

INSPECTION REPORT

PLACE FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Haverhill

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124554

Headteacher: Mr P J Fletcher

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 4th-7th June 2001

Inspection number: 192516

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:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Camps Road Haverhill Suffolk
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Place Farm Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs J Welch
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

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2070 4	Terry Elston	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology, Design and technology.	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
1969 3	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?
1989 7	Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, History, Geography.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
1459 6	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Pupils with special educational needs, Equal opportunities, Science, Religious education, Physical education.	
1914 2	Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	Provision for children in the Foundation Stage, English, Art, Music.	

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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?	11
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Place Farm Primary is a larger than average sized school in Haverhill, West Suffolk. The school educates boys and girls aged between four and nine. There are 300 full time pupils on roll. There are 24 per cent of pupils on the register for special educational needs, which is about average, and none with a statement of special educational need, which is below average. Forty per cent of pupils come from outside the school's catchment area, which is a mixture of owner-occupied and rented accommodation. Pupils enter the school with below average skills compared with those found nationally. Around two per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. None of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Ten per cent of pupils claim free school meals, which is below the national average. During the last school year, 16 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 11 left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This degree of mobility is greater than normally found.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Place Farm Primary is a good school which justifies its high reputation in the local community. The school is well led by a headteacher who has very high expectations of teaching, learning and behaviour. As a result, the quality of teaching is good and pupils make good progress and behave well. The school is improving well, and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- By the time that they leave, pupils' standards are above average in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership, and knows how to get the best out of the staff and pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good overall because teachers plan lessons well and make learning exciting.
- The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good, and they make good progress towards their targets.
- The assessment of pupils is very good, and provides the school with useful information about how standards can be raised further.
- The relationships throughout the school are very good, and help teachers to teach well, and pupils learn quickly.

What could be improved

- The attainment of girls in Years 3 and 4 is significantly below that of boys in reading and mathematics
- The school's development plan, set for one year at a time, does not provide a long term view of the school's priorities, and says too little about how much developments will cost.
- The weekly teaching time in Years 3 and 4 is an hour below that recommended.
- The school provides too little information for parents on the curriculum that their child is following, and the governors' Annual Report to parents and the school's prospectus lack some of the required details.

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 good improvement overall since it was last inspected in 1997. Pupils' standards by the time they leave are higher than before in English, mathematics, science, art and design, information and communication technology and music. Their performance in the Year 2 national tests in 2000 was higher than in 1997 in English and science and similar in mathematics. The school has made a good response overall to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, and is now good. Great improvements have been made in the planning of the curriculum, and this is good. The school has

done much to develop its assessment procedures, and these are very good. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is now satisfactory, and the assessments of their progress are good. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed well, and their monitoring of standards has a good effect on pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school's development plan still lacks a longer term view, and it remains the case that some targets lack accurate statements of how much they will cost to achieve. In view of the school's commitment to the raising of standards, it is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	C	B	B	B
Writing	B	A	B	B
Mathematics	C	B	C	C

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

The school's early assessments show that pupils enter the school with skills below those found in most schools, and the figures in the table illustrate how well pupils achieve. Children make a sound start in the Reception classes, and make steady progress to meet the nationally agreed targets by the time they leave the Foundation Stage in all areas apart from those relating to their physical and creative skills. The current Year 2 pupils entered the school with particularly weak skills, and their standards are not as high as last year's group. Nevertheless, they have made sufficiently good progress to attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Their work in information and communication technology, particularly creating databases, is above average by the end of Year 2, and their standards are average in all other subjects. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4, and their standards are above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. They are also above average in art and design, information and communication technology, swimming and music. Boys attain significantly higher standards than girls in Years 3 and 4, especially in reading and mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to their work, and concentrate well in lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Their behaviour is good overall, but a few pupils in Year 3 have responded poorly to changes in teachers this year, and take a long time to settle in class.
Personal development and relationships	These aspects are good overall. Pupils are mature, and keen to take responsibility. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall, but the attendance rate is slightly below the national average. Nearly a quarter of the annual absences are the result of parents taking their children out of school for holidays.

Overall, the strengths in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development, and the high quality of relationships throughout the school, have a positive impact on pupils' progress, and the standards they attain by the time they leave.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Foundation Stage	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good overall, and is a significant reason for pupils' good progress through the school. Of 67 lessons seen, one was excellent, 15 per cent very good, 57 per cent good, 25 per cent satisfactory and one was unsatisfactory. The teaching generally meets the needs of all pupils well, although sometimes teachers do not do enough to ensure that girls attain as well as they could. Pupils find lessons interesting because teachers use exciting methods and good resources to make the subject come to life, and provide a good mixture of direct teaching and group work. Teachers teach literacy and numeracy well, and most pupils leave the school able to read confidently and work out answers quickly in their head. Teachers' good musical and artistic skills develop pupils' creative talents well. A strength in the teaching of information and communication technology lies in the way that teachers use computers in many subjects, and encourage pupils to use them as an everyday tool for learning. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but is sometimes too formal and over-directed to allow children to develop their independence and creativity.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides pupils with a good curriculum, which is planned well to give them a broad range of experiences. The curricular provision for literacy and numeracy is good, and pupils make particularly good progress in the basic skills of reading and number. There is a good range of extracurricular activities for older pupils, but little for those in Years 1 and 2. The curricular time for pupils in Years 3 and 4 is an hour below the recommended weekly amount.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	This is very good, and is organised to a high standard by the experienced co-ordinator. As a result, pupils make good progress towards their targets.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including including	This provision is good overall, and very good for pupils' social and moral development. 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 as well as that of other people of the world.

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.
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The good curriculum, and effective support of pupils have a positive impact on the standards they attain. The school keeps parents well informed of their child's progress, but provides too little information about the topics that their child is covering. A large number of parents help in classes, but a few feel that the lack of a parent-teacher association restricts their involvement in the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher leads the school very well, with high expectations of pupils and staff. He has a sharp focus on the raising of standards, and is well supported by the deputy and assistant headteacher.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the school well, 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. Statutory requirements are generally met, but there are minor omissions in their Annual Report to parents and the school's prospectus.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school does this very well by analysing its results and comparing them with those of other schools. In this way, weaknesses are identified, challenging targets are set, and pupils' progress towards them is monitored carefully. Very good performance management procedures, and good monitoring of their teaching give staff clear targets to improve their work.
The strategic use of resources	The school has built up a good range of resources, and the very skilled administration officer manages the budget meticulously. The weaknesses in the school's development plan, however, mean that the school lacks a long term view of its strategies and expenditure. Otherwise, the school has good procedures for securing the best value from its spending.

The school's staff is a good mix of younger and more experienced teachers who are supported well by an appropriate number of teaching assistants. The accommodation generally supports the curriculum well, but the play area for children in the Reception classes is not easily accessible and their physical skills are relatively weak as a result. The resources are good overall, and have a positive impact on pupils' learning.

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 good quality of teaching. • Pupils' good attitudes to learning. • The good standards their children achieve. • The way the headteacher and teachers are always available for parents to see them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of information the school provides about the curriculum. • The range of extracurricular activities for younger pupils.

Parents speak very highly of this school, and the inspection team agrees with their positive views. Of the other points, too little information about the curriculum is sent home, and, although extracurricular activities for pupils in Years 3 and 4 are good, there is little provision for younger 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 and similar schools, standards in reading and writing were above average, and in mathematics, they were average. The school meets its challenging targets consistently, and is well on course to do so again this year. The teachers' assessments for science showed that pupils' attainment was above average. This inspection finds that standards are lower this year, and are average in reading, writing, mathematics and science. The assessments made when this group joined the school show that their skills were particularly low. The trend in attainment is generally in line with that found nationally. These judgements show that standards are similar at Year 2 to those reported in the previous inspection. The test results over the past three years show that boys out-perform girls in reading and mathematics.

2. This inspection finds that, by the end of Year 2, in English, pupils' literacy skills are average. They read familiar books with reasonable fluency, and learn new words at a steady pace. A few pupils have a good knowledge of how to break up new words into sounds, and this makes reading easy for them. Pupils' enjoyment of books is a strength of their learning. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are above average, and profit from the school's very strong focus on language. Standards in writing are average by Year 2. Teachers give younger pupils freedom to experiment with their own writing, and this enables them to feel confident to write imaginatively.

3. In mathematics by the age of seven, pupils use quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten, but they are less confident with numbers to 20. They understand the concept of half and quarter, and have a good knowledge of common two and three-dimensional shapes. They use their information and communication technology skills well to generate interesting graphs of pupils' birthdays and hair colours. In science, pupils' experimental skills are good. They achieve well as they conduct experiments with electrical circuits using batteries and bulbs, and note the changes in a block of solid jelly when they mix it with hot water. In their work about living things, pupils record their likes and dislikes over food, and classify animals and materials with average skill. In information and communication technology, pupils' skills are above average, and are particularly good when creating databases in mathematics and design and technology lessons. In religious education, pupils' attainment meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, and most have a sound understanding of Bible stories and those from other religions of the world. Year 2 pupils' standards are average in art and design, history, geography, music, design and technology and physical education.

