

INSPECTION REPORT

**EAST BERGHOLT VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED CHURCH OF ENGLAND
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

East Bergholt

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124729

Headteacher: Mrs J Seaborne

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 18th-20th June 2001

Inspection number: 192153

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Lane East Bergholt Suffolk
Postcode:	CO7 6SW
Telephone number:	01206 298202
Fax number:	01206 299369
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, East Bergholt CEP School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs F Trott
Date of previous inspection:	February 1997

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20704	Terry Elston	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology, Physical education, Pupils with special educational needs.	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
10639	Sally Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19897	Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, Design and technology, Equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19142	Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	English, Art and design, Music, Religious education.	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, History, Geography, Provision for children in the Foundation Stage.	

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
"Thule" 60 Joy Lane
Whitstable
Kent
CT5 4LT 01227 273449

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager

Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	9
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is an average sized school on the northern side of the large and growing village of East Bergholt. The school educates boys and girls aged between four and eleven. There are 200 pupils, 23 of whom are in the Foundation Stage in a Reception class, on roll. Twenty one per cent of pupils are on the register for special educational needs, which is about average, and five have a statement of their special educational need, which is above average. Around one third of pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. Most of the surrounding houses are privately owned, but there is a small council estate nearby. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and none has English as an additional language. Two per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is well below the national average. Pupils enter the school with above average skills compared with those found nationally. During the last school year, two pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and ten left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This degree of mobility is not unusual.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school, with many important strengths. The headteacher leads the school very well, with high expectations of pupils and staff. This explains why the quality of teaching is very good, and the standards of pupils' work and behaviour are so high. The funds are managed efficiently, the curriculum is organised well and the links with parents are very good. Despite higher than average costs per pupil, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils' standards by Year 6 are well above average in English, mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall, and enables pupils of all abilities to do well.
- The leadership of the school is very good, and knows how to raise standards.
- Pupils are keen to take responsibility, and their behaviour and attitudes to work are very good.
- The school's partnership with parents is very good, and plays an important part in the standards of work that pupils achieve.
- The school's assessment procedures are very good, and are used very well by staff to set demanding targets.

What could be improved

- Standards in geography by Year 6, which are too low.
- The play area for children in the Foundation Stage, which inhibits their physical development.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting, which is often untidy and a mixture of joined and printed letters.
- The arrangements for the checking of portable electrical appliances, which have lapsed in recent years.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in February 1997. Pupils' standards are much higher overall, with their scores in the national tests showing a great improvement. This inspection finds they have been raised still further. The quality of teaching is much better, as is the monitoring of pupils' attendance and progress. The management of the school is much sharper, and the roles of senior staff are now defined clearly. The school has developed its resources well, and the financial management procedures are now good. The school has made a very good response to the key issues of the previous inspection. Weaknesses in the standards of art, religious education, information and communication technology and speaking have been addressed, and all are now at least above average. The school has improved its resources, and they support pupils' learning well. The curricular planning is now far more structured, and meets the needs of all groups of pupils well. Curriculum co-ordinators support colleagues effectively, and now play a significant role in the raising of standards. The school has worked hard to develop pupils' social skills, and these are now among the school's strengths. The governors are more involved in shaping the direction of the school, although they still leave the identification of priorities in the school's

development plan very much to the staff. In view of the many strengths in this report, and rapid improvement over the last four years, the school is very well placed well to develop further.

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
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	A*	A	A	B
mathematics	A	A	A	B
science	A	A	A	A

Key	
very high	A*
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E
very low	E*

The table above shows how well pupils achieve, not only when compared with all schools, but also against similar schools. The school has done well to maintain high standards over the last three years in all three subjects, and meet nearly all of its challenging targets. Pupils are well on course to do so again this year. Children enter the Foundation Stage at above average levels of attainment, overall, and make sound progress. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to reach above average standards in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. Standards in their physical and creative development are similar to those found in most schools, and are not as well-developed as other areas because of the restrictions imposed by the lack of an easily accessible play area. Pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2, and, in Year 2, pupils' standards are well above average in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science. In art and design, history, information and communication technology and music, pupils' work is above average, and it is average in physical education, religious education, design and technology and geography. In Year 6, pupils have maintained their good progress. Their attainment is well above average in English, mathematics, science, art and design, and music, and above average in information and communication technology, design and technology, physical education and religious education. Their standards are average in history, but below average in geography, where the curriculum is not taught in sufficient depth. The teaching of geography has suffered because of the lack of a co-ordinator until recently to drive the subject forward.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, and delight in their successes.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Lessons take place in a calm and busy atmosphere, and pupils play happily together outside.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is very good and many relish the opportunities to take responsibility. Relationships are of a high quality throughout the school
Attendance	Very good. This, and pupils' punctuality, help to make the most of their time in school.

These are strengths of the school, and help to explain why this is such a harmonious community, where all work hard and enjoy doing so.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation Stage	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, and meets the needs of all groups of pupils very well. During the inspection, 43 lessons were observed, of which seven per cent were excellent, 40 per cent very good, 42 per cent good and 11 per cent satisfactory. None was unsatisfactory. The school has done much to make literacy and numeracy lessons effective; the teaching of reading and number work is very good and pupils do well. Teachers plan lessons well so that all pupils work hard and learn quickly. Lessons are interesting because teachers show pupils that they enjoy teaching, and do everything to capture their imagination. Teachers are particularly good at developing pupils' creative skills, and this is why standards in music and art are so high. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is good, and ensures that they benefit from a good start to their education.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is planned well, with a very good focus on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The planning for geography does not, however, give pupils enough opportunities to develop these skills to the same levels of other subjects. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities for older pupils, but fewer for those in Years 1 and 2.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is good, and pupils make good progress. The co-ordinator works closely with teachers to plan appropriate tasks for these pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	This provision is very good overall. The school does much to teach pupils about the importance of God in their lives, how to behave well and accept responsibility for their actions. There is a good range of activities to develop pupils' understanding of their own culture, but not so many to show how other people of the world live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school monitors pupils' personal development very well, and the very good assessment procedures help to raise the attainment of pupils of all abilities. The school cares for its pupils very well, but there have not been safety checks on electrical appliances for some years.

The good, well-balanced curriculum and the effective monitoring of pupils' progress provide a very good foundation for pupils' learning and teachers' teaching. Parents are well-informed about the curriculum, and their child's progress, and their links with the school are very strong.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is a strength of the school. The headteacher has a clear understanding of how to raise standards of teaching and learning, and works closely with the deputy head and Key Stage 2 co-ordinator to do this effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	This is a good governing body, which is keen to see the school do well, has a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and works closely with the staff to raise standards. The Chair leads her team very well, and has a very good understanding of her role.
The school's evaluation of its performance	This is very good. All available data are analysed, and are used very effectively to raise pupils' standards. Pupils' work and teachers' lessons are monitored well, and explain why the standards of both are improving all the time.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its resources well. The employment of a co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs with no class responsibilities has proved to be a good, cost-effective, initiative, which is yielding good results in pupils' progress. The school applies the principles of best value well, and makes useful comparisons between the performance of this school and others.

The school's accommodation supports pupils' learning well overall, and the swimming pool is a significant asset. The staff are well qualified, and are supported effectively by appropriate in-service training. The resources are good, and have a positive effect on pupils' standards.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The very good behaviour. • High standards of teaching. • The standards that pupils achieve. • The provision for pupils with special educational needs. • The good improvement the school has made over recent years. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of extra-curricular activities for infant pupils.

Parents' views are extremely positive, and this inspection confirms these comments. Of the extra-curricular activities, this inspection finds them satisfactory, with a reasonable range of activities for all pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Analysis of the school's national tests for seven year olds in 2000 shows that, compared with all schools, standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above average. Compared with similar schools, pupils' scores were average in writing and mathematics, and below average in reading. The teachers' assessments for science showed that pupils' attainment was very high. This inspection finds that standards are higher this year, and well above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. These judgements show that standards are far higher than those reported in the previous inspection, when they were average in all four subjects. Standards have also risen in art, information and communication technology and music at Key Stage 1. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

2. Children enter the Foundation Stage at above average levels of attainment, and make sound progress. By the end of the Reception year, most children are on course to exceed the nationally agreed goals in their personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, mathematical development and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They do particularly well in developing their personal and social skills, and show maturity in the way they look after themselves and interact with adults and one another. They speak well, and have a good understanding of how to use books. Many write well. Their mathematical skills are good, and nearly all add, subtract and order numbers accurately. Standards in their physical and creative development are similar to those found in most schools, and are not as well-developed as other areas. The inaccessibility of the play area means they cannot easily move from the classroom in order to play outside.

3. Pupils do well in the infant classes. This inspection finds that, in Year 2 in English, pupils' literacy skills are well above average. They read familiar books with fluency, and learn new words quickly. Many have a good knowledge of phonics, and this makes reading easy for them. Pupils' enjoyment of books is a strength of their learning. Their speaking and listening skills are well above average, and profit from the school's concentration on language. Standards in writing have benefited from the school's strong focus on the content of their written work, and teachers' emphasis on correct punctuation. Pupils write interesting stories, which have a good structure. Not all of their writing by Year 2, however, is presented well. Teachers give younger pupils freedom to experiment with their own writing, and this enables them to feel confident about writing imaginatively.

4. Year 2 pupils use quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20, and have a good understanding of how to solve problems. They classify two and three-dimensional shapes skilfully with reference to their properties. A particular strength is the way pupils use their information and communication technology skills in their mathematics work, constructing good graphs and producing effective patterns based on reflective symmetry. In science, pupils' experimental skills are very good, as was illustrated when they discovered what will happen if you put a coat on a snowman, and ensuring that their test was fair. They have a good knowledge of forces, and talk knowledgeably about the main features of the human body. Pupils present their work well using accurate charts and graphs.

5. In Year 2 in information and communication technology, pupils' skills are above average, and particularly good when creating databases in mathematics and design and technology lessons. In religious education, pupils' attainment meets the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus, and most have a sound understanding of Bible stories and those from other religions of the world. In geography, pupils' work is average. They have a good

understanding of their local area, and are starting to produce some sound maps. Pupils' historical skills are good, and are enhanced by teachers' imaginative use of resources, which include a model of a castle for role-play activities. Pupils' creative skills are developed well by the school. They compose very good pieces of music, and sing well. Their art shows vivid imagination and a good attention to detail. Pupils' models in design and technology are sound. They choose appropriate materials and tools for themselves, as was seen to good effect when they made wooden photograph frames, and decorated them with crepe paper and foil. In physical education, pupils' standards are average overall, and many swim well.

6. Pupils continue the good rate of their progress right through the school. In last year's national tests, the school's results were well above average in English, mathematics and science. They were also well above the average of similar schools in science, and above average in English and mathematics. This inspection shows that pupils' standards are still well above average in English, mathematics and science, and that the school is on course to meet most of its ambitious targets. The upward trend is at a higher rate than that found nationally. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. Standards in Year 6 have improved since the previous inspection in English, mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education. Standards in geography have declined.

7. In Year 6, nearly all pupils read fluently, and with good expression. Pupils locate information from non-fiction books easily, and make good use of computers to research their topics. They speak and listen very well, and are confident when addressing large audiences. Their writing is also well above average. Pupils write in a very good range of styles including diaries, poetry, stories and reports, and much of the writing shows a very good command of style and expression. Their writing shows great understanding of another's feelings, but some of their work is let down by the standard of their handwriting, which can be untidy, and a mixture of joined and printed letters.

8. In mathematics, Year 6 pupils multiply and divide whole numbers by 10, 100 and 1000 easily. They have a very good understanding of negative numbers and equivalent fractions, and calculate the circumference and area of circles. They are particularly good at constructing and interpreting various kinds of graphs and diagrams to illustrate data, such as their favourite football teams. They use their mathematical skills well in other subjects, particularly when making calculations in science and design and technology.

9. In science in Year 6, pupils carry out experiments to a high standard, and plan their own investigations very well. Their recording is good, and is illustrated very well by line graphs and charts to show their results. They have a good understanding of the human body, and the effects of exercise on the organs and muscles. They work confidently with materials, and conduct good tests to show how they can change when heated or cooled. Pupils are self-assured when investigating forces, and have a good understanding of the potential dangers of electricity.

