipment in school. Teachers take account of these experiences in providing learning, which is well matched to the age and skill of the pupils. Pupils listen attentively to instructions despite their excitement, concentrate and develop independence in using the resources. They co-operate well and enjoy helping each other, which is a key factor in the level of progress made. Planning for use of the computer is well

thought out, as is the organisation of the resources and time allocation for pupils to work at the computers. Information technology is well used to support other areas of the curriculum.

- 118 A key strength in the teaching and learning of the information, communication and technology curriculum lies in the established systems of assessing and monitoring individual pupil performance. A series of in-school certificates has been devised. These are awarded to pupils as they achieve specific generic skills, for example 'I can use a CD-ROM without help'. Very young pupils take on the responsibility of preparing the computer for use each morning and closing it down at the end of school. They eagerly earn a 'Computer Buddy' certificate. Detailed records are kept of each pupil's information capability, which ensures that skills are built upon as pupils move through the school.
- 119 The school improvement plan shows that the school is continuing to develop and extend the learning programmes for its pupils. All action points have been directly linked to raising standards of achievement and the school has set challenging targets for the coming year.
- 120 The subject co-ordinator has put a great deal of time and effort into organising the computers into an effective facility. There is a policy and a recommended scheme of work from which all teachers plan the curriculum. The co-ordinator has a very good overview of the subject and a clear vision for its future development.

MUSIC

- 121 During the week of the inspection, lessons seen were in performing and composing; pupils were not observed listening to and appraising music. No overall judgement on attainment in music can, therefore, be made. Pupils' progress in performing and composing throughout the school is, however, satisfactory. These findings are in line with the position outlined in the previous inspection report.
- 122 Pupils in Year 2 create, compose and perform a simple composition using percussion instruments. For example, in one lesson they composed work to create a mood using the stimulus of a word such as "sparkling", "gentle" or "smooth". Year 2 and 3 pupils sing a wide range of songs from memory. They sing tunefully, with enthusiasm and are able to sing a round in 2 or 4 parts with an awareness of other performers.
- 123 The pupils perform their small group compositions with confidence to the rest of the class. They demonstrate good listening skills and concentration. They are able to sing with expression, making use of different volume to create different moods such as for the different verses of "Kum by ya".
- 124 Teaching is at least satisfactory and is sometimes good. It is less effective when learning objectives in the planning are unclear and when pupils are given insufficient time to repeat and practise to consolidate skills and improve performance. The teacher's own enthusiasm for the subject motivates the pupils and the use of current musical vocabulary such as "timbre" helps develop knowledge and understanding.
- 125 The co-ordinator has been in post for just over a year and in that time has written a good quality policy with clear aims and objectives and a scheme of work which sets

out what is to be taught for each age group. She has a clear vision for development of the subject and liaises well with other members of staff responsible for teaching different age groups.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 126 Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. No judgement has been made on progress in Year 3 as, due to timetabling and other arrangements, no lessons were observed in these classes during the inspection.
- 127 Pupils follow the Durham Scheme of Work for games and gymnastics. This scheme gives support and guidance to teachers and is effective in ensuring continuity and progression. Pupils in Year 2 demonstrate skills of throwing and catching in line with age expectations. They can work co-operatively in pairs to develop skills. During the inspection week, Year 1 pupils were also working on developing throwing and catching skills and clear progression can be seen in expectations and achievement from Year 1 to Year 2.
- 128 Pupils are aware of the expectations of behaviour when working in the hall and respond well to these. They enjoy the work and persevere to achieve challenging tasks. In one lesson, for example, Year 2 pupils had to bounce a ball in a straight line over a certain distance. They concentrated and practised until by the end of that part of the lesson, all had achieved the task and were pleased with their success. They work co-operatively and are confident to demonstrate their ideas and skills to the rest of the class.
- 129 Pupils' positive attitudes and the satisfactory standards achieved are promoted through the good quality teaching. Clear explanations are given and good use is made of demonstration to help pupils develop their own skills and ideas. Pupils are given sufficient time to practise, consolidate and develop skills. There is a good pace to lessons and praise is used effectively to motivate pupils to persevere.
- 130 The co-ordinator for the subject has written a helpful policy document that has recently been updated and she has led inservice training. Resources are adequate and are well maintained.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 131 One lesson only was observed. Evidence has been drawn from scrutiny of work, talking to pupils and teachers and evaluation of planning and other curriculum documentation.
- 132 The school follows the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with its requirements at the end of Key Stage 1 and as they leave the school. Pupils gain an understanding of the main elements of Christianity, based mostly on stories from the Bible. They know about prominent figures in the Old Testament and are familiar with events in the life of Jesus. They can name major Christian festivals throughout the year. Pupils also study faiths other than Christianity and can describe some of their key features and festivals. They have an understanding of the importance of places of worship and of sacred texts. They recognise that some aspects of religion, such as worship and prayer,

are common to different faith groups. They are less competent in explaining the differences between religions and are insecure in their knowledge of details of customs and festivals.

- 133 Teaching in the Year 2 lesson was satisfactory. The story of Joseph in Egypt was used to draw out pupils' thoughts and feelings about jealousy, kindness and helping others. They also briefly discussed how it must have felt to be sold into slavery and, later, to be imprisoned. The teacher enabled pupils to express themselves and encouraged their ideas with suitable questions. There was insufficient attention paid, however, to discussing what this particular story tells us about faith, God and why it is included in the Bible.
- 134 Much of the work in books is based on worksheets that are sometimes lacking in challenge, especially for the oldest pupils and for the more able. Pupils complete work willingly and show interest in their work. They talk confidently about what they are doing and about past work. They show a degree of sensitivity towards the diversity of religious belief.
- 135 The subject is well organised by the co-ordinator who has worked hard to build up contacts within the local community and with multi-faith agencies in the city. She has a sound understanding of the requirements of the agreed syllabus but is less clear on the distinction between whole school worship and religious education. Aspects of the religious education curriculum are introduced in assemblies regardless of the specific topics being studied by different year groups. This means that their relevance and content do not always match the levels of understanding of all pupils.
- 136 Resources are organised well, with additional artefacts borrowed when required. Visitors to the school from a variety of faiths and denominations enhance the awareness and extend the experience of the pupils. Pupils recall such visits readily and obviously find them valuable.