4. Pupils have done well to attain these standards by Year 2. They have made good progress overall from their low starting point, and are prepared well for the demands of work in Years 3 and 4.

5. The findings of the inspection are that the current Year 4 pupils attain above average standards in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, science, art and design and music. The school has, therefore, raised standards in all of these subjects since the last inspection when pupils' attainment was average in all subjects. There is, however, a significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls in English and mathematics. Overall, boys read more fluently than girls, are more confident when working out new words and have greater confidence using number. The school recognises this difference, and is investigating reasons for the variations and ways to raise girls' attainment.

6. In English by Year 4, most pupils read confidently and accurately. Already, many are developing advanced reading skills, and skim and scan texts to gain information quickly. Pupils read with appropriate expression, and benefit from teachers' good models when they read to them. They speak well, and are confident when addressing the whole class. Their writing is of a good standard. They organise their writing in a logical sequence, and show a good understanding of grammatical structure. A few have more advanced writing skills, and use paragraphs in their longer passages. They plan, edit and refine their written work well, and are good at appraising their own and others' writing.

7. In mathematics by Year 4, pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers quickly in their heads. They apply their mathematical skills well in solving real life problems concerning the duration of time, money and capacity. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of equivalent fractions and the square roots of numbers. They calculate the perimeter and area of shapes accurately, and use protractors skilfully to measure angles.

8. In science by Year 4, pupils conduct investigations with good skill, and make reasonably accurate predictions of the outcome. Teachers link pupils' environmental work in geography well with science, and this explains why their knowledge of scientific aspects of pollution is so good. Pupils' understanding of forces is average.

9. In information technology, Year 4 pupils' skills are above average overall. Their word processing skills are good, and they use these well to support their learning in many other subjects. Pupils use computer reference programs effectively to research topics in history, geography and science, but the school has only just been connected to the Internet, and pupils have little experience of using electronic mail.

10. Pupils develop their creative skills well, producing exciting paintings and pastel drawings, and composing their own music using instruments. In geography, pupils have a secure understanding of how the features of a river and its valley change from source, and use four-figure coordinates accurately to locate features on maps. In history, pupils have an average knowledge of the past. They use different sources well, and speak confidently about Victorian England. In design and technology, pupils use tools reasonably well, and conduct good investigations into foods and their packaging. In physical education, their attainment is average, overall, but their swimming skills are good, and they benefit from regular lessons in the school's swimming pool.

11. Children enter the Foundation Stage at below average levels of attainment overall. The quality of teaching and the quality of their learning are satisfactory overall. The children make steady progress, and, by the end of the Foundation Stage, their skills are average in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their physical development is below average and suffers because of the inaccessibility of the play areas. Children's creative development is slow, because teachers structure the work too much, and give them too few opportunities to experiment with materials and techniques.

12. Pupils do well at this school, and make good progress. From their below average starting point, nearly all attain at least national standards by Year 4 and many have above average skills. The strong focus on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is successful in giving pupils the self-assurance to read with confidence, and work out sums quickly. Higher attaining pupils achieve good standards, and the school makes the most of their talents by planning work to extend them. They do particularly well in writing and science, as is illustrated by last year's Year 2 national tests when the proportion of pupils reaching above average standards in these subjects was well above that found nationally.

13. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards for their previous attainment. Their individual plans provide good, well-focused targets that enable pupils to make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The pupils have maintained their good attitudes to school found at the time of the last inspection. They enjoy coming to school and are generally enthusiastic about their work. This has a positive impact on their learning. In many lessons, pupils have very good attitudes to their work. This was seen in a Year 3 art lesson when the pictures of a surrealist artist captured the imagination of the pupils. They listened attentively to their teacher and looked carefully at the pictures. They picked out features in minute detail, and were keen to answer questions about the common characteristics of the paintings. They then moved quickly to the painting tables and concentrated hard on creating their own 'dream pictures' in the style of Miro. They were justifiably proud of their finished pictures, and pupils talked with particular feeling about their interpretations.

15. Children in the Foundation Stage settle into school well and enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to their work and play. Behaviour is good. They interact well with each other, their teachers and the teaching assistants. However, their independent learning is limited because too much is done for them. For example, when making 'insect masks', the 'insect' shapes were already cut out for them and, rather than the children devising their own way of sticking the 'legs' on to their 'spiders', this was done for them by a teacher, who stapled the legs on to the spider's body.

16. The behaviour of the pupils is good and the school is generally a harmonious and orderly community. Behaviour in lessons is good overall, and often very good. Nearly all the pupils understand that the teachers have very high expectations of good behaviour, and respond well to rewards such as stickers. A few pupils, mainly in Year 3, do not always behave as well as their classmates. They get over-excited, are silly and try to waste time. There have been a number of staffing changes this year in Year 3, and some pupils struggle to cope with the expectations of different teachers. The pupils' behaviour in assemblies is very good, and this helps to create a suitable atmosphere for worship and reflection. The pupils behave very sensibly at lunchtime and at playtime in the playground. Incidents of bullying and anti-social behaviour are rare. There was one permanent exclusion last year.

17. The pupils' personal development and relationships are good. Relationships throughout the school community are particularly strong, and there is no evidence of any bullying. The pupils collaborate very well. This was seen in a Year 3 music lesson when groups of pupils worked on a composition, discussing and compromising in order to include everyone's ideas. The pupils have very good relationships with adults working in the school and have the confidence to ask for help if they do not understand. The pupils are keen to take responsibility and enjoy helping in the classrooms and around the school. Older pupils help younger ones at lunchtime and during swimming lessons. They enjoy attending after-school clubs, and raise money for charity enthusiastically.

18. The attendance of the pupils is satisfactory but has declined since the last inspection when it was judged to be good. The attendance rate of 94.2 per cent for 1999/2000 is just below the national average and there were very few unauthorised absences. A significant number of parents take their children on holiday during term time, and this has a detrimental effect on pupils' learning. Children come to school on time, and the school day starts promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is good, and is a significant reason for pupils' good progress through the school. Throughout the school, although not enough teaching was seen of design and technology to make a judgement, the quality of teaching is good in all other subjects. Parents view the quality of teaching as a significant strength of the school. Of 67 lessons seen, one per cent was excellent, 15 per cent very good, 57 per cent good, 25 per

cent satisfactory and one per cent unsatisfactory. These figures demonstrate how much the school has improved its teaching since the previous inspection when almost one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory, and few were very good. The more rigorous systems for monitoring teaching, and the impact that this has had on teachers' control of classes, lesson planning, marking of work and expectations of pupils are important reasons for this improvement.

20. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. As a result, they make suitable progress and reach appropriate standards given their below average entry point. This shows a significant improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when 60 per cent of lessons were unsatisfactory. Within this overall judgement, teaching and learning are good in communication, language and literacy, satisfactory in personal, social and emotional development, mathematical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world, but unsatisfactory in physical and creative development. Teachers' expectations and management of the children, teaching of basic skills and use of assessment are good. Teachers' planning and use of support staff are satisfactory. Weaknesses are evident, however, in teachers' understanding of how to develop children's learning and independence. The curricular provision does not provide sufficient opportunities for the children to display their ingenuity, imagination, and independent learning. This, in turn, restricts the extent to which they can develop their physical and creative skills. Teaching methods are used appropriately to teach early reading and practical skills, such as using scissors, but at other times they confine children's creative development, as they are not encouraged to explore situations for themselves.

21. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and account for the school's good results in the Year 2 national tests. Teachers plan and review lessons as a team, and this works well because it utilises the skills of everyone in the year group. It also creates a consistency in the planning and enables teachers to assess which lessons worked well, and if not, why not? Another key feature of the teaching is the consistently good quality of the work on improving pupils' basic skills, for example, in reading and number. Teachers make very effective use of the National Literacy Strategy lessons to develop pupils' knowledge of how to work out new words, and this gives pupils confidence to read independently. Teachers use the summing up session at the end of each lesson very well to assess how well pupils have learned, and judge which topics need more attention. They develop pupils' early numeracy skills very well by using exciting games alongside regular mental mathematics sessions, and, in these ways, pupils enjoy their learning while growing in confidence to calculate and use numbers. The teaching in Year 1 is especially good, and builds well on the work done at the Foundation Stage. Here, teachers show a good understanding of the needs of young pupils, and break down lessons into short, snappy sessions so that pupils' interest is maintained. In both Years 1 and 2, teachers give lots of praise to pupils to reward their efforts, and this encourages them to strive even harder. If a pupils answers a question incorrectly, teachers use phrases such as, "That's an excellent try, and very nearly right, but look again to see if you could give me an even better answer!" (Year 2 mathematics lesson). In an excellent English lesson in Year 1, the teacher said, "Listen to the poem again, and see if you can see any *more* rhyming words. You're getting so good at this!"