10. In information and communication technology, Year 6, pupils attain above average standards, and nearly all have good skills in using word processing programs. They use data handling programs well to produce pie graphs of their mathematical investigations, and produce very good pie charts in science of the different teeth in the human mouth. Their good understanding of how to frame questions is illustrated when they use 'decision trees' very effectively to classify materials in science. They control a programmable toy well, and move on to attain high standards by putting together a sequence of moves to create shapes on the computer screen.

11. In art, pupils' attainment is well above average. They use sketchbooks very well to experiment with ideas and different materials, and produce very detailed drawings of

objects in still-life exercises. In design and technology, standards in Year 6 are above average. They produce very good design sheets, with word-processed text outlining step-by-step instructions, illustrated with accurately labelled diagrams. Their models are imaginative, and produced with good attention to detail and work well.

12. In geography, pupils' skills are below average overall, and they do too little geography to attain the high standards found in other subjects. Year 6 pupils use appropriate geographical vocabulary to describe the physical features of coastal regions, and have a sound awareness that people can improve or damage the coastal regions. The weaknesses, however, lie in the overall development of their geographical skills, which are at a very basic level by the age of eleven. Standards in history are average. Pupils have a good knowledge of Ancient Egypt, and use both primary and secondary sources of information to find out about aspects of their life and beliefs. Much of the work, however, is in the form of worksheets. These often prevent the pupils from applying the high level of literacy skills they have to their work in history. In addition, the opportunity to carry out personal research is sometimes at a superficial level, and does not fully extend the higher attaining pupils in Year 6.

13. Pupils' musical skills are well above average. Most of them sing a wide repertoire of songs with accurate pitch, vary the volume to good effect and show a good understanding of rhythm. They develop their singing voices and group performance very well by composing their own lyrics and scores in small groups, which they rehearse and improve upon before adding percussion, tuned musical instruments and a dance sequence. In physical education, pupils' attainment is above average overall. They have good games skills, and throw, control and hit balls with good skill. Pupils observe each other's work carefully, and improve their own performance as a result. They play competitive games against other schools with considerable success, and swim to a very high standard.

14. In religious education, pupils' attainment is above average. They have a good insight into the traditions, beliefs, literature, symbols and festivals of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and a sound understanding of other world religions. They compare Christianity with Judaism and Islam with a good feel for the differences and similarities.

15. Pupils with special educational needs do well at this school in relation to their previous attainment, and many attain, or come close to, national standards by the time they take the national assessment tests in Year 6. Parents are very pleased with their children's rate of progress, and the extent by which they grow in confidence. Pupils make particularly good progress in literacy and numeracy, where the school's effective implementation of the national strategies is giving them good practice in the basic skills of reading and number.

16. Higher attaining pupils make good progress, and profit from the school's extra support to extend their literacy and numeracy skills. In addition, many develop a deep understanding of science because of the demanding tasks that teachers set. As a result of these positive moves, pupils' standards in the national tests show a high proportion of them exceeding national expectations in all three subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. The pupils' attitudes to school are very good, and have improved since the last inspection when they were good. The parents are delighted that their children love coming to school. The pupils' enthusiasm for learning, including those with special educational needs, has a very positive impact on their progress. This was seen when the Year 2 pupils walked through the village on their way to visit the Church. By chance, a grass snake slithered along the pavement in the opposite direction. The pupils behaved very sensibly and made the most of the opportunity to look closely at the movement and markings. They were very excited, and talked eagerly amongst themselves about how they could find out more about snakes. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers, and are keen to

join in class discussions. They settle quickly to their work and concentrate very well on the tasks they have been given.

18. Behaviour at the time of the last inspection was good; it is now very good. Parents are impressed by the pupils' behaviour and good manners. The school operates as a happy and harmonious community, and this has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils know that adults who work in the school expect good behaviour, and they nearly always behave very well, even when they are working without close supervision. Sanctions are rarely needed. Some pupils, mainly in Year 3, have not learned to put up their hands during class discussions. They are so keen to answer that they shout out. Pupils behave sensibly during lunch, and play very well together in the playground and on the playing field. They are trustworthy, and show great respect for their environment, particularly though the work of the environmental group, the 'green team'.

19. Pupils' personal development and relationships are very good, and have shown significant improvement since the last inspection. These are pupils who are confident and mature. They enjoy helping in the classroom and around the school. One Year 5 pupil said that the best thing about school was the range of responsibilities that the pupils were given. She said, "It makes us really feel part of the school." The pupils, particularly the older ones, take their duties very seriously. The 'buddy system', where pupils act as play leaders with younger ones, works well, and they complete written applications in a very mature way so that they can join the scheme. The school council meets every month, and the members are very enthusiastic about their initiatives to improve the school grounds. Relationships are very strong throughout the school community, and there is a high level of mutual respect. In lessons, nearly all pupils have the confidence to ask for help if they do not understand. They work very well together in groups, and value the contributions of others.

20. Children in the Foundation Stage have positive attitudes towards their work and play. They interact very well with each other, the teacher and classroom assistants. They behave very well. These young children enjoy coming to school, and take full benefit from the range of activities provided for them. Developing initiative and personal responsibility in learning are strongly encouraged by the teacher, and this explains why most children are able to organise themselves well.

21. The attendance of the pupils is very good and has improved since the last inspection when it was good. The attendance rate of 95.9 per cent for 1999/2000 was well above the national average. There was no unauthorised absence. The concerns about punctuality raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed. The vast majority of parents now bring their children to school on time, and the school day starts promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, and promotes good progress through the school. Nearly all parents agree that the quality of teaching is good, and that it helps their children to do well. During the inspection, 43 lessons were observed, of which seven per cent were excellent, 40 per cent very good, 42 per cent good and 11 per cent satisfactory. None was unsatisfactory. These figures compare well with those of the previous OFSTED inspection, when 11 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory and the teaching was 'generally good'. The biggest improvements lie in teachers' expectations of the quality of higher attaining pupils' work, and in the greater depth of knowledge teachers have of the subjects they teach. The school has done much to make literacy and numeracy lessons effective, and the teaching here is very good. Teachers are enthusiastic about the national strategies, and comfortable with the division of lessons into direct teaching time, activities for individual pupils or groups and the summing-up session. Consequently, pupils make good progress in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and their results are improving in the national assessment tests at a faster rate than is found

nationally. Throughout the school, teachers' expectations are high, and this pushes pupils to do their best. Only in handwriting do we find some inconsistencies, with some of pupils' work that is untidy, or printed in Key Stage 2 rather than joined, accepted by teachers. In all classes, teachers make it clear at the start what pupils should know by the end. This works well, because it sets the scene for the lesson, focuses pupils' attention on specific learning and helps evaluate how successful they have been at the end.

23. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is good. The Reception teacher knows the children very well as individuals, and has a warm relationship with them. Consequently the children settle into school happily, and develop very good attitudes to learning. The daily activities are prepared well, and an appropriate range of resources is available indoors to stimulate pupils' interest and participation. The use of resources outdoors is, however, insufficiently developed, in part due to the lack of a suitable designated play area. The Reception teacher's management of children and use of support staff are very good, and there is an appropriate balance between activities directed by the teacher and those initiated by children. The well-organised routines enable all children to become used to the pattern of the day, and to respond quickly to the high expectations for behaviour, attentiveness and following instructions. The teacher and classroom assistants in the Reception class listen with interest to what the children have to say, and demonstrate good skills in helping children to develop their language for communication. Adults explain new work clearly to the children, and use questions skilfully to assess how well they have grasped the concept. Teachers watch the children's responses carefully, and take every opportunity to extend their knowledge and understanding. The teaching of social skills is especially good, and the children enter Year 1 with a good understanding of how to behave, and a growing awareness of others' needs as well as their own. Adults use assessment well to monitor the progress and development of the children, and this enables the teacher to plan effectively for the children's future learning.

24. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is very good, and pupils learn quickly in a very stimulating environment. The quality of teaching was exceptional in Year 1, but there was very good teaching in both classes. Teachers show a very secure knowledge of the subjects they teach, and all make lessons interesting so that pupils enjoy learning. Their direct teaching works well, and promotes pupils' learning of new skills effectively. Teachers' management of pupils' behaviour is excellent, because their standards are so high and clearly communicated that pupils are left in no doubt about the expectations of them.

25. The teaching of basic skills is especially good in Years 1 and 2, and explains why pupils' reading, writing and mathematics work is of such a high standard. Teachers are very secure with the national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and these lessons are packed with learning. Once pupils have mastered a new skill, the teachers organise group tasks very well, ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are supported effectively, and high attaining pupils have demanding work to stretch them. In one excellent literacy lesson, which illustrates some of these strengths, the Year 1 teacher began by emphasising the importance of punctuation in pupils' writing. The teacher used questions carefully to ensure that all pupils were involved, asking, "Why has this got a capital letter?" and pupils quickly got the idea. Once the teacher had established the point of punctuation, she moved swiftly on to its importance when reading passages of text. In this way, pupils learned the skill, and then had the chance to put their new learning into practice. As a result, their reading aloud improved dramatically. Overall in Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is very good in English, mathematics and science, good in art and design, religious education, history, music, design and technology, physical education and information and communication technology, and satisfactory in geography.

26. In the junior classes, the quality of teaching and learning is very good, and builds well on the foundations laid earlier. Lessons are planned well, and give pupils a good mix of direct teaching to provide them with new skills, challenging activities to stretch all groups of pupils and useful time at the end for the teacher to assess pupils' progress. Teachers build up pupils' independence well and give them more and more responsibility for researching history topics on the computer, for example, or devising their own experiments in science. Higher attaining pupils do particularly well because teachers are always pushing them to deepen their knowledge through research and independent work. The effectiveness of these strategies can be judged by the high proportion of pupils who reach above average levels in the national assessment tests in Year 6. Teachers have effective strategies to manage pupils' behaviour, and apply their rules consistently. They reward pupils who behave very well in an obvious way, praising them enthusiastically, and this makes all pupils strive for this standard. In these classes, the quality of teaching is very good in English, mathematics and science, good in art and design, physical education, design and technology, information and communication technology, religious education and music, and satisfactory in history and geography.

27. Teachers' marking is satisfactory overall, and, at its best, gives useful indications as to how pupils can improve their work. There are, however, some inconsistencies here, and sometimes teachers limit their marking to pages of ticks, or congratulatory comments when pupils have not responded appropriately to earlier criticisms.

28. The provision of homework is generally good. Teachers give pupils appropriate amounts of work to do at home, and increase their demands as pupils get older.

29. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good overall. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs works closely with teachers and support assistants to set targets and plan work for pupils who have special educational needs. The co-ordinator studies teachers' planning, and plans her own work that is appropriate for these pupils. Some pupils are withdrawn for well-directed specialist teaching. This system works well, and ensures that pupils with special educational needs are working at similar tasks to the rest of the class, but at their own level. This is why they make such good progress.

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

30. Overall, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum, offering the pupils a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. It affords a good preparation for high school. Whilst Year 6 pupils go to a nearby pool for swimming lessons, other pupils have very good opportunities to learn to swim in the school's own indoor pool. About 12 pupils are currently taking advantage of instrumental music tuition, which enhances the curriculum. Key issues from the previous inspection were to ensure full coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education, and to improve curricular planning; these have been addressed successfully. There are now clear policies and schemes of work for all subjects. The teachers plan carefully for the work which the pupils will do each term and each week. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics, and the school is implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy very well. Teachers are confident about the format of these lessons, and pupils attain high standards in their reading and number as a result.

31. The teachers base their planning in other subjects on national or local education authority guidelines. However, the two-year rolling programme of planning for history and geography leaves long gaps in the time that Key Stage 2 pupils spend on these two subjects, and this has a particularly detrimental effect on the development of pupils' geographical skills. Total weekly teaching time meets national recommendations in Key

Stage 1, but is 35 minutes below in Key Stage 2, and this affects the amount of time that these pupils are learning. The headteacher monitors the curriculum very thoroughly.

32. The school does much to provide equal opportunities for all pupils. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs, for example, is good, and parents speak highly of the way the school meets their child's particular needs. Pupils are included in all school activities, and are withdrawn for appropriate amounts of time to work on their reading and number. Pupils' individual targets are well thought out, and are reviewed regularly. Their targets include goals for literacy, numeracy and behaviour. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational needs are met well, and their annual reviews provide a very good focus for further improvement. Higher attaining pupils are given every chance to develop their skills to the full, with very good provision of extension activities in English and mathematics to encourage them to think more deeply about these subjects. The school monitors the attainment of boys and girls very well by analysing their results in the national tests, and those set regularly by teachers. This is good practice, and ensures that any variations are explained, and that changes in curricular provision or resources are made promptly.

