

# INSPECTION REPORT

**BRITANNIA COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL  
and NURSERY**

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124653

Headteacher: Mrs K Heath

Reporting inspector: Mr Christopher Hemmings  
14614

Dates of inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2000 to 11<sup>th</sup> February 2000

Inspection number: 191721

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary School and Nursery

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Britannia Road  
Ipswich

Postcode: IP4 5HE

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs P King

Date of previous inspection: 27 January 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Chris Hemmings	Registered inspector	Art	What sort of school is it ?
		Design Technology	The school's results and pupils' achievements.
			How well are pupils taught ?
Mary-Anne Gledhill	Lay inspector	No subjects	How well does the school care for its pupils ?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents ?
Helen Banks	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Under Fives	
		Special Educational Needs	
Sue Cosson	Team Inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils ?
		Geography	
		History	
Roger Eagle	Team Inspector	Information Technology	How well is the school led and managed ?
		Physical Education	
John Sweet	Team Inspector	Music	
		Equal Opportunities	
Sandie Sykes	Team Inspector	English	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
		Religious Education	

The inspection contractor was:

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

This school is a very large urban Primary school and Nursery for boys and girls aged 4 -11 years old. It has 530 full-time pupils and 51 part-time pupils in its new nursery unit. There are approximately equal numbers of boys and girls and the average class size is 26. The school's intake covers the full range of abilities. Some children start in their reception year with some above average attainment in English, mathematics and personal and social development. Eight per cent of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is below the national average. Seventy-seven pupils have special educational needs; a figure lower than the national average for a school of this size.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Britannia Primary and Nursery is a school with many good features and some weaknesses. By the time the pupils are eleven they achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science. Teaching is good overall but there is some unsatisfactory teaching in some lessons. The school has good strategies for improvement in place. There is a whole school focus upon raising standards of pupils' attainment by monitoring and evaluation. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- In mathematics at Key Stage 1 pupils achieve above average standards overall and achieve well in mental work.
- Overall, teaching is good. In over half the lessons seen teaching is good or very good. This enables pupils to make good progress.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they make good progress in their learning.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and they have good attitudes; this makes a positive contribution to their learning.
- Pupils behave very well and get on well with each other in lessons and in the playground.
- The school cares very well for the pupils' academic and personal development.
- The headteacher, senior management team and governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and what needs to be done to improve.
- The nursery provides a very good foundation for children's learning and attitudes.

#### **What could be improved**

- The quality of teaching is inconsistent. This is mainly because teachers do not know how to interpret and put into practice planning that has been completed by colleagues. As a result they are not always clear about what pupils will learn.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking skills in a range of contexts.
- Insufficient opportunities are planned for pupils to solve problems, undertake investigations and show independence in their working in mathematics and science.
- A significant minority of parents do not feel fully informed about what their children are learning and how well their children are getting on in school. They do not feel that the school works in close partnership with them.

**The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well. The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.**

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in addressing the key issues identified in the January 1997 report. The main improvements are the introduction of the nursery which provides a good foundation for the under fives, a new structure for managing the school and systems for evaluating

teaching and learning. Through the close analysis of available data the school has formed a very clear view of its own strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders now check that planning covers the intended areas of work and they are beginning to take responsibility for the quality of provision and standards achieved by the pupils in their specialist areas. In the short time since these changes were introduced the impact upon standards of these changes has been limited. The governing body has become more actively involved in the life of the school. A large number of teaching appointments has brought new expertise, in mathematics for example, and fresh ideas and approaches to teaching and learning in the school. Realistic but challenging targets for improvements in the national test results have been set. The school is soundly placed to improve in the areas of standards, teaching, learning, management and leadership.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools		similar schools	
		Year 6		Year 6
English		C		D
mathematics		C		D
science		C		D

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

Standards achieved by eleven-year-olds in 1999 were broadly the same as the national average in English, mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils attaining at the higher levels was below average in English and science and close to the average in mathematics. When compared with the achievements of those schools with a similar proportion of pupils who receive free school meals, standards are below average.

Inspection evidence indicates that standards for the present Year 6 pupils are average in English, mathematics and science.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school.	Pupils' attitudes to the school are good. They enjoy coming to school, try hard and are eager to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms.	The behaviour of pupils both in and out of classrooms is very good indeed.
Personal development and relationships.	Personal development is good. The pupils are well mannered and polite. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are good throughout the school.
Attendance.	Attendance is good. Pupils arrive on time.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	good	good

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

Teaching is good overall with more than half of all lessons (55 per cent) being good or better. There are instances of very good teaching at both key stages. The teaching of English, including reading and writing, is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 (4-7 year olds) and good at Key Stage 2 (7-11 year-olds). In mathematics, including numeracy, the quality of teaching is good in both key stages. The great majority of lessons are carefully planned and successfully sustain the pupils' interest. In the very good lessons teachers share with the pupils what they are intended to learn and encourage the pupils to reflect on what they have learned and the ways in which they learn.

There are instances of unsatisfactory teaching at both key stages. In almost one in eight lessons teaching is unsatisfactory. This is mainly due to teachers being uncertain about what they expect pupils to learn.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum.	The curriculum is broadly based and relevant to the needs of most of the pupils. The numeracy strategy has been successfully introduced, but there is further work to be done in the planning of literacy.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs.	Very good. All pupils with special educational needs are very well supported and well integrated in classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is good. Pupils have a clear sense of right and wrong and get on well together. Spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory overall but opportunities to develop pupils' appreciation of art, literature and music from their own and a range of other cultures are limited.
How well the school cares for its pupils.	The school cares well for all its pupils. Systems for evaluating pupils' performance and personal development are well established and effective. Teachers know their pupils well.

Attention to equal opportunities, and respect for pupils by teachers are good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff.	The headteacher has established coherent management systems, which are sharply focused and beginning to have a positive impact upon improving the quality of education. A good structure of delegated responsibilities is in place.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities.	Governors fulfil their responsibilities well. They are increasingly active in all aspects of their role.
The school's evaluation of its performance.	The school has a clear understanding of its performance as a result of careful analysis of available data.
The strategic use of resources.	Satisfactory. All resources are effectively used.

After an unsettled period with the appointment of a new senior management team the school is establishing a common sense of purpose. The strengths of the leadership and management are the systematic approach to evaluating performance and developing effective approaches to school improvement. The school is aware of the principles of best value and it is beginning to apply this to evaluating many aspects of the work of the school. Although there are important issues to be resolved with parents, the school is moving forward under this leadership.

Staffing, resources and accommodation are adequate. The nursery provides very good accommodation for the youngest children.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most:	What parents would like to see improved:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• their children like school</li> <li>• the good quality of teaching</li> <li>• the good behaviour in the school</li> <li>• the expectation that children will work hard and do their best</li> <li>• their children make good progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the information they get from the school about their children's work and progress</li> <li>• how the school responds to their queries and concerns</li> <li>• the consistency of the teaching throughout the school</li> <li>• greater consultation and information about decisions that have a direct impact on them and their children.</li> </ul>

The inspectors endorse the parents' positive comments. There are formal occasions when parents discuss their children's work with teachers and there is an informative annual report. These arrangements are sufficient to keep parents adequately informed about their children's progress. Other information about the life of the school is provided regularly but the inspectors support parents' views that there is scope for improvement. The good links with parents identified in the last report have not been maintained. Not all parents feel that they are full partners in their children's education. This is an important area for development. Parents need to know what their children are learning each term, how decisions affecting their children are being made, and to feel welcome and able to get involved.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. At the time of the previous inspection, in 1997, academic standards were close to the national average in all the core subjects at both key stages. Results of the national tests in 1999 indicate that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils achieve average standards in reading, above average standards for writing and well above average standards in mathematics. This pattern of results is the same in comparison with similar schools. By the end of Key Stage 2 results are broadly average for English, mathematics and science, when compared with all schools nationally. The percentage of pupils attaining higher levels is below average in English and science and close to the average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools standards at Key Stage 2 are below average in English, mathematics and science and the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels is well below average in English, close to the average in mathematics and below average in science.
2. National test results for eleven-year-olds over three years, 1997-1999, indicates higher than average attainment in the first two years followed by a slight fall in 1999. Evidence gathered during the inspection from lesson observations and scrutiny of completed work shows that standards are broadly average in English and science at Key Stage 1. In mathematics pupils achieve above average standards, with good achievement in mental work. At Key Stage 2 pupils achieve average standards in English, mathematics and science. There are no significant variations in the achievements of boys and girls.
3. The school has made satisfactory progress with implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. A daily hour of focused teaching is provided for each subject. Evidence shows that effective teaching is helping to raise attainment in mathematics at both key stages. Appropriate targets have been set for pupils who will reach the end of Key Stage 2 in 2001 based upon detailed analysis of pupils' current attainment. Writing and mathematics are effectively developed across the curriculum and they make a useful contribution to pupils' learning but there are insufficient planned opportunities for pupils to develop reading skills to undertake research and to support learning across the curriculum.
4. In English, the standards achieved by most pupils at the age of 7 and 11 are average. Listening skills are broadly average at both key stages but speaking skills are below average. The pupils quickly learn to read and older pupils read with good expression and obvious enjoyment. Reading skills are insufficiently used, however, to undertake research and to support learning across the curriculum. Standards in writing skills are average overall and there are signs that the emphasis given to improving handwriting is having a positive impact. By the age of 7 pupils write well in a sequence of sentences, often using more interesting vocabulary. Progress is inconsistent between classes in the lower stages of Key Stage 2. This is due in the main to teachers' lack of subject knowledge and uncertainty about how to implement the planning provided by colleagues. By the age of eleven pupils express themselves clearly and imaginatively in poems, stories, instructions and non-narrative pieces. They know how to adapt their form of writing for different purposes.
5. Pupils achieve well in mathematics at Key Stage 1. They make good progress, particularly in mental mathematics. They are developing a good understanding of the

four rules and higher-attaining pupils apply their knowledge well to solve problems. At Key Stage 2 standards by the age of eleven are average. Achievement in using and applying mathematical knowledge to solve problems are less well developed at both key stages because there is insufficient focus upon this aspect of the mathematics curriculum.