22. Teachers' control of the infant classes is very good. This enables pupils to make the most of their time in school, and helps to explain why the pace of lessons is so much quicker than that seen in the previous inspection.

23. The quality of teaching continues to be good in Years 3 and 4, and accounts for pupils' good progress to achieve above average standards in English, mathematics, science, art and music by the time they leave. The expectations of pupils are high overall, and they respond very well to the challenges set for them. Girls, however, do less well than boys,

and, too often, teachers miss opportunities to select girls to answer questions, or to undertake more challenging work. The boys, overall, are more assertive than girls, and when a teacher asks a question, far more boys put their hands up. When the teacher wants pupils to demonstrate good practice, in physical education, for example, or music, boys are always the first to offer, and usually the first to be asked.

24. Teachers' planning of lessons is good in Years 3 and 4, and gives appropriately challenging work for higher attaining pupils, whilst supporting those who learn more slowly. In this way, the most able pupils are able to extend their learning and gain a deeper insight into, for example, scientific and mathematical investigations, whilst pupils with special educational needs do well to establish solid basic skills. Their control of classes is generally good, although the behaviour of a few pupils in Year 3 has been affected by staff changes this year, and the teacher struggles sometimes to maintain pupils' concentration and the pace of lessons.

25. Teachers make good provision for homework. The school's homework policy gives pupils, and parents, clear ideas of the school's expectations, and makes a good contribution to pupils' progress.

26. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good. The teachers prepare material at suitable levels for these pupils, which are aligned closely to their individual targets. These targets are very well constructed, and provide clear guidance to pupils, teachers and classroom assistants. The co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs works closely with all staff to ensure that pupils are given appropriate support, and as a result, pupils make good progress, in their reading, writing, numeracy and behaviour.

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

27. The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum for all the pupils, offering them a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, which judged the curriculum for the youngest children to be weak. During the summer term, there are opportunities for all the pupils to have swimming lessons in the school pool. Total weekly teaching time meets national recommendations in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. However, it is an hour a week below the recommended time in Years 3 and 4. Religious education is taught according to the locally agreed syllabus and the school meets its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics, and the school is implementing the national strategies for literacy and numeracy well.

28. The school has successfully addressed a key issue of the previous inspection, which was to improve planning of the curriculum. This is now very good. The teachers have worked hard to plan carefully for the work which the pupils will do each term and each week. Activities are planned to match pupils' varying needs. There are clear policies and schemes of work for all subjects. English and mathematics are planned according to the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Planning for other subjects is soundly based on national or local guidelines. This very good planning provides a smooth progression in pupils' learning as they move from one year group to another. The teachers in each year group plan together, and this works well, ensuring that pupils in different classes cover the same work. The curriculum is monitored well by the senior management team, which evaluates planning and teaching rigorously.

29. The quality and range of the learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. There is an adequate range of appropriate, adult-planned activities, but insufficient child-planned or initiated activities. The lack of an appropriate outside play and work area, including a covered outside area, also limits the provision for the full range

of the curriculum and learning opportunities for the children. Teachers attempt to overcome these shortcomings by planning a few occasions during the week for one of the teaching assistants to supervise the children outside. However, this does not provide sufficient, or frequent enough, opportunities for children to move 'spontaneously between indoor and outdoor environments' as stated in the recommended curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. Although the school has some good large wheeled toys and appropriate climbing apparatus for outdoors, these were not used during the inspection. Access to this equipment is difficult, as the toys are stored in a shed, which is crammed full of many pieces of equipment with the dolls' pram under other things, and the large wheeled tricycles piled on top of each other at the far end of the shed.

30. There is a good range of extracurricular activities for pupils in Years 3 and 4. There is a regular book club and choir, in addition to clubs for singing, recorders, gymnastics, rugby, soccer and tennis. No competitive sports matches are played against other schools. All pupils can participate in swimming sessions outside lessons during the summer term. Inspection findings confirm the view of a good many parents that, apart from this swimming and a 'Book Club', there is little for pupils in Key Stage 1. The school has to restrict access to pupils in Years 3 and 4, because of the large numbers of pupils who wish to take part. A sound range of school visits enhances learning in some subjects, such as science, history and geography.

31. The school makes good use of the community to enrich pupils' learning. Visiting clergy often lead acts of collective worship, and members of the Salvation Army have talked to pupils. The adjacent Place Farm Day Centre is the school's chosen charity. The school choir regularly visits the centre at Christmas to sing carols, and younger children perform a Nativity play there. The community police officer talks to pupils about issues such as safety and vandalism, and pupils visit the local fire station. Learning in subjects such as history and geography is enriched by local fieldwork. The Cangle Educational Trust has provided funds to allow visiting storytellers and drama groups to enhance the curriculum.

32. There are satisfactory links with the middle schools to which Year 4 pupils transfer. Subject co-ordinators meet colleagues regularly from these schools, and in some subjects, such as information and communication technology, there is joint planning between the schools. Pupils' records are passed on. On a 'transfer day', Year 4 pupils have the opportunity to visit their next school. There are some links with local Nurseries, in order to facilitate their entry into the Reception classes.

33. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education. There is a clear scheme of work, with detailed weekly planning for each year group. In regular personal, social and health education sessions, the teachers encourage the pupils to develop confidence and self-esteem and to respect other peoples' views and opinions. The pupils have the opportunity to discuss issues such as good citizenship, the local environment, friendship, peer pressure and the dangers of misusing drugs. In a Year 1 personal, social and health education session observed, the teacher led a worthwhile discussion about what the pupils were good at and what they felt they could do better. She read a story, which illustrated clearly the distinction between right and wrong. In science, the pupils learn about healthy lifestyles and diets. The governing body has not yet agreed a formal sex education policy. Local schools are in the process of developing a common approach to this matter. Currently, teachers answer pupils' questions about human growth and development openly and honestly, with appropriate regard to their age.

34. The curriculum is very well organised for pupils with special educational needs. Provision is very good overall, and demonstrates very good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of their individual targets is now very good. These targets provide easily measurable small steps that can be achieved by pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are included in all aspects of school life, and most support for them is

provided within their own classes. Appropriate opportunities are given for children to share ideas in discussions and equipment in practical work, and to work collaboratively in their groups.

35. Pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes are founded upon the school's good provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The good standards found at the time of the last inspection have been successfully maintained.

36. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Acts of worship are an integral part of this aspect where pupils sing hymns, and prayers are included in all assemblies. In religious education, they are given the opportunity to study the faith and practices of various world religions such as Islam, Hinduism and Judaism. The emphasis is on Christianity and various local ministers come to the school to lead assemblies. Pupils also visit places of worship locally. Pupils know and can repeat Bible stories such as those about Joseph, or Moses, and they take part in acts of worship for Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Opportunities across the curriculum are limited but pupils are taught some appreciation of the natural world in science and in geography with work on seasons and the weather and the environment in general.

37. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. There are clear expectations for good behaviour and older pupils join together in formulating the rules for their own classes. Teachers provide good role models, and pupils are taught right from wrong. In assemblies, they are taught to arrive and leave in an orderly way, and very quietly. The school's expectations for behaviour are displayed in classrooms and include such sentences as 'try to be kind, and help each other'. Teachers often link with the theme of the day's assembly. For example, pupils in a Year 3 physical education lesson were reminded to make every effort just as the triple jumper they had heard about in the morning assembly.

38. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. There is an atmosphere of co-operation and a sense of 'family gathering' in assemblies, where pupils share the experience, behave well, and take a full and active part. There are many opportunities for pupils, especially older pupils, to take part in after school clubs where they learn to share or work together for a common purpose, such as choir or sports. Pupils in Year 4 have opportunities to help younger ones by assisting at meals, and others help with equipment or in the library. Occasionally, a 'Litter Squad' is organised to help maintain the appearance of the school and keep it tidy.

39. Cultural provision is good. Western culture is promoted appropriately through subjects such as history, art and music. Pupils are made aware of the contributions of ancient civilisations to culture, such as their study of the Romans, which they are enjoying greatly. They have the chance to listen to music from various composers as they arrive and depart from assemblies, and in art, there are many good examples on display after the style of famous artists. Posters and displays celebrate and instruct about other cultures. For example, in Year 4, there are displays about Indian culture, dress, pictures and a selection of tea produced there. In religious education, pupils learn about the practices and celebrations of other faiths and cultures such as the family celebration of the Sabbath in Judaism with its food and customs.