33. The quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good. The planning documents take full account of the six areas of learning as recommended for children in the Foundation Stage, and are carefully linked to the subjects of the National Curriculum in Year 1. A strong emphasis is placed on providing first-hand experiences, and there is good provision for children's personal and social development that prepares children well for entry into Year 1. The more structured planning of literacy and numeracy work is good, and children develop above average basic skills in their reading and number as a result. Although play is planned well for indoors, the facilities do not extend to a secure play area outdoors as an extension of the curriculum.

34. A third of parents completing the questionnaire feel that the school does not provide a sufficient range of activities outside lessons. This inspection finds that provision for extra-curricular activities is satisfactory overall. The younger pupils have the opportunity to join in the choir, and attend swimming, tennis and computer clubs. Older pupils participate in sporting activities, country dancing and recorders. About 30 pupils are in the school orchestra, and about 50 in the choir, both of which have a good impact on pupils' musical skills. Friendly sports matches are played against local schools, often with considerable success. The school's netball team recently came second in a local tournament. The teachers enrich the curriculum through a wide range of school visits to places such as Colchester Castle, Chantry Park and the Isle of Wight and through the use of visitors.

35. The school makes good use of the community to enhance the pupils' learning. Staff from Ipswich Town Football Club have led coaching sessions and some assemblies. There are strong links with the local church. The pupils attend a service there once a term, and the Vicar leads assemblies regularly in school. At Christmas, the pupils entertain invited local Senior Citizens. A local estate agent sponsors the school's annual fete. Staff from Flatford Mill contribute well to work on the environment. Whenever possible, the teachers make good use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors, such as parents, grandparents, an artist and a poet.

36. There are sound links with the pre-school playgroup on the school's site, and these help the children's induction into the Reception class. These young children regularly come into school to hear stories and to have lunch. The headteacher meets twice each term with colleagues from local primary schools, but links with the high school are not as strong. Nevertheless, pupils' academic records are passed on and there is close liaison with regard to pupils with special educational needs. Year 6 pupils have a useful induction day at the high school, and staff from that school come and talk to Year 6 pupils.

37. The headteacher co-ordinates the pupils' personal social and health education well, and provision is good. Each class has a timetabled session for personal, social and health education, and planning is soundly based on local education authority guidelines. In these sessions, the teachers strive to develop the pupils' self-esteem and confidence in speaking, while discussing issues such as the dangers of drugs misuse, finite and renewable sources of energy, environmental pollution and conservation and changing schools. The teachers answer questions about human growth and development openly and honestly as they arise, with due regard to pupils' age and maturity. The school is part of the local education authority's 'Healthy Schools Initiative', and the pupils learn about the need for a balanced diet and exercise for healthy growth.

38. The provision for pupils' personal development is very good, and has improved considerably since the previous inspection. There is good provision for the pupils' spiritual development, witnessed in some moving singing by the choir and every pupil's participation in the creation of some Millennium artwork entitled '2000 Rain Ripples'. Year 6 pupils have thought deeply about the beginnings of life, and have discussed issues relating to the natural and the man-made world. They have written evocative poems on the subject of questions 'for which there is no answer'. The teachers do much to instil a sense of awe and wonder into learning. During the inspection, for example, Year 2 pupils visited the local church, and were clearly awestruck at the playing of the church organ.

39. There is a good behaviour policy, and provision for the pupils' moral development is very good. The pupils are taught clearly what is right and what is unacceptable. Year 2 pupils, for example, have written about good and bad ways of behaving. The teachers reward effort and achievement through the use of stickers and certificates, which are celebrated in displays and in assemblies. Codes of conduct and playground rules are displayed clearly in classrooms. The individual targets for some pupils with special educational needs include appropriate goals for improving behaviour.

40. There is very good provision for social development, and the pupils clearly benefit from this. This is a marked improvement from the previous inspection, which judged this provision to be weak. Most parents feel that the school helps their children to mature and to become responsible. The pupils exercise responsibility through various tasks around the school. Older pupils act as 'buddies' for younger ones, helping them with lunchtime games and activities. Some Year 6 pupils develop their decision-making skills as members of the school council. The school has developed 'Eco Codes' which focus the pupils' attention on the need for environmental conservation, recycling and respect for living creatures. Year 5 pupils have adopted Sasha, the white tiger at Colchester Zoo, and members of the 'Green Team' help improve the school environment. The pupils develop social skills further on school visits, and by participating in clubs, class assemblies, school productions and in the Suffolk safe cycle scheme. Year 6 pupils develop these skills further during a residential visit to the Isle of Wight. The pupils have shown consideration for people less fortunate than themselves by supporting charities such as the European Children's trust, Comic relief and Mencap.

41. Provision for the pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In history, they learn about the cultures of ancient Greece, Rome and Egypt and the Normans' legacy in Britain. In geography, they learn about life in India and Kenya. The pupils have the opportunity to visit museums, and they have worked effectively with visiting artists and poets. They participate in World Book Day. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 put together a successful music and drama show at Easter, with a hectic 11 hours' preparation. In religious education, pupils learn about different faiths and cultures in Britain and worldwide. Year 4 pupils have produced some effective work on the theme of art and India. There are some library books which reflect the multicultural nature of society, but, around the school, there are few displays or pictures to show the richness of other cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school provides good educational and personal support for its pupils. This is a very caring community. The adults working in the school know the pupils well, and treat them with considerable respect. Pupils say that they would feel able to talk to their teachers if they were upset. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good, and the teachers make helpful comment in the termly reports. Other adults working in the school, including lunchtime assistants and office staff, make valuable contributions in caring for the pupils. The BOSS (before and after school club) provides useful child-care facilities for parents and carers.

43. There are very good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment opportunities are clearly identified in the teachers' plans, and this is an improvement from the previous inspection. An innovative feature of the school's policy is the use of 'assessment weeks', when the teachers sample work in a specific subject, and come to an agreement on which National Curriculum levels of attainment they show. During the inspection, a staff meeting focussed on the pupils' understanding of place value in mathematics. These discussions led to a whole school collection of examples of levelled work, which helps the teachers in the accuracy and consistency of their assessments. The teachers use information from assessment, including a thorough analysis of national test results, very well to plan subsequent work and to set the pupils individual targets for further improvement. Examples observed included: 'Too eager to start without really thinking about what they were doing and why' (science); 'Need to go over measures next week' (mathematics); and 'Need to practise bowling' (physical education).

44. The teachers encourage the pupils to become involved in self-assessment, through a useful system of 'response partners' where they look critically at each other's work. The school recognises that its marking policy needs review. The teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively. However, whilst some marking clearly shows the pupils how they might improve, this is inconsistent.

45. Overall, the school has satisfactory procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school's arrangements for child protection are good. The child protection policy, however, has not been reviewed recently, and does not reflect the good procedures for training that are in place. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection, and carries out her duties effectively.

46. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. The whole school ethos is well reflected in the way that they ensure that pupils with special educational needs have opportunities to take part in all school activities. All adults value these pupils' contributions highly, and are quick to recognise their achievements. This is particularly true for those pupils who have statements of special educational need, and ensures that these pupils make good progress. The school has good procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Pupils' needs are quickly identified when they enter the school, and appropriate arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress. There is good liaison with outside agencies, who provide valuable support. The school keeps good records of pupils' progress in relation to their targets.

47. The arrangements for first aid are generally satisfactory. No members of staff are qualified in first aid, but some adults have received basic training. Pupils who are ill or injured receive good care and attention, and the school keeps parents well informed about accidents. The members of staff who generally look after these pupils have no current training. The school keeps good records of all those with medical conditions, but not all minor accidents are recorded. There is no medical room and pupils are treated in the office or the foyer.

48. Overall the arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory, but, in some areas, the procedures are still not sharp enough. Since the last inspection, the school has drawn up a health and safety policy. This is now out-of-date and lacks details about risk assessment. Staff are vigilant about day-to-day hazards and the governors have undertaken a risk assessment and drawn up an action plan. Some health and safety concerns were brought to the attention of the school during the inspection. They include:

- the lack of testing of portable electrical appliances; and
- the lack of up-to-date fire exit signs.

49. The school is actively involved in the 'Healthy Schools Initiative' and has improved healthy activities at lunchtime through more play equipment, and the involvement of older pupils who act as play leaders with younger ones.

50. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. Registers are marked correctly, and teachers and office staff analyse and monitor attendance data rigorously. The office staff make early contact with home if they do not know why a pupil is absent. The school has addressed the issue of lateness, which was raised as a concern in the last inspection report, successfully. There are appropriate links with the educational welfare officer when pupils' attendance or punctuality is a cause for concern.

51. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good. This is not a highly regimented community, but one where there is an ethos of mutual respect and high expectations of good behaviour. Pupils and adults working in the school are very good role models. There is a very clear behaviour policy, which emphasises the expectation of good behaviour. Rewards are effective, and pupils enjoy receiving stickers which can lead to becoming a 'Superstar'. An appropriate list of sanctions has been drawn up, but is rarely needed. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. The pupils say that rare incidents of anti-social behaviour are discussed in 'circle time' (whole class discussion) and are dealt with effectively. The school does not have an anti-bullying policy, which is a statutory requirement.

52. Children in the Foundation Stage are very well cared for and it is evident that they feel at ease in their surroundings. They share very good relationships with the teacher and classroom assistants and will happily talk to visitors about their work. Assessment procedures are good and include daily observations of the children in all six areas of learning, with anything of significance noted down and used to assist in planning future activities.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The parents' views of the school are very positive. All parents who returned the questionnaires think that the quality of teaching is good, and that pupils behave well. The vast majority of parents feel that their children are expected to work hard, and are making good progress. The parents feel welcome in school, and value the way in which staff are approachable. The parents say that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. A quarter of the parents who returned the questionnaire were not happy about the range of out-of-school activities.

54. The school has maintained the very good links found at the time of the last inspection. The parents value the school's 'open door' policy, and the staff are available to talk with parents at the end of the school day. The school found the parents' views helpful when drawing up the school's development plan.

55. The quality of the information the school provides to parents is very good. New parents receive good information through visits, a meeting and a helpful booklet. The prospectus and governors' Annual Report are informative but there is not enough information about

special educational needs. The parents appreciate the information sessions on topics such as information and communication technology and numeracy that are held each term. The school provides parents with helpful information each term about the topics that their children will be studying. The school's website is easy to use and enables parents and pupils to access useful information about the school. Throughout the year, the school gives parents, including those who live away from the family home, very good information about how their children are getting on. The progress reports give a valuable 'snap shot' of the levels the children are working at, and their attitude to work. The end-of-year reports are more detailed, and give helpful information about how pupils can improve their work. The school offers parents beneficial opportunities to meet with the class teachers each term to discuss their children's progress.

56. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is very good. Parent governors are very supportive of the school, and help to shape its future. The Parent-Teacher Association works hard to raise funds and organise social events. The parents enjoy coming to events such as concerts, and help with maintaining the grounds. The majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement.

57. The parents make very good contributions to their children's learning at school and at home. The school values the help offered by the many parents who assist in the classroom, with swimming and school visits. The vast majority of parents want to help their children and they support their children with work at home such as research. They listen to their children read and make comments in the reading records.

58. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well involved with their child's support, and are delighted with the provision made by the school. They are informed as soon as the school has concerns and they are consulted in all procedures. Parents are kept well aware of the school's targets for their child, and meet staff regularly to discuss how much progress is being made.

59. The induction procedures when children enter the Reception class are good. In the half term before the children start school, they are invited to join the Reception class for six afternoons and one whole day to get to know the teacher and meet other children. Children from the nearby Nursery visit the school every Monday. Before the children start school, the headteacher, deputy head and the Reception class teacher meet with the parents to explain the school routines. The school has prepared two very useful booklets to inform parents of the induction procedures and of the Foundation Stage curriculum.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

60. The leadership of the school is very good, and makes an important contribution to the raising of standards. The quality of leadership has improved significantly since the previous inspection, particularly in the way it has improved the management of the budget, developed the curriculum, raised the quality of teaching and built up the resources. This energetic response to weaknesses found in the school's provision is the key to the success of the leadership, and the main reason for its improvement in all areas. The impact of these improvements is clear when pupils' high standards in this inspection are compared with those found in the previous report.

