

INSPECTION REPORT

**St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided
Primary School**
Hadleigh, Ipswich

LEA area : Suffolk

Unique Reference Number : 124760

Inspection Number: 191085

Headteacher : Mrs S Holt

Reporting inspector : Mr P Cutts

OFSTED Inspector Number: 17210

Dates of inspection : 18 - 21 October 1999

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school :	Infant and Junior
Type of control :	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils :	4 - 11
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Stonehouse Road Hadleigh Ipswich Suffolk IP7 5BH
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Appropriate authority :	The governing body Address as above
Name of chair of governors :	Mr E Day
Date of previous inspection :	April 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P Cutts, Registered Inspector	Mathematics Information technology Design and technology	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
Mr R Kitson, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs L Carter	Science Art	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development The curriculum and assessment Special educational needs Under fives Equal opportunities
Ms S Wilkinson Mrs S Boardman	English History Geography Music Physical education	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development English as an additional language

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average at age 7. By the time children leave the school aged 11, standards are above average in English and science and well above average in mathematics.

- Children make good overall progress throughout the school.
- Children's behaviour is mainly good.
- Attendance is a strength.
- There is a high proportion of good teaching at both key stages and with children under five. Teaching in the Early Years class is very good.
- The school's curriculum is well planned and effectively delivered.
- A very good range of extra-curricular activities enhances the curriculum.
- Provision for children's personal development is good. For their spiritual development and welfare, provision is very good.
- Partnership with parents and the community is very good.
- The school's ethos is a strength and reflects its Christian foundation.
- The headteacher provides dynamic leadership which has raised standards, improved teaching and strengthened the school's profile in the community.
- Planning for the school's development and finances, the monitoring of the school's work and arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good.

Where the school has weaknesses

- Although they are improving, standards in information technology are not yet high enough by age 11.
- A few children persist in being inattentive and talking out of turn. In a minority of lessons, teachers are not consistent enough in dealing with this.
- The marking of work varies in quality, with not enough guidance provided on how children might improve.

This is a good school with many strengths. Weaknesses identified will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of children at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

In relation to the key issue for action identified in the last inspection:

- I. Strong leadership now provides a clear focus on raising standards and improving teaching.
- II. There is a much improved management structure with clear delegation resulting in a motivated staff team.
- III. School development planning is now of very good quality.
- IV. The proportion of teaching which is satisfactory or better has risen greatly - from 80% to 98%.
- V. Curriculum planning ensures good progression from year to year.
- VI. Assessment information is used well to improve performance.
- VII. Strengths in pastoral care and teamwork have been maintained.

In addition:

- VIII. Standards in English, mathematics and science have risen at both key stages.

- IX. The school has set realistic targets to help children do better in National Curriculum tests.
- X. Information for parents has improved.
- XI. The quality of accommodation has improved.

Overall the school has made substantial improvements since the last inspection. It is well placed to make further improvements and to meet its targets,

Standards in subjects

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
			<i>well above average</i> A
			<i>above average</i> B
			<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i>
			<i>well below average</i> E
English	B	B	
Mathematics	A	A	
Science	B	B	

Children under five make good overall progress. They are on line to reach the standards expected for five year olds in all areas of learning for children of this age and to exceed the expected standards in speaking, literacy, in the scientific aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world, in their personal and social development and in the development of their physical skills.

Good progress continues at Key Stage 1. Children's attainment was well above the national average in the 1999 assessments for 7 year olds in English, mathematics and science.

Progress at Key Stage 2 is also good overall. In the national tests for 11 year olds, standards were above the national average in English and science, and well above average in mathematics.

At the end of Key Stage 1 children reach national expectations in information technology but at the end of Key Stage 2 they do not yet reach these expectations.

There are strengths in art at both key stages, and in history and swimming at Key Stage 2.

Children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make good progress.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in:	Under 5	5 - 7 years	7 - 11 years
English	very good	good	good
Mathematics	good	good	good
Science	¹	good	good

Information technology	¹	satisfactory	satisfactory
Other subjects	very good	good	good

The quality of teaching is good. In the school as a whole 98% of lessons are satisfactory or better. Four out of 10 lessons are good and a further 3 out of 10 are very good. There is some good teaching in every class. Teaching of children under five is very good.

The strengths in the teaching include very good planning and effectively structured lessons. There is a good level of challenge for children of differing abilities. Teachers explain things clearly and examples and demonstrations are used well. In some lessons which are on the whole satisfactory, teachers are not consistent enough in dealing with children's inattentive behaviour.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Mainly good. Children behave well around the school and most behave well in class. A few persist in being inattentive in lessons and talking out of turn.
Attendance	Very good. Above the national average.
Ethos*	Caring and purposeful, underpinned by the school's Christian foundation. Positive attitudes to learning, good relationships and a commitment to continuous improvement and high standards for all.
Leadership and management	Dynamic leadership provided by the headteacher; good leadership provided by the deputy, key stage and subject leaders; supportive oversight from the governing body and effective teamwork overall.
Curriculum	Broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of all pupils. Assessment is also good. The range of extra-curricular activities is a strength.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision. Children are well supported and make good overall progress.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. Spiritual development is particularly strong. Cultural development does not place enough emphasis on non-western cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Well-qualified teachers, effective support from classroom assistants and good accommodation. Sufficient resources for learning, but resources for information and communication technology (e.g. computers) are a weakness which the school is addressing.
Value for money	Good due to the good progress children make and the good quality of education provided.

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

Note 1: These national curriculum subjects are not studied as formal subjects by children under five

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
XII. Pleased with the progress children make. XIII. Think children's behaviour is good. XIV. Support strongly the attitudes and values promoted by the school. XV. Appreciate and support the Christian ethos. XVI. Satisfied with the arrangements for homework. XVII. Appreciate the information provided by the school, including the identification of learning targets, parents' consultation evenings and annual reports. XVIII. Think the school provides enough help for children and builds their confidence. XIX. Find it easy to approach the school with questions, problems or suggestions. XX. Think the school handles complaints from parents well. XXI. Say their children like school.	XXII. Would like more homework for to move on to secondary school.

Inspectors are in broad agreement with parents' views. Inspectors judge, though, that arrangements for homework are satisfactory.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

- i. **Raise standards in information technology* by:** (paragraph numbers 19, 53, 196, 197, 198, 201, 203 and 204 refer)
 - continuing the programme of staff training to improve teachers' expertise;
 - improving the provision of computers both in the computer suite and in classes;
 - revising the curriculum to ensure that children have enough opportunities to consolidate and improve their skills.

- i. **Improve children's behaviour where there are weaknesses by:** (paragraph numbers 27, 42, 141, 155, 165, 179, 187 and 211 refer)
 - ensuring pupils are aware of clear rules about paying attention;
 - ensuring procedures for dealing with inattention and talking out of turn are followed consistently in all classes.

- i. **Improve the marking of work by:** (paragraph numbers 59, 143, 159 and 168 refer)
 - checking that the school's marking policy is followed;
 - ensuring marking identifies what children have done well and provides guidance on what they need to do to improve.

In addition to the key issues noted above, other more minor points for action should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. These are to be found in paragraphs 58, 67, 76, 91 and 147.

*The school has already identified this issue in the School Development Plan and improvements are under way.

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

1. St Mary's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a small primary school located in the town of Hadleigh. At the time of the inspection 167 children attended full time in the main school (85 boys, 82 girls) and 17 attended part time in the Early Years class (8 boys and 9 girls). In the mornings seven classes each contain children from one school year group. As a temporary arrangement for two terms, children in the Year 1 class divide to join the Early Years and Year 2 classes to form six classes in the afternoons. Since the last inspection there has been a change of headteacher with the new head appointed from September 1997.

2. Children enter the school representing a wide range of abilities. Inspection evidence indicates considerable variation in the attainment of different year groups when they entered the school. Overall, though, children's attainment when they join the Early Years class is about average. Twenty two percent of children are on the register for special educational needs, a figure which is slightly above average. The majority of children on the register are in Years 5 and 6. Three children have statements of special educational need.

3. Children are mainly from white indigenous backgrounds. However, 4% of children are from ethnic minority families, the highest proportion being Bangladeshi. Six children speak English as a language additional to that spoken at home - an above average proportion.

4. Most children are from the town of Hadleigh. Children come from a range of housing including private and local authority housing. Overall the background of children is slightly advantaged in social and economic terms. Twelve percent of children are entitled to free school meals, a figure at the lower end of the broadly average range.

5. Since the last inspection the school has introduced arrangements for 4 year-olds to attend the Early Years class from the September of the academic year in which they become five years old. The oldest Reception children (those due to turn five between September and December) attend full time from September. The younger children attend part time for one or two terms (depending on their age) before becoming full time in the term in which they turn five. At the time of the inspection eight older Reception children were attending full time. Seventeen younger four-year-olds were attending part time in the mornings. During the afternoon thirteen Year 1 children join the full-time Reception children.

6. In the context of a Christian ethos the school aims to provide a safe and pleasant environment where children:

- feel secure and valued;
- enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum;
- develop confidence in themselves and others;
- show respect for others;
- work and try hard;
- use possessions and property with care;
- take pride in their own and others' achievements;
- take responsibility for their actions.

1. The school's priorities and targets include:

- raising children's attainment through setting targets in English, mathematics and science;

- improving staff expertise in information technology;
- trialing a new format for the annual report to parents about children's progress;
- evaluating the impact of the literacy focus on children's attitudes and performance;
- adopting a revised scheme of work for religious education;
- improving the learning of multiplication tables;
- revising the physical education plan, to give gymnastics a higher profile;
- trialing specialist teaching in physical education, art and music;
- consolidating the function of the Senior Management Team and continuing monitoring by subject co-ordinators;
- familiarising staff with a new scheme of work for personal, social and health education;
- using information from surveys of opinions of visitors, governors and Year 6 children.

1. In addition governors are actively pursuing the provision of a designated Nursery.

2. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	13	15	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	15	15	15
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	96(89)	96(96)	96(93)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	12	12
	Girls	13	13	14
	Total	25	25	26
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	89(89)	89(93)	93(93)
	National	82(81)	86(85)	87(86)

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	17	13	30

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	26	26	27
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	87(63)	87(63)	90(74)
	National	70(65)	69(59)	78(69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	14	15	15
	Girls	12	11	12
	Total	26	26	27
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	87(78)	87(74)	90(85)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	3.6
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.1
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	30
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

Children under five

1. Although children enter the school with a range of attainment, results from the local education authority's assessment for very young children (baseline assessment) indicate that their attainment at the beginning of the year in which they enter the Early Years class is about average.