6. In science, pupils' grasp of scientific knowledge is average at both key stages with some pupils in Years 2 and 6 attaining above the age related expectations. However, pupils' achievements in scientific investigation and experiments at Key Stage 2 are below average. This was a weakness identified in the last inspection and it has only recently begun to be fully addressed. Consequently by the time the pupils are in Year 6 they do not have the foundation of experience and understanding to frame hypotheses, devise and undertake investigations at a level that is expected for their age. Higher-attaining pupils, in particular, are not attaining as well as they should.
7. Pupils achieve average standards in information technology throughout the school. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound grasp of basic word processing skills and they generate ideas in text form and store and retrieve their work. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 follow a line of investigation to interrogate data about insects in science and devise presentations using a multi-media program.
8. In art, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and music pupils achieve average standards. There is some higher attainment in swimming in physical education, and in history pupils have a good knowledge of the people and events in the periods they are studying. Pupils achieve good standards in textile and colour work in art but they achieve less well in drawing and painting. This is because there is no systematic development of these basic skills throughout the school. Although pupils attain average standards overall in design and technology they make insufficient progress in learning about mechanisms and knowing how to use them effectively within their designs.
9. In religious education pupils' achievements meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about important festivals in different religions and they are making sound progress in learning to recognise religious symbols. In Key Stage 2 pupils are developing understanding of religious symbols and the meaning of religious stories to their own lives.
10. Pupils with special educational needs are set appropriate targets and make good progress towards them. This is because support and guidance is well managed by the special educational needs co-ordinator and class teachers take care to match work to their needs. Appropriate records of progress are kept and objectives in individual education plans are detailed and specific.
11. Raising standards and improving individual achievements is a priority shared by the headteacher, governors and staff who have worked hard to implement new schemes of work and to improve planning and teaching. The headteacher and senior management team have begun to make very good use of test information and continuous assessment data to set targets for groups and individuals, but the impact of this strategy has yet to be reflected in significantly improved standards. The school takes care to ensure that all staff positively promote equal participation by all pupils in all activities, irrespective of gender or ability. Inspection evidence shows that this is effective.

## **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

12. The pupils at Britannia Road School are eager to learn and have good attitudes to school and to each other. Throughout the school, pupils work hard in lessons. They settle down to their learning quickly and they persevere to complete their work, even when the pace of the lesson is sometimes slow. Most pupils readily carry out their teachers' instructions. They concentrate well, and respond with enthusiasm particularly when teachers make lessons challenging and introduce aspects of particular interest. Many older children in the school find mathematics particularly exciting, and when asked, talk about the challenges it brings with great enthusiasm, even when they find the work hard. Where teachers enjoy teaching mathematics and stimulate and challenge children's thinking, the children respond well to this and they demonstrate great determination to work hard.
13. The confidence shown by many pupils is a positive feature in many lessons. They enjoy role-play, for example, in religious education when trying to relate an idea to their own lives. They are eager to bring books in from home to help their studies in history. They also appreciate the opportunity to explore new skills, as in design and technology when they try out new decorative techniques as a preliminary to designing slippers.
14. The pupils clearly enjoy each other's successes and listen attentively to ideas in whole class sessions and when working in groups. Some pupils work with partners in class to explain to one another and to sharpen their thinking in lessons. They are becoming adept at giving constructive feedback to each other, though this is not widespread across the school. Earning merit points is important to many of them and quite a few, though not all, talk well about their targets and how they view their own progress.
15. The pupils arrive punctually at school and are clearly happy to be there. The attendance rate is good. When asked what they like best about school, they talk positively about their friends, their teachers and the clubs to which they belong. Break times go very smoothly. Pupils play well together and take care of their friends, showing acts of kindness without being prompted. Many older pupils keep a good eye on younger ones and it is clear that pupils feel safe playing outside. They also move around the school very sensibly. They know the corridor rules that help to keep congestion at a minimum. Younger pupils are very patient, for example, when queuing to go to the hall for physical education lessons and they wait sensibly until the route is clear.
16. Pupils' behaviour, both in and out of class is very good. Staff apply the school's behaviour policy consistently to make sure that pupils are helped to behave well and to feel safe. Pupils with special educational needs are helped considerably through the firm, calm guidance that their teachers and other adults working with them offer. As a result of the good team effort, worked through fairly, everyone benefits and a calm, happy atmosphere is maintained across the school.
17. The School Council is appreciated by the pupils, particularly those who have a direct involvement in it. The school's personal and social development curriculum brings to the fore key issues for discussion, such as tackling bullying and being a good friend. Pupils demonstrate consistently high standards in behaviour and convey positive attitudes to school and each other, although few demonstrate well-developed initiative skills or an aptitude for making decisions. The school allows its pupils too few

opportunities in lessons to develop these skills. This was identified as a weakness in the school's last inspection and remains an area for improvement.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

18. The quality of teaching is broadly similar to that identified in the previous inspection report. Overall the quality of teaching is good, with more than half of all lessons (55 per cent) being good or very good. One in seven lessons is very good. However, in one in eight lessons teaching is unsatisfactory. The pattern to the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching is similar at both key stages with instances of very good and unsatisfactory teaching at both key stages.
19. Teaching of under fives is good overall. Half of the ten lessons seen were good or very good. At Key Stage 1 teaching is good overall. Sixty one per cent being good or very good. Of the 23 lessons observed two were unsatisfactory and one numeracy lesson was poor. At Key Stage 2, 55 per cent of teaching is good or better with 18 per cent of teaching being very good. Of the 60 lessons observed, seven were graded unsatisfactory.
20. Teachers who had unsatisfactory lessons at both key stages also had lessons, which were judged to be satisfactory or better. The weaker teaching is attributable to two main factors; the teacher's limited subject knowledge and a planning system which relies too heavily upon teachers being able to interpret planning provided by a colleague.
21. There are common features to the most successful teaching at both key stages throughout the school. Where teaching is good or better the strengths include very careful planning and positive and purposeful learning relationships. Many teachers share their enthusiasm and enjoyment in helping children to learn. Planning is linked clearly to medium and long-term plans within a subject and this assists pupils to work systematically through the curriculum. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and appropriately high expectations of the pupils. They show a good understanding of individual needs and considerable care goes into matching activities to the learning objectives. In general, expectations are about right for pupils of all abilities. Teachers' planning successfully focuses upon the full range of attainment within the class and in the best teaching higher attaining pupils are challenged to fully extend themselves.
22. In the very good lessons teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils and provide opportunities for them to reflect on the ways they have learned. Teachers regularly check the extent of pupils' understanding by frequently asking questions such as 'what do we have to do next, how do you know?'. In this way teachers challenge pupils to keep thinking and to test their own understanding. Classroom routines are well established and the great majority of lessons are well organised. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very effectively throughout the school. Humour is used to very good effect in several classes at both key stages to create a very positive climate for learning and a powerful sense that learning is fun and enjoyable. This was evident, for example in a literacy lesson at Key Stage 2, where the teacher shared individual pleasure in poetry and pupils eagerly suggested imaginative phrases for a class poem. Praise is very effectively used to motivate and encourage pupils and they respond by trying very hard. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and are well structured to sustain the pupils' interest. Teachers ensure that classroom assistants are fully aware of the aims of the lesson and their role in supporting groups of pupils. Time in most lessons is used very effectively but occasionally insufficient time is allocated to the review of what has been learned. The opportunity to

consolidate understanding, to share what has been learned and to assess whether the intended learning has taken place, is lost.

23. Where teaching was unsatisfactory at both key stages the key factors were teachers' lack of the necessary subject knowledge or uncertainty about how to interpret and put into practice the planning completed by a colleague. Several teachers do not have a secure understanding of the literacy and numeracy strategies, so they are unable to focus questions to extend pupils' thinking and understanding. Consequently, in Year 1 and Year 3, there is some underachievement. When teachers are given complete lesson plans by a colleague they are not always precisely clear about what the pupils are expected to learn. In Year 3, for example, a literacy lesson on using non-fiction text did not focus sufficiently on the reading strategy identified in the plan with the result that the activities did not challenge or extend pupils' knowledge about use of language.
24. The quality of teaching in literacy ranges from very good to unsatisfactory at both key stages. It is satisfactory overall. In almost half of all lessons observed the teaching was good or better but 19 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. In the good and very good lessons teachers have good subject knowledge and are confident in using the National Literacy Strategy. The weak teaching is very largely the result of an insecure grasp of the Strategy and how to implement the planning system.
25. In numeracy, the quality of teaching is good at both key stages. It is good or very good in two thirds of all the lessons seen. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and the recently introduced National Numeracy Strategy. This, together with the effective support of the subject leader, makes a significant contribution to pupils' attainments and achievements.
26. In science the quality of teaching is good at Key Stage 1 and satisfactory at Key Stage 2. In the good teaching there is a sharp focus upon developing pupils' scientific understanding, skills and thinking through practical investigation and activity. In information technology, design and technology, physical education and religious education teaching is good. In all other subjects the quality of teaching is satisfactory.
27. Good teaching contributes effectively to the achievements of all pupils. Close attention is given to ensuring that all pupils are provided with equal opportunities. The specialist teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and this is enhanced by some very good teamwork between class teachers and support staff. Feedback to pupils on how they are succeeding is effective in maintaining high self esteem and also helps pupils to know how they need to improve. Classroom assistants provide very good quality support for teaching and learning. They make a very positive contribution to the life of the school. Similarly, volunteer parents help with a variety of tasks in and out of classrooms. This enables teachers to focus on small groups in some lessons, with consequent benefits to pupils' progress.