61. The headteacher, who started in September 2000, has built well on the previous headteacher's achievements, whilst establishing her own management style to good effect. Her vision is for pupils to revel in their successes, and this inspection finds pupils showing a great pride in the high standards they attain. Central to the headteacher's effectiveness in raising standards is the way she pinpoints areas of weakness, and channels the teaching and curricular organisation to address the problem. Pupils who are underachieving are identified by careful analysis of data that compares pupils' performance with that of pupils in other schools. The deputy headteacher makes a significant contribution to this analysis

by utilising a computer program produced by the Local Education Authority to show patterns of performance. These data, alongside regular assessments and rigorous monitoring of pupils' work, give the school useful information about the success of the teaching, and where improvements need to be made. This is good practice, and showed, for example, that higher attaining pupils were not achieving high enough standards in mathematics. These pupils were given extra sessions to develop the depth of their knowledge, and subsequent test results showed a very good improvement in the standards they attained.

62. The monitoring of teaching is very good, and has a significant impact on the quality of lessons and pupils' progress. The headteacher and deputy monitor lessons on a regular basis, and staff benefit from useful feedback and targets for the future. These observations have helped make the school's performance management procedures useful, because teachers' targets are based securely on areas identified as in need of improvement.

63. The deputy headteacher supports the school well, and forms a good partnership with the headteacher. He works very well with the headteacher, and the partnership is made stronger by their common vision for the school's aims and future development. Importantly, he sets a very good example to staff by his own teaching. The deputy's work to improve the school's assessment procedures has had a particularly good effect on the standards of teaching and learning.

64. The school's support of new staff is very good. Staff are provided with lots of useful information on school procedures, and benefit from very good guidance from an experienced mentor.

65. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs provides good support to pupils and teachers. She is very skilled and experienced, and works closely with teachers to set pupils clear targets and monitor their progress towards them. Parents value this provision very highly, and the way the co-ordinator keeps them informed about their child's progress.

66. The role of subject co-ordinators has strengthened considerably since the previous inspection. They monitor standards in their subject well overall, and benefit from good training on the management of their subject.

67. The governing body supports the school well. Governors analyse the school's policies thoroughly, and are keen to offer their own views on the school's future direction. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and use data well to look for ways to improve the school further. Governors, for example, identified the differences in the attainment of boys and girls as an issue for the school to pursue. They monitor the progress of the school's development plan, but take too little part in its formation, relying more on school staff to set the targets. The governors generally meet the statutory requirements for the teaching of the curriculum and the welfare of pupils, although their Annual Report to parents does not fully meet statutory requirements and there is no anti-bullying policy.

68. The school manages its finances well, and benefits from the direction and support of knowledgeable governors. The school's development plan provides a good focus on targets to raise standards further, and is linked closely to the budget. The school has good procedures for securing the best value from its spending, looking carefully at alternative sources for equipment, and making very useful comparisons of the school's performance with that of similar schools. The school uses its funds for pupils with special educational needs very well, employing the special educational needs co-ordinator for over half a week, and providing a good supply of skilled teaching assistants.

69. The staff are well qualified to meet the demands of the curriculum. The school uses their expertise effectively, and staff benefit from very good opportunities to attend courses and develop their skills. New staff benefit from very good induction procedures, and the support of an experienced member of staff. These measures work very well, and ensure that new staff settle quickly, and soon make a valuable contribution to the school.

70. The accommodation is good overall, and generally allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. However, the outdoor accommodation for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory, because there is no separate fenced area or covered area for outside play. This limits opportunities for physical development. The school building is welcoming, and is enhanced by colourful displays. It is in good decorative order and is well maintained. The caretaker works hard to achieve good standards of cleanliness. The classrooms are of adequate size to accommodate the number of pupils. The library areas are attractive, and well stocked. Open areas in the corridors provide good opportunities for group work, for example, with computers. The spacious hall provides adequate accommodation for collective worship, physical education and social interaction at lunchtime. The playgrounds and attractive grounds provide good opportunities for physical education and play. The swimming pool is a great asset, and has a very good effect on pupils' standards of swimming.

71. The school's resources are satisfactory overall, and good in science, music, physical education and religious education. The weaknesses identified in the previous inspection have been addressed, and pupils now have a wide range of up-to-date materials to make lessons interesting.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to build on the school's many strengths, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- (1) **Raise standards in geography by ensuring that the subject is taught regularly, and in sufficient depth** (paragraphs 12, 121, 123, 124).
- (2) **Investigate ways to provide children in the Foundation Stage with a play area that is easily accessible, and can develop their physical and creative abilities to the full** (paragraphs 2, 20, 23, 70, 77).
- (3) **Have higher expectations of pupils' handwriting throughout the school, so that they learn to write neatly, and join their letters consistently** (paragraphs 7, 22, 79, 85, 86, 92).
- (4) **Ensure the safety of staff and pupils by:**
 - having portable electrical appliances checked regularly, and
 - producing an up-to-date health and safety policy (paragraph 48).

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Produce an anti-bullying policy (paragraph 51).
- Put more information about the provision for pupils with special educational needs, disabled pupils and attendance rates in the governors' annual report to parents (paragraph 67).
- Make teachers' marking more consistent, so that it shows pupils how to improve their work (paragraph 44).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	55

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
7	40	42	11	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	200
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	4
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	42
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.1
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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
	2000	16	16	32

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	13	13	15
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	29	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91(91)	91(81)	97(88)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	16	16
	Girls	16	16	16
	Total	30	32	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	94(81)	100(84)	100(81)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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
	2000	14	19	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	14	14
	Girls	15	16	18
	Total	28	30	32
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (100)	91 (94)	97 (100)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	14
	Girls	15	16	17
	Total	27	29	31
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (94)	88 (94)	94 (87)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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	0
Black – other	0
Indian	3
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	171
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.8
Average class size	28.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	157

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	441959
Total expenditure	412710
Expenditure per pupil	2064
Balance brought forward from previous year	23735
Balance carried forward to next year	29249

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	200
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	44	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	56	3	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	28	72	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	56	17	0	3
The teaching is good.	39	61	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	28	61	11	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	47	47	6	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	47	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	28	61	11	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	39	6	3	14
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	64	0	3	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	44	25	8	3

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

66. The school has maintained the good provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. Assessment made of the children on their entry to the school shows their attainment to be above average for their age. From this starting point, the children make satisfactory progress and broaden their knowledge in all areas of learning. By the time they are ready to start in Year 1, the majority of children exceed the nationally recommended goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in their personal, social and emotional development. In their creative and physical development, most children achieve appropriately and are on course to attain the goals.

67. The children are admitted to the Reception class to start their full-time education at the beginning of the term in which they become five. The school does, however, provide parents with the option of part-time education for their child at the beginning of the year in which they are five. The well-planned curriculum in the Reception class gives children a wide range of relevant experiences. The quality of teaching, overall, is good, and prepares children well for work in the National Curriculum.

Personal, social and emotional development

68. Standards are above average in this area of learning. Children make satisfactory progress, and, by the time they leave the Reception class most are on course to have exceeded the nationally recommended goals. The children are very confident, sustain their interest well and show great pleasure in what they achieve. They choose activities in a sensible, structured way and apply themselves to tasks with enthusiasm. All children respond positively and have mature attitudes to their learning. They play together well, and initiate their own imaginative ideas. For example, while playing in the 'castle' and re-enacting the nursery rhyme 'Humpty Dumpty', the children decided that Humpty needed some medicine to make him better when he fell off the wall, and set about concocting a mixture in the castle kitchen. The behaviour in and around school is very good. Children attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and most undress and dress themselves independently before and after physical education and swimming lessons.

69. All children settle quickly to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and concentrate for appropriate periods of time. The quality of teaching and learning is good: personal and social development is strongly promoted in all areas of learning, and the planning is thorough. The Reception teacher has created a secure environment in which children are valued as individuals. All adults working in the Reception class provide very good role models for the children, always treating each other and the children with courtesy and respect. This leads to trusting relationships, and strengthens the bond within the class. There is an adequate range of resources available, including those for role-play, which gives children the opportunity to experience co-operative and imaginative play. The Reception teacher ensures that there is sufficient time for the children to choose activities for themselves, initiate ideas and solve simple problems while at play. During group activities, all adults take every opportunity to encourage the children to talk about their experiences, take turns, listen to others and develop an awareness of the feelings of others.

Language and literacy

70. The quality of teaching and learning is good in this area. Children make good progress as a result, and, by the time they end the Reception year, most exceed the recommended targets. Their communication skills are particularly strong, and many children speak

fluently with a broad vocabulary. All adults use talk to good effect, and make a point of listening carefully to the children's contributions. Throughout all the areas of learning, both the Reception teacher and helpers talk to the children individually and in groups, to ensure that all extend their vocabulary, and use their language and communication skills for a range of purposes. All adults show children that they value their efforts at communicating. These effective strategies teach children how to listen carefully themselves, and speak clearly to adults and each other. The children sustain attentive listening, and participate confidently in discussions. They enjoy listening to stories, and talk with pleasure about those they have listened to previously. They 'have a go' confidently at writing, and make phonetically plausible attempts at words.

71. Children's good progress is illustrated by the example of one child's writing after only being in school for two terms: 'One day wen I was at scool my toys went on a vencha (adventure) and they went to somebodeys hos and thay plad thear'. By the following term she was writing at length in an imaginative style. By the time children leave Reception, many write independently for a range of purposes that include writing instructions for making play dough, and making an invitation for a birthday party. Children handle books well, and most know that print carries meaning and that text is read from left to right. Many recognise familiar words in simple reading books, and are confident to share their reading books with adults. Skilful teaching introduces the children to rhyming, and they make good progress in linking sounds and spelling patterns by using their knowledge of rhyme to identify words such as, 'dog, log and frog'. For example, when writing their own versions of Humpty Dumpty, they wrote, 'Humpty Dumpty fell off a log, Humpty Dumpty saw a dog'.

72. The Reception teacher has adapted the National Literacy Strategy framework effectively to meet the needs of all children in the class. Their good understanding of phonics is developed through effective word, sentence and text work using well-known stories and rhymes. Children are provided with a good range of purposeful activities to develop their use of language for reading and writing, whatever their stage of development. For example, they are provided with paper and pencils in the writing area for 'pretend' writing activities and lists of common key words are displayed prominently to reinforce learning. The shared partnership with parents for reading has a positive impact on the child's development and learning. Through the effective interaction and high expectations of work that can be achieved, all children extend their communication, language and literacy skills well.

Mathematical development

73. This area of learning is taught well and children learn well. By the end of the Reception year, most children make good progress to exceed the goals for mathematics. Most children count to 10, and many count confidently beyond to 20. They copy-write their numbers well, and, by the end of the Reception year, many children record their numbers unaided. A significant number of higher attaining children count, order, add and subtract numbers when solving problems involving ten or more objects. In their early work, children are provided with a wide range of practical experiences, such as dice games, shape puzzles, building with bricks and exploring water and sand. They make repeating patterns of shape and show awareness of time by drawing pictures of events in their day and putting in the hands on the face of a clock to the hours of 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock.

74. The teacher introduces more formal activities for mathematics effectively through the national framework for teaching numeracy. Children use mathematical language such as 'more' or 'less' to compare two numbers, and find one more or one less than a number from one to 20. Many children name the simple shapes of triangle, circle and square and use everyday language to describe the properties of shapes, such as a square having four corners and four straight sides. The teacher plans the work well, and encourages children to see mathematics all around them, and helps develop their mathematical ideas through

play and singing rhymes. Adults use questions skilfully to encourage children to organise their ideas and explain what they have done. For example, during the introduction to a numeracy lesson on addition, the teacher took ten cubes, put five behind her back and asked, "I've got five here, ten altogether, how many behind my back?" After each question, the teacher asked the children to explain how they had worked out their answer. Adults use correct mathematical vocabulary from the outset, and all the planned activities build on the children's learning effectively with tasks that are appropriate and in line with the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

75. Children enter Reception with a good general knowledge, and make satisfactory progress in their awareness of the world around them. The teaching and learning are good, and most children reach above average standards by the time they enter Year 1. Activities are planned and organised well, and this planning provides effective links between the recommended areas of learning and the National Curriculum subjects. Taking themes such as 'Toys' and 'Homes', adults plan activities well to enable children to explore aspects of the environment, and to relate the work to their own experiences. Discussion forms a very important part of the work; children are encouraged to be observant and describe what they see. In work related to scientific enquiry, the children achieve highly. For example, they sort different materials according to whether they are plastic, metal, wood or paper. In their work on electricity, they show a good understanding about everyday appliances that use electricity, and investigate the making of a working circuit using a battery, wires and a bulb. Many children talk about where they live, their families and their immediate environment with good understanding. On a simple map of the village, they highlight the route they walked, and use information and communication technology to produce a pictorial graph of how they travel to school. In their work on the theme 'Toys', the children compare old and new toys.