2. During the time they are in the Early Years class, children make good progress in all areas of learning for children of this age group and the majority are on line to reach the standards expected by age five. They make very good progress in personal and social development, in language and literacy, in the scientific aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world, and in developing their physical skills. Many are on line to achieve beyond the expected standards in these areas of learning.

3. These very young children show interest in their work and concentrate for increasing lengths of time. They take turns and share. Many understand the link between letters and the sounds they make. All children recognise their name and many are able to write it. They express their thoughts clearly with a growing vocabulary. Most children recognise and match numbers to 10, and some work with numbers up to 20. Their good scientific knowledge is shown in their understanding of everyday materials and how they are used. Most children can already throw, catch and bounce a ball.

Key Stage 1: Children from five to seven years old

English, mathematics and science

1. In the 1999 assessments for seven-year-olds, children's attainment in these subjects was well above both the national average and the average for schools with similar characteristics. The brighter children did particularly well in writing and science, with a high proportion achieving National Curriculum level 3, beyond the target of level 2. Inspection evidence from the current Year 2 class indicates that the large majority of children are on track to achieve expected standards by the end of the school year. Progress at this key stage is good in all three subjects, accelerating especially in Year 2.

2. By age 7 children's reading is a strength, with writing composition and spelling even stronger. Handwriting is satisfactory. In mathematics children have a good grasp of number, shape and measures and their written recording of their mathematics is also good. Children's scientific knowledge is good, especially about living things. Their skills of scientific investigation are well advanced, especially their observation, their ability to recognise when a test is not fair, and their ability to communicate what they have found.

Other subjects

1. In information technology children's attainment reaches the national expectation by age 7 and their progress is satisfactory. Last year children in Year 2 achieved expected standards in word-processing, data handling and controlling a programmable object.

2. In art and music progress is good, with children producing some intricate printing, and demonstrating good skills in listening and appraising music. In all other subjects where inspectors were able to make judgements, children's progress is satisfactory.

16. Key Stage 2: Children from seven to eleven years old

English, mathematics and science

1.Children continue to make good progress in these subjects at Key Stage 2. In the 1999 national assessments for 11-year-olds, children's attainment in English and science was above both the national and similar schools' averages. In common with schools nationally, boys tended to do less well than girls in writing. In mathematics children did particularly well, with well above average attainment compared both with all schools and similar schools. Inspection evidence from the current Year 6 indicates that the majority of children are again on track to achieve the expected standards in all three subjects by the end of the school year.

2.Writing composition continues to be a strength, with children demonstrating good skills in communicating in a variety of different forms, for example in stories, poems and reports. In mathematics children's calculating is reliable with a good knowledge of multiplication tables demonstrated. They have a clear understanding of decimals and fractions, can calculate areas of shapes, measure angles accurately and have good skills in making graphs. In science children's understanding of life processes such as the food chain is good as are their skills of investigation, notably their ability to form and explain conclusions.

Other subjects

1.In information technology children's attainment does not yet reach the national expectation and progress over time has been too slow. Data handling is a weakness, as is multimedia work such as inserting pictures into text. This is because children have not been given enough experience of these parts of the curriculum. Children have had no experience of computer simulations such as making spreadsheets or the use of the computer for monitoring data.

2.Children's good progress in art continues, particularly in print making and in using their knowledge of the techniques of artists to apply to their own work. There is also good progress in history, particularly in developing an understanding of how periods of history fit together and in using research skills. Progress in swimming is a strength with nearly all pupils exceeding the end of the key stage expectation of swimming 25 metres. As with Key Stage 1, in other subjects where inspectors made a judgement, children's progress is satisfactory.

Children with special educational needs

1.Most children with special educational needs make good progress throughout the school against the targets in their Individual Education Plans. A variation to this pattern appears in handwriting at Key Stage 1 where the progress of children with special educational needs is satisfactory. In contrast there is sometimes very good progress in specific lessons, for example when receiving individual teaching in English from the special educational needs co-ordinator.

Children with English as an additional language

2.The attainment of children with English as an additional language is in line with national standards for children of similar ages. Children in Years 2 and 6 achieved the target levels for their age groups in National Curriculum tests this year. These children make good progress throughout the school due to the good provision.

22. Literacy and numeracy across the curriculum

22.

23.Children's skills in literacy serve them well in subjects across the curriculum, for example when using their reading skills to research topics in history. Writing skills show a good level of fluency so serve children well when note taking or writing reports, for instance in science. Children's skills in numeracy also serve them well, as when older children produced a line graph in science to demonstrate the effects of exerting force on an elastic band.

Trends over time

3.Evidence from national assessments indicates that at Key Stage 1 there has been well above average attainment in mathematics, English and science for two years. At Key Stage 2 attainment in the national test has been closer to the average until this year when it was significantly better. Writing has been above average for two years. The attainment of the more able 11-year-olds has improved significantly this year to well above average in writing and mathematics and science. Since results recorded in the last inspection, standards are higher overall at both key stages.

24. Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

4.At both key stages most children have good attitudes to learning, are mainly well behaved in school and develop good relationships with adults and children alike. In the Registered Inspector's questionnaire for parents, the vast majority of parents said their children liked school and that the school achieved high standards of good behaviour. Maintaining the quality of children's attitudes and their behaviour was a key issue for action in the last inspection. Inspectors find that the school has generally been successful in this respect. Children's good attitudes and good behaviour contribute positively to the standards they achieve.

5.At Key Stage 1 children usually follow instructions carefully and show confidence in organising themselves and equipment. On most occasions they are quick to settle to their work and show a lively interest in the lessons. They sustain concentration and often persevere when faced with more challenging activities. The majority of children respond well to the trust placed in them when working together or independently. They have good relationships with each other and the adults who work with them. At Key Stage 2, typically, children show confidence, enthusiasm and interest in their work. They are quick to respond to teachers' requests and instructions and are keen to immerse themselves in their work until the task is complete. They are willing to share their knowledge with each other and work co-operatively when required to do so. Many show a pride in their work and are keen to make improvements. As with Key Stage 1, relationships with classmates and adults are good.

6.In a significant minority of lessons in both key stages, some children persist in inattentive behaviour, interrupt discussions led by the teacher by calling out and occasionally disrupt quieter work times. This is usually linked with inconsistency from teachers in ensuring the class rules are followed. Improving this inattentive behaviour is a key issue for action.

7.Around the school building children behave in a responsible and orderly manner. They show respect for property and treat resources with due care and respect. They are courteous and welcoming to visitors. Children are clear about what they should do if harassed by other children. They know that the adults in the school would resolve such situations. There have been no exclusions for many years.

8.Children's personal development is good. They show a sense of community and respect for the rights and individuality of others. Children show very good support and encouragement for those in the school with significant learning difficulties. They recognise and celebrate their achievements in a sensitive and caring manner. Children take responsibility within the classroom and throughout the school, as when older children pair up with younger children for Reading Club activities, and when elected members represent their class on the School Council.

9.Children under five in the Early Years class have very good attitudes to learning. They show interest, concentrate and persevere. They organise themselves well to select activities and resources. Their behaviour is very good in class and around the school. On occasions, when adults need to remind children how to behave, they respond immediately. These children work well together, sharing and taking turns. They understand right from wrong and treat property with care. Their relationships with other adults are excellent.

10.Most children with special educational needs respond well to their work, form very good relationships with their teachers and learning support assistants, and behave well. A few children with

special educational needs find difficulty in controlling their behaviour in line with the class rules.

Attendance

1.Attendance rates in the school are very good. Authorised absences are below the national average and unauthorised absences are minimal.

2.Most children arrive at school on time and lessons start promptly.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

1.Overall the quality of teaching at St Mary's is good. Across the school it reaches at least a satisfactory level in 98% of lessons. It is good in 4 out of 10 lessons and very good or excellent in a further 3 out of 10. The good teaching has a strong impact on children's progress.

2.Teaching quality is distributed in the following ways across the key stages:

	excellent	very good or better	good or better	satisfactory or better	less than satisfactory	poor or very poor
Children under five in the Early Years class	22%	67%	100%	100%	0%	0%
Key Stage 1	6%	33%	67%	100%	0%	0%
Key Stage 2	5%	23%	67%	97%	3%	0%

1.In Key Stages 1 and 2 the teaching is good overall. For children under five in the Early Years class it is very good. There is some good teaching in every class.

2.In nearly all lessons throughout the school, very thorough planning results in a clear purpose and a suitable focus on teaching points. The plans regularly indicate how the work should be varied to suit the range of abilities in the class. Teachers are knowledgeable about the subjects taught and are able to resolve problems which the children experience. Teachers' subject knowledge is a strength in English and mathematics, as is their expertise with children under five. Expectations are usually high, of children's attention, behaviour and learning.

3.Lessons are carefully structured. An effective common pattern is a whole-class introductory session followed by individual or group work. Sometimes this is interspersed with useful brief reminders or reinforcement for the whole class. Explanations are very clear, for example when the teacher in Year 3 explained how information from a bar chart could be turned into a frequency table or when the teacher in Year 2 explained with great clarity how to use the icons on an art programme for the computer. Demonstrations are also used to good effect, as when the teacher in Year 6 demonstrated how to write a poem about the sea using figurative language. A whole-class session often concludes to highlight what has been learned. This also provides an effective means for teachers to check if children have understood the key learning points.

4.In the large majority of lessons, the management of children is good. A good pace is maintained. Praise is used well to help motivate children. In some of the lessons where the management of children is particularly good, the teacher's voice is used very effectively to create a calm and focused atmosphere. In others the effectiveness comes from persistent but unobtrusive reinforcement of the class rules.

5.Resources are used well, for instance when pupils in Year 4 examined commercial pop-up books to

help them get ideas for their own design task or when the teacher in Year 1 hid teddy bears as a way to teach subtraction.

6.A strength is the very effective deployment by teachers of the nursery nurse and classroom assistants. These support staff are briefed well by teachers about what the children should be learning.

They have good skills in communicating with children and are able to extend the teaching and develop children's self-confidence.