40. Since the last report, the good standards have been maintained with some satisfactory improvement in the provision for social development. The school has appointed a co-ordinator for multicultural issues who provides good resources to make lessons more effective in the way they teach pupils about other people of the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school provides its pupils with very good educational and personal support. This is a caring community, and pupils are well known and valued by adults working in the school.

Parents appreciate the support given to pupils and their families who are experiencing particular difficulties. The school has good links with a range of outside agencies and makes good use of a local Family Centre to provide specialist counselling. The procedures for monitoring and supporting the pupils' personal development are good and teachers make helpful comments in pupils' reports. Other adults working in the school, including support and office staff, make valuable contributions in caring for the pupils. Lunchtime is well managed, and lunchtime assistants encourage pupils to play traditional games and help them to develop good table manners. Supervision at playtime is good and there are secure arrangements for pupils to be collected at the end of the day.

42. Children in the Foundation Stage are cared for well and are very happy to come to school. They share good relationships with their teacher, teaching assistants and other adults in the school. Most are willing to speak to visitors about their work.

43. The school generally has good procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. The school's arrangements for child protection are very good and there is a clear child protection policy. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection and carries out his duties effectively. Most other adults working in the school have received appropriate training.

44. The school has satisfactory arrangements for first aid. The school provides good care for pupils who are injured, but has no specific accommodation for those who are unwell.

45. The school pays good attention to health and safety. Any potential hazards are recorded promptly, and members of staff make termly checks of the premises. Governors undertake a thorough annual risk assessment. There are good procedures for testing electrical equipment and for fire drills. Some health and safety concerns were brought to the attention of the school during the inspection, including:

- the lack of up-to-date fire exit signs, and
- the potential risk to pupils' safety when they run around in the cramped conditions in the hall during physical education.

46. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory, and office staff keep registers to a high standard. The school has rigorous systems to monitor the holidays that pupils take, and the governors' Annual Report strongly discourages parents from taking holidays during term time. Any holidays over ten days are not authorised. Unexplained absences are followed up promptly, and there are satisfactory links with the educational welfare officer.

47. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, which explains why this is such an orderly and harmonious community. The ethos of good behaviour is reinforced effectively in lessons, assemblies and by the examples of adults working in the school. The school has not reviewed the behaviour policy recently, and it does not reflect the school's ethos of promoting good behaviour. In practice, the teachers have very high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and use sanctions sparingly but effectively. Lunchtime supervisors manage behaviour effectively, and give stickers to pupils who behave well. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good, and rare incidents of anti-social behaviour are dealt with effectively. The school has a clear anti-bullying policy and gives parents detailed guidelines to support the school in its action to combat anti-social behaviour.

48. Although there is no teacher with specific responsibility for co-ordinating assessment, the school has addressed a key issue of the previous inspection successfully, which was to produce a consistent policy for assessment. There are now very good procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment and progress. The teachers identify opportunities for checking pupils' progress in their weekly planning for all subjects. There is

a clear timetable of formal assessments, which are carried out throughout the year. Information from these, together with careful analysis of pupils' performance in the end of Key Stage 1 national tests, is used very well to plan the next stages in pupils' learning and to set targets for further improvement. The teachers agree on National Curriculum levels of attainment in samples of pupils' work, in order to ensure accuracy and consistency in assessment. Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment were very accurate in the 2000 national tests for seven year olds. Marking has improved since the previous inspection, when it was judged to be inconsistent. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and positively, praising good work and effort appropriately. There are examples of very good marking, which helps the pupils to improve. These include comments such as, "Try to think of more statements using the information" (Year 2 mathematics) and, "Are all rivers suited to these activities?" (Year 4 geography)

49. The school has good assessment procedures for children in the Foundation Stage. Soon after they enter school, they are assessed using a procedure designed specifically for this age range. The evidence from this provides a precise insight into the stage of development of each child, which enables the teachers to plan activities to meet their needs.

50. The care and support provided for pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. The whole school ethos is reflected in the way that they ensure that pupils with special educational needs have opportunities to take part in all school activities. There are 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, which provide good support. Good records are kept of pupils' progress in relation to their targets.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The parents' views of the school are very positive. Forty per cent of pupils live outside the catchment area, but parents still choose to send their children to Place Farm. Nearly all parents say that teaching is good and that their children like school. They feel that their children are expected to work hard and are making good progress. The parents value the way in which staff are willing to discuss the parents' concerns and feel that the school is well led and managed. They say that behaviour is good and the school helps their children to become mature and responsible.

52. The school has satisfactory links with its parents and carers. The parents value the school's 'open door' policy and are delighted that staff are available to talk with parents at the end of the school day. Some parents use the 'reading record book' to communicate with the class teacher. The school sought parents' views on the home school agreement and a proposed sex education policy through approaching a selected group of parents. Whilst this provided a sample of parents' views, it did not allow all parents to express their opinions, and limits their involvement in the life of the school.

53. The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. Parent governors are supportive of the school. The vast majority of parents have signed the home-school agreement and come to events such as concerts. There is no parent teacher association, and a few parents are concerned about this, but parents support fundraising events organised by the staff.

54. The quality of information, which the school provides to parents, is satisfactory. The school invites new parents and their children into school, but only arranges one visit and an induction meeting. This gives them few opportunities to become familiar with school routines and little time for pupils and teachers to get to know each other. The prospectus is informative, but the tone is formal. The governors' Annual Report and prospectus do not

contain all the information that is required. Letters to parents give them details of future events but contain little information about the school's successes. The school does not give all parents regular information about the topics that their children will be studying. This limits parents' involvement in their children's learning. The school has run useful sessions on the statutory tests for seven year olds. The end of year reports are of a good quality, and provide parents with valuable information about how their children are getting on. They include helpful details of what children can do and how they can improve their work. The school offers parents beneficial opportunities to meet with the class teacher each term to discuss their children's progress. The school also keeps parents who live apart from their children well informed about their children's progress.

55. The parents make good contributions to their children's learning at school and at home. The school values the help offered by the good number of parents and a grandparent who assist in the classrooms. Parents also provide valuable help with swimming. The vast majority of parents are very keen to learn more about the school, and attendance at parent/teacher consultations is very high. Most parents help their children with homework and this has a beneficial impact on the pupils' progress. Parents share books and story tapes with their children and support them with homework such as spellings.

56. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed when the school has concerns, and are kept very well aware of the school's targets for their child. They are encouraged to support pupils to achieve their targets by hearing them read or helping with spellings. Although a few parents feel that they are not well enough involved, the findings of the inspection are that the school provides a good amount of useful information about their child's progress, and about how they can help at home.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The leadership of the school is good, and makes a significant contribution to the raising of standards. The quality of leadership has improved since the previous inspection, particularly in the way it monitors pupils' progress and uses the information to set challenging targets for them to achieve. These are important reasons why pupils' standards, by the time they leave, are higher than before.

58. The headteacher's high expectations of staff and pupils are central to the school's success. Parents value the school's strong leadership, and the impact that this has on pupils' attainment and behaviour. The high reputation the school enjoys in the community is illustrated by the significant proportion of parents who have chosen to send their children here from outside the school's catchment area.

59. The headteacher provides the school with a very positive direction. He has clear ideas of its priorities, and how to address them. He has created an enthusiasm for self-evaluation, which involves the whole staff in celebrating their successes while looking critically at how they can improve their work. When, for example, teachers' assessments showed that standards in spelling were too low, the school invested in a specialised spelling programme. Subsequent testing showed that 70 per cent of Year 4 pupils achieved average levels, compared with only 40 per cent before the initiative was introduced.

60. The school makes very good use of a computer program produced by the Local Education Authority to evaluate pupils' standards, against both national levels and those attained by pupils from similar schools. This is very good practice, and teachers make good use of the data to set targets which challenge pupils to attain higher standards. The low attainment of girls compared with boys in Years 3 and 4 was also identified in this way, and the school has taken some action to raise girls' aspirations and attainment. The headteacher, for example, talked to girls and boys, and asked about their goals for the future. When those of girls turned out to be modest against those of boys, the

headteacher invited female university students to the school to talk to girls and provide them with successful role models. This was a positive move to raise girls' aspirations, but the school has not addressed the issue fully in lessons. Teachers, for example, do not always do enough to encourage girls to answer questions, or require them to perform as well as boys in physical education.

61. The monitoring of teaching is good, and has a significant impact on the quality of lessons and pupils' progress. The headteacher, deputy and assistant headteacher have benefited from useful training on the monitoring of teaching, which has provided them with good skills. Teachers value the oral and written feedback after these observations, and the targets that arise. The impact of this monitoring can be judged by the improvements in teaching from the last inspection.