76. A particularly strong feature in developing the children's understanding of the past is through the use of role-play. For example, the shared area for all three early years classes has been converted into a large castle with three rooms, a kitchen, a banqueting hall and a chapel. This provides the children with an excellent opportunity to learn about the past by actually 'living' it. The teacher provides an appropriate range of construction toys and materials for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. Their skills in design and technology are good, as seen in their drawings of robots and the posters of East Bergholt. The children make good progress when using the computer, and demonstrate appropriate skills for their age in their control of the mouse when using a number program. Children are introduced to a suitable range of religions and beliefs through the religious education lessons, and an appropriate selection of role-play resources is provided to introduce children to different cultures.

Physical development

77. Children's physical development is average for their age, and they make sound progress. On entry to the school, the children's ability to handle tools, such as scissors and pencils, with control is relatively weak. Adults provide many opportunities for children to learn, practise and refine their manipulative skills. As a result, children pick up small items of equipment competently when engaging in play activities, make sturdy models with construction toys and make marks with a variety of painting and writing materials. Teaching and learning, in general, are satisfactory in this area, but a weakness in the provision, which explains why children's physical development lags behind other areas, lies in the lack of a secure designated outdoor play area. Neither is there a suitable sheltered

area outdoors for children to use when the weather is such that they cannot get out onto the playground to play. The Reception teacher does, however, make full use of the school's facilities, including the swimming pool, for teaching physical skills. In the outdoor games lesson observed, children participated well and used the playground space appropriately. They show reasonable skills, and most children can drop and catch a ball. However, their skills in throwing a ball are weaker. When in the swimming pool, all children make a good attempt at swimming with the use of floats and arm-bands, and are confident in the water.

Creative development

78. The children make sound progress overall in developing their creative skills, and most meet the nationally recommended targets by the time they enter Year 1. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and most activities are organised well. Adults plan role-play activities well, and this enables children to play out imaginary situations and dress up accordingly. They use dressing-up and other resources imaginatively, sustain aspects of characters for appropriate periods of time and talk enthusiastically about what they are doing. For example, while at play in the 'castle', children have the opportunity to take on the role of different people who lived in castles in the past, such as those who worked in the kitchens as well as the kings and queens. They play co-operatively as part of a group, and collaborate well when using the bricks for building. Their creative play outdoors, however, is restricted by the lack of a suitable area for them to use freely on a daily basis. Children sing a variety of simple songs from memory, and enjoy participating in action songs. They paint freely, and produce some good self-portraits. They mix colours well when painting, and the finished products illustrate the sound development of their skills. Children make their own blocks for printing, and use them to produce prints of a good standard for their age. However, there is, in general, insufficient time given to allowing the children to explore a rich and varied range of art activities as it is an area of learning that is generally timetabled to one afternoon a week.

ENGLISH

79. Standards in English are well above those expected nationally for seven and eleven year olds in reading, writing, speaking and listening. This represents a very good improvement, overall, in standards at both key stages compared with those reported in the school's last inspection, when all aspects of English were judged to be average. The findings of this inspection differ from the results of the 2000 national test results at Key Stage 1, which showed that standards were above average when compared with all schools nationally, but that standards were below those achieved by pupils from similar schools. During this year, the school has made good improvements in many aspects of English, especially in the way teachers have raised their expectations of the way pupils use language in all areas of the curriculum. The school is, however, aware of need to improve pupils' handwriting skills. At Key Stage 2, standards found in this inspection mirror those in the 2000 national tests, which showed pupils to be well above average.

80. All pupils make good progress in English. During this inspection, no differences were found in the attainment and progress of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English, and most attain average standards by the time they leave the school. The good support in lessons enables them to understand the work and improve their reading and writing skills well. Those withdrawn for specialist work on their reading do well, and make good improvement in their fluency and accuracy.

81. In both key stages, standards in speaking and listening are well above average. Pupils are especially good at listening to, and talking about, stories, rhymes and poems, which was evident when Year 1 pupils discussed the story 'Anansi and Mr. Dry Bone'. All pupils listened very attentively, and were aware of the importance of taking turns and valuing the contribution of others. Pupils in Year 2 listen attentively, and express their ideas clearly

using a good range of vocabulary, as was seen when they discussed the poem '4 o'clock Friday' by John Foster. They clearly enjoyed the humour, and recognised that the poem was written in rhyming couplets.

82. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to widen their vocabulary, and are responsive listeners. They listen thoughtfully and show very good respect for the views of others. Most express their ideas clearly, confidently and fluently. They respond precisely to the point being made, and use well-developed vocabulary and complex sentences. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils discussed the poem 'Unwillingly to school' by Geoffrey Harrison. The teacher directed the discussion well, and ensured that all pupils were able to take part and extend their understanding of the humour in the poem. The whole-school productions, and 'sharing assemblies' are particularly effective in developing good speaking and listening skills.

83. Pupils' standards in reading are well above average at both key stages. Their obvious enjoyment of books is a strength of their learning. By Year 2, pupils handle books confidently and with care. They are keen to take them home regularly to practise their skills. They show their good understanding of the text when they express their ideas willingly about what may happen later in the story. Nearly all pupils read simple texts accurately with understanding, and employ a good number of strategies to attempt unfamiliar words. A good number of higher attaining pupils read challenging texts accurately. They have strong views about their likes and dislikes in reading.

84. Pupils' interest in, and enthusiasm for, books develop well as they get older, and by Year 6 they read with fluency, accuracy and very good expression. Most give a concise summary of events, discuss characters in detail and make accurate predictions of possible outcomes. They have a very good understanding of the main parts of a story, and express their preferences for a range of books. Most pupils name a favourite author, such as Roald Dahl, J.K. Rowling and Paul Jennings, and read aloud confidently before their classmates. Pupils' research and reference skills are good across the key stage. The position of the school's two libraries enables pupils in both key stages to have easy access to a wide range of books, and provides them with good opportunities to browse and extend their research skills.

85. Standards in writing are well above average at both key stages. In Year 2, pupils show good understanding of a story's structure, and most write at an appropriate length for their age. Many use a broad vocabulary, and their spelling and punctuation are mostly accurate. Many pupils use very good vocabulary, as was illustrated when a Year 1 pupil wrote 'I drifted away', when describing a balloon ride. They use interesting vocabulary, as was shown when they wrote 'candy floss clouds' and 'a blossom tree swaying against the peaceful river' to illustrate their 'Wings' poems. Although joined handwriting starts to be taught during Year 2, most pupils print their writing or use a mixture of joined and printed writing, which limits the speed of their work. Throughout the key stage, many pupils do not form their letters well, and some hold their pencils incorrectly, which makes it difficult to write neatly.

86. In Year 6, pupils write in a very good range of styles including diaries, poetry, stories and reports. Much of the writing shows a very good command of style and expression. They use complex sentence structure and creative vocabulary, and write in a logical sequence. They sustain concentration well, which enables them to extend their learning. In some of the best work, Year 6 pupils were studying the story of 'The Snow Spider' by Jenny Nimmo and wrote very good character studies, which showed their skills in the use of inference and deduction. Their writing shows great understanding of another's feelings, such as how 'Mrs. Griffiths' felt when she discovered that 'Bethan' had disappeared. Some of their work, however, is let down by the standard of their handwriting, which can be untidy, and a mixture of joined and printed letters.

87. Pupils in Year 6 are confident in writing extended stories and develop their ideas very well. They plan, draft and refine their written work conscientiously, and this helps to maintain the high standard of their work. Also, because the use of paragraphs is taught early, pupils develop this skill well. Pupils discuss and appraise each other's work critically but fairly, and this gives them good ideas of how to improve their work. All work is marked promptly and often with helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work. A good initiative is that individual targets are set for pupils and are reviewed regularly. Year 6 pupils are responding well to the innovative idea to write stories for children in Year 2. This is enabling pupils to have a reason for writing, to take pride in their work and is helping them to understand how to structure, sequence and present their writing for a given audience.

88. Throughout the school, standards in literacy are well above average, and help pupils to achieve high standards in other areas of the curriculum. In subjects such as science, geography and history, pupils' well above average attainment in reading and writing skills results in their being able to express their ideas clearly.

89. The quality of teaching and learning in English is very good at both key stages. This shows a very good improvement in teaching from the previous inspection, when teaching was judged to be satisfactory overall, with some good features. Teachers' very good subject knowledge is evident in their clear and lively presentations and confident management of the literacy hour. This ensures that lessons move at a quick pace, and secure pupils' interest and attention. The very good relationships between staff and pupils provide a very supportive, caring environment for learning. All staff set clear guidelines for acceptable behaviour, and pupils respond positively. The development of language has a high priority in the school, and teachers reinforce this very well by using correct terminology, such as 'similes', 'alliteration' and 'anthology', which enables pupils to further their knowledge and understanding of these terms from an early age. All teachers use effective, open-ended questioning, which enables pupils to think clearly before answering. Teachers help pupils to feel successful by praising them for their efforts, which encourages them to sustain concentration and extend their learning. Teachers have very high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and set challenging tasks which enable all pupils to achieve high standards of attainment. Teachers explain clearly what pupils are expected to learn within each lesson, and use the summing up sessions well to reinforce pupils' learning.

90. Strengths in teaching and learning of English across the school were illustrated in a Year 6 lesson, when pupils took turns to become one of the characters from 'The Snow Spider' by Jenny Nimmo, while others questioned them about the characters' 'feelings and about their lives'. The discussion was organised well by the teacher and every pupil took part eagerly in the role-play activity, which enabled them to extend their language skills well. Through very perceptive questioning, the teacher enabled pupils to explore the underlying meaning and feelings within this story. The teacher's very high expectation of the quality of work she wanted from pupils encouraged them to feel confident to express their ideas, and develop their skills of using inference and deduction. This very challenging task engrossed pupils; they took part in the role-play enthusiastically, and made very good gains in their understanding of how authors use words to create different moods and atmospheres. This was the result of very good subject knowledge clearly conveyed to pupils, and the high level of challenge set by the teacher.

91. In all classes, teachers pitch questions at an appropriate level, and ensure that all pupils are fully involved. This is helping pupils to become more confident speakers. In Years 1 and 2, teachers use very opportunity to help pupils develop confidence in all aspects of English. In a Year 1 lesson, for example, the teacher used the story of 'Anansi and Mr. Dry Bone' extremely well to help pupils read with expression. The combination of a story, which pupils knew well, her quick fire questioning and the very good use of praise when pupils read expressively – "Wonderful, it makes me so interested in your reading"-

enabled them to make very good progress with their reading. She inspired pupils, and all made excellent progress in their reading, oral and listening skills.

92. Although teachers' expectations are usually high, when older pupils print, rather than join their writing, it is not always corrected. This is why some pupils in Years 5 and 6 write with a mixture of printed and joined letters.

93. The curriculum in English is well-balanced, and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy very well. The procedures for, and use of, assessment are very good. The language policy and scheme of work support teaching and learning well, which is a very good improvement since the previous inspection, when the policy had only just been agreed and the school did not have a scheme of work for English. Pupils have appropriate individual targets in literacy to motivate them and give them responsibility for their learning. Information and communication technology is used well throughout both key stages to support teaching and learning in English. The co-ordinator is very experienced, and provides very good support for staff. She monitors planning and has undertaken some monitoring of the teaching of English. Learning support assistants provide good support for group work. Resources are adequate in English, but the school realises that Key Stage 1 requires more books. The school has made very good improvements to the library since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be 'poor'. The school now has a library area for each of the two key stages with a good range of new books. The non-fiction area in the Key Stage 2 library has an appropriate range of books to support research and study skills, and to enable pupils of all ages to enjoy their reading. Imaginative displays of pupils' work such as the 'Owl' poems by Year 4 and the thoughtful writing by Year 3 pupils on 'In my perfect garden' instil a sense of pride in pupils, and celebrate their creativity. English supports pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development very well, when pupils work cooperatively together, and enjoy reading classic works of literature.