1.In some instances where teaching was judged satisfactory, one reason it was not judged good was that, whilst teachers were able to maintain overall order and a sense of purpose, they were not consistent enough in picking up a few children who were inattentive or talked out of turn. This happened in a significant minority of lessons, so improving consistency in the management of inattentive behaviour is a key issue for action. Another reason why some sound lessons were not judged good was that the pace of these lessons, although steady, tended to lack the briskness of the better lessons.

1.Informal day-to-day assessment is good across the school, with recap at the beginnings and ends of lessons used effectively to check what children have remembered and informal feedback to children used well. There are, though, inconsistencies in teachers' use of marking (see section on assessment below).

2.Some of the best teaching is in mathematics. The impact of the teaching methods, advocated as part of the Numeracy Hour, is apparent in these lessons, with a clear focus, good lesson structure and good direct teaching being common features. The result is good progress and high standards. Although the school has not fully adopted the Literacy Hour lesson format, the quality of teaching in literacy is good and this too promotes good progress at both key stages.

3.Teaching of children under five in the Early Years class shows a particular perceptiveness to the learning needs of young children. Very good planning is coupled with considerable skill in judging how to engage and maintain the children's interest. Good questioning challenges children's thinking and there is a good emphasis on extending the children's vocabulary. There is a continuous intuitive assessment of what children understand, which shows itself in the way the teacher replies to and builds on children's comments. There is a good balance between learning which is more closely directed by the teacher and that which enables children to make choices and organise themselves. There is an entirely appropriate emphasis on learning through carefully structured play, for example when children counted out and set places for a party including plates, cups, and balloons.

4.Teaching for children with special educational needs is good. Teachers have high expectations of the progress these children can make. They pay careful attention to adapting the work to suit these children's needs, either through adjusting the level of demand or through providing extra adult support to help the children interpret and carry out the tasks. Under the direction of teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator, classroom assistants provide effective support for children both as individuals and when they are working in groups. Individualised teaching sessions with the special educational needs co-ordinator are of good quality.

5.Children with English as an additional language are well supported by class teachers who are sensitive to their needs.

6.Homework is used effectively to complement and extend the teaching. At the Registered Inspector's meeting for parents, some parents said they would like to see more homework for the older children as they prepare for secondary school. Inspectors judge that the arrangements for homework are satisfactory but that the school could increase the amount of homework set for older children, if it felt this to be desirable after consultation with parents.

7.Improving the quality of teaching, particularly where it was poor or unsatisfactory was a key issue for action in the last inspection. The school has responded successfully to this with the proportion of

teaching which is satisfactory or better rising from 80% to 98%. During the inspection no poor teaching was observed and unsatisfactory teaching was very rare.

The curriculum and assessment

Curriculum

1. At both key stages and for children under five the curriculum is of good quality and contributes to the good progress children make.

2. At Key Stages 1 and 2 the curriculum provided promotes children's intellectual, physical and personal development. It is organised successfully to support children in preparing for the next stages of education, both within the school and later as they move on to secondary education. The subjects of the National Curriculum are often combined into one overall topic, helping to make the learning relevant to the children.

3. The curriculum for children under five is also of good quality. It successfully combines the six areas of learning identified for children under five into an experience of school which is both meaningful to the children and rich in language development. This also enables children to make good progress, regardless of their starting point. The needs of part-time children are catered for well, through careful organisation of the morning to ensure all areas of learning are covered. Planning is organised well to allow for children to begin the Programmes of Study of the National Curriculum when they are ready.

4. The school's strategy for literacy is effective and for numeracy it is very effective. There is, though, a weakness in the design of the information technology curriculum. Although it is much improved compared with a year ago, it does not yet provide frequent enough coverage of the necessary skills. Improving the curriculum for information technology forms part of a key issue for action. Through the study of science and through the personal, social and health education curriculum, the school provides appropriate drugs and sex education.

5. Considerable emphasis is placed on personal, social and health education. The scheme of work for this is developed as a separate part of the curriculum as well as being addressed through subjects. It makes a valuable contribution to the children's personal development. The curriculum is enriched in a variety of other ways, including through the addition of French to the timetable for Years 5 and 6 and through the use of visitors to school, for instance musicians and artists, and visits to places of interest.

6. All children have equal access to the curriculum. There is good provision for children with special educational needs. Teachers are careful to adapt class work to enable these children to succeed. Additional adult support in the classroom and specialist teaching provided by the special needs co-ordinator contributes to the good provision. As part of their individual education plan, targets are set for children which are matched well to their personal needs. The Code of Practice is followed closely. Full access to the curriculum is also ensured for children with English as an additional language.

7. Teachers have put considerable effort into the design and implementation of a range of plans for each subject. Termly plans for English are in the early stages of implementation but are of sound quality. In other subjects the quality of plans is good. Termly plans are used well to inform lesson plans, most of which identify expectations for children of different abilities and opportunities for assessing what children have learnt. Refining curriculum planning to ensure better definition of progression from year to year was a key issue for action in the last inspection. There has been good progress with this key issue because planning for progression is now good.

8. The school provides an extensive range of extra-curricular activities. Lunchtime activities and after school clubs, including music, sports, environment, TAG (Talking about God), computer and reading clubs make a positive contribution to the curriculum and to children's personal development.

Assessment

1. Assessment procedures are good throughout the school. All subject plans identify a range of assessment opportunities. Subject co-ordinators are compiling useful records of examples of work to support the further development of assessment within subjects. The assessment co-ordinator's analysis of a range of formal tests is used very effectively to track the progress of individuals and groups throughout the school. This also assists teachers in setting realistic targets for particular year groups. The identification of learning targets in English, mathematics and science is a recent development, which has helped to focus more sharply teachers' planning, and assessment. It has also helped parents understand what children can do, what they will be learning during the year, and to monitor their progress. However few children are clear about what their targets are. Enabling children to be clear about their targets is a point for action.

2. A marking policy clearly states the purposes of marking, including monitoring progress and providing feedback for children. All work is marked but there is variation in its quality. In the good examples, for instance in Year 3, the teacher notes what children have achieved and advises them how to improve. The majority of marking, though, consists of ticks or comments about presentation with not enough guidance provided on how children might improve. Improving the marking of work is a key issue for action.

3. Accurate, up-to-date and informative records are kept for each child. These include examples of children's work in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, the results of formal tests and the outcomes of target setting.

4. Progress of children with special educational needs is monitored well. Very good use is made of a range of information from informal and formal assessments to identify learning difficulties. Very thorough and useful records are kept.

5. Making better use of all assessment information to help monitor and improve performance was a key issue for action in the last inspection. There has been good progress with this key issue, particularly in the use of National Curriculum and other test data to help identify areas for improvement and groups of children needing extra support.

62. Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

1. The school's provision for children's personal development is good overall. The school has maintained its strength in this area from the last inspection. Provision for spiritual development is very good, for moral and social development it is good, and for cultural development it is sound. In the pre-inspection parents' questionnaire the vast majority of parents (94%) indicated their support for the attitudes and values promoted by the school. At the Registered Inspector's meeting for parents, those present echoed this support, with parents expressing appreciation for the contribution made by the school's Christian foundation.

2. Spiritual development is fostered in all aspects of school life. The school's Christian foundation underpins its ethos and is a strength of the school. Collective worship in the school is of high quality. The school has a clear policy with assembly themes identified and there are good links between whole school, key stage and class assemblies. All assemblies include a period of calm, reverence and prayer when children are encouraged to reflect on, for instance, how unfair it is that so many people in the world do not have enough to eat. Visitors and teachers lead assemblies with sincerity and plan for the active participation of the children, for example in sharing experiences and in asking and answering questions. Children are also encouraged to offer extemporised prayers, which many are keen to do. Children are provided with opportunities to gain insights into other people's lives and beliefs through their curriculum studies, particularly in history and geography. Their work in science opens up a fascination with the physical and natural world. One example is when children studying the plant cycle considered the origins of plant life.

3. The school also successfully promotes children's moral development. It has a strong pastoral

structure which emphasises children having respect for one another and promotes knowing right from wrong. This is reinforced by the good model of respect provided by adults in the school. The merit system is operated well across the whole school and the trusty badges provide an appropriate recognition of continuous good behaviour. The recently revised behaviour policy has clear aims and includes guidance on practical implementation. However, there are some inconsistencies in its application by teachers, as referred to in paragraph 42. Personal, social and health education makes a good contribution to children's moral development through the moral issues raised for discussion.

4.Social development is nurtured effectively by the school in a variety of ways. Children's ideas and views are sought, valued and acted on by the school. There is a well-established and effective School Council with elected representatives from each year group. This provides an excellent forum for children to discuss a range of subjects such as the recently agreed school rules and equal opportunity issues. Pupils are given responsibilities for jobs in class and more widely around the school, especially as they get older. Co-operation and collaboration are encouraged in lessons and clubs, including the sharing of ideas and respect for one another's views. The school has established good links with the community and these provide opportunities for children's social development through involvement with local music, art and religious events. History and geography also provide opportunities for social development through field trips and projects involving children's own families and the local area. Assemblies foster a wide social concern, for example concern for the hungry, as does raising money for charities.

5.Studies across the curriculum, including visits, support children's knowledge and experience of their own and others' cultural traditions. However, few examples from non-western cultures are seen in the curriculum, particularly in music and art, a feature also noted in the last inspection. The school's multicultural policy has appropriate aims, but lacks practical information for ensuring their implementation. Improving provision for cultural development to include a greater emphasis on non-western cultures is a point for action.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

1.The school is very successful in its stated aim of providing a safe and pleasant environment in which children can learn. Strengths in pastoral care have been maintained, a key issue for action in the last inspection. The very good procedures for monitoring children's progress and personal development contribute positively to the progress they make.

2.Class teachers have the prime responsibility for monitoring academic and personal development. They carry out this task effectively and efficiently. Parent consultation evenings, annual reports and the annual identification of targets for improvement help provide effective guidance. At the Registered Inspector's meeting for parents, parents said they thought teachers provided very effective help for children and that they were good at building up children's confidence.

3.Support for children with special educational needs is provided with sensitivity by all staff. Practical support for individual children, including those with physical disabilities, increases their independence. There are very good procedures for monitoring the progress and personal development of children under five, including those needing additional support.

4.The children are supervised well whilst in school and when playing in the school grounds. The mid-day supervisors know the children well and carry out their responsibilities in a dedicated and caring manner.

5.An unusual feature which supports children's welfare is the school's breakfast club, which opens before school at 8 a.m. in the morning. This provides well-planned and interesting activities as well as a nutritious start to the day.