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

28. The school adequately fulfils the requirements to teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2. All six areas of learning for the under-fives are covered. It also provides personal, social and health education, including appropriate sex education. The curriculum is therefore broadly based and relevant to the needs of most of the pupils. However, the school places a very heavy emphasis on English and mathematics and the amount of time devoted to these subjects particularly in Year 6 is very high. These pupils spend more than sixty per cent of the week doing English and mathematics and thus do not experience a well balanced curriculum. Insufficient time is currently allocated to history, geography and personal and social education.
29. Whilst the pupils have many opportunities for reading and writing, the overall planning for their progress in English is unsatisfactory. The framework for literacy is being implemented but is at an early stage. The half-termly plans are underdeveloped and although the weekly plans offer a firm structure to the non- specialist teacher, they include too much to cover in sufficient depth. Nor, are there enough opportunities to evaluate how well pupils have done before the next plan is prepared. As well as a daily literacy lesson, pupils have regular extended writing sessions. These are sometimes well linked to the work covered in literacy lessons or to work in history or geography but at other times they have little or no connection. Each class in Key Stage 2 has regular sessions described as "core skills". It is left to the judgement of the class teacher as to the purpose and content of the sessions. There is no planned programme in place and despite the amount of time devoted to English, there are too few opportunities to talk for a purpose and there is no considered approach to the teaching of speaking.
30. Opportunities for learning mathematics are good. The National Numeracy Strategy is providing a good basis for planning a broad curriculum. The school has developed a scheme of work which provides good guidance on activities for each year group and links this to published schemes and other resources. Teachers are giving a lot of attention to developing mental and oral mathematics and planning the precise mathematical language that the pupils will learn. These plans provide a good framework to support the structure of the daily mathematics lesson. Work is well differentiated to show what pupils of different levels of attainment are expected to learn and do, including pupils with special educational needs. In general, the school provides an interesting and stimulating range of activities in mathematics and the pupils are keen to learn. A whole school mathematics day based on the theme of a giant's foot provided a good opportunity for pupils from nursery to Year 6 to investigate mathematical relationships. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils, particularly the most able, to develop their skills in using and applying mathematics.
31. The school has adopted the schemes of work from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for a number of areas of the curriculum. These, supported by Local Authority guidelines, are largely effective in ensuring statutory requirements are met and a broad and balanced range of learning opportunities is provided. The school is good at providing opportunities for the pupils to learn information technology skills, both within lessons and in out of school clubs. Other areas of strength are some aspects of art, such as textiles and printmaking, and aspects of physical education such as dance, where the work is often linked to other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils have been learning Tudor dances to link with their work in history and pupils from both key stages have worked with a resident artist to complete large pieces of abstract art.

32. Teachers have worked very hard to improve the curriculum during the past year and are aware that there are still areas to be developed further. These are principally concerned with the provision of more opportunities for pupils to carry out more independent and investigative work in science, mathematics and geography, to learn how to investigate the past and to acquire the skills of drawing and painting more systematically.
33. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. They are well supported within normal lessons and the teachers' plans show how activities are adapted or set to meet particular special needs. Learning support assistants are very well briefed through a diary system, which sets out clearly what each pupil is expected to do and provides an effective record of the pupil's progress. The individual education plans are produced by the special needs co-ordinator with class teachers in order that they support progression in learning. These clearly identify small, achievable steps in learning and often take account of the pupils' different learning styles. For example, pupils with autistic tendencies are encouraged to use visual support materials and this helps them to follow more complex instructions. Particular attention is given to supporting pupils with literacy and numeracy difficulties. Specific physical needs are also addressed, for example by providing a programme of information technology and typing skills for a pupil with co-ordination difficulties. The provision detailed in statements for special educational needs are fulfilled and form the basis for producing the pupils' individual education plans.
34. The pupils have a number of opportunities to pursue their interests outside lessons. The activities and clubs provided are mainly of a sporting or musical nature but other interests are catered for too. Year 5 and 6 pupils have the greatest choice. They are particularly enthusiastic about the news club. A range of reports written by the pupils has been published in the local press, helping them develop a sense of being part of a wider community. The curriculum is also enriched by some visits out of school and by visitors to the school. Year 2 pupils visited Felixstowe, for example, as part of their work in geography and a specialist in Tudor music has enlivened the pupils' work in the history of that period. Links with the community and relationships with partner schools are satisfactory.
35. Overall, the school makes good provision for the pupils' personal development. Assemblies and circle time offer the pupils opportunities for quiet reflection. Through their religious education lessons, the pupils are encouraged to reflect on the influence of religious belief on people's lives. Occasionally, in lessons pupils display a sense of wonder and excitement. There is scope for further enhancing spiritual development through subjects such as art, music and literature.
36. The school provides well for the pupils' moral and social development. For the youngest pupils, the nursery provides a clearly structured environment and routines in which pupils are encouraged to make choices and take responsibility for classroom tasks. For example, they take turns to do jobs at snack time and they select and return their own resources. A good programme for personal, social and health education which gives appropriate attention to sex education and drug misuse is in place. This well planned programme, the religious education lessons and the school behaviour policy make particularly valuable contributions towards helping the pupils know right from wrong and helping them behave well. Working co-operatively is an important part of many lessons and the pupils do this successfully. In art and design and technology lessons, for example, pupils share resources and develop designs and prints together. In a personal and social education lesson, pupils felt confident to express their feelings about seeming at times to be an 'outsider'. Their classmates listened thoughtfully and offered a practical and acceptable solution to one pupil's

problem. Year 2 pupils are used to turning to a 'working partner' if they need help. The school council is proving a valuable means of involving some pupils in decision-making and helping them become aware of what it means to be part of a democracy. However, the pupils generally do not have enough opportunities to develop social skills by working on open-ended problems and showing initiative in their learning.

37. Pupils learn about their own cultural traditions through several areas of the curriculum. In a history lesson they learned about the background to the Marathon. The school has made recent improvements to the development of the pupils' awareness of other cultures through the purchase of books for classrooms and the celebration of a multicultural week as well as through learning about other faiths in religious education lessons. There is, however, scope for further developing the pupils' appreciation of the art, literature and music from both their own and other cultures.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

38. Overall the school takes good care of its pupils. The headteacher and staff have worked hard to develop comprehensive systems for assessing and keeping careful records of pupils' academic performance. These records are being increasingly well used to ensure that pupils are in the right groups for each subject and are making progress. For example, in mathematics and science, teachers have a very clear picture of pupils' achievements. Target setting is thorough, systematic and regularly reviewed and target groups moved where appropriate. Particular attention is also paid to specific groups of pupils and their progress, for example how well boys achieve in comparison to girls. The code of practice for pupils with special educational needs is followed carefully and the co-ordinator works very effectively with colleagues to ensure that individual educational plans are maintained and used effectively.
39. There are excellent procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour both within the classroom and in and around the school. The well publicised behaviour policy, which is closely linked to many supportive strategies to promote good behaviour and eliminate bullying, is well understood and supported by staff and parents. Pupils speak with understanding about the existence and aims of the anti-bullying group, which meets weekly and also of the friendship course. Other areas of pupils' personal development are thoughtfully planned for and coherently delivered through the School's Personal and Social Education programme. Circle time is used well in many classes to enable pupils to take responsibility and reflect on issues that concern them and others. The school's merit system works very well to draw together and underpin the school's efforts to monitor, promote and support the development of pupils, both academically and personally.
40. Attendance at the school is good and it is monitored very carefully. Child protection procedures comply with arrangements that are agreed locally. Health and Safety inspections are carried out regularly with careful notes made of any problems picked up together with the action taken to remedy these problems.

### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

41. Many parents speak supportively of their relationship with the school and also of the

help and guidance, both academic and pastoral, which their children receive. They feel that the school is approachable, and staff are willing to listen to and deal with concerns raised.

42. However, this is not the case for a significant minority of parents who feel that the school does not work hard enough to build and maintain effective channels of communication with them. They are unclear and, consequently, unhappy about how to raise immediate concerns with the school regarding aspects of their children's education or welfare. Although new arrangements for parents to see staff regarding day-to-day issues have been conveyed effectively to parents and are understood, there has been limited consultation on the matter and some parents feel kept at arm's length by the school. They do not feel that the school works sufficiently closely with parents and do not feel well informed about how well their child is getting on in school.
43. This is despite the school's regular newsletters which contain a good mix of information about events as well as about the curriculum. For example, a recent newsletter shared with parents the school's behaviour policy and the strategies that are being used to help promote behaviour. The Home-School policy was shared in draft with parents and invited comment. The school prospectus is also very informative. However, although the school is good at communicating with parents in more formal ways, informal channels of communication are under-developed at present. Year group newsletters are of varying quality; some are more successful than others at keeping parents informed.
44. There is a very hardworking Parent Teacher Association which successfully raises substantial sums of money for the school. There is also a core of loyal and hardworking parents who help in and around the school and in the classrooms. Their work is greatly appreciated by the school and they are effectively deployed.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

45. The leadership of the school ensures clear educational direction. After an unsettled period the school is establishing a common sense of purpose. The school is working hard to meet its stated aims and objectives. The headteacher provides sound leadership and together with the senior management team has identified the main priorities for development in the school but some teachers are not fully aware of these important issues for school improvement. This reduces the impact of the work the school is doing to meet its priorities.
46. The school development plan reflects the areas which have been identified for improvement and shows a sharp focus on raising attainment. There is also an emphasis on improved achievement in some of the other objectives of the school. For example, the development of pupils' independence and their skills of taking responsibility for their own learning have been identified as a priority by the senior management team and are included in the plans for improving personal and social education. However, the school development plan focuses only on the year ahead and, as a result, it is not clear how important developments will be consolidated and built on in the longer term.
47. In general the teachers work well together in their year group teams to plan and review work for all classes within the year. They also work across year groups to evaluate standards and establish expectations for pupils' attainment. This is helping to reinforce the staff's common commitment to raising standards. The headteacher

has established a good structure for delegation. Job descriptions include management responsibilities where appropriate and funding is allocated to allow these to be carried out. Staff understand their management roles on a day-to-day basis, but the impact of delegating responsibility for evaluating and improving the quality of teaching and learning, for example, has been inconsistent. The system for monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning is comprehensive and is beginning to help the school raise standards. In some year group teams areas for improvement have been identified and tackled successfully. Lesson planning is checked by subject leaders to ensure that it includes tasks matched to the differing needs of the pupils and the scrutiny of written work has resulted in higher and more consistent expectations of the pupils' attainment. However, the monitoring role of subject leaders has not yet led to effective action for improvement in all areas of the curriculum. In some subjects, teachers have an insufficient understanding of the methods needed to enable the pupils to do their best. For example, pupils do not have well developed skills in solving problems and investigating their own ideas in mathematics and science.