MATHEMATICS

94. In both Year 2 and Year 6, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are well above average. This is a very good improvement from the previous inspection, when standards were average, and is a result of very good teaching and the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. In both key stages, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress.

95. In the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 national tests, standards were well above average compared with schools nationally, but only average compared with similar schools. Standards have risen steadily since 1996, except for a fall from 1998 to 1999. Boys have outperformed girls, although the findings of the current inspection do not show any significant difference in attainment by gender.

96. By the age of seven, pupils use quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20. They have a good understanding of which strategies to use to solve problems. Pupils attain well as they classify two and three-dimensional shapes with reference to their properties. They make very good use of their information and communication technology skills to produce effective patterns based on reflective symmetry. Pupils use standard metric units confidently in investigating length, mass and capacity, and construct accurate Venn and Carroll diagrams well to represent data. The pupils use their mathematics skills well in other subjects. For example, Year 2 pupils have produced accurate bar charts of ways that they come to school, and of cars parked in School Lane. Year 1 pupils have done the same to show their favourite milkshakes.

97. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is very good. In the previous inspection, some teaching was judged unsatisfactory. In a Year 2 lesson, two teachers worked together very well to help the pupils learn about the concept of fractions as equal

parts of a whole. They used questioning very well, in order to make the pupils think, asking, "Why is this shape not a half?" They matched work well to varying needs, and challenged higher attaining pupils appropriately. Lower attaining groups had the opportunity to use a computer program to aid learning. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher started with a brisk, demanding mental mathematics session, which helped the pupils understand place value in two-digit numbers and how to add or subtract nine from a number. This enabled the pupils to build well on earlier work. The teachers are well supported by classroom assistants who support groups or individuals effectively.

98. In the 2000 end of Key Stage 2 national tests, standards were well above average compared with schools nationally, and above average compared with similar schools. A high proportion of pupils attained the higher National Curriculum Level 5, and one pupil attained Level 6. There has been a steady rise in standards since 1996, despite a slight fall from 1999 to 2000. Boys have outperformed girls, although, currently, there is no evidence of any significant difference in attainment by gender. A realistic target of 91 per cent of pupils to achieve the expected Level 4 or above, and 33 per cent to achieve Level 5, has been set for this year.

99. In Year 6, nearly all pupils multiply and divide whole numbers by 10, 100 and 1000 easily. They have a very good understanding of negative numbers and equivalent fractions, and calculate the circumference and area of circles. They use protractors accurately to measure different kinds of angles to the nearest degree. They are good at constructing and interpreting various kinds of graphs and diagrams to illustrate data, such as their favourite football teams. There is evidence of the pupils using their mathematical skills well in other subjects. For example, in a scientific topic on insulation, Year 6 pupils drew accurate line graphs of the different melting rates of ice. Year 5 pupils used their knowledge of estimation to produce an interesting class booklet of amazing facts, such as the 1520 school lunches eaten by the class in a year, and the 12,000 bricks in the school wall.

100. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is very good, and explains why pupils attain such high standards. The previous inspection judged teaching to be very variable, with some unsatisfactory, so there has clearly been considerable improvement here, particularly in the way that teachers get pupils to think their way through a problem. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, the teacher used very good strategies to help the pupils tackle problem solving, which many of them had found quite difficult, asking, "What is the important information in this problem?" She encouraged the pupils to approach the problem step by step, and to check the reasonableness of their answers. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to explain their strategies, and this helped them to quicken their responses in a mental mathematics session on numbers and capacity. He encouraged the pupils to make estimates before calculating the capacities of various containers. Teachers make lessons interesting by thinking of different ways to motivate pupils, using games or challenges. In a Year 4 lesson, for example, the teacher helped pupils to reinforce their knowledge of multiplication tables by saying, "I'm thinking of a number...", and this made pupils think of a range of possibilities.

101. The teachers are very confident with the three-part daily mathematics lesson. They start with brisk mental and oral mathematics sessions, and move smoothly into well-organised group work, in which the teachers involve classroom assistants effectively. The teachers encourage the pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge to solve real life problems, and this works well. They consolidate learning by means of effective summing-up sessions, which lead on to regular homework tasks.

102. The co-ordinator is a very enthusiastic mathematics graduate, who manages the subject extremely well. Planning is soundly based on the National Numeracy Strategy and, in order to evaluate pupils' performance, the co-ordinator monitors both planning and

teaching. There are very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and the teachers use information gained from assessment very well to plan subsequent work. During the inspection, some teachers altered their weekly planning as a result of their assessment of how some pupils struggled with earlier work. These assessments also prove useful in identifying more able pupils, who are challenged to complete very demanding tasks in groups taught separately by the headteacher. Learning resources, which were barely sufficient in the previous inspection, are now adequate, although there are too few computer programs for mathematics. The co-ordinator has built up a very useful Key Stage 1 library of mathematical games, which the pupils can take home to enhance learning. She organised a successful 'Mathematics Day' to raise the profile of the subject, and to stimulate the pupils' interest. In encouraging collaborative work and the sharing of resources when necessary, the subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social development. National Curriculum requirements are met.

SCIENCE

103. Pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain standards that are well above average, which is a significant improvement on the judgement made by the school's last inspection, when attainment was judged to be in line with the national expectation by the end of both key stages. This is due to the school's concerted effort to develop and raise the profile of science, and to provide more opportunities for pupils to conduct experiments. Pupils achieved very high standards in the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 assessments made by teachers. The percentage of pupils reaching Level 3 and above was well above the national average. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, and attain at, or close to, national standards.

104. The end of key stage tests results showed that pupils in Year 6 achieved well above average results compared with all schools, and when compared with similar schools. A particular strength of attainment is the significant number of pupils who achieved standards higher than the nationally expected level. Trends over time from 1997 show that the school's performance has improved year on year, and continues to maintain the above average standards. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

105. By the age of seven, pupils have a good understanding of the organs of the body, and why living things are found in different places. Their experiments to discover what will happen if you put a coat on a snowman, and carrying out an investigation using ice, showed a very good understanding of how to make a test fair. They have a good knowledge of forces, as was illustrated in their tests to explore which ball will move the furthest down a slope. Many pupils think scientifically by the age of seven, and present their work in an appropriate variety of ways, such as drawings, writing, charts and tables.

106. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress in Years 3 to 6. By Year 6, they carry out experiments methodically, and plan their own investigations very well. Their recording is good, and is illustrated very well by line graphs and charts to show their results. They have a good understanding of the human body, and the effects of exercise on the organs and muscles. They work confidently with materials, and conduct good tests to show how they can change when heated or cooled. Pupils are confident investigating forces, and have a good understanding of the potential dangers of electricity.

107. The quality of teaching and learning is very good at Key Stage 1, and promotes good progress. All pupils enjoy science, and profit from the enthusiasm of their teachers. Lessons are made interesting, and, as a result, pupils concentrate fully on their work, and make very effective use of the time available. In a very stimulating Year 1 lesson that illustrated the quality of teaching and learning, pupils were asked to explore a variety of materials to find out which would make the strongest carrier bag. The teacher introduced

the topic extremely well, and set the scene by telling the pupils that she had a friend whose bag kept breaking, and he could not find one that worked. On hearing this, she told him that she had a class full of scientists and they would help. By very skilful questions such as, "What does it need to be a good bag?" and, "What qualities does it need?" pupils applied their previously gained knowledge to the task, and put forward lots of ideas such as, "It needs to be flexible and waterproof". The very high expectations of the teacher were clearly evident in the tasks set for pupils, and they could hardly wait to make bags from different materials, and test them to see how many potatoes they would hold.

108. The well above average attainment at Key Stage 2 is due to the very skilled teaching, which results in good progress. This is a significant improvement in the teaching of science since the last inspection, when the quality of teaching was judged to be 'variable'. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject, and provide accurate and detailed explanations so that pupils learn quickly. They plan work very well and use a good range of strategies, and this is why pupils respond with such enthusiasm. In all lessons, teachers manage the behaviour very well, and pitch their lessons at an appropriately challenging level. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and this leads to a good progression of skills as pupils move through the school, particularly in their ability to set up their own investigations.

109. Strengths of the teaching of science and its impact on learning in Key Stage 2 were illustrated in the very good lesson seen in which pupils in Year 6 were given the opportunity to devise and carry out their own fair tests. This covered a range of experiences that included testing the strength of tea in tea bags, the absorbency of sponges and investigating the quality of different soaps. Pupils were fascinated by the task, and relished being expected to explore and take responsibility for their own learning. As the lesson progressed, all pupils put forward ideas about the methods they were going to use, and were able to explain how they were going to make the test fair. At the end of the lesson, when the pupils presented their findings to the class, the teacher continued to extend their scientific thinking by asking questions such as, "What is scientific about your test?" "How could it be made more scientific?" and "What would you change if you did it again?" By the end, all pupils had made rapid progress, and learned much about how best to test materials.

110. A particularly effective aspect of science teaching throughout the school is the opportunity for pupils to work together to discuss and develop their own ideas. For example, pupils in Year 4 worked in small groups to create a food chain to represent the feeding relationships within specific habitats. All staff show confidence when teaching science, and provide a very good range of opportunities for the pupils to become actively involved in their own learning. The teaching style is such that pupils are encouraged to ask questions to clarify their ideas; as a result, they know the reason for learning and achieve well.

111. The subject co-ordinator manages the subject well, and has contributed much to developing the school's outdoor environment that involved pupils in creating a wild life area in the grounds. The school is recognised as an 'Eco-School' and is working towards a European Eco-Award. The school has produced a useful scheme of work that provides very good coverage of all aspects of the subject. Assessment procedures are good, and have benefited from staff meetings to determine and agree upon the levels of pupils' work. The subject makes an important contribution to pupils' spiritual and social development when teachers bring a real sense of wonder to the lessons and allow pupils to collaborate when carrying out investigations. Resources in science are good; the school grounds are well developed and are used for environmental studies. This represents very good improvement since the previous inspection when it stated that the resources for science were inadequate. National Curriculum requirements are met.

ART AND DESIGN

112. Pupils' work in art and design, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is above average by the age of seven years old, and well above average standards by the age of eleven years old. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe the teaching of art and design in the Year 3 and 6 classes due to the school's timetabling and curricular organisation. Judgements are based on this evidence, discussions with teachers and pupils, analysis of art displays around the school and on the school's planning and records. This is a very good improvement on the average standards at Key Stage 1, and the below average standards at Key Stage 2 in the school's previous OFSTED inspection report in 1997. A key issue in that report was to raise the standards of attainment in art and design at Key Stage 2, and the school has addressed this very well by improving the planning of the curriculum, and providing lots of stimulating challenges to help pupils be more creative.

113. The quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages, and promotes good progress. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject, and this ensures that pupils learn the basic skills of drawing, designing and painting well. Teachers' high expectations mean that pupils move on from basic techniques quickly. Pupils are given many opportunities to experiment with more exciting methods. As a result, they are eager to participate in each activity, and derive a great sense of pleasure from the subject. Teachers provide a wide range of stimulating experiences and a very good variety of materials and processes, which improve pupils' expertise well as they progress through the school. A particularly good feature of pupils' work is the strong link that it has with other subjects. In work linked with history, for example, Year 2 pupils used paints well to create castles and soldiers to illustrate their work on William the Conqueror. Some of their observational pencil drawings of shoes show very good attention to detail and understanding of this technique. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have created their own exciting sculptures using natural materials after studying the artwork of Andrew Goldsworthy. Year 1 pupils achieved very high standards as they created a large 'dragon', which is displayed well in the school grounds. Year 2 pupils used twigs, leaves and flowers for their smaller sculptures, and these turned out well. Their pencil drawings of these show how much they have learned, and some are of very high quality.