6.Excellent procedures are in place for monitoring and promoting attendance. The registration

procedures are correctly carried out and the registers are maintained in accordance with legal requirements. Clear guidance is given in the school brochure to parents about what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence and the procedure to be followed if their child can not attend school. The relationship with the educational welfare officer is very good.

7.The recently revised behaviour and discipline policy sets out well-founded aims and objectives in order to create a safe and happy environment in which learning can take place unhindered by unacceptable behaviour. It is based upon a system where children can gain merit marks for good behaviour and good work. There is also a range of sanctions which can be applied, if needed. The policy is good and mainly effective but there is inconsistency in its implementation in some classes, (see paragraph 42).

8.Procedures for promoting health and safety are very good. The school has a comprehensive policy, which sets out procedures in order to protect children, staff and visitors. It covers such matters as supervision of children, fire and emergency procedures. The headteacher and members of the governors' premises group carry out regular health and safety inspections of the school. Established first-aid arrangements are in place and a number of members of staff are trained in first aid and swimming safety instruction. Overall, the security arrangements are satisfactory taking into account that the school is adjacent to an open public space.

9.The danger of the unprotected slope adjacent to the outer playground, as identified in the last inspection, still remains. A recent accident involving one child emphasises this danger. Although the younger children's playground is now fenced in, the lack of a fence round the older children's playground means children go onto the adjoining road to retrieve balls during play - a potentially dangerous practice. Every effort is made to minimise the hazards of this open site. Extensive research has been undertaken to explore possible solutions, and resolving these issues remains a point for action.

10.Whilst the school does not have a written policy on child protection, clear procedures are well known by all staff who have received appropriate training.

Partnership with parents and the community

1.The school is very successful in developing a strong and meaningful partnership with the local church, parents, governors and the community in Hadleigh. The close connection the school has with the church and the support it gets from parents and governors are strengths.

2.The school does encourage and is successful in getting parents to help in school. A number assist in school on a regular basis and help with visits. There is also a very strong and dedicated School Support Group of parents and teachers who provide physical help to the school and also raise a considerable amount of money for school funds.

3.The provision of information for parents is a strength of the school. Recognition of this is seen in the results of the questionnaire for parents, with large majorities agreeing that the school provides a clear understanding of what is taught and keeps parents well informed about children's progress. Parents take an active interest in their children's learning and attend formal progress meetings with teachers, which are held twice a year. At the meeting for parents appreciation was expressed for the information about children's progress, particularly the system of sharing, reviewing and reporting of academic targets to support children's learning. End of year written reports about children's progress are of good quality.

4.The headteacher and staff are available at the start and end of the school day and many parents take the opportunity to discuss informally any concerns they may have. In the questionnaire for parents an overwhelming majority (98%) said they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with their children.

5. Parents of children with special educational needs are kept informed of the support provided. The school makes every effort to involve parents, both in formal reviews and supporting their children in achieving their targets. Liaison with local advisory specialists and services and the local secondary school is very good.

6. Weekly informative newsletters are sent home about a range of school matters. The governors' annual report to parents and the school prospectus are prepared well and provide very useful information to parents on the life and work of the school.

7. The Early Years induction programme for parents and children is very good. Parents and children are able to visit the school and information is shared readily. There are good procedures for informing parents of their child's progress and how to support their learning.

8. Although the school has strong links with the local parish church it also has reached out and developed meaningful contacts in the local community, which it uses to support the curriculum, particularly in art and music.

9. Children raise money for local and overseas charities; they also entertain elderly people in the community and sing carols at Christmas. Celebratory services are held on a regular basis in conjunction with the parish church.

10. A very close working relationship exists between St Mary's and Hadleigh High School and other schools in the local pyramid of schools. The transfer arrangements for when children go up to the high school are well established, including those for children with special educational needs. These enable children to integrate quickly into their new school.

11. These links with the community are very good and make a positive contribution to children's attainment and personal development.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

88. Leadership and management

1. At the Registered Inspector's meeting for parents, those present said that since the last inspection the good ethos of the school had been maintained. They also thought the direction of the school was now clearer, that it was better organised, that communication with parents had improved and that there was more successful promotion of the school in the community. Inspectors agree with these views.

2. The headteacher provides dynamic, sensitive and much respected leadership. She is ambitious for the school and has succeeded in lifting morale, developing a successful management structure and effective teamwork, raising standards, improving teaching and strengthening the school's profile in the community. Good leadership is also provided by the deputy and key stage, early years and subject leaders. They have worked hard to provide good quality planning and support for colleagues. They are also closely and effectively involved in the school's monitoring arrangements.

3. Governors provide supportive oversight and an appropriate level of accountability through formal meetings, regular meetings of working parties, informal visits and by receiving reports from the headteacher and deputy. The remits of governors' working groups are not defined and there are no formal arrangements for individual governors to report the findings of their visits to help the governing body evaluate the school. Developing these aspects is a point for action.

4. The school's framework for monitoring and evaluating standards and teaching is rigorous. The setting of targets to help children do better in National Curriculum tests, the observation of lessons and teacher appraisal are all well established. A useful element of external critique strengthens these processes through the involvement of local education authority advisory staff in lesson observations. Findings from monitoring are used successfully to identify priorities and to support the professional development

of staff.

5.The school introduced the National Numeracy Strategy two years ahead of the expected start date of September 1999. The longer-term benefits of this initiative are clearly seen in the quality of teaching in mathematics and the high standards achieved. The school's strategy for literacy is also proving to be effective.

6.Provision for special educational needs is very well managed. Procedures are efficient and effective. There is a very good policy and very effective deployment of staff. Monitoring of children's progress and the effectiveness of provision is good. Provision for children with English as an additional language is also managed well, with good links with parents and monitoring of progress.

7.The School Development Plan is very good. Targets are appropriate and based on a realistic appraisal of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are clear allocations of tasks and timescales, and links to the budget. Success criteria are suitably precise and supported by the school's setting of numeric targets to measure children's progress. Governors' responsibilities for monitoring the plan are clearly described. There is a clear long-term view of the development of the curriculum and strategic planning for variations in the number on roll.

8.The school has clearly stated aims and values which reflect its Christian foundation. These permeate the work of the school. There is a commitment to raising standards for children of all abilities, to providing equal opportunities, and to fostering children's personal development, particularly their self-esteem and confidence. Staff care for and support the needs of children and relationships are good. At the Registered Inspector's meeting for parents, those present praised the school's ethos.

9.Statutory requirements are met in nearly all respects. One exception is the curriculum for information technology which, although it has improved, is not yet securely planned and delivered.

10.The last inspection identified as key issues for action ensuring a more robust leadership and management role for the headteacher, the establishment of a satisfactory management structure and the improvement of the School Development Plan. There has been very good progress with all three key issues, which are now fully addressed.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

1.The school is adequately staffed. All teachers are suitably qualified for the age range of children and for the delivery of the curriculum. There is a good range of experience and expertise, although staff lack confidence and expertise in aspects of information technology.

2.Support staff are effective in their work. They are briefed well and make a significant contribution to children's learning. As well as providing efficient administrative support to the school, office staff provide a friendly welcome to visitors.

3.Staffing for children under five is very good. All members of the Early Years team are appropriately qualified and experienced. The teacher develops effective working relationships with the nursery nurse and other adults to the benefit of the children. There is a strong commitment to partnership in their support of children's learning.

4.Arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good. The teaching staff training co-ordinator efficiently and effectively identifies training needs after consulting individual teachers and the headteacher. Training is linked to individual needs identified through appraisal and in the School Development Plan. All members of the teaching staff are appraised in accordance with the school policy. Training for support staff is also good.

5.The school buildings are clean, in good decorative order and maintained well by the caretaker. The governors' premises working group carry out regular inspections and have a planned maintenance programme. Classrooms are spacious, well looked after and have attractive displays of children's

work, which celebrate their successes and achievements. A recently refurbished courtyard provides attractive recreational facilities for children. The appearance of the school has improved significantly since the last inspection, a factor commented on by parents.

6. Classroom accommodation for children under five is good. There is good provision for outdoor activities in a secure area which present opportunities for children to investigate and explore. There are sufficient learning resources, many of which are of good quality.

7. The school is sufficiently resourced for learning with books, equipment and resources for most areas of the curriculum. The exception is information technology where the lack of resources adversely affects the curriculum. The school is aware of this shortcoming and the replacement of the current out-dated equipment is imminent.

8. Overall, the accommodation, staffing and resources for learning have a positive impact on the quality of education provided and the educational standards achieved.

The efficiency of the school

1. The resources made available to the school are efficiently managed.

2. Financial planning, identified as weak in the last inspection, is now very good. It takes account of projected numbers on roll. Costs and resource implications support the school's plans for development. The budget is well thought out and reflects the school's current priorities.

3. Financial control is very effective. Close monitoring of the overall budget position is carried out weekly by the headteacher, monthly by a governors working party and termly by the governing body. The auditor's report of 1997 found the school's operation of systems of financial control to be sound, and budgetary control to be satisfactory. Requirements of the auditors have been met with the exception of the provision of a register of pecuniary interests of staff. This is being prepared.

4. School administration is efficient yet unobtrusive.

5. The school makes efficient use of its funding for children with special educational needs. The decision to allocate financial resources to employ a special needs co-ordinator represents good value for money. Efficient use is also made of financial resources for children with English as an additional language, with careful targeting to where it is most needed.

6. Teachers are deployed very effectively. Very effective use is made of support staff, especially in the Early Years class, and of the team of classroom assistants who support children with special educational needs. Accommodation and learning resources are also used very well. The decision to centralise some computers has led to efficient use of the machines kept in the computer suite, though some in the classrooms are underused.

7. The cost of educating a pupil at the school is broadly in line with the national average. In the light of the good progress children make between entry to the school and the time they leave, the good teaching, the good provision for children's personal development and welfare, the school provides good value for money.

113. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

1. At the time of the inspection, children under five in the Early Years class had completed their first half term in school. At the beginning of the school year, children are assessed using the local authority baseline assessment. The results show that there is a wide range of ability within the class but that overall attainment is about average when children join the class. Children make good progress in all areas of learning for children of this age group and most are on line to achieve the expected standards (Desirable Learning Outcomes) by age five in mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. Children's progress is very good in personal and social development, in language and literacy, in the scientific aspects of their knowledge and understanding of the world and in developing their physical skills. More children than is typical are likely to exceed the expected standards in these areas of learning.