48. The governors fully support the drive for high achievement. They have a well-defined view of how this can be achieved through good teamwork involving all the staff and the governing body, and by developing a working partnership with the parents. In their appraisal of the work of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the governors have set targets related to improvements in the pupils' attainment. There are good links between the staff and the governing body. The governors work well with senior managers through a well organised committee structure. This allows the governors to support the school in challenging itself about the quality of its work and the standards it achieves. They are well informed about the work of the school through regular and detailed reports from the staff, first hand observation during their visits to classrooms, and working with the staff on training days. This enables them to form a very clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and helps them to decide how improvements can be made.
49. The school is developing a good system for evaluating and improving teaching, based on the recently produced useful teaching and learning policy. This has helped to maintain the quality of teaching at a level similar to the last inspection during a period of staff turnover. The close involvement of the headteacher and other members of the senior management team in the evaluating process enables them to have a clear overview of what is happening in classrooms. The school is beginning to make use of expertise within the staff to raise the quality of teaching across the school. Peer observation is effectively used to share teaching approaches and this is providing good opportunities for teachers to evaluate their own performance, draw on the strengths of their colleagues and set targets for improvement.
50. There are good procedures for the induction of teaching staff. Teachers have opportunities to observe their colleagues teaching and this helps them understand how the school's policies work in practice. They generally receive good support from their year group leaders.
51. The headteacher and the governing body are aware of best value principles. The school applies many of these principles, for example, in comparing its performance with national benchmarks and in the careful consideration of the maintenance and development costs of the accommodation. The school's spending is targeted on the priorities identified in the school development plan. Most action plans include an

overall budget allocation but some do not indicate precisely how this money will be spent. Some plans do not show when the action will be taken nor set out clear indicators of success. This makes it difficult to judge the effectiveness of spending in some of the priorities. As a consequence, it is difficult for staff and governors to be sure that they are moving successfully towards the targets they have set for themselves.

52. The school council provides good opportunities for the pupils to have a voice in aspects of school life. However, a significant number of parents do not feel adequately consulted or informed about decisions which have a direct effect on them and their children. This has had an adverse impact on the partnership between the school and home.
53. The latest auditors' report recommended only minor issues for action, all of which have been acted upon. The systems for day-to-day financial administration are efficient and take up a minimal amount of teachers' and pupils' time. The administrative assistants are conscientious and make good use of information technology to keep the headteacher and governors well informed about spending patterns.
54. The school has made good use of specific grants. The National Grid for Learning grant, for instance, has been used to re-equip the information technology room and update hardware in classrooms. This, together with some effective staff training, is helping to raise standards in information technology.
55. The school is adequately staffed with teachers whose experience and expertise meet the needs of the primary curriculum. Appointments made since the headteacher took up post have brought new expertise, in mathematics for example, and fresh ideas and approaches to teaching and learning in the school. However, some staff have an insufficient understanding of the strategies which enable the pupils to make the best possible progress in some areas of the curriculum, for example, in literacy lessons. The support staff make a valuable contribution to the provision for pupils with special educational needs. A substantial proportion of the pupils is taught in temporary accommodation but, overall, the accommodation is satisfactory for teaching all subjects. In general, the accommodation is kept in a good state of repair by the premises supervisor. The major remodelling of an area in the main building to form two new classrooms and a library is a good example of the imaginative development of the accommodation to improve the environment for learning. The information technology room is another example of spending well targeted on improving provision and this is beginning to have a positive impact upon standards. However, the number and range of books, particularly pupils in Key Stage 2, is insufficient for their age and reading preferences. Opportunities for pupils to read at length vary across the key stages. Resources are generally adequate to meet the needs of the planned curriculum. Resources for most subjects are held in the classrooms and arrangements for sharing these are generally well managed and effectively used. Each subject is allocated an annual budget on the basis of needs assessed by the subject leaders and the senior management team. The new library is adequately stocked and there are plans to build up the number and range of books to extend opportunities for pupils to develop their personal study skills and read for pleasure.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

56. In order to improve the quality of education provided the school should:

**(1) raise standards in aspects of English, mathematics and science by providing:**

- i) more planned opportunities to develop pupils' speaking skills within lessons so that speaking is put to more relevant and worthwhile purpose within a broader range of contexts
- ii) more opportunities for pupils to solve problems, to undertake investigations and to make decisions and use their initiative mathematics and science.

**(2) make the teaching consistently good by:**

- i) providing appropriate training and support where subject knowledge is weak
- ii) reviewing the planning procedures to ensure that all teachers have a clear understanding of the purpose of lessons and what pupils are going to learn within lessons and in the longer term
- iii) identifying further opportunities to share expertise and good practice.

**(3) strengthen the partnership with parents by:**

- i) improving communications so that all parents are well informed about what their children are learning and know how they are getting on
- ii) increasing the opportunities for parents to take an active part in the work of the school so that all parents feel they are able to get involved
- iii) make more explicit the fact that parents are welcome in the school.

## **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

### ***Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection***

Number of lessons observed

95
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Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

42
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## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	15	40	33	12	1	0

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

## Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	25.5	503
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		34

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	1	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	6	77

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

## Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.03
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.19
National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	44	33	77

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	37	43	42
	Girls	33	30	32
	Total	70	73	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (82)	91 (85)	96 (85)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	37	42	43
	Girls	31	31	33
	Total	68	73	76
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	88 (85)	95 (91)	99 (92)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	45	39	84

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	35	17	30
	Girls	37	28	25
	Total	72	45	55
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (81)	54 (55)	65 (69)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	23	32	34
	Girls	34	30	34
	Total	57	62	68
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	68 (65)	74 (64)	81 (75)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	2
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	6
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	2
White	454
Any other minority ethnic group	3

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	23.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	26.5
Average class size	26

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	11
Total aggregate hours worked per week	200

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

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

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	15

Number of pupils per FTE adult	2
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999
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	£
Total income	901960
Total expenditure	872237
Expenditure per pupil	1568
Balance brought forward from previous year	59755
Balance carried forward to next year	89478

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	553
Number of questionnaires returned	132

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	43	7	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	30	59	10	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	48	14	5	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	48	18	11	7
The teaching is good.	34	52	7	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	42	30	8	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	27	43	14	13	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	33	55	7	3	2
The school works closely with parents.	16	46	23	13	2
The school is well led and managed.	12	45	16	17	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	55	11	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	42	15	5	15

**Many parents were supportive of the school and expressed appreciation of the hard work and commitment of the team. However, a significant group of parents expressed serious concerns about the partnership between the school and parents. The parents' biggest reservations about the school were in relation to the information about how well their children are getting on and the leadership and management of the school and how closely the school works with parents. The school needs to address these matters as a priority for improvement.**

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

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

57. The majority of children under five have two terms of education in the nursery class and enter the reception year at the beginning of the term in which they are five. The reception and nursery classes are lead by an early years co-ordinator who was unfortunately away during the week of the inspection.
58. Significant improvements in the provision for children under five have been made since the last inspection. The new nursery class, which opened two years ago, provides very good care and education for the youngest children. The nursery environment is well structured and provides a lively and stimulating range of activities. Children are encouraged to make choices and to use their initiative in developing learning through play. They are confident in using all areas of the nursery, both indoors and outdoors. They enjoy coming to nursery and show real interest in what they are doing. There is a good balance between activities that are directed by an adult, such as printing patterns with circles or going on an environmental walk and activities initiated by the children, such as role-play in the clothes shop or making towers in the sand.
59. Baseline Assessment on entry to school shows that the girls are achieving above expected levels in English, mathematics and personal and social development. Children make good progress in their learning in the nursery. Overall progress in the reception classes is satisfactory.
60. The quality of teaching in the nursery is good or better. The teacher and nursery nurse work together well as a team and parents are also encouraged to help in the nursery. Time is used well during each session to provide secure routines and a broad mixture of individual, small group and whole class activities. This means that the children know exactly what to expect and are actively engaged in learning throughout the session. The staff monitor the children's activities well and provide support for activities that the children plan themselves, such as building structures with the blocks or Duplo. In January a new reception class started and there are currently some inconsistencies in teaching approaches used in nursery and reception. Structures and routines are less well established in the reception classes and children are not always clear about what they are expected to do. Some planning results in children spending too long in whole class and adult-directed activities and there are insufficient opportunities to develop learning through play.
61. The organisation of resources in the reception area has also improved since the last inspection. A large shared area has been developed to provide a range of play- based activities for all the reception classes. This provides space for the children to be more physically active and to use their imagination in role-play and creative activities. However, there is no secure outdoor area which the under fives in reception can use to extend these options further.
62. Staff are working together well to establish a more integrated Early Years Unit in

preparation for the introduction of the Foundation Stage in September 2000. Topics have been planned covering the two years to ensure that the children receive a broad coverage of all six areas of learning. The curriculum for children under five is planned round the recommended six areas of learning. A similar approach to termly and weekly planning is used in nursery and reception and shows that an appropriate range of learning experiences is covered.

#### **PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

63. High priority is given to personal and social development. The nursery teacher and assistant work well as a team and are consistent in their management of children and have developed very positive and supportive relationships with the children. Children are very familiar with the routines in the nursery and know exactly what they are expected to do. The clear organisation of the nursery and accessibility of resources encourages children to make choices and they are very independent in using all areas including indoor and outdoor activities. Circle time is used well to develop children's social skills and to develop awareness of their own feelings and those of others. The children have a clear understanding of the class rules and they know right and wrong. They are given responsibilities in snack time, which they enjoy and they show independence in carrying out these jobs with and without adult support. Children are also expected to be independent when dressing and undressing and manage this well. Similar routines are being established in the new reception class including finding their name cards to self-register at the beginning of the day. The reception class is organised with some areas that are similar to the nursery such as the 'writing' and 'technology' areas but these are not as clearly structured to support children with independent learning. The reception teacher has established positive relationships with the children and the children are generally supportive of each other.

#### **LANGUAGE AND LITERACY**

64. Significant attention is given to developing children's language and literacy skills in the nursery. Staff help the children develop confidence in speaking and provide opportunities to extend their use of language. The teacher uses circle time well to demonstrate how to listen carefully to each other and the children show mature speaking and listening skills in their conversation during snack time including telling each other jokes. Children are encouraged to share books with staff and parents and they show a real interest in books and handle them with care. A large number of parents and carers came to share books with the children and the children clearly look forward to this event. The book and writing areas are well structured to provide stimulating resources and the children use them frequently. They make little books of their own and readily make marks on paper and show knowledge of some letters. They also enjoy making a range of marks with large chalks on the playground. They are all able to find their name cards in order to self-register at the beginning of the session and to collect things that they have made at the end of the session. They read their names in order to find their place at snack time. The children are learning to write their names on their pictures and paintings. Computer programs are also well used to support letter identification and the children are consequently developing secure knowledge of a range of letter names and sounds. The children are producing their own home-school readers, which introduce some high frequency words. In the reception class the children are being introduced to the structure of the Literacy Hour and this sometimes results in a limited range of teaching approaches. The need to plan in Baseline Assessment tasks has also limited the range of opportunities planned during the beginning of the term. Insufficient attention is given to developing a broad range of skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Children are making sound progress in developing specific skills such as handwriting and are

developing their knowledge of sounds at the beginning of words, for example, they talked about objects that begin with 'o' and found the letter 'o' on a jigsaw puzzle.