62. The leadership has made a good response overall to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection, and works to a well-structured action plan. The quality of teaching has improved significantly, and is now good. Curricular planning, including that for children in the Foundation Stage, is good, and assessment procedures are very good. The role of subject co-ordinators has developed well, and their monitoring of standards has a good effect on pupils' progress, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The school's development plan, however, still lacks a longer-term view, and some targets lack accurate statements of how much they will cost to achieve.

63. The senior staff support the school well, and form a good partnership with the headteacher. He consults them concerning matters of change within the school, and they undertake their duties conscientiously. The deputy headteacher capably supports the headteacher, and has had a significant impact on the organisation of in-service training for staff, which is closely matched to the school's needs. The assistant headteacher provides very good support for newly qualified staff, and this helps them to settle into their role quickly.

64. The co-ordinator for special educational needs carries out her responsibilities very effectively and very efficiently. She maintains careful records of all dealings with agencies outside the school, as well as pupils' progress and areas for concern. The co-ordinator supports and monitors teachers very well, and monitors pupils' individual targets very carefully. The school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice for special educational needs overall, but the governors' Annual Report to parents provides too little information about the school's provision and the success of its policy. The governing body takes an active interest in the provision for special educational needs, and there is a named governor who takes a special interest and who has a good involvement in the work of the school.

65. The governing body supports the school well. Governors analyse the school's policies thoroughly, 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 meet the statutory requirements for the teaching of the curriculum and the welfare of pupils, but the information they provide to parents lacks some statutory elements. The school's prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents, for example, do not mention:

- alternative provision for religious education and collective worship;
- rates of unauthorised absence;
- national figures in the end of Year 2 national assessment tests;

- the school's progress in addressing the issues from the previous OFSTED inspection; and
- a full financial statement.

66. The school manages its finances satisfactorily, and benefits from the direction and support of knowledgeable governors. Although the school's development plan focuses only on the next year, the financial planning looks at the next three years, giving, for example, alternative spending patterns for variations in the numbers of pupils entering the school. The school has good procedures for securing the best value from its spending, looking carefully at alternative sources for equipment, and making useful comparisons of the school's performance with that of similar schools in order to focus curricular provision on areas that are relatively weak. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used well to support their learning, and give them access to all areas of the curriculum.

67. The school has a good number of suitably qualified teachers with a range of experience to enable them to teach the curriculum. There have been a number of staff absences due to long-term illness. The school has recently managed this well by appointing temporary teachers on contracts rather than short-term supply. The induction programme for new staff is very effective, and they are quickly made to feel 'part of the team'. Teaching assistants benefit from good training, which enables them to give good support to pupils in the classroom. The lunchtime assistants maintain a happy and orderly atmosphere at lunchtime. The office staff are very welcoming and efficient.

68. The accommodation is good, and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The building is welcoming and is enhanced by colourful displays. It is in good decorative order, and is well maintained. The caretaker and cleaners work hard to achieve good standards of cleanliness. The classrooms are of adequate size to accommodate the number of pupils. The library is attractive and well stocked with books. The hall is cramped, especially for physical education lessons. The outside play area for the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory as it is difficult to supervise, and this limits opportunities for physical development. The playground, swimming pool and the field provide good opportunities for physical education and play.

69. The range and quality of equipment and materials to support teaching are good. Equipment for physical education is very good and is organised well. Resources for religious education are good and there is a good range of artefacts. Equipment for science, special educational needs, design and technology, history and geography is also good, and enriches the pupils' learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

To continue the school's good rate of improvement, and raise standards further, the governing body, headteacher and staff should,

- (1) **improve the attainment of girls, especially in reading and mathematics by:**
 - teachers having higher expectations of girls;
 - encouraging girls to have higher expectations of themselves; and
 - ensuring that, in class discussions, girls are given the chance to answer questions ahead of the more assertive boys. (paragraphs 1, 5, 23, 84, 86, 93, 96, 143)
- (2) **produce a development plan that has a long term view of the school's priorities, and has clear indications of the cost of the developments.** (paragraph 62)
- (3) **increase the amount of teaching time in Years 3 and 4 to that recommended for pupils of this age.** (paragraph 27)
- (4) **improve the quality of information to parents, and meet statutory requirements, by:**
 - giving parents more information about the work their child is covering each term, and
 - making sure that the school's prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents contain all the required information about the provision for pupils with special educational needs, rates of absence, national test results, full financial details and what alternative provision exists for religious education and collective worship. (paragraphs 54, 65)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- investigate how the play area for children in the Foundation Stage can be more easily accessible for them, and
- providing more opportunities for these children to be creative, and make their own choices in their work. (paragraphs 11, 15, 20, 29, 68, 71, 72, 80, 82)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

67

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

49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactor y	Unsatisfactor y	Poor	Very Poor
1	15	57	25	1	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 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	300
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	30

Special educational needs

	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	67

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	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	38	25	63

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	35	31	36
	Girls	23	25	24
	Total	58	56	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	92 (89)	89 (96)	95 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	34	33	36
	Girls	23	22	25
	Total	57	55	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	90 (89)	87 (91)	97 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	226
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	2	1
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– Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	27

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	506920

Education support staff: YR– Y4

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	107

Total expenditure	494716
Expenditure per pupil	1730
Balance brought forward from previous year	36924
Balance carried forward to next year	49128

Results of the survey of parents and carers**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	279
Number of questionnaires returned	131

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	49	2	1	4
My child is making good progress in school.	47	46	2	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	43	2	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	39	48	8	0	5
The teaching is good.	47	47	1	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40	46	7	2	5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	49	44	2	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	47	47	2	1	5
The school works closely with parents.	37	50	5	3	5

The school is well led and managed.	47	45	3	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	3	2	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	36	40	15	2	7

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

70. The children are admitted to the Reception classes at the start of the autumn term during the year in which they become five years old. Those children born between September and December attend full-time, whilst the other children attend part-time, but all now attend full-time. They are taught within a warm, caring, supportive environment where they feel safe and secure. Most of the children have attended local nursery schools or playgroups before starting in the Reception class. Assessments made of the children on their entry to the school, shows their attainment to be below average for their age. They are taught in two classes: one classroom is in the school buildings, whilst the other is in a mobile classroom in the playground. Due to the large number of children in the Reception classes, a third teacher is employed to work part-time in each class, so that the maximum time is spent on teaching, particularly for the teaching of basic skills with smaller groups of children. Class teachers have established a good working relationship with the teaching assistants. However, neither Reception class has a full-time teaching assistant or one that is allocated specifically to a class, which restricts the effectiveness of the team. The recommended curriculum is in place, although some aspects, such as the curriculum for creative development and outdoors play, are limited. Planning is clear, with specific learning and achievement targets, but teachers often link these too closely to the areas of learning in the National Curriculum rather than the recommended curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage. Children respond very positively to the high expectations of good behaviour and the caring environment.

71. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory. Often, it is good, especially for communication, literacy and language development, but there are some unsatisfactory features in the teaching and learning for physical and creative development. This judgement is an improvement compared with the school's last inspection in 1997, when there was a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching. Overall, the quality of teaching promotes satisfactory progress and the children make steady progress from their below average levels of attainment, when they first entered school. The children are on course to reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage in all areas of learning except for their physical and creative development. Children with special educational needs are fully included in all areas of the curriculum and receive well-targeted support in class.

Personal, social and emotional development

72. The quality of teaching in this area is satisfactory, and children make steady progress in their personal and social development so that most attain average standards. Their behaviour in and around the school is good. They work and play together and are beginning to co-operate well. They show a good understanding of classroom procedures

and most respond well to them. They are aware of the teachers' high expectations of them and mostly abide by the rules, such as how many children are allowed in the sand at any one time. When given the opportunity to choose activities for themselves, they do so in a sensible way and sustain concentration well for their age. However, opportunities to do this are limited as they are often directed to an activity, and their independent learning skills are undeveloped as a result. Most dress and undress themselves without much help.

73. The teachers have created a warm, secure, caring environment in which children are valued as individuals. The teachers and the teaching assistants have a good relationship with the children, treating each of them with respect to which they respond positively. Consequently, children concentrate and persevere in their activities, seek help when needed, are eager to explore new learning, and solve simple practical problems with confidence. They enjoy the many moments of fun, and times for reflection, which help to strengthen the bond between them.

Communication, language and literacy

74. The quality of teaching and children's progress are good in this area of learning, and their attainment is average by the time they leave. Children talk eagerly about their homes, their friends and things that interest them. They enjoy listening to stories and have good recall of books which they have listened to previously. They are attentive throughout story times, and are developing the ability to predict outcomes, which was evident when children responded well to the story of 'The Lion and the Mouse'. There is good discussion about the key areas of the story that everyone enjoys. Children enjoy humorous books such as 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' and describe where the title is and where the author's name appears. Most children understand the concept that pictures and print carry meaning and that text is read from left to right. The children know many initial phonic sounds and the most able can use this skill to attempt to read simple words. Children are encouraged to take books home to practise their early reading skills. They have good listening skills and listen carefully to instructions. Many of the children have difficulty with the control of their pencils, but adults do not always do enough to correct their mistakes, so often they continue to practise incorrect letter formation. Most children make a good attempt at writing their own name. The staff give lots of praise of children's early writing, and this is good as it boosts children's confidence, and makes them feel as if they are 'writers'.