114. Personal and social development

2. Children in the Early Years class have very good attitudes to learning. They show interest and enjoyment in their work, concentrating and persevering with activities which interest and challenge them. They organise themselves to select activities and resources. Their behaviour is very good both in class and throughout the school. On occasions when adults need to remind them how to behave, they respond immediately. Teachers and other adults make good use of opportunities to guide children towards positive attitudes to each other. As a result children work well together, both in the classroom and beyond, including playtimes, sharing and taking turns. They express their feelings and understand right from wrong. They treat property and their environment with care. Children's relationships with teachers and other adults are excellent. Children are considerate of other people's feelings and are willing to take responsibility in simple ways.

3. The short time each day when children come together to have their drink and apple is an important social occasion. It was on such an occasion that thought was given to one member of the class who was currently unwell. Children suggested that making a 'get-well' card would cheer him up. Children's response to class assemblies is excellent. They understand that this is a time of calm reflection and recall the events of the previous day's school assembly, relating this to their own experience. Some children express thoughts about situations beyond their own experience, such as people in other countries who are less fortunate than themselves. The teaching of personal and social development is consistently very good.

116. Language and literacy

1. Children are able to listen and talk about their experiences both in large and small groups. They make very effective use of a growing vocabulary to express their thoughts and explain events in their lives. They listen to and respond well to stories, songs and rhymes. Time for speaking and listening is used to very good effect. All children are respected and their contributions valued. They listen attentively to each other and are able to ask relevant questions and give appropriate replies in a class group, such as when talking about the parcels they had brought to school for this week's Toy Party theme. Teachers engage children in both planned and spontaneous conversations.

2. Children show enjoyment and concentration when listening to stories as a class or in smaller groups. They enjoy books, understand that print has meaning and how a book is organised. They are making good progress as early readers and are developing the number of words recognised at sight. Many children know and understand the link between letters and sounds and enjoy work focused on the characters linked with alphabet letters. Children are aware of the purpose of writing. All children recognise their names and many are able to write their names with increasing skill, recognising the difference between capital and lower case letters. Their letter formation shows improvement since joining the class in September.

3.The teacher and nursery nurse are skilful at talking with children about their work, both to develop vocabulary and to set challenges. There is sensitive adult support to help those for whom English is an additional language and in developing children's range and use of language. The teaching of language and literacy is very good.

119. Mathematics

1.Children can use mathematical language with confidence, such as position and size when using construction toys. Many can identify shapes and describe position, size and quantity. They are familiar with number rhymes and counting activities. They compare, sort, order and count a range of objects, such as parcels for the Toys' Party. Most children recognise and match numbers to 10, and some work with numbers up to 20.

2.At this early stage in their school lives children are provided with mathematical activities which are closely linked with their language skills. Work from last year shows that children experience a full range of mathematical activities and make good progress in developing their mathematical understanding. The teaching of mathematics is good.

121. Knowledge and understanding of the world

1.Children talk about themselves, their families and where they live. They are able to recall past events. They describe similarities and differences using the vocabulary of their senses, such as finding objects that are smooth, soft or cold. They are beginning to recognise and understand how the properties of materials are important, such as explaining that glass is used for windows because it is hard and transparent. They are confident with technology to support their learning, such as using the audio player to listen to story tapes.

2.Teachers make good use of topics of interest to the children. Both planned lessons and informal discussions provide opportunities to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world. Children show a keen interest in the natural world and their immediate environment. Sharing books is often the starting point for discussions with individuals or small groups. These opportunities are used well and are supported by adults so that children make good progress in their scientific knowledge and understanding. The teaching of this area of learning is good and of the scientific aspects it is very good.

123. Physical development

1.During physical education lessons children show increasing skill and dexterity when using equipment. Most children can throw, bounce and catch a ball. Older children show good control when jumping, running and skipping. They can handle a range of tools and materials safely and with good control, for example when printing and assembling construction kits. Teachers provide helpful reminders about how to use tools, equipment and materials safely.

2.There are good opportunities for outdoor activity in a safe and attractive environment. There is a good pace to the teaching of physical activities. Children are challenged to try new skills and improve their performance through practice. Provision to develop children's physical skills is good and the direct teaching of physical education is very good.

125. Creative development

1.Children use colour and texture in their artwork. They enjoy modelling and making a range of objects with dough. The oldest children are confident in using a pencil to make simple observational drawings. They use their senses to learn about their environment. Their involvement in a range of activities

provides opportunities to extend their creative play, such as the farmyard and the imaginative play area. They enjoy joining in with action songs, remember most of the words and sing tunefully.

2.Children are provided with a range of materials and equipment with which to develop their artistic skills and imagination. Displays show an emphasis on group work designed to develop skills of colour mixing, cutting, folding and gluing. Overall, the teaching of creative development is good.

127. Other aspects

1.Overall teaching for children under five in the Early Years class is very good. In the lessons observed, all teaching was good with two thirds of lessons being very good and one in five being excellent. The teacher and nursery nurse have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. They also have very high expectations of children, both of their learning and behaviour. Very good planning is coupled with considerable skill in judging how to engage and maintain the children's interest. Good questioning challenges children's thinking and there is a good emphasis on extending the children's vocabulary. Activities are very well matched to children's needs and interests. There is a good balance between learning which is more closely directed by the teacher and that which enables children to make choices and organise themselves. There is an entirely appropriate emphasis on learning through carefully structured play. A continuous intuitive assessment of what children understand shows itself in the way the teacher replies to and builds on children's comments. Baseline assessment is used well to inform planning at all levels.

2.There is clear leadership for Early Years within the school. This is expressed through an ethos of high achievement, a secure and challenging environment, very good relationships with adults and children within and beyond the Early Years class, and a curriculum that ensures access for all children.

3.The approach of all working in the Early Years admirably supports the ethos and aims of the school. In the last inspection a number of strengths were identified in provision for children under five. These are now even more prominent, particularly the proportions of good and very good teaching.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

1.Since the last inspection the children's attainment in English has improved at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2.

2.In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for 7 year olds attainment in English at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above both the national average and the average of schools similar to St Mary's. This is because more children achieved the target level (level 2) and more reached the higher level 3 than is typical. This has been the case in reading and writing for two years now. In the 1999 tests children's attainment in writing was very high, especially the attainment of more able children. Children's attainment in spelling was also high.

3.In the results of the 1999 National Curriculum Tests for 11 year olds, standards at the end of Key Stage 2 were above both the national and the similar schools' averages. The proportion of children achieving the target level (level 4) was high. The proportion of children achieving an overall English level 5 was about average. This is because the number of children achieving level 5 in reading was about average. However, the number achieving level 5 in writing was high. In common with schools nationally, boys did less well in writing than girls at both levels 4 and 5.

4.Inspection evidence shows that the majority of children currently in Years 2 and 6 are on track to reach national expectations by the end of the school year, but that they are unlikely to achieve as high results as in 1999. However, boys' writing in Year 6 is progressing as well as girls this year.

134. Speaking and listening

1.Children attain the expected level, having made sound progress. By the time they are 7 years old children listen well to their teacher and each other, paying careful attention to explanations, stories and others' views. They are keen to answer questions and offer ideas. They read their own written work aloud confidently and sometimes with expression.

2.By the time they are 11 years old children listen carefully and appreciatively to others' ideas and to instructions and explanations from their teacher. They give considered answers to questions, offering ideas and explanations. They read aloud with intonation and expression. Progress in speaking and listening is sound overall with children reaching the expected level 4.

136. Reading

3.From early on in Key Stage 1 children use clues from the pictures, from the sounds letters make and from the overall appearance of words to work out new words they meet in their reading. The majority make good progress and by Year 2 most children can read books appropriate for their age with accuracy and can talk about the story and the characters in them. Some higher attaining children know the difference between factual and story books and can name a favourite author. Progress for these children is good but a weakness is their knowledge of a wider range of authors and types of text. Children with special educational needs also make good progress in reading.

4.Attainment in reading in Year 6 reaches the expected level for the large majority of children and overall progress at Key Stage 2 is good. By Year 6 most children read fluently and accurately and with good comprehension from a range of fiction and non-fiction books. They show an enthusiasm for what they read and express definite tastes, although the range of authors they refer to is small. Most children can explain how to access information from non-fiction books and use the subject index in the library. Higher attaining children are able to discuss a story in detail, including the feelings and motivation of the characters. Their progress, although good, is sometimes limited because the texts they meet do not provide sufficient challenge. Progress in reading for children with special educational needs is also good.

138. Writing

1.Overall children make good progress in writing composition at Key Stage 1. A strength of the writing is that all children are willing to write independently and attempt their own spellings. In Year 1, children make good progress in spelling and in handwriting, with letters becoming correctly orientated and similar in size. In Year 2 children make good progress in composing writing, for example stories and recounts which include the main events, and poems which contain rhyme and repetition. The progress of children in handwriting in Year 2 is satisfactory.

2.Children continue to make good progress in writing at Key Stage 2. Those with special educational needs make very good progress. In Years 3 and 6 progress of children of all abilities is particularly good. Across the key stage children are able to write in a wide range of formats and show an awareness of the intended audience. These aspects are strengths. By Year 6 the writing of most children is lively and interesting, particularly when phrases and vocabulary are chosen for effect. They are able to make quick and relevant notes. This skill is used well to extract information effectively in other curriculum areas. By the end of the key stage almost all children write with a legible and joined hand and most children write fluently. The spelling of most children is accurate.

140. Other aspects

1.Across the school children are interested in their work and settle quickly to tasks. Almost all children concentrate and persevere with their work. They are keen to contribute ideas during class sessions and when working collaboratively. They are willing to improve their work, particularly when writing, and to take risks, as when they attempt their own spelling. Almost all children enjoy good relationships with their teachers, classroom assistants and each other. They are attentive and respond quickly to

teachers' questions. However, a significant minority of children, in some classes, talk out of turn and find it difficult to sustain concentration on independent tasks.