## **MATHEMATICAL DEVELOPMENT**

65. Routines such as registration and snack time are used well in both nursery and reception to provide opportunities for counting. The children in reception counted the name cards to see how many children were in the class that day and how many were away and they were able to record numbers greater than 20. The organisation of the mathematics area in the nursery provides an interesting range of resources to encourage children's interest in number, shape and measures. There are an interesting range of posters about shape and number and numbers lines and squares. An attractive display celebrates the children's involvement in the whole school maths day about the giant's foot. The children drew round their feet on paper and cut these out and put them in order of size and the words 'biggest' and 'smallest' recorded on the display. The children enjoy looking at the books and they count objects on their own, such as the number of butterflies on a page. Children show pleasure in joining in number rhymes with actions such as "*One finger, one thumb keep moving...*". They use their own fingers to help them with counting and taking away to five whilst joining in the rhyme "Five Speckled Frogs". Staff use routines effectively to develop sorting skills such as choosing children who have buckles on their shoes to go and wash their hands. The range of activities available during the daily mathematics lesson in reception was appropriate for the age and experience of the children. The children count and draw six items and are learning to form the number 6 correctly. One child expressed a huge sense of achievement when demonstrating how to write the number 6 commenting "*Look at that!*". Higher-attaining children count accurately beyond ten.
66. Children print patterns using different sizes of circle and the nursery teacher used this opportunity well to talk about circles and the language of size.

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

67. Children in the nursery are encouraged to investigate and find out about the world around them. A display of natural objects such as leaves and cones was available for children to look at closely using magnifying glasses. The children explore the use of materials in their outdoor area in an environmental trail activity working with an adult. They look closely at building materials such as sand, bricks and wood and talk about the feel and texture of these materials. The staff had put containers with holes such as colanders and plastic bottles with holes in them in the water tray and the children enjoyed investigating what happened when they put water into these. The learning support assistant helped the children to think about what would happen and to try using these containers to fill up another container. They are developing skills in cutting and joining using a variety of tools and materials. They work well together to build models with a range of construction resources such as wooden blocks and Duplo. They are confident in using the computer independently and use the mouse to click on icons. In the reception class the children also use a variety of tools and materials in the technology area to make collage pictures and models of faces using flour dough. The children were learning about their own bodies and the teacher used a story and song effectively to reinforce the language of parts of the body. Children were confidently able to name external parts of the body and talk about some ways in which they had changed since they were babies. The structure of a range of follow

up activities was rather unclear and provided limited opportunities to extend the children's learning beyond what they knew already. The children are likely to achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the time they are five.

## **PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

68. Physical education sessions in the hall are used well by staff in nursery and reception to develop children's physical skills. The teacher models a good range of warm up activities and the children watch carefully and enjoy copying the actions. The children are developing good awareness and control over different parts of their bodies. They are aware of the need to take account of others when moving around the hall and show good awareness of space. The children listen and respond very well. Sensitive support is provided for children who are having difficulty joining in with the whole class. The outdoor area in the nursery provides a good range of activities to develop children's physical skills. They are developing good co-ordination using a range of wheeled vehicles such as scooters and bikes. Climbing apparatus is available outside during the summer months but opportunities for using large apparatus are limited during the winter months. Reception children do not have access to a safe outdoor area in which they can develop physical skills.

## **CREATIVE DEVELOPMENT**

69. The range of opportunities for imaginative play has improved since the last inspection. Role play areas are well organised in the nursery and the shared area for the reception classes. There is also a good range of small world resources such as play people. The children enjoy using these areas and develop their own stories in their play. Opportunities for the children to join in singing and to make music are planned in the weekly routines but these were not observed during the inspection. There are limited opportunities for the children to make their own music at other times. The children join in games such as musical statues during physical education sessions and enjoy inventing different shapes. They successfully make pictures using a variety of resources and techniques. Children are also able to select painting as an option on a daily basis although few children selected this activity and there were few examples of children's own ideas on display. There was a limited range of children's creative work on display in the reception class.

## **ENGLISH**

70. Overall, the standards achieved in English by most pupils at seven and eleven years of age are average. Results in the 1999 national tests for Key Stage 1 shows standards are above average in writing. At Key Stage 2 the results are average when compared with schools nationally but they are below average when compared with similar schools. The standards seen in work during inspection are about average. Current work indicates standards are rising in handwriting in both key stages. However, in reading and writing in both key stages the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels is below average. Overall, standards are similar to those in the last inspection.
71. The management team has a good understanding of pupils' achievements through careful analysis of task and test results. The following steps to improve standards have been taken since the last inspection:
- the National Literacy Strategy is being implemented and this provides the framework

for much of the work in teaching English

- team leaders carefully plan work each week to challenge and extend pupils' learning across the year group
  - a core skills programme to extend pupils' achievements in maths and English has been introduced.
72. Pupils in each key stage demonstrate well-developed listening skills. Across the school pupils listen and respond readily to their teachers. Although most pupils answer questions readily and explain their work clearly at the end of lessons, when asked to, insufficient opportunities are provided across the curriculum for pupils to fully develop all aspects of their speaking skills. For example, in design and technology do not know the technical vocabulary of mechanisms and they do not justify their own views or intentions sufficiently well. More planned opportunities for pupils to develop speaking skills for relevant and worthwhile purposes within a broad range of contexts is an area for development.
73. Pupils throughout the school make sound progress in reading. At the end of Key Stage 1, they know how to tackle unfamiliar words and most pupils talk about the books they read confidently. They describe what is happening and predict what might happen next. They find their way around information books, using the contents and key words. They read clearly and confidently and higher-attaining pupils read fluently with good expression. Books go home every day so that pupils can read with their families. In this way, the school ensures that the youngest pupils develop good reading habits early. The addition of the new library has added to these opportunities. The pupils are enthusiastic and use the library systematically to find the books they want. The school intends to extend the scope of the library.
74. At Key Stage 2 pupils are equally enthusiastic readers and most read competently and with good expression. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 use a range of strategies effectively to tackle unfamiliar words, particularly by re-reading words and sections to search for meaning. They use phonic strategies less confidently which reflects the school's early stage of implementing the Literacy Strategy. Older pupils in Key Stage 2 are building on their general competence by examining texts more closely, for example, by reading variations in different versions of the same story and detecting persuasion in travel brochures. In this way they are making good progress in learning to analyse texts more deeply, weigh arguments and form conclusions.
75. All classes in Key Stage 2 use the library at least weekly, although pupils' library skills vary somewhat across this key stage. Currently, there are too few planned opportunities where pupils use the library to undertake research. The number and range of books, particularly for the oldest pupils is inadequate for their age and reading preferences. Opportunities for pupils to read at length vary across the key stage. Too little emphasis is given to guiding pupils' reading in lessons and many older pupils have too few opportunities to develop their own individual reading capacities across the school week.
76. Pupils' writing skills are variable across the school, though it is clear that the school's recent emphasis on developing pupils' handwriting is yielding improvements. At Key Stage 1 pupils work independently and write in full and accurate sentences. In Year 2 pupils use full stops and capital letters correctly and they are beginning to make good use of a range of interesting and apt vocabulary suited to the work in hand. This is particularly successful when teaching in the Literacy Hour has pinpointed the focus

for writing well.

77. At Key Stage 2 standards in writing are average overall. Opportunities to demonstrate writing are not always fully taken by all teachers and too little guidance is given to the pupils in literacy lessons to help them to improve the quality of their work when they write at length. Emphasis is given instead to punctuation whilst the use of phonics to aid spelling is under-emphasised. In the early stages of Key Stage 2, for example, pupils learn about writing in both story and factual formats. However, their skills are not developing so that they can adapt their writing easily to different audiences and too few guided writing opportunities are given in the Literacy Hour. There are too few good examples of extended writing in pupils' finished work.
78. Progress in developing writing skills is inconsistent at Key Stage 2. In Year 3 there is insufficient focus upon the systematic development of pupils' writing. On the other hand, in Year 5 work builds well upon what has gone before and this results in writing which is particularly lively and thoughtful. Many pupils write at length, selecting words skilfully to develop ideas through to the end of their stories. Writing is well organised and reflects the clear focus provided by the teaching. Here progress in writing is good and it results in high standards of work produced across the range of attainment, including those pupils who have been 'targeted' for group support.
79. Although the team leaders diligently write comprehensive weekly plans, the quality of teaching ranges from very good to unsatisfactory at both key stages. The very good teaching at both key stages engages the pupils in improving their reading and writing. Teachers show good understanding of the range of needs within the class and pitch the work accordingly. Effective support is given and misconceptions are explained clearly and sensitively. Feedback to pupils is constructive in tone and enables pupils to learn from errors. Consequently they make good progress. Lessons are fun; they are animated and have high pace with the result that pupils want to learn and do well.
80. The unsatisfactory teaching at both key stages arises because some teachers have limited subject knowledge and they are not clear about what to teach and how to go about it. Half termly plans do not provide sufficient detail, while the weekly plan is too complex. This inhibits some class teachers from successfully identifying what the pupils will learn precisely each week. In addition there is too little flexibility in the current arrangements to help teachers adjust the plan to build on what pupils can already do. Insufficient time is given to discussing the plans with the subject leader before they are implemented.
81. Pupils across the school have good attitudes to learning in English. They respond well in lessons and consistently work hard. The quality of everyone's learning benefits because pupils want to do well. Pupils who have special educational needs are very well supported in lessons. As a consequence they make good progress over time. These features are strengths of the school.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. National test results for eleven-year-olds over three years, 1997-1999, indicate higher than average attainment in the first two years followed by a slight dip in 1999. Evidence gathered during the inspection from lesson observations and scrutiny of completed work shows that standards at Key Stage 1 are above average, with good achievement in mental work. At Key Stage 2 pupils achieve average standards. There

are no significant variations in the achievements between boys and girls.