114. As they move into the Key Stage 2 classes, pupils refine their skills well. They use sketchbooks very well to experiment with ideas and different materials, such as their designs for block printing in Year 3, and colour washes for shades of materials to be used in Year 6 pupils' weavings. Pupils' detailed drawings of trainers are mature for their age, and show very good understanding of the skill of using pencils in various ways to create perspective by different depths of shading. They sustain concentration very well because they are so interested in their artwork. The Year 4 tie-dye cushions and bags are decorated well with creative stitching, and, together with their delicate batiks, make good links with their geography work on India. Some of the Year 5 self-portrait collages show a unique 'hidden side' to their characters. A Year 6 lesson, which was one of a series of lessons on weaving, illustrated the strengths of the teaching and learning. Pupils had looked previously at pictures of landscapes and sunsets before sketching their own ideas for a woven picture. They were encouraged to experiment with different colour washes before deciding on the various mix of materials for their design. They had already made their own card looms and were moving on to the process of weaving. The teacher provided pupils with very good support, whilst, at the same time, encouraging them to make the final decisions, and this developed their creative talents very well. The teacher extended their learning of new techniques very well, and pupils showed very good skills at weaving with different materials, such as wools and ribbons, creating different textures and depth to their landscape or seascape designs. Two very effective completed 'sunset' pictures showed the strength of teaching, and how much pupils had learned.

115. For the past year, two co-ordinators have shared the post for art and design. They have good subject knowledge, and work very well together to provide good support for staff. During this year, they have studied the nationally recommended scheme of work for art and design, and are amalgamating this with the school's own scheme. This provides a good structure for teaching and pupils' learning. An advisor from the local education authority has led an informative 'workshop' for the teachers, which has helped them to plan the art and design curriculum confidently, and raise the standard of pupils' attainment. Overall, resources are adequate, but there are insufficient examples of the work of famous artists. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed very well when they work well together and respectfully evaluate the art and design work of others.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Standards in Year 2 are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making sound progress in developing their designing and making skills. Boys and girls attain equally well.

117. By the age of seven, the pupils have a sound understanding of how mechanisms work, and of how materials can be joined in different ways. They choose appropriate materials and tools for themselves, as was seen to good effect when they made wooden photograph frames, and decorated them with crepe paper and foil. In work linked to reversible and irreversible change in science, Year 2 pupils made some fairy cakes and chocolate cakes, and showed good skills in selecting ingredients and mixing them together.

118. Standards in Year 6 are above average, which is an improvement from the previous inspection which judged standards to be average. This is a result of better all-round teaching, with less over-direction of learning and a good balance between designing, making and evaluating. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress. Pupils design and make very good motorised vehicles and quiz boxes, incorporating batteries, wires and lights. They produce very good design sheets, with word-processed text outlining step-by-step instructions, illustrated with accurately labelled diagrams. Year 5 pupils have designed and made very effective Morse-Code receiving towers, incorporating electrical circuits. They have also made some imaginative cam toys. In food technology, these pupils make a pizza, emphasising the importance of both taste and appearance. Younger pupils in this key stage have designed and made good boxes with wooden frames and lids fastened in different ways. They also use their knowledge of electrical circuits well to make effective torches. They have a good understanding of how pneumatics can be used in the design and making of some imaginative 'talking heads'.

119. The quality of teaching and learning in both key stages is good, and this is promoting good progress. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, when teaching was found to be 'variable and largely over-prescriptive'. In a well-planned Year 1 lesson, the teacher and other adult helpers encouraged the pupils to experiment for themselves and they used questioning well to draw out ideas from the pupils. This helped the pupils develop confidence in adding various flavours to milk to produce milkshakes. The teacher made useful links with literacy, referring to 'Willy Wonka's secret recipe', and with mathematics when pupils had to produce a bar chart of the pupils' favourite flavours. In a Year 5 lesson, the teacher made effective links with the pupils' knowledge of electrical circuits in science when he asked them to design and make an electronic quiz board. He used questioning well to make the pupils think and to draw out their ideas, asking, "What things did you have to consider when planning your quiz-board?" He encouraged pupils to develop their independence in learning, and they responded extremely well, with the result that there was a quiet, purposeful learning environment where all worked hard to complete the task.

120. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. There is a good policy, which meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning is based soundly on guidelines produced by the local education authority. The co-ordinator offers colleagues help and advice informally, and she has led some useful training that has helped to develop colleagues' confidence and expertise in design and technology. Learning resources, which the previous inspection found were poor, are now adequate. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. In encouraging collaborative work and the sharing of resources, the subject is making a positive contribution to the pupils' social development.

GEOGRAPHY

121. During the inspection there were no opportunities to observe geography lessons due to the structure of the curriculum. Judgements are made on the basis of the analysis of pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with pupils and teachers. These show that pupils' standards are average by Year 2 but, by Year 6, they are below average. In Year 6, this is not as good as judgement of the last inspection, when attainment was judged to be 'just satisfactory'. The evidence provided, and discussions with pupils, indicate that the curriculum in Year 6 is too narrow, and pupils do not have the opportunity to work in any real depth. Overall, pupils' attainment, including those with special educational needs, is not high enough given their skills when they enter Year 1. Pupils make sound progress in their knowledge and understanding of the topics covered, but they do not do enough geography to develop the skills that are expected by pupils in Year 6.

122. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1. The analysis of work shows that pupils in Years 1 and 2 have appropriate early map skills. The teaching uses the pupils' own local knowledge well, and they have drawn satisfactory maps making use of picture symbols to show their route to school. They produce block graphs to show how they travel to school, and carry out a simple traffic survey of the parked cars in the school lane. In Year 2, pupils have planned a good information brochure for East Bergholt, and produced an informative leaflet that shows the main physical features that gives the village its character. In their work on the seaside, pupils express their views clearly about why they like to go there, and make good comparisons of their own village with Clacton. They write interesting descriptions of the features of both places and identify the similarities and differences in the buildings and businesses found there. Teachers make good use of the travels of 'Bertie and Betsy Bear' to develop the pupils' knowledge and understanding of places around the world. In this way, pupils learn about such places as Malaysia, New Zealand and Africa.

123. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and the quality of learning in the geography topics covered are generally satisfactory. However, the planned curriculum for pupils in Year 6 is too narrow, and, consequently, the work is not demanding enough, particularly in the development of their geographical skills. The pupils make steady progress in their knowledge and understanding of the local area, as was illustrated by those in Years 3 and 4 who completed an imaginative project on designing an environmentally friendly village. The project was made meaningful by teachers inviting a local councillor involved in planning to judge the pupils' finished work. Their geography books show that pupils have a sound awareness of the main physical and human features of India. They make good comparisons of the climatic conditions of Bangalore with those in London, and use information and communication technology well to present their findings. By Year 6, pupils use appropriate geographical vocabulary to describe the physical features of coastal regions, such as cave, arch and stack. They have a sound awareness that people can improve or damage the coastal regions, and write knowledgeably about the different strategies that are used for coastal management, such as dredging and building sea walls and groynes. Discussions with Year 6 pupils showed that they have a sound knowledge

and understanding of places such as Ipswich and Cambridge, and the features that make up towns and cities compared with those of their own village. The weaknesses, however, lie in the development of pupils' geographical skills, which are at a very basic level by the age of eleven. They have a reasonable understanding of the functions of a key when using an atlas, for example, and of why scales are used, but know little about the use and interpretation of maps on a range of scales.

124. The subject co-ordinator has only been in post for the past year. Previous to his appointment, there had been no designated co-ordinator for four years, and the subject was left to individual teachers to plan. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and has already identified relevant priorities for future development. Geography is taught largely through a thematic approach using an agreed two-year topic plan. It is taught for three terms within the two-year cycle, alternating with history. However, this does mean that geography is taught for only one term of the year in the first cycle, and this is why pupils' skills do not develop well enough. Assessment procedures are generally satisfactory, and track pupils' progress systematically. Resources have improved since the last inspection with the inclusion of atlases of good quality, and a wide range of maps. The school makes good use of visits in and around the local environment to extend the pupils' geographical knowledge and understanding. The subject promotes the pupils' moral, social and cultural development well as they learn about other cultures around the world, and begin to realise how man affects the environment, but, in view of the curricular weaknesses, geography does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.

HISTORY

125. The standards achieved by pupils in Year 2 are above average, whilst, in Year 6, standards are average. In the previous inspection, there was insufficient evidence on which to judge the standards of achievement. In Key Stage 1, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well in the development of their knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past and in their ability to carry out an historical enquiry. This is largely due to the good teaching that places a strong emphasis on bringing history alive, and, as a result, motivates the pupils. At Key Stage 2, pupils make satisfactory progress overall in their knowledge and understanding of the history study units they cover, and are sufficiently aware of how the past is represented, and how it can be interpreted in different ways.

126. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is good. In a very good Year 1 lesson that illustrated these strengths, the teacher revised work that the pupils had covered on what life in castles was like a long time ago. Following the introduction to the lesson, pupils were taken through the tasks for just long enough to be sure they could work independently. The very dynamic teaching style had pupils enthralled, and very eager to get started. The teacher channelled their excitement well, and used praise very effectively to promote their learning. Consequently, when they were given a range of objects that were used in castles long ago, they investigated them with great eagerness. They were able first to identify the objects, and then to complete a chart on what they used for and where. Their historical knowledge was good, as was demonstrated in the vocabulary they used to identify these artefacts, using terms such as 'quill' and 'goblet' confidently. A very good extension of the task was when the classroom assistant took a group of pupils to the 'castle' role-play area, where they had the opportunity to dress up, and re-enact the roles of people who lived in castles long ago. Year 2 pupils are encouraged to act as 'history detectives', building on the knowledge and skills they have developed in Year 1, and this adds excitement to their learning. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to bring history alive, as pupils use a 'castle' adventure program to hunt for the artefacts that they have previously been given to identify. This works very well, and consolidates pupils' learning of important historical facts. Pupils have a good

knowledge of famous people and events in the past, write in an informed way about the thoughts of King William and talk knowledgeably about the Bayeux tapestry.

127. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 2. Pupils have a sound insight of what life was like for children in the Second World War, and the effect it had on the lives of people from different sections of society. Their writing shows interesting interpretations of why Britain became involved in the war, with one pupil explaining, 'While the Nazis were in Poland, Britain and France were starting to think this isn't on'. Pupils show an appropriate understanding of why the Germans chose to bomb London, and what London did to limit the damage and loss of life. Teachers are enthusiastic about history, and present the work in a way that pupils enjoy so much that they develop their historical skills easily. Pupils are well aware that information about the past can be transmitted in different ways, and that writing expresses the thoughts and ideas of the writer. This was illustrated well in a Year 3 lesson, when the teacher introduced two passages of text written by eminent Romans about the battle between Boudicca and Suetonius. They learned by this approach that accounts can differ, and while one account told of how Boudicca died from an illness, the second told of how she ended her life with poison. The analysis of work shows that Year 3 pupils are dealing with the same basic topic as those in Year 4, and that they have a sound insight into the way of life, beliefs and achievements of Ancient Greece, and the legacy of that civilisation. In Year 5, the pupils develop a good knowledge of Ancient Egypt, and use both primary and secondary sources of information to find out about aspects of their life and beliefs.

128. In general, teachers are demanding of pupils in their oral responses, but less so in terms of the quality of their written work. The analysis of work shows that, although there are some examples of good written work, for example, when writing an account of Edith Searle, much of the work is in the form of worksheets. These often prevent the pupils from applying the high level of literacy skills they have to their work in history. In addition, the opportunity to carry out personal research is sometimes at a superficial level, and does not fully extend the higher attaining pupils in Year 6.

129. The subject co-ordinator has only held the position for a year, and has worked hard to raise the profile of history in the school. However, previous to that, there had not been a designated subject co-ordinator for four years. Consequently, the subject had been slow to develop, and lacked direction. A sound policy, and the schemes used by the school, support teaching and learning reasonably well. However, history is taught over three terms within a two-year cycle, which means that two year groups share the same topic. This can also mean that, for instance, in the second year of the cycle, pupils in Year 6 will only be taught history for one term, and this is not enough to make the best of their historical talents. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, and track pupils' progress systematically. Teachers use drama effectively to make history an excitable experience for pupils. Classes in both key stages have experienced visits to many places of historical interest, which include the Toy Museum, Colchester Castle, Hedingham Castle and the Fitzwilliam Museum. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development, for example through their understanding of the legacy of ancient civilisations to modern society, and discussions about the results of actions carried out in the past.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

130. The attainment of pupils by the end of Years 2 and 6 is above average, and significantly better than the below average standards reported in the previous inspection. Since then, the school has improved teachers' expertise, and improved the supply of computers to match the level found nationally. A particular strength of pupils' attainment lies in the way they use computers in many other subjects, creating graphs in mathematics and science, for example, and researching CD ROM programs in history and geography.