2.Overall, teaching is good in both key stages. In a third of lessons it is very good. Since the last inspection there have been improvements in the quality of teaching in English with no unsatisfactory teaching noted during the inspection. Lessons are very well planned have a clear focus and good use is made of the National Literacy Strategy Framework for Teaching. The planning for children of differing abilities is a particular strength. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and give clear instructions and explanations. They have high expectations and use questions well to help children develop their ideas and to check understanding. When teaching is very good, the teacher "models" reading and writing effectively by providing demonstrations; and provides excellent support to a particular group which includes reference to the children's targets. In one excellent lesson in Year 6, the teacher modelled examples of language which could be used to create a personified image of the sea. Her phraseology was very dramatic and it inspired the children to reach for adventurous vocabulary in their own work.

3.Occasionally lessons lack pace and in some classes teachers do not respond effectively to children talking out of turn. In these lessons teaching tends to be satisfactory rather than good. All children's work is marked, but there are inconsistencies between year groups in how this is carried out. Marking is very good in Years 3 and 5. The very competent support teacher and classroom assistants are used very well to provide support for particular groups and individuals including children with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

4.The termly planning for the English curriculum is sound and covers all the areas of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The detailed weekly and daily planning is very good. It identifies opportunities for assessment and the needs of particular individuals. Teachers set individual targets for the children. These have a positive impact on planning and teaching, but the children are not always made sufficiently aware of them so do not know when they have achieved them in their work. Children's literacy skills serve them well in the reading and writing that they do in all other subject areas.

5.The co-ordinator leads the subject effectively, providing training for colleagues, leading the recent school focus on reading and monitoring teaching and learning.

6.Recent purchases of books for classrooms and the library have meant that the school is now adequately resourced. Good use is made of resources, including the library.

7.Widening the range of reading of the higher attaining children is a point for action.
147.

Pupils with English as an additional language

1.The attainment of children with English as an additional language is in line with national standards for children of similar ages. This was demonstrated when children in Years 2 and 6 achieved the target levels for their age groups in National Curriculum tests this year. These children make good progress throughout the school. In the Early Years class they are at the beginning stages of understanding that print carries meaning and are beginning to join in with class activities designed to help children recognise the sounds letters make and to build up a vocabulary of immediately recognised words. At Key Stage 2 they are all able to read accurately from texts appropriate for their age group and most can discuss the characters and story. They are all able to write independently and can successfully structure narrative and factual writing and can compose poems.

2.The children respond well in lessons. In the Early Years class these children listen and respond quickly to the teacher's instructions. They are keen to be involved in activities and answer direct questions from the teacher. At Key Stage 2 they are confident when talking about their reading and willing to discuss their ideas with adults and children.

3.At Key Stage 2 children are well supported by a Section 11 teacher (employed to support children

with English as an additional language) and a classroom assistant. They use questions well to encourage the children to voice their ideas and to translate these into writing.

4. Provision for children with English as an additional language is managed well. Children's progress is carefully monitored against individual targets. These have a positive influence on class teachers' planning for these children. The Section 11 teacher has close contact with all the families, built up over time. Communication with these families goes beyond the direct needs of the children as the teacher provides support and advice for the whole family. The children have equal access to the curriculum, but across most areas there is insufficient planned use of materials from non-western cultures.

Mathematics

1. Attainment in the 1999 national tests for 7 and 11 year olds was well above average when compared with all schools in England and when compared with similar schools. This was also true in 1998 for Key Stage 1 whereas at Key Stage 2 it was close to the average in that year. The proportions of more able children reaching the higher level 3 at Key Stage 1 and the higher level 5 at Key Stage 2 are high. Inspection evidence from children in Years 2 and 6 this year indicates that the large majority of pupils are on track to reach national expectations by the end of the school year, with a good many children already working beyond the expected level in some aspects. Progress in mathematics is consistently good at both key stages, including children with special educational needs.

2. By the end of Key Stage 1 most children have developed confidence with numbers. Many are quite quick to calculate mentally within 20 and the higher attaining children deal well with calculations around 50 and beyond. By the end of the year children calculate additions and subtractions with numbers beyond 100 and multiply and divide by 2 and 5. Even the lower attaining children are quite confident within 20 and can perform simple multiplication. Their coin recognition and calculation of money problems are also good. Children's understanding of shape is good; for example they can recognise when a shape is symmetrical. They measure using standard units such as centimetres. They can read bar charts and tables successfully. Children's recording of their mathematics is good. They set out much of the work for themselves and do so clearly and neatly.

3. The good progress already seen continues at Key Stage 2 with children by Year 4 multiplying by 3, 4 and 6 and able to find a fraction of a number. Their understanding of place value reaches into the thousands and their measure includes perimeters of shapes and finding areas by counting squares. Children have begun to measure angles. Lower attaining children continue to do well due to teachers' high expectations. They subtract numbers above 100 using pencil and paper, and have a good understanding of the relationship between a metre and centimetre. By Year 6 children's attainment in mathematics is a strength. For example they have a secure grasp of fractions, decimals and percentages. They find areas of shapes using the formula, with the higher attaining children able to work out areas of complex shapes by calculations involving several steps. Their measurement of angles is accurate. Children's use of graphs is a strength with pupils confident with line graphs and able to apply this skill in their work in science.

4. In class, children's responses are positive. Most commonly, children listen to their teachers, concentrate on their work and co-operate. Where very good responses were observed, children were visibly enthused by the mathematics, particularly the whole-class mental arithmetic. They thought hard about the questions asked and were keen to persevere, even when the work was demanding. Weaknesses in responses occurred where some children became inattentive or started to talk out of turn while the teacher was talking.

5. At both key stages the teaching is mostly good and there are very good lessons also at both key stages. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy ahead of the start date is clearly evident in lessons, especially the mental arithmetic.

6. Lessons are always planned well, prepared, and structured. Teachers' expertise in teaching

mathematics is supported by the National Framework for Teaching, and is a strength. The knowledge and skills children should acquire are clearly identified in the planning and matched well to the range of needs within the class. Teachers have high expectations and children are challenged well. This includes expectations of children with special educational needs who, as a result, often reach the target level for the age group. Teachers emphasise the correct use of mathematical language, explain mathematical ideas very clearly and ask a good range of questions. Mental arithmetic sessions, following the style of the National Numeracy Strategy, have a good and sometimes rapid pace. There are easier questions for the lower attaining children and some difficult calculations for the most able. In one very good example, in Year 2, children each were given a “fan” of number cards to show their answers to mental arithmetic questions. This technique ensured all children were fully engaged and that the teacher could quickly assess each child’s answers. There is a helpful emphasis on children setting out work for themselves rather than just completing worksheets, a factor which accounts for good standards of presentation. Teachers use recap at the beginning and end of lessons effectively to check what children have remembered. A strength in Year 6 is the use of a mathematics log in which children write down their reflections on what they have learned. This helps children consolidate their learning and provides a very useful opportunity for the teacher to assess children’s understanding.

7.A weakness in the teaching, which occurs in a minority of lessons at both key stages, is a lack of consistency in dealing with inattentive behaviour and talking out of turn from some children, with teachers sometimes talking over children’s chatter. Whilst the class remains under control and learning continues, the pace is slowed down by the interruptions. In a few other lessons the pace can be rather laboured. Apart from these elements, there are no significant weaknesses.

8.All work is marked but the quality of marking is somewhat variable. In Year 3 the teacher provides helpful points for improvement but this level of written feedback is not seen across the school. Useful learning targets are identified and shared with parents at the beginning of the year. These help focus the teaching and planning but children are not often aware which targets they are working on. Information, based upon regular standardised tests, helps to identify weaknesses and is used very effectively to target groups of children for extra help.

9.The subject leader has a very high level of expertise in mathematics. She has provided very good leadership in terms of implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, developing planning and resourcing the curriculum. She has also monitored work across the school.

10.Overall the school has maintained the strengths in mathematics noted in the last inspection with the significant improvement in the attainment of more able children by Year 6.

Science

1.In the 1999 national assessments for 7 year-olds, children attained standards in science which were well above those found nationally and in schools similar to St Mary’s. The more able children did particularly well with a high proportion achieving National Curriculum level 3. Inspection evidence indicates that the large majority of pupils in this year’s Years 2 are also on track to reach the national expectations by the end of the year. Children’s attainment in scientific investigations, particularly in understanding fair testing, is good. They also have a very good knowledge and understanding of the natural world.

2.In the 1999 national assessments for 11 year-olds, children’s attainment was above average. A high proportion of children in the current Year 6 class are also reaching the expected levels. By Year 6 children show a very good understanding of the process of scientific investigation. They are skilled at obtaining information through experimental work and through research using texts. They demonstrate accuracy and care when making observations and taking measurements. They have a very good understanding of life processes. Their understanding of aspects of physical and chemical processes, such as forces, motion and the effect of temperature in changing materials, is also good. Higher attaining children ably apply their knowledge of science to their investigative work. Their ability to reflect on and discuss their work is one reason why they achieve high standards. At both key stages,

children's use of information technology to collect, organise and present scientific information is weak.

3. Progress in science is good throughout the school, an improvement from the last inspection where too many inconsistencies in progress were found. Work completed last year showed that progress for all children was at least satisfactory and frequently good in each year group, with higher attaining children showing very good progress in their investigative work.

4. The majority of children show a keen interest in science, particularly experimental work. Most are prepared to listen, answer questions and work together during practical activities. At Key Stage 1 children work well in small groups, for instance when investigating the waterproof qualities of materials. Some find it difficult to remember to speak in turn during class teaching and to use a considerate volume in group activities. At Key Stage 2, children in Year 6 persevered with planning an investigation to explore a scientific question related to forces. Work on sound in Year 5 encouraged children to co-operate and use scientific reasoning to develop an understanding of sound insulators. Children in Year 4 worked successfully together obtaining evidence from an investigation into friction and the properties of materials. In Year 3, children used reference books to increase their knowledge and understanding of the life cycle of plants and shared this with one other, taking great pride in the quality of their work. In reflecting on the continuous cycle of plant life, one child in the class was fascinated by how and when the first seed came into existence. In some lessons, a few children are unable to sustain levels of concentration and their behaviour is inattentive. This results in a lack of pace in their work.

5. The teaching of science is good throughout the school, again an improvement on the last inspection, where the teaching was found to be inconsistent and at times unsatisfactory. In one third of lessons it is now very good. Good features of the teaching include a good pace and questions that challenge children's scientific thinking. There are good quality discussions with children which help them to clarify their scientific ideas, correct any misunderstandings and maintain their attention on the work. In addition there is a good focus on scientific vocabulary. Inconsistencies in applying class behaviour codes and questioning which did not provoke enough thinking were weaker features in some sessions.