- 83.. The attainment of pupils who recently started school is above the Suffolk County average in mathematics and pupils make good progress in learning in Key Stage 1. The test results for seven-year-olds in 1999 showed that the percentage of pupils achieving expected levels was very good compared with similar schools. A significant percentage of pupils also achieved higher levels. Most pupils in Year 2 show a good understanding of hundreds, tens and ones and can round up or down to the nearest ten. They know number facts to 20 and use these in a range of calculations. They are able to tell the time to the nearest five minutes and can raise their own questions for interpreting data, for example, "*How many houses have less than seven rooms?*" displayed next to a bar graph about rooms. They are developing and understanding of multiplication and division and can halve and double numbers. Higher-attaining pupils are able to apply their knowledge well in problems such as "*What is 30p more than 69p?*". They also make good attempts to explain their reasoning.
84. Progress in learning has been slower in Key Stage 2. Results in 1999 broadly matched the national averages but they were below the results for similar schools. To improve, the school has identified target groups in their weekly planning so that there is an increase in the proportion of pupils in Year 6 who achieve Level 4 and above. Inspection evidence from samples of work and the work seen in class shows that most pupils are working at the appropriate level. The co-ordinators are using standardised tests to monitor progress on a more regular basis and these show a recent improvement in scores for Year 6. Here, pupils show a secure understanding of decimals and place value to 10,000. They are also developing a sound grasp of negative numbers in contexts such as measuring temperature. They explore and describe number patterns and such relationships as multiple, factor and square. They find the perimeters of simple shapes and find areas by counting squares. Higher-attaining pupils use column addition for whole numbers up to four digits and add pairs of decimal fractions. They read and plot co-ordinates in four quadrants.
85. The school has successfully introduced the new National Numeracy Strategy since September 1999 and this is providing an effective structure for developing the teaching of mathematics. There is some evidence to indicate that the strategy is beginning to have a positive impact upon raising standards. Staff and pupils are enthusiastic about the daily mathematics lesson and the pace and variety of teaching styles and activities that it brings. Pupils like mathematics and behave very well in the great majority of lessons. The routines of the daily mathematics lesson are well established and a good ethos for learning is evident in lessons. Pupils work well together in pairs or in discussion groups and they show initiative when they are set more challenging tasks and help each other with their learning.
86. There has been an improvement in the teaching of mental mathematics since the last inspection. Teachers are good at targeting questions to provide appropriate challenge for pupils whose understanding of mathematics is at different levels. They gradually increase the challenge provided for the higher attaining pupils such as in Year 4 when the teacher asked the pupils to think of numbers that fulfilled three criteria. Pupils are also encouraged to explain their mathematical reasoning in this part of the lesson as in a Year 2 class in which the children came up with a range of strategies for solving the problem "*I'm thinking of a number, when I add ten to that number the answer is 22.*" The identification of mathematical vocabulary to be developed in the weekly lesson plans helps teachers and learning support assistants to focus on extending mathematical language. Pupils respond well to the challenges provided in the

mental/oral part of the lesson and good questioning by staff helps children to work from and build upon their existing knowledge.

87. Throughout the school pupils are developing a good understanding of the number system. They use number lines and 100 squares to help them with counting and make good use of the range of computational strategies. In Year 1, pupils make good use of the 100 square to count in tens from a given number and they use the pattern they identify to work out numbers beyond 100. In Year 4 pupils draw their own 'empty number lines' to add and subtract numbers such as  $189 - ? = 50$ . A good range of resources has a positive impact by ensuring that all pupils are enabled to participate fully. Consequently they make good progress.
88. Teaching of mathematics is good overall. Of the 21 lessons seen, almost half were good and in one in five lessons teaching was very good. There are similar proportions of good and very good teaching at both key stages. In particular, there was much good teaching in Years 2, 4 and 6. Teachers generally show good subject knowledge and are therefore able to provide clear, step by step, explanations and often model the mathematics to be used. For example in a Year 6 lesson the teacher used questions such as "*What can you tell me about this shape?*" to build on pupils' existing knowledge and to demonstrate how to use their knowledge of angles and parallel lines to build accurate models of shapes. Similarly in another Year 6 class the teacher modelled the use of a number line to find out about equivalent fractions. When the pupils are given clear explanations of what they are expected to do they are able to work confidently and independently. Teachers also encourage the pupils to work collaboratively on some tasks and to help each other with their reasoning such as in a Year 2 class in which pupils have 'working partners'. Work within lessons is well planned to match the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment and pupils generally make good progress with their learning. Teaching is most effective when group tasks are organised so that the teacher and learning support assistants can focus their attention on teaching new work to specific groups. A good example occurred in a Year 2 class where the staff helped pupils to use a clock face to work out the difference between two times. Teaching is very effective when teachers repeat and reinforce the correct answers and are positive in their use of errors made by the pupils to help them to improve their understanding. Good management and organisation of the daily mathematics lesson is supported by clear weekly planning. This is particularly effective when teachers share the teaching objectives for the lesson with the pupils and use these to review learning that has taken place at the end of the lesson. In Year 3, for example, the teacher explained to the pupils that there is a relationship between addition and subtraction and at the end of the lesson checked to see how many pupils could understand this relationship and how to use it to solve problems. Sometimes learning objectives are rather too broadly defined such as 'to understand subtraction' and this results in the focus of the lesson being insufficiently sharp to ensure good progress in learning.
89. Weaknesses in teaching are very largely related to teachers' lack of subject knowledge. This results in confusion in the way mathematical ideas are presented and developed and an overemphasis on procedures at the expense of pupils' understanding of the underlying concepts. Very occasionally poor organisation and management of pupils leads to pupils losing interest and distracting each other.
90. The programmes provided in the National Numeracy Strategy are being used effectively to produce termly plans for each age group so that all areas of mathematics are given sufficient coverage. At present insufficient emphasis is being given to using and applying mathematics in problem solving situations and there has

been little progress in developing this aspect of mathematics since the previous inspection. The mathematics co-ordinators are aware that this is an area for development and have identified the need to plan for staff development in this area. Written work produced this year indicates that the higher-attaining pupils are not covering sufficient work at the higher levels. Significant emphasis is given to the development of numeracy skills within the daily mathematics lesson and, in Year 6, in the core skills sessions. Although mathematical skills are used in subjects such as science, these are not clearly mapped across all curriculum areas in order to build on the work in the mathematics curriculum.

91. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported within lessons and weekly planning shows how tasks are specifically set to match their abilities. These build on guidance provided in the individual education plans. The special needs co-ordinator plans to develop staff expertise in supporting specific learning needs in terms of numeracy. Teachers often plan more practical tasks and games, which provide appropriate contexts for pupils with special educational needs to develop their skills. For example a group of pupils in Year 2 played a subtraction game and a pupil with a statement for special educational needs was given the task of counting the dots on the dice. In this way pupils feel involved in the lesson. Learning support staff provide good support in talking to the pupils about what they are doing.
92. The leadership in mathematics is shared by two co-ordinators. They are working together well to develop a good overview of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. They have made good use of data analysis to identify areas of mathematics that need further development. Monitoring of teaching is still at an early stage but the co-ordinators have used this well to support the introduction of the daily mathematics lesson and improve teachers' confidence in using new teaching approaches such as more mental and oral mathematics. There is a need to monitor and evaluate more samples of work to ensure that children are covering a sufficiently broad range of work to be able to attain expected levels.
93. Achievement checklists have recently been introduced in pupils' work books and these are also used to provide more focused targets for individual pupils and should form a good basis for focusing on improving attainment. Currently the use of these is patchy. There is also a lack of consistency in the marking of pupils' work. This is generally good in Year 2 where staff provide positive feedback and add comments to work to record how pupils approached tasks such as, "*G's strategy was slow but sure. She worked independently*". Some teachers make good use of day-to-day assessment of pupils' work in lessons but this is not used systematically to inform the next week's plan. Some homework is included on weekly plans but this is also rather limited and usually involves routine tasks such as learning tables. A better example was when Year 2 pupils were asked to look at television programme listings in order to work out how long some programmes were. This provides a more relevant context for using and applying mathematics and helps parents to support their children's learning in more meaningful contexts.

## SCIENCE

94. Overall, the pupils achieve standards in science, which are about average. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge of science is at the level expected for eleven-year-olds. For example, Year 6 pupils explain well that air resistance is a force which slows a falling object. At Key Stage 1, most pupils are working at the expected level for seven-year-olds. In some aspects, the seven-year-olds are achieving well. For example, quite a few can make an electrical circuit and explain why some of the

circuits do not work.

95. The previous inspection report stated that attainment was in line with national expectations and a greater number of pupils than usual achieve 'average attainment'. It described progress across Key Stage 2 as uneven in science and the pupils were better in acquiring knowledge and skills than in using them. To date there has been no improvement since the last inspection as standards, as measured by National Curriculum test results have fallen at Key Stage 2 and progress in using scientific skills across Key Stage 2 is slow. After a period of delay the school is taking the necessary steps to raise standards in science.
96. Although much of the work in science throughout the school is practical and covers a wide range of scientific topics, the pupils' work in experimental science lags behind their work in the other aspects. This is particularly the case in Key Stage 2 where, by the end of the key stage, standards in experimental and investigative science are lower than they should be. The pupils are too dependent on the teacher to guide and structure their investigations. Generally the pupils are not good at framing questions that can be investigated and at using their scientific knowledge to make predictions. The more able pupils in particular are not doing as well as they should. This weakness in experimental and investigative science is partly due to limited subject knowledge and confidence of some teachers and also because, until recently, there has been no systematic programme for teaching scientific skills. The school has recognised this and has recently introduced such a programme into Year 6. This systematic programme is proving an effective foundation for teaching good lessons very sharply focussed on scientific skills. The new record system in the pupils' books is also proving helpful in enabling both teachers and pupils to see what progress is being made and what the next steps are.
97. The teaching of science is satisfactory overall. Some good and very good teaching occurs but a small number of lessons are unsatisfactory. Teachers are good at ensuring they give emphasis to the correct scientific vocabulary and are paying appropriate attention to safety. The recently introduced planning sheet for use throughout the school is helpful in focusing on the need to identify the work for different groups of children, including those with special educational needs. The plans are usually clear and detailed although they do not always give enough support to enable the non-specialist or inexperienced teacher to maintain a sharp focus upon what the pupils are intended to learn. The lesson plans set out objectives for the lesson or group of lessons but teachers do not have an overview of the half term's work. This means they do not have a clear view of what the pupils should gain from the unit as a whole.
98. In the good and very good lessons, teachers explain carefully what the focus and the purpose of the work is so that the pupils set to work promptly. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, following the teacher's introduction, the pupils could then explain that they were finding out the best material to wrap a parcel safely. This helped the pupils to carry out their investigation with minimum intervention from adults. These good lessons have a brisk pace and there is usually a clear focus to each part of the lesson. No time is wasted. The pupils are given short manageable tasks with a set timescale. This maintains their interest and concentration. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher used good balance of explanation, short focused discussion and skilful questioning to build on the pupils' answers. This meant that in a very short time the teacher had found out what they already knew about healthy eating, made them aware of the key ideas, consolidated and extended their existing knowledge and captured their interest for the next lesson. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher encouraged

the pupils to think more deeply about the possible effects of air resistance by inviting the pupils to rethink and rephrase their answers. The best lessons are rounded off well to emphasise the main points of the lesson, clear up any misconceptions and set the scene for the next lesson, for example by saying to the class, *“What I want you to remember is....”*.