This constant involvement in information and communication technology gives them the confidence and competence that was lacking at the time of the last inspection.

131. In Year 2, pupils communicate their ideas clearly on a computer, combining text and pictures with good skills and printing their work independently. They work quickly using the keyboard and mouse, and are confident editing their text and changing fonts. Pupils frame questions with good skill to negotiate simple adventure simulations, and are starting to understand that inappropriate questions yield inappropriate results. They construct databases skilfully, and use the information to, for example, illustrate in graphical form how far their models travel that were made in a design and technology lesson.

132. In Year 6, pupils have good skills in using word processing programs. They use data handling programs well to produce pie graphs of their mathematical investigations, and produce very good pie charts in science of the different teeth in the human mouth. Their good understanding of how to frame questions is illustrated when they use 'decision trees' very effectively to classify materials in science. They control a programmable toy well, and move on to attain high standards by putting together a sequence of moves to create shapes on the computer screen. Their use of a presentation program is of a particularly high standard, with many producing excellent information sheets which combine text and graphics. They show a very good knowledge of the use of information and communication technology in society by producing exciting illustrated books for younger pupils to read. Pupils use the Internet well, and convert currency, for example, using the rates shown on financial websites.

133. Pupils achieve well in information and communication technology. The regular practice they have in many lessons, and good planning of tasks for pupils of all abilities, ensure that they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their information and communication technology skills, and also benefit from specialist programs to help their reading and spelling.

134. The quality of teaching was unsatisfactory in the last inspection, and pupils learned slowly. The judgement of this inspection is that the quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. The teachers' confidence, knowledge, and willingness to use computers as an every-day piece of classroom equipment explain why pupils are so at ease with the technology. Their clear explanations give pupils the necessary skills, whilst their willingness, when appropriate, to allow pupils to work on their own develops their independence. Teachers are confident in their knowledge, and this ensures that pupils learn the necessary skills in the correct sequence. Their demonstrations are clear, and give pupils a good chance of success when they try themselves. Teachers extend higher attaining pupils well by requiring them to try more adventurous tasks, with larger numbers in data work, for example, and by asking them to reflect critically on their presentations. The school has made an innovative move by employing a technician who teaches many of the lessons. This works well, as her experience and knowledge lend much to the quality of teaching and pupils' learning.

135. The school has a good scheme of work, which provides useful advice on how to use information and communication technology to support work in other subjects. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, and matches their attainment accurately against that expected of pupils nationally. The teacher with responsibility for co-ordinating information and communication technology is enthusiastic and knowledgeable and has played a significant role in the raising of standards since the previous inspection. He monitors the work completed in each class satisfactorily by scrutinising the pupils' work, and has observed some teaching. The school's response to the criticisms of the previous inspection has been very positive. A well-structured action plan directed the school towards a thorough review of the provision, and led to good staff training, and improved resources. The

timetabling of specific information and communication technology lessons works well, and ensures that all pupils have regular and demanding work on computers.

MUSIC

136. Standards in music are above average for pupils at seven, and well above average at eleven years old. This is a very good improvement compared with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection in 1997, when attainment was judged to be average for seven-year-old pupils, and there was insufficient evidence of attainment for pupils at eleven years old. Evidence from this inspection is based on lesson observations, scrutiny of teachers' planning, assemblies and discussions with teachers and pupils. Pupils enjoy their music making, and their achievement is good across the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, achieve appropriate standards and take a full part in all musical activities.

137. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages, with some examples of very good teaching and learning. Lessons are planned well, and prepared with a broad range of challenging musical activities. Teachers help pupils to be aware of what they are expected to learn by sharing the aims of lessons with them at the start. This works well; it keeps pupils focused on the task, and helps to assess their progress when they revisit these aims at the end. In Year 2, pupils sing a variety of songs tunefully. They show good control, and enjoy using appropriate actions. They sustain a good rhythm when singing during assemblies. In discussion, they show a good knowledge of the names of various percussion instruments, such as 'tambourine', 'drum', 'cymbals' and 'maracas', and that the instruments are made from different materials, such as wood or metal. Year 2 pupils' unaccompanied singing of 'Who's the king of the jungle' was sung tunefully, and with good pitch. They recognise repeating patterns, and know immediately if the music is getting higher or lower. They record this effectively by drawing symbols, such as a 'cheetah' for faster and a 'tortoise' for slowly. The quality of teaching and learning is enhanced by the pupils' interest and good behaviour, and because teachers work hard to stimulate pupils and help them to feel successful.

138. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 2. Pupils have a good understanding of rhythm and basic musical structure. Most of them sing a wide repertoire of songs with accurate pitch, vary the volume to good effect and show a good understanding of rhythm. At the start of a singing assembly, a group of ten recorder players from the Year 3 and 4 classes played 'Scarborough Fair' on descant, treble and tenor recorders, and achieved a good standard of playing. The sense of enjoyment that teachers bring to the subject was illustrated when pupils sang 'From a tiny ant' in two parts; pupils took up the challenge with great enthusiasm, and all showed a sense of pride at the end. Year 3 pupils achieve well as they use correct musical notation, such as crochets and quavers, when writing different rhythms. This good progress is maintained in Year 4, as was illustrated when pupils devised a class 'Dawn chorus', using a good range of tuned musical instruments, and recorded their scores on tape. They listened respectfully to the recording, and evaluated this well before attempting to improve it. In Years 5 and 6, pupils build effectively on these foundations. They develop their singing voices and group performance well by composing their own lyrics and scores in small groups, which they rehearse and improve upon before adding percussion, tuned musical instruments and a dance sequence. One group explained that their composition contained 'a samba rhythm for the verse and rap for the chorus', as they wanted to compose a song that was different from the main types of music heard today.

139. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator. There is a good policy and new scheme of work that are helping teachers to be more confident to teach music. There is a good range of resources, including an electronic keyboard, and computer programs to enable pupils to compose their own tunes. Pupils have opportunities to join the two choirs, both of

which are excellent. Pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 are in the large choir of approximately 50 pupils, whilst the smaller choir of twenty pupils is from Years 5 and 6. All sing a range of songs confidently, and the choirs recently performed with two other choirs at a concert in Clacton. A teacher conducts and leads the choirs. Her enthusiasm and love of music are clearly conveyed to pupils, creating an air of excitement and ensuring pupils' total involvement in their learning. Two parents help to organise the very good school orchestra, which is helping pupils to further their understanding of a wide range of music, as well as their talents as budding musicians. Some pupils have music lessons to learn to play the piano, flute and violin, which enhance their knowledge of correct musical notation. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when they make and reflect on music together, share instruments and take part in musical productions.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

140. In Year 2, pupils' work in physical education is average, and of a similar standard to that reported in the last inspection. By Year 6, pupils attain above average standards, and have improved since the previous inspection.

141. Year 2 pupils combine running, jumping and walking movements into suitable sequences with appropriate levels of co-ordination. Their games skills are average. Most throw and catch balls with reasonable skill, and hit one with a bat with confidence. Pupils are aware of the effects of exercise on their heart and lungs and understand why they warm up before vigorous exercise. Although swimming is not part of the National Curriculum at this key stage, Year 2 pupils swim in the school's pool. Nearly all swim by Year 2, and many do so with good skills.

142. In Year 6, pupils' games skills are above average. They work hard at developing skills associated with balls, and throw, control and hit them with good skill. Pupils observe each other's work carefully, and improve their own performance as a result. They have a good understanding of why they need to warm up before exercise, and a few name the correct muscle groups that are being stretched. They play competitive games against other schools, with considerable success, particularly in football, netball and hockey. No gymnastics was seen during the inspection. Pupils swim to a good standard, and achieve high standards in life saving awards. These pupils do well in competitive swimming events against other schools.

143. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, and pupils make good progress. Teachers plan lessons well to give pupils a good range of stimulating and safe experiences. These ensure that pupils of all abilities are able to develop a wide range of skills. Teachers warm pupils up carefully, and demonstrate skills well, using higher attaining pupils effectively to illustrate their points. This has a good effect on pupils' learning as they are able to refine their movements, and improve their performance. Teachers have a good focus on the systematic development of basic skills, and this ensures, for example, that pupils learn the correct way to jump, throw, and catch. Teachers manage classes well, with high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and this makes the best use of the time available. Pupils' swimming skills progress well because of the regular practice they have, and the good teaching of techniques.

144. The co-ordinator manages the subject well. He has introduced a good scheme of work, and the curriculum includes appropriate opportunities for all aspects of physical education. There is a good development plan to raise standards further, with appropriate targets for staff training. As well as the swimming pool, the school has a good-sized hall, and good hard and grassed areas for games. There is a good supply of resources, and a good range of extra-curricular sessions helps to boost standards for older pupils. There are few, however, for those in Years 1 and 2.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

145. By the age of seven years old, pupils achieve the standards of attainment expected by the locally agreed syllabus, and, by eleven years old, they achieve above these standards. As pupils move through the school they make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are involved with all class activities and discussions and, with appropriate support and encouragement, make good progress. These are similar to the standards reported in the school's previous OFSTED inspection report for Key Stage 1, but show a very good improvement on the below average standards reported for Key Stage 2. This improvement is due to the school's efforts to raise standards through the positive, whole-school approach to religious education, and the part played in this strategy by the co-ordinator for this subject who has introduced the new locally agreed syllabus well.

146. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is good. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe the teaching of religious education in Year 2, when they visited a nearby church. From the analysis of work and the observed lesson, it is clear that pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and a satisfactory understanding of Judaism. They know many aspects of the life of Jesus, such as the Nativity and Easter and the miracle of raising Jairus' daughter from the dead. They achieve well as they relate their understanding of places that are special to them, such as their homes, to the importance of the church to Christians, and know that Christians go to church to pray. Before their visit to the church, the teacher conveyed her very good subject knowledge well to the pupils. This helped them to make the best of the visit, and to extend their learning, and understanding of the importance of the church to Christians. They realise that books are special for varied reasons, relating their understanding of books that are special to them, with the Bible being a special book for Christians. Pupils have a sound understanding of the life of young Jews from listening to stories about 'Reuben and Hannah at home'.

147. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 2. In Year 6, pupils have a good insight into the traditions, beliefs, literature, symbols and festivals of Christianity, Judaism and Islam, and a sound understanding of other world religions. Year 6 pupils compare Christianity with Judaism and Islam with a good understanding of the differences and similarities. They understand that holy texts, such as the Bible and the Torah, contain teachings and moral guidance that are helpful to people in their lives. Years 5 and 6 pupils have a strong sense of empathy with those less fortunate than themselves. Pupils are encouraged to think deeply about issues, and this helps them understand more about why religion is so important to many people. The well-planned lessons for pupils in Years 5 and 6 on 'What would life be like if there was no pattern, order or structure in the natural world?' gripped their interest and imagination. As a result of well-structured and thoughtful teaching, pupils were able to reflect on this idea, and start to realise that there is a pattern to life on earth. As a result of these lessons, pupils have a mature grasp of the need for order in the world, and their spiritual awareness is heightened very effectively by the two teachers' sensitive approach and very good subject knowledge.

148. An important strength of the teaching and learning of religious education throughout the school is the sensitive way teachers create an environment of mutual trust and support, where pupils know that everyone will treat their opinions with respect. The very good use of open-ended, perceptive questioning enables pupils to express their own ideas clearly. They learn to respect the beliefs of others and have tolerance towards different faiths. Many of the religious education lessons are mainly oral, which greatly enhances pupils' speaking and listening skills. Their attainment is assessed effectively at the end of each unit of work, and this helps teachers plan further work at an appropriate level.

149. The subject is led well by the co-ordinator, who took up her post at the start of this academic year. She has monitored the teaching of religious education in the school and

provides good support for other members of staff. Resources are good now, as new resources for world religions, especially for Judaism and Islam, have been purchased. This is a very good improvement from the previous inspection, when resources were judged to be very poor. There is a good policy for religious education, and the good scheme of work is based on the locally agreed syllabus. Information and communication technology supports learning effectively. Literacy skills are developed well, such as discussions about religious beliefs and listening to Bible stories. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed very well when they reflect on the beliefs and values of others.