6. During her first year at the school, the co-ordinator has led the subject well. She has improved the science curriculum, and assessment procedures are now generally good. This demonstrates an improvement since the last inspection where the science curriculum was criticised for unnecessary repetition of work, and assessment was judged to be a weakness.

7. The recent introduction of science targets, based on National Curriculum levels, has helped to focus more sharply teachers' planning and teaching. Teachers have also successfully used the targets to inform parents of the science children will study. Other than in Year 6, though, no children were able to give examples of targets. There is also variation in how marking and feedback support children in knowing when they have reached targets and what they should do to improve their work.

8. Many of the science resources are of good quality and used well. Good use is made of field trips, such as Year 5's visit to Thetford Forest and the school's wildlife area. The care and development of the wildlife area serves as a popular club activity.

OTHER SUBJECTS AND COURSES

Art

1. Owing to timetable arrangements during the inspection, only two art lessons were observed. Judgements are based on the outcomes in these lessons, along with the scrutiny of children's artwork.

2. Progress in art is good in both key stages. This demonstrates an improved and more consistent picture than in the last inspection report. The co-ordinator's portfolio of work shows good examples of children's work from each year group in a range of media, including collage, fabric and print. At Key

Stage 1 children make very good progress in mark-making and printing, showing increasing control and complexity in their work. Children's sketchbooks, at Key Stage 2, show good progress in using a range of materials to explore colour, line, shape and texture. They show a good level of skill in their use of pencil, pastel and other graphic materials to produce detailed line patterns and in their printing. They also make good progress in applying their knowledge and understanding of different artists' styles to their own work, such as in Year 3's pastel and paint studies of work by Van Gogh and Year 5's computer graphics interpretation of Mondrian's work. Children talk critically about their own and other's work. Progress in observational drawing, though, is a weakness.

3.Children are enthusiastic and interested in their own and others' work. They sustain concentration and show pleasure and pride in their work.

4.Two lessons of art were observed during the inspection. Both were very good. Very good features of lessons observed included children being asked to evaluate their work. This was followed by high quality advice to children on how to improve. Teachers also demonstrated enthusiasm for and knowledge of the subject. This had a positive impact on the quality of the work produced and the pride shown by the children.

5.The art co-ordinator provides strong leadership and has raised the profile of art throughout the school. She has worked with teachers to develop a range of plans for each year group. Art is monitored effectively and satisfactory records are kept helping teachers to report to parents on children's achievements and progress. External advisers, with the support of the co-ordinator, have significantly contributed to the increased skill and confidence of children and staff. Special events, such as the Pied Piper project, visiting artists – both local and national, and the St Mary's Church Art Exhibition provide additional impetus for the work and contributed to the cultural dimension of school life. However, the use of art from non-western cultures is a weakness, as is the availability of resources reflecting art from the wider world. The use of good quality materials contributes positively to the children's approach and attitude to their work.

Design and technology

1.At the time of the inspection, it was only possible to observe a small number of lessons in design and technology. Judgements about children's progress are therefore also based on discussions with children and staff, together with a scrutiny of work and photographs produced during the past year.

2.Children make sound progress in design and technology at both key stages, with examples of good progress in some individual design topics. This demonstrates an improvement from the last inspection when progress at Key Stage 2 was sometimes unsatisfactory.

3.Sound progress at Key Stage 1 is seen in the development of children's making skills, working with a variety of simple tools and using a range of high quality materials. There are good examples of fabric work in hand puppets made by Year 2, showing careful and accurate stitching.

4.At Key Stage 2 good progress can be seen in the musical instruments designed, made and evaluated by Year 5. Photographic records of bread making in this year group also show work of a good standard. Completed designs show care and attention to detail, such as the electronic mini-beasts made by Year 6 last year. Generally at this key stage children make good use of design notes to explore and record their ideas and they evaluate their work sensibly.

5.In the three design and technology lessons seen, two were of sound quality and one was excellent. In all lessons planning was good and the lessons were well sequenced. Instructions were clear and resources were used well, for example pop-up books to illustrate the range of mechanisms children might consider using in their own cards. Health and safety considerations were given due regard, for example the dangers when using needles. Children with physical disabilities were very effectively supported through help, but not too much help, from additional adults. In the excellent lesson, the teacher had very high expectations of her class. Although the children presented some disruptive

behaviour at the beginning of the lesson, she insisted and persisted with them, enthusing about the quality of the musical instruments being made and urging children to consider whether the durability and visual appeal would persuade anyone to buy them. During the practical work her questioning further challenged pupils to evaluate as they were working and to improve the build quality. In contrast to their rather unhelpful attitudes at the beginning of the lesson, children soon became highly motivated and worked purposefully.

6. One reason that a sound lesson was not judged to be good was that the pace was rather laborious, with some children losing motivation.

7. With the exceptions noted in paragraphs above, children's responses in design and technology lessons observed are mainly good. They enjoy the practical work and show good levels of perseverance. They are careful with tools and materials. In the best lesson observed children showed a good level of constructive self-criticism.

8. In the last inspection a criticism was that there was insufficient emphasis on designing skills. This is no longer the case, with well-planned opportunities for children to look at commercially produced items, to discuss ideas and to plan ahead using labelled diagrams.

9. The co-ordinator, although not a specialist, has provided good leadership in the subject, designing and amending plans and providing examples of work from her own studies in the subject. Although she has only had a small opportunity for monitoring, she used this well, identifying the need to make better use of diagrams for designing.

Geography

1. Owing to the timing of the inspection and timetable arrangements, only three geography lessons were observed. The outcomes from these lessons, along with the scrutiny of children's topic folders and books, the study of plans and discussions with children, indicate that children make sound progress in geography. This represents an improvement from the last inspection where progress of older children at Key Stage 1 was criticised.

2. By the end of Key Stage 1 children have experienced a range of geographical studies through direct enquiry, including local fieldwork. Visits are made into Hadleigh to find out about the children's own locality and to identify key landmarks. A "walk to the shops" provides opportunities to collect and record evidence in response to a range of questions. Children have begun to develop knowledge about co-ordinates and routes and can explain how to make simple journeys from school to key places such as their homes, to the swimming pool and to the church. Farm visits also take place in which the children develop an awareness of a contrasting location. The study of Chembakolli, in India, helps children develop an awareness of the world beyond the United Kingdom.

3. By the end of Key Stage 2, children can effectively compare and contrast their local area with another locality on the coast of North Norfolk. Children have a clear understanding of life alongside the River Nile and can explain the key features of a river such as the delta, describing how erosion and deposition occur. They also understand the differences between weather patterns in different parts of the world. Children use a wide range of geographical sources including maps, photographs, temperature charts and tables to investigate geographical questions. They have good skills in drawing together pieces of evidence about the places studied and formulating conclusions.

4. At both key stages, children show an interest in their work and are confident in their use of geographical terms. They apply themselves well to tasks and activities and enjoy sharing the knowledge and understanding gained from practical investigations. Children work well individually but also co-operate and share materials well in paired activities. Evidence was observed of some children at Key Stage 2 causing disruption by calling out during questioning sessions and having difficulty remaining on task. The majority, however, remained focused and made satisfactory progress within their lessons.

5. Of the three lessons observed, two were good and one was satisfactory. Teachers have a clear understanding of the subject and plan their lessons well. Good use of questioning is made to check understanding. Tasks are adjusted to provide the right level of challenge for children of differing ability, including the more able. Homework usefully extends the learning and helps prepare for future lessons.

6. Geography is well co-ordinated. Plans ensure children cover the National Curriculum and that they make progress year on year, a definite improvement from the last inspection where planning for progression was incomplete. The role of literacy has been successfully developed within the subject through increasing the range of relevant fiction and non-fiction. This has had a noticeable impact on progress in research skills. Resources for geography are sufficient and readily accessible.

History

1. Due to timetable arrangements during the inspection, it was only possible to observe three history lessons, all of which were in Key Stage 2. Children's work was viewed and discussions were held with a selection of children.

2. Sound progress is made in history at Key Stage 1. Children find the history meaningful because it is studied through topics which are relevant to them, for example through the study of toys from the past and finding out about when their grandparents were young. They begin to develop a sense of the passing of time by looking at the changes that have taken place since they were born. By the end of Key Stage 1 they understand the changes in home and school life during the last forty years, achieved through questioning their parents and grandparents about life when they were young. They have also developed some detailed knowledge about life long ago, for example they can explain the routines of daily life when people lived in castles and distinguish clearly the differences between life then and life in the present day.

3. Children at Key Stage 2 make good progress, especially in the successful development of the skills of historical investigation. This is a strength. They use a wide range of historical sources such as artefacts, photographs, drawings and texts. They demonstrate good skills in asking and answering research questions, selecting and recording information independently. By the end of Key Stage 2, children have acquired a clear understanding of life in Victorian times and Ancient Greek culture. They also have a detailed knowledge of life during the time of the Romans and understand the impact on Britain of the Roman conquest. More able children have a good sense of chronology and can describe major events, dates and people associated with a range of historical periods. Children with learning difficulties make good progress through the clear guidance and support provided by classroom assistants. Children's presentation of their work is good.

4. During the history lessons observed, children listened well to their teachers and gave careful responses to the questions asked. They generally settled quickly to historical investigation tasks and sustained good levels of concentration. They worked well independently and in pairs and showed initiative in selecting resources.

5. In the three lessons observed two were satisfactory and one was good. Activities are planned well and resourced and provided for the different levels of abilities within the class. Effective questioning extended children's thinking. The more able children were extensively challenged and children's work reflected the depth of interest they have developed as a result.

6. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator. Sound monitoring of work in the subject takes place, and this has contributed to raising standards. Links with geography through, for example, local studies help to increase the relevance of the subject. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection and improvements have been made in ensuring that work is satisfactorily completed and presented in Key Stage 1.

Information technology

1.Evidence from discussions with children and teachers, and scrutiny of work indicates that children's attainment in information technology (IT) reaches national expectations by age 7 but their attainment by age 11 does not yet reach expectations. In the last year there have been significant improvements in the subject but over time children's progress has been too slow at Key Stage 2, despite the mainly satisfactory teaching observed during the inspection. This has happened for four reasons. One is that it has only been in the last year that the development of information technology became a school priority; another is the lack of expertise and confidence among staff. A further reason is that the school's curriculum plan for information technology does not provide enough coverage and practice in all the necessary elements of the subject. Finally, resources for information technology are insufficient, with not enough up-to-date and reliable machines in the computer room to enable children to work on the same software in pairs, even with half a class at a time. Raising standards in information technology is a key issue for action.