99. Assessment procedures in science are improving. Regular assessments of pupils' knowledge understanding and skills are carried out and the school is moving towards a more consistent interpretation of national curriculum levels in order to improve the accuracy of the assessments. Some teachers ensure that the focus of written work is apparent and use this as a basis for their marking. They identify what has been done well and make suggestions for improvement. This has a positive impact upon the progress pupils make. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school.
100. Most pupils clearly enjoy their science lessons. They are well motivated and show good attitudes to learning science. Much of the work involves practical activity and this gives pupils the opportunity to work together productively. They particularly enjoy being given some kind of challenge. Year 2 pupils, for instance, were very energetic when investigating how many jumps they could do in two minutes and what effect that had on their bodies.

## **ART**

101. Attainment in art is broadly average at both key stages. While the overall standards are similar to those found at the last inspection report in 1997, the current strengths and weaknesses in attainment are different from those identified at that time.
102. At Key Stage 1, pupils of all attainments make sound progress. They are making sound progress in learning to draw and paint to represent simple ideas and to explore colours. One teacher's good subject knowledge and enthusiasm for art in Year 2 ensures that the pupils gain a good understanding of the printing process so that they understand and can explain why designs will not print well if they are over complicated. Bold, large-scale abstract work, completed under the direction of an artist in residence, is an indication of the pupils' capacity for exuberant expression and high achievement when given the right stimulus, guidance and condition. Generally the work on display is less dynamic and more constrained than this.
103. At Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in consolidating their understanding of colour and textiles. Practical skills are taught well. For example, good organisation of practical learning in Year 4 enables pupils to undertake mono-printing successfully. They show a keen interest, take great care and concentrate very hard when drawing portraits of Elizabethan queens by pressing through the paper on to an inked surface to create the image. Through skilful questioning the teacher leads pupils to consider the differences between past and present styles of art. In Year 5 a brightly coloured frieze and textile designs using colourful dyes and various stitching and components, as part of a display on a Caribbean topic, shows good achievement in the bold use of colour and creative invention. Large, three dimensional models created in response to the works of great artists by Year 6 pupils are particularly effective and are evidence of good understanding of art from the European and American tradition. Where teachers have good subject knowledge skills are taught well and clear instructions are given about new techniques, for example, how to make a print. Older pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and to suggest ways of improving it. As a result, pupils are enabled to make good progress in learning to make art.

104. Detailed pencil portraits of historical figures, observational pastel studies made in the locality, illustrations of Greek pots and design drawings show controlled use of drawing media in Year 5. However, there is little systematic development of drawing skills through observational studies and exercises with the result that the older pupils do not know how to make full and effective use of texture, pattern and tone to achieve higher standards. Pupils' achievements in painting is a weakness at this key stage. Colour studies of Monet's work reveal that the older pupils have only a limited understanding of the painting techniques needed to build up more subtle colour effects. The previous report highlighted the need to develop more confidence in staff and pupils in using technical skills more adventurously. There has been insufficient improvement with this issue.
105. Sketchbooks are used to good purpose in some classes, such as the good line drawings of bicycles in Year 4, for example, but they are not used consistently throughout the school. Pupils do not understand how to use them to explore their own ideas, practise skills, record scenes and make visual notes. Pupils' experience, knowledge and appreciation of contemporary art and the art of other cultures is under developed.
106. The subject leader is undertaking training to fulfil the role and shows a good understanding of what steps need to be taken to raise standards. At present the scheme of work is too vague to ensure that skills and techniques are consistently and progressively developed.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

107. Standards achieved in the 1997 inspection were judged to be average. These standards have been maintained at the end of both key stages. Good progress has been made with establishing a scheme of work to ensure that all pupils experience a broad and balanced range of designing and making experiences. Few lessons were observed during the inspection so the judgement has been based largely on completed work, teachers' planning, curriculum documentation and discussion with staff and pupils.
108. At Key Stage 1 pupils achieve average standards in designing and making. The younger pupils know how to join components in a variety of ways and use simple tools to cut shape and combine different materials. Older pupils are developing good designing skills as a result of focused teaching of practical tasks. In Year 2, for example, pupils confidently explain how to design a coat for Joseph using a computer and they use their printed and enlarged photocopies of their designs as a template to cut felt shapes accurately. Shared planning, good organisation and management of practical learning and clear structure to the development of identified skills ensure that all pupils are well supported and guided in developing their capability. Shared planning ensures that pupils have equal opportunities. A good example occurred in Year 2 when a supply teacher was able to use the detailed short term planning to teach well so that the pupils' progress in learning was fully maintained. Questioning is very effectively used to elicit what the pupils know and understand. Teachers take care to recap what has gone before and to emphasise the correct technological vocabulary.
109. At Key Stage 2 pupils achieve average standards. Steady progress is made in developing designing and making skills. Pupils throughout the key stage show a good understanding of the design process and how products are developed. For example,

photographs in the food technology room record the process by which the pupils designed, made and evaluated their own biscuits. A further good example was seen in Year 6 when pupils explored their own ideas and tried out decorative techniques in preparation for designing and making a slipper. Here, the teacher's good subject knowledge underpinned the purposeful interactions with the pupils. Percussion instruments on display in Year 5 indicate good development of pupils' creative designing skills. Although the models are not finished to a high standard the pupils' making skills are adequate for the purpose of assignment. Older pupils show some understanding of structures and simple drive mechanisms to make moving models using electric motors and pulleys. Overall, however, mechanisms and control technology is a weak aspect of the pupils' knowledge and understanding. This is an acknowledged area for professional development to increase teachers' own understanding, confidence and competence.

110. In the small number of lessons seen pupils show very positive attitudes to designing and making. They behave well and show high levels of interest and enjoyment. Pupils explore their own ideas readily and confidently, they are eager to explain their ideas and persevere well. They share resources and equipment with each other readily and persevere well. This makes a positive contribution to their learning.
111. The new subject leader has made an energetic start with raising standards and improving the provision. An audit of resources has been completed and priorities for development identified. The food technology room has been restored to working order and all resources are well organised and accessible to teachers.
112. The scheme of work set out by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been adopted by the school. This provides a clear framework for planning the development of pupils' capability through a balanced sequence of designing and making experiences.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

113. Standards in history are average at both key stages. The pupils have a good knowledge of the people and events in the periods they are studying. Year 2 pupils, for example, remember a lot about the lifestyles of the Romans and the Celts and Year 4 pupils are well versed in the problems encountered by Henry VIII in his search for an heir. The pupils make sound use of historical source material to make straightforward observations but they are not so skilled in making plausible deductions. Very little work in geography was seen during the inspection. Previous work by Year 2 pupils about their visit to Felixstowe indicates that they are working at the level expected for their age. However, the level of work of Year 5 pupils is not as high as it should be and, until the present term, Year 6 pupils had studied no geography this academic year. This indicates that, in Key Stage 2, pupils do not make sufficient progress in geography.
114. Only three history and two geography lessons were observed during the inspection. The teaching varied from good to unsatisfactory. The teachers are knowledgeable about the content of the historical material they are teaching and provide varied activities and a range of resources to interest and motivate the pupils. The good teaching was characterised by the teacher's clear understanding of the historic concept to be developed and a methodical approach to advance the pupils' understanding. A writing framework, drawing on skills learned in literacy lessons, was used effectively so that all the pupils produced at least one biased account successfully. Thus, Year 5 pupils were well aware of the limited nature of primary

evidence for the Battle of Marathon and recognised that any later account of the battle would depend on the viewpoint of the writer. Not all teachers are so clear about what precise historical skill they want the pupils to learn and further in-service training is needed in this area.

115. The unsatisfactory lessons were largely due to the unhelpful nature of the planning. The current system of lesson planning is both a strength and a weakness. At its best it gives support for well structured lessons. For example, the history plans in Year 5 give detailed guidance for teaching the difficult idea of historical interpretation. At times, as for Year 5 geography, the plans are too broad and the suggested activities are not well designed to promote learning. Thus, they are not helpful to the teacher.
116. The pupils enjoy learning history. Their teachers are good at arousing their interest and enthusiasm. Year 3 pupils for instance were keen to find more information about the Egyptians and Year 2 pupils displayed great interest in Queen Boudicca, with one pupil producing a long piece of writing at home on her own initiative.
117. The school has recently adopted the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's Units of work for history and geography and these are still being trialled. Whilst it makes good sense to teach geography and history in alternate units of work, particularly in view of the limited time made available by the school for these subjects, the current curriculum plan is not helpful in supporting continuity and progression in the pupils' learning. In Year 6, for example, pupils have recently started a geography topic – the first geography they had studied since last July. As a result pupils have only very hazy memories of having learned any geography before. At present, they do not have an overview of the work for the term and what the pupils will be expected to be able to do at the end of it.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

118. Standards of attainment in information technology are average. This is similar to those found at the last inspection. The co-ordinator has continued to lead the subject well and has been successful in ensuring that teachers' expertise and confidence have been maintained during a period of high staff turnover. This in turn has resulted in the pupils making satisfactory progress throughout both key stages and achieving the standards expected for their age by the time they leave the school.
119. All pupils have regular opportunities to use the information technology room to develop their skills in all aspects of the subject. In Year 1, pupils use a mouse to control the cursor on screen with confidence, they are beginning to present information using graphs well and they know how to print their work when the data has been entered. In Year 2, pupils use the keyboard and mouse with increasing competence to produce and edit text, and they store and retrieve their work. The younger pupils in Key Stage 2 use a composing program effectively to devise simple tunes and they know how to group together and name a series of instructions. The older pupils use information technology to follow a line of investigation, for example, about the characteristics of insects, and the higher attaining pupils are able to interrogate information to answer questions they have posed for themselves. The oldest pupils, in Year 6, use a multimedia program to devise presentations, which include images, sounds and text.
120. The co-ordinator has provided a considerable amount of effective training, which has given teachers the knowledge and understanding to teach the subject with enjoyment and raise their expectations of what the pupils can achieve. Consequently, teaching

is at least satisfactory in all lessons, and sometimes good or very good. There are plans to extend this training further.