75. Teaching assistants are used effectively with small groups, when direct teaching is involved. They are well briefed, and assist the teacher in maintaining regular assessments of individual children's progress. The programme of work is well structured and linked to the National Literacy Strategy for young children. Classroom displays are rich in language prompts intended to reinforce learning and a good emphasis on language development is evident throughout the whole programme of work.

Mathematical development

76. The quality of teaching and learning is good in this area. Teachers help the children to develop their mathematical understanding well by providing a structured programme of practical experiences, which enables them to make good progress to attain average standards. Many children can name common shapes such as square, triangle and circle. Most recognise numbers to ten and count to at least 20. When asked, "What is one more than 28?" one child quickly replied, "29". These skills are practised regularly when singing nursery rhymes, number jingles and playing simple board games. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support by playing board games with the children, and this improves children's understanding of early addition and subtraction. Children work

confidently with sand and water, filling and emptying differently sized containers with good skill.

77. Teachers use every opportunity to extend the children's understanding and reinforcement of basic skills through practical experiences. They ensure that all adults in the Reception classes use correct mathematical vocabulary, and provide many activities to build upon the children's understanding. However, during one observed lesson, some aspects of the mathematical activity were too challenging and beyond the children's present stage of development. The practical work on ordinal numbers was appropriate, such as the race between a small group of children, and finding out who was first and who came second. Also, when children later lined up to go to their physical development lesson the teacher asked, "Who is the first one in the line?" and, "Who is third in the line?" which helped to reinforce their understanding of this concept. However, the cutting and sticking exercise of putting mini beast pictures on to a worksheet grid and adding the appropriate printed numbers under each picture was only possible with much support from the teacher. Afterwards, few of the children could read the numbers correctly.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

78. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good overall, and children attain average standards by the time they leave the Reception class. On entry to the school, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world are below average for their age. During the Foundation Stage, they make steady progress in learning about their immediate environment, and are satisfactorily prepared for the programme of study in the National Curriculum. The children have an average knowledge of themselves, and what it means to be a family. They talk confidently about their parents, brothers and sisters, and recognise how much they have changed since they were babies. The children know the main changes in the life of a butterfly, and use terms such as 'egg', 'caterpillar' and 'cocoon' appropriately. They know a little about the town where they live, and express their thoughts clearly on which things they like. However, children have great difficulty trying to express their ideas on which things they dislike in the town. Their answers of 'snakes' and 'ghosts' shows how little they understand about this aspect of their environment. They use the mouse on the computer confidently to change the colour of pictures, and computer 'tools' to create their own patterns.

79. The quality of teaching and learning of computer skills is good. Children acquire new learning when the teacher involves them very well by effective questioning and clear explanations of how to use the mouse, the icons and the printer.

Physical development

80. Overall, the children's attainment is below average in their physical control and they make slow progress from their below average starting point. The lack of an easily accessible outdoor play and work area limits their physical development, because they cannot easily and independently go outside to play. During their physical development lessons, most of the children have difficulty bouncing and catching large balls and some bump into others when moving around the hall. Teachers provide them with many opportunities to develop their manual control skills by providing them with a range of mark-making tools, and cutting and gluing activities. However, many have weak control of their pencils and most have difficulty forming their letters correctly. They enjoy threading beads and using construction kits. Most dress and undress themselves, but some still need help with buttons and zips.

81. The teaching and learning are satisfactory overall in this area. Teachers give clear instructions during physical education lessons and allow children to demonstrate good examples of their work. However, teachers miss some opportunities to increase pupils'

hand control, when they and other adults, for example, thread needles for the children before they have attempted this for themselves.

Creative development

82. Overall, children are achieving below average attainment in their creative development. Children are directed to activities, which limit their independence to choose and initiate ideas of their own, and to experiment and to explore creatively and imaginatively. This holds back their creative development. Although, for example, they had previously drawn and designed their own 'teddy bears', they were given templates of bears to draw around on material, which an adult cut out. Instead of extending the children's creativity, this was stifled and all the 'teddy bears' were all exactly the same shape, with the only difference being the colour. Children weave strips of pliable plastic through plastic netting, which is attached to the fence of the outside area to create an abstract design. They 'paint' the wooden outside fence with water and ask, "Am I doing this well?" but their creativity and painting skills are not enhanced by such activities. Although dressing-up clothes are available to extend imaginative play, these were not used during the inspection. The children enjoy singing rhymes and traditional songs, such as 'heads, shoulders, knees and toes'. Children use malleable materials appropriately and, although the teacher suggests that they use this to make aspects of the life of a butterfly, they enjoy making 'a pancake', 'a sausage', 'a cherry cake' and 'a ladybird', showing their imaginative and creative talents. Although some good artwork of 'people who help us' was displayed, drawings and paintings seen in the analysis of work and observed during the inspection were not of such high quality.

83. Whilst children are taught basic skills well, the quality of teaching and learning in this area is unsatisfactory overall. There are weaknesses in the curricular provision with too few opportunities for children to choose from a wide range of activities, or explore and experiment with their ideas.

ENGLISH

84. Overall, standards in English are average for seven year olds, but are above average by the time they leave the school. This represents an improvement on the standards reported in the last inspection in 1997, when all aspects of English were judged to meet national expectations. Over the past four years, standards in English have fluctuated. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results in the national tests in 2000 were above average in reading and writing. The findings of this inspection differ from the 2000 national test results at Key Stage 1. This is because many of the pupils in the current Year 2 started school at below average standards, and although they have made good progress, their attainment is only average. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 3 and 4, and most achieve above average standards by the time they leave the school. In the 2000 national tests, there was similar attainment in reading by boys and girls, but boys outperformed girls in writing. The findings of this inspection show no significant differences in English in the attainment of boys and girls in the infant classes, but by Year 4, boys' attainment is significantly higher than that of girls. The school recognises this as an issue and is looking at ways to raise girls' attainment.

85. Overall, pupils achieve well in English as they progress through the school. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards compared with their previous attainment, especially when they receive well-targeted support in class. The additional literacy lessons in Years 3 and 4 are helping to improve pupils' attainment, and support their needs well.

86. Throughout the school, pupils achieve above average standards in speaking and listening. Nearly all speak clearly and confidently, both in small groups and to a wider

audience. The excellent and very good teaching observed in the Year 1 classes is enabling pupils to attain high standards in their oral and listening skills. Throughout the school, most pupils listen attentively both to their teachers and to other pupils. However, in Year 3, some pupils are easily distracted and tend to call out. Their year has been disrupted through staff illness, but the present class teachers are now addressing this well, and are steadily helping pupils to improve their listening skills. Teachers use effective, open-ended questioning well, which stimulates pupils' own thoughts of enquiry, and develops good listening skills. This was evident in a Year 4 lesson, when pupils listened very attentively to a poem entitled 'To my daughter'. The very good pace and questioning which followed enabled pupils to analyse the poem well. They understood clearly the themes of the poem, and the teacher's probing questioning enabled them to think seriously about its meaning. Consequently, many expressed their thoughts well, and made sensitive comments such as "They can remember their children in their heart". A very spiritual moment followed when they realised that the teacher's mother had written the poem. In a Year 4 geography lesson, a debate on good and bad aspects of life in an Indian village enhanced pupils' speaking and listening skills well. However, boys are keener than girls to answer questions, and sometimes teachers are too quick to ask them to answer without giving the girls sufficient time to think their ideas through before giving their answers.

87. Standards in reading are average by the end of Year 2, and above average by the end of Year 4. Teachers impart a love of books to pupils, and their emphasis on the enjoyment of reading in the first few years at school is successful in developing positive attitudes towards books. Pupils take books home regularly to practise their skills, and the addition of story tapes to the lending library is a good innovation. Pupils' enjoyment of books is a strength of their learning. They share their ideas thoughtfully, and read suitable books with expression and understanding. By the end of Year 4, higher attaining pupils are able to read challenging material, and use the more advanced reading skills of prediction, skimming and scanning. At all ages, they enjoy reading the shared text in the literacy hour, and many read with appropriate expression. Pupils name their favourite authors, such as Dick King Smith, Roald Dahl and J. K. Rowling. Teachers promote reading skills well, and are good models for pupils when they read aloud and show how to use the voice to convey meaning. This was observed in an excellent Year 1 lesson when the teacher read the poem, 'Waves', to pupils, in an expressive way that enabled them to make excellent gains in their understanding of the poem. Research skills are satisfactorily developed across the key stages, and older pupils are familiar with both the colour coded and Dewey system of classification.