2.By the end of Key Stage 1 children are able to control software confidently using the mouse. They can use a graphics programme to produce artwork, for example when they produce work in the style of Mondrian. They are confident with the line, colour-fill and spray tools. Some can save and print by themselves. They can input a series of commands into a programmable floor toy to make it move forwards and turn. Inspection evidence indicates that children who have left Year 2 also have sufficient skills in working with databases. Progress at this key stage is satisfactory overall.

3.By the end of Key Stage 2 children have some skills in word-processing. They can change the style of the font in a text but are uncertain about cutting and pasting within a text or about how to import, for example, pictures into text to make a multimedia presentation. They can create a procedure to make an image move around the screen and can access a CD ROM in order to find information. They can save data in a database but have not yet worked on National Curriculum level 4 skills such as searching, sorting and interrogating, and checking databases for anomalies to ensure these skills are secure. They have not yet developed the use of computer models to explore patterns or relationships such as simulations or spreadsheets nor used information technology to monitor data, such as changes in temperature.

4.Children's attitudes towards information technology are good. They are well motivated when working with computers, concentrating keenly, and taking a noticeable pride in their work. They co-operate and assist each other when working together such as when producing a joint piece of artwork. Those with more advanced skills are keen to show the others.

5.In the information technology lessons observed during the inspection week, the teaching was mostly satisfactory and some was good. Through the school's programme of training, teachers were generally sufficiently familiar with the software in use. Explanations were clear and problems, which the children experienced, were usually resolved. In one very good lesson the teacher followed a very clear explanation about the use of screen icons with well-organised paired work. Time limits supported the industrious pace of work achieved and teacher interventions to explain how to save and print were very well judged just at the moment when children recognised the need.

6.Weaknesses apparent in some lessons were when the teacher spent too long consolidating skills children had already gained, when software used was not suitable for the reading abilities of the children or when children could not see the screen satisfactorily.

7.The centralising of some computers into the computer room has brought significant benefits as it has allowed the direct teaching of skills to half a class at a time. However, at times the school has insufficient staffing to allow for the splitting of the class.

8.Last year the school adopted a two-year curriculum plan with staff training provided by external advisory staff at the beginning of each module of work. This has been beneficial in familiarising staff with the software and helped them understand progression in the IT curriculum. It has had a positive

impact on teaching and standards. However, it does not provide a suitable curriculum for the subject because children go too long without opportunities to practise and progress in important aspects such as word-processing and data handling. The school is already aware of the need to evaluate and refine the scheme of work.

9.Resources for information technology are inadequate, with not enough up-to-date reliable machines and printers. Those in the computer room sometimes have different versions of software, meaning explanations to the whole class are difficult to follow up in individual and paired work. Resources are about to improve significantly with the addition of four modern machines. Other computers around the school extend the range of hardware but they are not used enough as an integral part of other lessons.

10.Committed subject leadership in information technology has been successful in raising the profile of the subject, in co-ordinating effective staff training and establishing a curriculum with a useful accompanying assessment system. The co-ordinator also plans to restructure the curriculum to ensure children cover all aspects with sufficient frequency.

11.No overall judgements were made about information technology in the last inspection, so it does not provide an adequate baseline on which to judge progress. However, inspection evidence indicates that there have been substantial improvements in the school's provision in the last year, associated with the centralisation of computers in the computer suite.

Music

1.During the inspection only one class lesson of music was observed at Key Stage 1 so it was not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching at that key stage. In addition to the class lessons observed at Key Stage 2, three instrumental tuition lessons and two music clubs were observed. Taped evidence of musical performances was also examined. Children of all ages and levels of attainment make satisfactory progress at both key stages and benefit from the opportunities to take part in a wide range of musical activities during the school year.

2.At Key Stage 1 children develop good listening skills through exploring and recognising the musical elements of duration, dynamics, tempo and texture. They compose simple musical patterns by playing a range of untuned instruments, some of which they have made themselves at home. Skills in listening and appraising music develop well through investigating different sounds made by everyday objects. Children can interpret these sounds using a range of instruments.

3.At Key Stage 2 children make satisfactory progress in extending their singing skills, through developing control of diction and expression. They are able to sing tunefully, for example when singing hymns in assembly. Older children sing with enthusiasm and have a well-developed sense of rhythm. Children are able to refine and polish compositions and demonstrate a good level of confidence in performing. Progress in lessons observed was satisfactory, although, in some lessons, excitable and disruptive behaviour hampered progress.

4.In the one lesson observed in Key Stage 1, children's attitudes to learning were good. They listened carefully both to their teacher and the sounds performed. When questioned, they thought carefully before responding and gave sensible replies. Their interest was reflected in their keenness to participate and by the imaginative and varied instruments they made at home.

5.At Key Stage 2 children's responses vary from good to poor. They were unsatisfactory in a half of lessons observed. The majority of children show an interest. They are keen and eager to participate and show a good level of commitment to performance. They usually listen carefully and are able to co-operate in group work, enjoying the sense of ownership resulting from joint compositions. When behaviour is not managed with consistency or with sufficient firmness, or when children become over-excited, they become inattentive and at times disruptive, resulting in lost time. Within extra-curricular music clubs children's interest and levels of concentration are good.

6.The teaching of music is satisfactory in class lessons. There is a clear sense of purpose and links are made with studies in other subjects when relevant. Lessons are planned well and a clear lead is given. Children are effectively taught to rehearse and improve their performance and make decisions regarding the selection of accompaniments. Useful feedback is also provided. A weakness is a lack of consistency in ensuring class rules are followed, as referred to above.

7.Planning for music is of good quality. The commercial published scheme, introduced to support non-specialist staff, provides a good basis for progression. Effective in-service training took place for all staff when the scheme was first launched and staff were able to develop further their skills when working with the London Symphony Orchestra in the Pied Piper project. More recently, teachers have been able to work along side staff from the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and support the children in a range of singing and instrumental performances.

8.At present, nineteen children benefit from the opportunities to develop instrumental specialisms with peripatetic teachers. The tuition available includes cello, violin, guitar and a range of wind instruments. During these short, sharply focused sessions good teaching leads to good progress. The subject knowledge of the instructors is very good. Their expectations of children are high and an emphasis is placed on practising at home and meeting targets in preparation for future lessons. Lessons are supported by the incentive to practise for further lessons and performances. An example of an informal performance was observed in an assembly when a group of flute players played solo and in a group. Children often reach good levels of attainment and go on to take part in examinations. In the summer of 1999 all the school's violinists and flautists gained a merit in the Grade 1 examinations.

9.Music is enhanced by clubs, music workshops and opportunities for performance both within and beyond the school, including multimedia performances at Snape incorporating instrumental and dramatic work.

Physical education

1.During the inspection, games lessons were observed in both key stages, along with a gymnastics lesson in Key Stage 1 and a swimming lesson in Key Stage 2. In games and gymnastics children make sound progress at both key stages. In swimming progress is very good.

2.Children at Key Stage 1 demonstrate good co-ordination in gymnastics through linking a sequence of movements together. They show a sound awareness of different levels, space and shape. Some children develop good hand/eye co-ordination through the throwing and catching of beanbags and different sized balls. Their movements reflect a good sense of balance. They watch the performance of others and use their observations to try and improve their own practice.

3.At Key Stage 2 children move fluently and can change direction both quickly and smoothly, showing good control of speed. Throwing, though, is a weakness, as is children's use of space when working in the hall. In swimming the vast majority can swim the recommended twenty-five metres and many can swim further by the time they leave the school. Several have achieved bronze, silver and gold personal survival awards.

4.Children's response to physical education is good. They try hard to meet the challenges set. They respond quickly to instructions and demonstrate perseverance, whatever their level of ability. They co-operate well in pairs and small groups and behave sensibly in lessons. Equipment is handled safely.

5.The quality of teaching observed during the inspection was mainly good and none was unsatisfactory. This represents an improvement from the last inspection when some teaching was poor. Lessons were appropriately structured, although insufficient time was sometimes allocated to the cool down activity. Planning reflected due regard for safety. Lesson pace maintained children's interest. The development of skills was accompanied by clear explanations and guidance. Good use of assessment and feedback supported children's progress. Children were encouraged to demonstrate good practice and on limited occasions encouraged to evaluate and appraise their own performance.

Behaviour was managed well.

6.Children receive a balanced physical education programme and take part in a range of activities including dance and athletics. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator. Children were observed enjoying an extra-curricular football club and on occasions they have an opportunity to take part in tournaments.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

1.A team of five inspectors carried out the inspection. During the inspection:

- 64 lessons or parts of lessons were observed, including instrumental tuition;
- the day-to-day life of the school was observed in, for example, registration, assemblies and lunchtimes;
- children were heard to read and were questioned about their knowledge and understanding;
- samples of children’s work were examined in all classes;
- school clubs were observed;
- the policy documents of the school and the School Development Plan were analysed;
- attendance registers, the records kept on children, and the teachers’ plans were inspected;
- the budget figures were examined;
- discussions were held with children, with staff and with governors, including the Chair of the Governing Body;
- the Registered Inspector held a meeting attended by 11 parents where their views on the school were sought and given;
- 49 responses to the parents' questionnaire were examined.

1.DATA AND INDICATORS

Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
Reception – Year 6	176	3	34	20

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (Reception – Year 6)

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

7.9
22.39:1

Education support staff (Reception – Year 6)

Total number of education support staff
Total aggregate hours worked each week

6
78.2

Average class size:

25.1

Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	332,816
Total Expenditure	325,035
Expenditure per pupil	1,748
Balance brought forward from previous year	8316
Balance carried forward to next year	16,097

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:

129

Number of questionnaires returned:

49

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	49.0	46.9	2.0	2.0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	53.1	44.9	0	2.0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	14.3	59.5	21.4	4.8	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	32.7	53.1	8.2	2.0	4.1
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	34.7	55.1	2.0	6.1	2.0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36.7	53.1	10.2	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36.7	51.0	8.2	4.1	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	24.5	59.2	10.2	6.1	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	46.9	46.9	2.0	4.1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	32.7	53.1	6.1	6.1	2.0
My child(ren) like(s) school	42.9	53.1	4.1	0	0