121. Throughout the school, teachers plan well structured lessons. Activities are well chosen to engage the pupils' interest and develop their understanding progressively. This careful, step-by-step approach is successful for most pupils but it sometimes slows down the progress of the higher-attaining pupils. This was a weakness found in the previous inspection. However, there are examples of good practice, which could usefully be shared more widely. In the best lessons, teachers set open-ended tasks, which challenge pupils of all abilities. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, pupils were asked to decide their own questions for investigation when making use of data about planets. As in the previous inspection, adult helpers provide valuable assistance in information technology lessons, especially for pupils with special educational needs. They help pupils to interpret instructions and take a full part in lessons. Consequently, these pupils make good progress.
122. As a result of the developments in resources and teaching skills throughout the school the pupils are well motivated and interested in their work. They concentrate to such an extent that they are sometimes unaware of the comments of other pupils and adults. They support each other well, the higher-attaining pupils sometimes acting as tutors to the less confident, and they treat equipment with respect.
123. The co-ordinator has played an important role in maintaining a high profile for the subject and has a good view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject. The policy has been kept under continuous review and the scheme of work has been amended to align it with national guidance. There are good links with many other subjects of the curriculum, for example, in literacy, where pupils are learning good word processing skills. There are also plans to refine the scheme of work further to ensure that information technology fits in well with other subjects. The good facilities in the information technology room are used well, but computers in the classrooms vary in quality and are underused. The co-ordinator has recognised this as an area for improvement and has a long-term plan for replacing hardware and purchasing new software.
124. Information technology is a priority in this year's school development plan and the main areas of focus have been re-equipping the information technology room and improving staff skills. The equipment in the information technology room has been completely replaced using National Grid for Learning funding and provides very good opportunities for the pupils to acquire and practise skills systematically.

## **MUSIC**

125. Pupils enjoy music and lessons observed were characterised by enthusiastic teaching, sound planning and effective management of the pupils and resources. As a result, little time is wasted, the pace is good, the pupils behave well and participate fully in all parts of the lessons. Group work is a particular strength and pupils co-operate well to compose and express their ideas using a range of instruments. In the most effective lessons pupils are challenged to reflect on their performances and improve them. This is best achieved when the teacher is able to give good feedback to the pupils about what they have done well and what they could do to improve. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported during lessons and encouraged to participate fully. Sometimes this is achieved by utilising the skills of a classroom support assistant; at other times, it is due to sensitive handling by the teacher.

126. Weaknesses are few in the lessons observed. However, the more musically able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to use their skills and to take a lead.
127. During the inspection, too few lessons were observed at Key Stage 1 to make secure judgements about the standards attained by the pupils and the quality of teaching. However, pupils in Year 2 distinguish between rhythm and pulse, listen carefully to music and respond to changes in tempo and dynamics. In this respect, their attainment meets the expectations for pupils of this age. In the lesson seen teaching was satisfactory.
128. At Key Stage 2, the attainment of pupils is average. Pupils in Year 4 use a graphic score to perform. They use a range of tuned and percussion instruments effectively as well as their voices and bodies to portray a scene from a story. By the end of the key stage, most pupils read from a score (in standard rhythmic notation) to perform their compositions. A feature of this work is how well the pupils listen to one another's performances, make constructive comments and applaud each other's efforts. In the three lessons observed the quality of teaching was good.
129. The range and quality of extra-curricular activities is good, although limited for pupils in Key Stage 1. Peripatetic musicians visit the school regularly to teach strings, woodwind and brass. School staff run recorder clubs, a choir and an orchestra; all of which are popular with the pupils. During the inspection the orchestra club was observed and it is well run and enthusiastically taught. Even the novice players are encouraged to play a full part and the atmosphere is very supportive. Here the pupils listen well and play enthusiastically. When the full range of instruments is deployed they make a pleasing sound and there is a good balance of tuned and untuned percussion instruments.
130. Other extra curricular activities have included participating in the Ipswich Music Day and a concert in school which provided a platform for the pupils involved in music clubs to present a variety of musical items. Both activities were well supported by parents.
131. Resources for music are good. Although there is no one with responsibility for music, a number of teachers, including the headteacher, are both enthusiastic and knowledgeable. There is a designated room for music teaching, which houses a good number of instruments which the pupils have access to as well as equipment for playing pre-recorded music including compact disks and tapes.
132. Progress since the previous inspection is satisfactory. The practice of teaching pupils in large groups has been abandoned and replaced by teachers working with smaller classes in single year groups. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 has improved. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed and in half of the lessons teaching is good.
133. The main weakness lies in the leadership and management of the subject. No further progress has been made in respect of monitoring or in developing schemes of work which support teachers in teaching high quality and well balanced music lessons. This has been exacerbated by the lack of a designated subject leader and the school recognises the need to recruit such a person if the development of the subject is to be enhanced.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

134. During the inspection only dance and games lessons were observed, but teachers' plans for all aspects of physical education were seen and discussions took place with teachers and pupils. Standards of attainment in physical education are similar to those found at the previous inspection. Overall, the pupils are achieving the standards expected for their age in dance and games, and in some lessons standards of attainment are good. By the time they leave the school attainment in swimming is good, with all but a very few pupils able to swim at least 25 metres and many achieving more advanced swimming awards. Overall, the quality of teaching has been maintained at a level similar to that at the last inspection when it was described as at least sound and often good or very good.
135. Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress overall in dance. In Year 1 they link together a series of simple actions, with a partner, which include travelling and turning. In Year 2 they develop increasing control and co-ordination in performing a sequence of movements in a small group. They respond enthusiastically to their activities, especially when they are working together in pairs and small groups. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the pupils discussed and tried out different ways of making a strong shape in small groups. The pupils had a real sense of purpose about this work because it was linked effectively to their topic on the Romans and they were able to draw on other areas of their learning. Teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes very good. Lessons are organised to ensure that the pupils are vigorously active but also have opportunities for warming up and winding down. Where the teaching is good the pupils are given a clear understanding of what they are expected to learn and the teacher provides continuous feedback to help them concentrate on what they need to do to improve. Sometimes teaching is over directive and, although the pupils are given opportunities to demonstrate what they have achieved, there is little emphasis on discussing how well they have performed and how they can make this better.
136. At Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress in games and very good progress in the one dance lesson observed. The older pupils are developing sound skills in controlling, passing and receiving a ball in a range of games. Teachers have a sound knowledge of the subject and this is used well to set tasks, which develop the pupil's skills systematically. Lessons build effectively on past experiences and are organised in blocks, which focus on one game over three or four weeks. In Year 5 they are given opportunities to learn how to strike a hockey ball safely and effectively in pairs. Year 6 pupils improve their passing and receiving skills in rugby and learn how to make good use of space in small-sided team games. In all games lessons, the pupils showed remarkably good concentration despite some difficult weather conditions. They worked well together in paired activities and showed mature attitudes of fairness and respect for the rules when playing team games. In the dance lesson the teacher's enthusiastic approach led to the pupils becoming engrossed in their activities. The pupils were given opportunities to devise a dance sequence in small groups and to make a record of this so that it could be repeated in subsequent sessions. The pupils made good use of these records to practise and refine their movements. They were then required to teach their dance to another group. This helped them to further clarify their ideas and think clearly about joining their actions in a smooth sequence. Throughout these activities the pupils made good use of discussion to explain and develop their ideas.
137. The co-ordinator is leading the development of physical education well and has identified the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and has produced a useful

improvement plan setting out the action to be taken over the year. The scheme of work provides good guidance for the year groups to plan their lessons and ensure that pupils make progress in all aspects of the subject. This has been regularly updated to take account of changes in other subjects. For example, the work in dance has been reorganised in Year 6 to align it with the history unit on Ancient Egypt. The arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning have been improved since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has oversight of all lesson planning to check that it is in line with the scheme of work and has been allocated time to observe lessons and provide support.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

138. Standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1 though several were seen at Key Stage 2. Judgements take into account the standards seen in pupils' books, information provided by the subject leader and evidence drawn from the school's plans.
139. Teaching and learning is directly linked to the locally agreed syllabus and pupils make sound progress in developing their knowledge of different faiths, symbols and festivals. Teachers rely on the guidance provided by the local education authority for the lessons taught each week and this has sustained the satisfactory provision since the last inspection. No significant improvements have been made to religious education since the last inspection.
140. In Key Stage 1 religious education is linked to the personal and social curriculum where pupils have opportunities to talk about matters of importance to them. Lessons centre on caring for friends and families. Pupils are given opportunities to think about why bullying is wrong and how it makes them feel. They also learn about special symbols of care and are learning to recognise religious symbols. They show their understanding through simple pictures and personal expressions of thanks.
141. In Key Stage 2 younger pupils learn about special services and find out about the meaning of religious objects and symbols. They have the chance to talk with members of a faith community and they learn to understand the meaning of religious festivals and special occasions. Older pupils relate the meaning of religious stories to their own lives, and the lives of people around them. These experiences enable pupils to reflect on their own thoughts and feelings.
142. In most of the lessons seen pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning in religious education. They listen carefully and respond thoughtfully to their teachers' questions. Teachers strive to bring religious education to life and approaches to teaching are carefully thought through. Overall the quality of teaching is good. Teachers give clear explanations and lessons are well planned and organised. Artefacts are effectively used to lead pupils to think more deeply about their own immediate experience and to relate what they have learnt to their developing understanding of other religions. There is a good range of suitable resources to support the syllabus. Teachers are usually good role models, demonstrating positive attitudes through sensitive handling of issues and artefacts. Assemblies contribute appropriately to the religious education curriculum.