88. Standards in writing are average by Year 2, and above average by the end of Year 4. Teachers give younger pupils freedom to experiment with their own writing. This is good teaching, as it enables the pupils to feel confident about writing imaginatively, and to choosing adventurous vocabulary. The school has identified pupils' spelling as an area of weakness and has made this a main priority for development. Standards in spelling are improving due to the concentrated programme of work, which is being implemented well throughout the school. Analysis of pupils' work shows many have good skills in writing for a variety of purposes. Year 2 pupils, for example, write clear instructions for making a finger puppet, and show good understanding of writing from a different perspective, such as their stories of imagining they are 'Tansy the cat'. Higher attaining pupils use a broad vocabulary, and develop interesting ideas, but some pupils still use a narrow range of words, and their sentences are often muddled. The punctuation used by many pupils is often inaccurate, and not always corrected when it is wrong, or missing. Teachers encourage pupils to present their work well, and many, as a result, write in a neat, legible, fluent style. Pupils learn to join their writing in Year 2 and, although many are making good progress, a few still print in Year 4.

89. Pupils in Year 4 organise their writing in a logical sequence, and most show a good understanding of grammatical structure. When writing extended stories, a few display more advanced writing skills, and use paragraphs in their longer passages. Pupils write well in a wide range of styles including poetry, reviews and stories. They respond sensitively to poetry, and enjoy experimenting with language. Year 4 pupils studied 'Silver' by Walter de la Mare before creating their own poems entitled 'Mango'. Their ideas were original, and many were keen to read their poems to the class. They plan, edit and refine their written work, which is helping them to achieve well. They discuss and appraise their own and others' writing, and this helps them to develop and extend their ideas.

90. The development of literacy skills is good across the curriculum. Pupils use their literacy skills well, such as when problem solving in mathematics, writing of life in Ancient Greece or Roman times in history and about the course of a river in geography.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good throughout the school. This is an improvement from the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be 'sound and often good'. Teachers create very good relationships in the class, which enable pupils to feel confident. They create a positive learning atmosphere within the classrooms, which allows pupils to enjoy their work within clear guidelines. Language has a high profile in the school, and teachers reinforce this well in class by emphasising precise terms so that pupils become familiar with, and understand, technical words such as homonyms, similes and suffix from an early age. Teachers' good subject knowledge is clearly evident in their clear, stimulating lessons and confident management of the literacy hour. These important strengths ensure a brisk pace to lessons, and secure pupils' interest and attention. Pupils are taught as a class, with work specifically set for different ability groups during literacy lessons. This works well, and all groups are set challenging tasks, which extend their learning effectively. Teachers use good, probing questioning, coupled with clear explanations, and this enables pupils to acquire new skills and consolidate their learning. Teachers respond to pupils' contributions enthusiastically, and this encourages them to try an answer, even though they are not sure. Pupils respond well to the challenges set and concentrate throughout the lessons, producing work of a high quality. Teachers make good use of assessment information to make sure that pupils attain standards in line with their ability. Teachers provide an appropriate amount of challenge for more able pupils, which is why many achieve high standards by the time they leave.

92. Strengths in the teaching and learning of English across the school were illustrated well in an excellent lesson observed in a Year 1 class. The teacher made learning fun and interesting. She shared the objectives for the lesson with pupils by asking them to read the speech bubble from the large, colourful dinosaur, W.I.L.F., ('What I Am Looking For'), so that they all knew what they were expected to learn. She read a poem, 'Waves', to pupils with great expression, and there was a hush as pupils listened with bright, excited faces. Using perceptive questioning, the teacher enabled them to explore and recognise the rhyming words. Pupils' responses were appropriate and thoughtful, and showed that they had listened to every word. Pupils make excellent gains in their understanding of the importance of rhyme in poetry because of the teacher's very high expectations and dynamic, exciting style.

93. Such high expectations are common throughout the school, and explain why pupils make good progress. However, in Key Stage 2, especially in classes that have a predominance of boys, teachers miss some opportunities to bring girls into class discussions, and this undermines their confidence as speakers. Also, very occasionally, they miss opportunities to provide a good model of the correct formation of joined writing, as observed in a Year 3 lesson when the teacher printed instead of joined her writing. The use of worksheets to practise handwriting skills across the school does not work well, because, without direct instruction, some pupils merely reinforce their bad habits.

94. The curriculum in English is balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented well. The good language policy supports teaching and learning well. Assessment procedures are very good, which is an improvement from the previous inspection, when assessment was a weakness. Appropriate targets in literacy are set for pupils to motivate them and give them responsibility for their learning. Information and communication technology is used well to support teaching and learning in English. Throughout the school, the quality of marking is good, and provides pupils with constructive comments about how they can improve their work. The co-ordinator is very experienced and provides very good leadership. She monitors teaching, planning and samples of pupils' work. Resources in English are good overall. The attractive school library and the classrooms have an appropriate range of books to support research and study skills, and to enable pupils of all ages to enjoy their reading. The subject is enhanced by events such as book fairs, a book club and storytellers. Imaginative displays of pupils' work, such as the Year 2 'holiday postcards' and the Year 3 and 4 stories of 'How light came to the world', instil a sense of pride in pupils, and celebrate their creativity. English makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, when they listen to literature, work co-operatively together and share in the celebration of each other's work.

MATHEMATICS

95. In Year 2, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are average, which reflects the findings of both the previous inspection and results attained in the 2000 end of Key Stage 1 national tests. Standards fell from 1996 to 1998, but have risen steadily since. Boys have outperformed girls. Bearing in mind the low levels of mathematical development of the current Year 2 pupils when they entered the school, they are achieving well. There is currently no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls at this stage. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in relation to their previous attainment and in meeting their individual targets.

96. In Year 4, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are above average for this age. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection and is a result of good teaching and the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Boys are achieving well, but there is under-achievement by girls in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with special educational needs continue to make good progress.

97. By the age of seven, most pupils use quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten, but they are less confident with numbers to 20. They understand the concept of half and quarter. They have a good knowledge of common two and three-dimensional shapes and describe some of their properties. They use their information and communication technology skills well to generate sound bar charts of pupils' birthdays and hair colours. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 1 is good and this promotes good progress by the pupils. The previous inspection judged teaching to be sound and often good. In a Year 2 numeracy lesson, the teacher made effective use of an overhead projector and 100 number square to help the pupils learn how to add 9, 11, 19 and 21 to different numbers, by making use of 10 and 20. This worked very well. He asked the pupils to explain their strategies and this helped the pupils to understand that there is often more than one way of solving a problem. He encouraged the pupils to predict number patterns involving three and four. In another Year 2 lesson, the teacher made good use of computers to help pupils explore number patterns. She matched tasks well to pupils' differing needs. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher placed a good emphasis on the acquisition of correct mathematical vocabulary, and this helped the pupils to use a large number square to count on or back from different numbers. She used questioning well to make the pupils think carefully and to consolidate learning about symmetrical patterns in two-

dimensional shapes. At one point the teacher probed pupils' understanding effectively by asking, "A square has four equal sides; what does equal mean?"

98. By Year 4, the pupils add and subtract two-digit numbers quickly in their heads. They apply their mathematical skills well in solving real life problems concerning the duration of time, money and capacity. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of equivalent fractions and the square roots of numbers. They calculate the perimeter and area of shapes accurately, and use protractors skilfully to measure angles. The pupils use their computer well to generate pictures illustrating reflective symmetry. In science, they draw accurate bar graphs of the effect of friction on different surfaces, and Venn diagrams to sort forces into pushes or pulls. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 is good overall, and this promotes good progress by the pupils. The previous inspection judged teaching to be sound and often good. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher used the initial mental mathematics session well to develop the pupils' understanding of multiplying and dividing by 10 and 100. She explained place value clearly and matched work well to pupils' varying needs. Good teaching ensured that the pupils were able to apply rules about the ten times table to different situations. In another Year 4 lesson, the teacher asked the pupils to explain their strategies and this helped to consolidate learning about rounding four digit numbers to the nearest 10 or 100. She explored reasons for wrong answers and this helped the pupils to learn from their mistakes. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher made effective use of a mathematics game, which made learning fun, and consolidated their understanding of multiples of two, five and ten.

99. The teachers are confident with the three-part daily mathematics lesson. At the outset, they make sure that the pupils understand what they will be expected to achieve by the end of the lesson. Brisk mental mathematics sessions move smoothly into well-organised group work, matched to pupils' varying needs. There is now more emphasis on the pupils using and applying their mathematical knowledge and skills in different situations than was the case in the previous inspection. Learning is consolidated effectively at the end of each lesson and through regular homework tasks.

100. Leadership was lacking at the time of the previous inspection, as there was no subject co-ordinator. This has now improved, and the subject is now managed well. The current co-ordinator has developed a clear policy. The requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Planning is very securely based on the National Numeracy Strategy and there are very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection. The teachers use assessment very well to plan subsequent work, and to set targets for further improvement. The co-ordinator has evaluated the subject's performance by monitoring planning and teaching, and this has helped to raise standards. This analysis has identified the differences in the attainment of boys and girls, but the school has not yet put in place measures to help girls do better. Consequently, more confident boys answer most of the questions in class, and, too often, girls sit on the sidelines.

101. Most of the old resources noted in the previous inspection have been replaced and resources are now broadly adequate. The subject makes a sound contribution to the pupils' social development through the encouragement of collaborative work in lessons and the sharing of resources.

SCIENCE

102. In Year 2, standards are average, which represents good progress from the below average standards at which these pupils entered the school. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress towards their targets. There has been satisfactory improvement at this stage since the last inspection when standards were average and pupils made satisfactory progress. In the year 2000 national curriculum assessments, Year 2 pupils' results were above average for pupils gaining the expected

Level 2, and well above average for those gaining Level 3, both against national averages and those for similar schools. However, with the present Year 2, the initial tests on entry to the school show that their knowledge and understanding of the world, which includes science later in the school, were particularly low. This inspection finds that there are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls, both of whom achieve average standards.

103. By the time pupils are at the end of Year 4, they have made good progress, and their standards are above average. This represents good improvement since the last inspection, when standards for this age group were average, and pupils made satisfactory progress.

104. The quality of teaching and learning across all classes is good. Teachers plan successfully in their year groups. Their planning always includes work that is appropriate for pupils with special educational needs, and also for those pupils who need more challenge to stretch them further. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on investigative work so that pupils are challenged to find out for themselves. For example, in Year 2, pupils experimented with simple electrical circuits using batteries and bulbs, and noted the changes in a block of solid jelly when they mixed it with hot water. Older pupils carried out an experiment about the places woodlice prefer to live in, and discovered that they liked the shady, damp area best.

105. In their work about living things, pupils in Year 1 record their likes and dislikes of food, and successfully classify from pictures of things alive or not. Pupils in Year 2 extend this classification by using the number of legs that a living creature has, or naming the parts of a plant and their uses. Older pupils, in Year 3, understand the formation of teeth, and how healthy eating is beneficial to human development. Year 4 pupils are able to do 'field work', studying the living things found in a hedge and classifying them, using criteria such as the number of pairs of wings. Teachers present good challenges to pupils, and enable them to learn well by good questions and methods, usually by involving them in activities and investigation.

106. Year 2 pupils sort materials such as glass, wood and metal, and find good examples of everyday things that are made of these materials. Pupils in Year 4 make good progress with this aspect of science and when considering materials, conducted an experiment to establish the level of friction presented by lino, tarmac and carpet. They all made their predictions, and when comparing the outcomes with these investigations, one pupil commented in his report, "We were surprised by the findings because we thought that something else would happen."

107. Pupils have a good knowledge of electrical circuits. Younger ones understand the problem if a bulb does not light, whilst older pupils understand the term 'conductor' and use this knowledge when making their own switches using, for example, a paper clip. By Year 4, they carry out good experiments turning solids into liquids, such as melting ice, or butter.

108. Teachers generally ensure that pupils engage in discussions about what they have studied so that they set the scene well for new work. For example, in a Year 4 lesson about food webs, the teacher led a good discussion about what had been covered previously about simple food chains, and this enabled pupils to think more clearly about the context and make the progression to more complicated work. Teachers have established good classroom routines, which result in good, or very good, behaviour by pupils, when, for example, taking their turn to answer or ask questions.

109. There are sufficient resources for all pupils to have their own apparatus. In a Year 3 lesson about magnets, all pupils had a magnet to work with, which enabled them to get on with their work without waiting to share equipment.

110. The co-ordinator has planned the subject well and this is having a beneficial impact on teaching and learning, especially the increased emphasis on investigative work. Assessment is good, and teachers keep careful records of pupils' progress and highlight areas for further work or emphasis. This impact on the planning year by year is enabling pupils to make good progress as they move through the school.

ART AND DESIGN

111. Pupils' work in art and design, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is average by the end of Year 2, and above average by the time they leave Year 4. This is an improvement on the 'average and sometimes good' standards at Key Stage 2 reported in the previous OFSTED inspection. This improvement is due to the school addressing successfully one of the key issues for action following the last inspection, which was to raise standards by matching the work 'more closely to individual needs'.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, and promotes good progress. When pupils enter Key Stage 1, many have weak art skills. The good teaching in Key Stage 1 enables pupils to achieve average standards by the end of Year 2. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of the subject, and this ensures that pupils learn the basic skills of drawing, designing and painting well. Year 1 pupils develop their observational skills well creating very good pencil drawings of buildings, and vibrant paintings of Van Gogh's 'sunflowers'. A good feature of pupils' work is the strong link that it has with other subjects. Year 1 pupils, for example, handled and controlled a digital camera well to photograph each other before using their photographs to make good observational self-portraits. In a Year 2 class, pupils produced bright, lively work linked to their history work on seaside life in the early part of the twentieth century, smudging chalk and creating collages of sea creatures. In the other Year 2 class, pupils painted a wash of blue over wax crayon, to create a tranquil feeling of under water life for their 'rock pool' pictures. This also linked well with their geography work on the sea and rivers. They use their mathematical knowledge of various shapes effectively to create their own looms on which they weave different textures of materials. Many talk critically about the differences in their own and others' work, and suggest ways to improve it.

113. As they move into Years 3 and 4, pupils refine their skills well. Year 3 pupils create very effective Celtic letters in pen and ink, self-portraits and crayon sketches of views of London. These pictures show good attention to intricate detail. Their very good pastel seascapes evoke a feeling of misty sea scenes and show clearly their good understanding of Turner's artwork. Their good paintings in the style of Picasso's 'The Dove', show how well they understand the techniques artists use to create different effects. Pupils in Year 4 make good block prints, and use handprints to create colourful wall hangings. As in Years 1 and 2, teachers link art successfully to other subjects. Intricate Mendhi hand patterns, and colourful paisley patterns, which originate from Kashmir, link well with their religious education and geography work on India. They use their artistic skills well in their story writing in English lessons.

114. A Year 3 lesson, which illustrated the strengths of the teaching and learning, began by the teacher showing pupils a variety of Miro paintings. The teacher used effective questioning, such as, "What colour can you see? What shapes can you see? What do you think the artist may have had in mind when he painted these pictures?" Pupils were keen to answer, and some thought the paintings were of 'dreams'. The theme of dreams really captured their imagination, and they set about their task eagerly to 'paint in the style of Miro'. By very good explanation of brush techniques, the teacher enabled pupils to make very good gains in their skill of painting. They sustained concentration well and their careful attention to detail showed how much they had learned. Teachers in the same year group plan together, which is good, and ensures that pupils are following the same curriculum.

115. The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively, and bases the school's art and design work on the nationally recommended scheme of work. This works well, and provides a good structure to the teaching and pupils' learning. At the end of Year 2, teachers use the scheme's own assessment procedures well to gauge pupils' progress, and raise standards even higher. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own and others' artwork, which is helping them to achieve high standards. The art club for Year 3 pupils is good, as this extends their learning. Resources are good, and include the use of a kiln and a digital camera. Art and design make a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development when pupils work cooperatively together and learn about artwork in other cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. Pupils' work in design and technology, including those with special educational needs, is average by Year 2 and Year 4, and they make sound progress. These are similar judgements to those of the previous inspection. By Year 2, pupils have average skills in designing and modelling using a variety of materials and simple tools. Most pupils label their designs to a good standard, and produce accurate step-by-step instructions. They conduct good, well thought-out investigations into the use of materials for specific purposes, and adapt these ideas well to design and make their own models. Some of their best work involved pupils in investigating how different foods are packaged, and which materials offer the best protection. Pupils' work investigating how soup is made was of a particularly good standard. They made good comparisons between soup in packets and that in tins, and investigated the composition of the products carefully to examine their contents. The teacher provided a very good extension to the task when she asked them to construct a database on the computer to show pupils' preferences. Pupils make sound evaluations of their work, and talk critically of why certain aspects have shortcomings. They make sound use of construction kits, and demonstrate average skills in building houses and vehicles with axles.

117. By Year 4, pupils have refined their designs and models well. They work well in pairs to conduct thoughtful investigations on how food is packaged, and learn much from taking food packets apart to see how they are made. They display good basic skills as they create a maze with wooden blocks, and show how creative they can be when they make figures out of tin foil, and three-dimensional fish in a picture frame.

118. Pupils with special educational needs attain good standards in design and technology for their abilities, and whilst their designs suffer from shortcomings in the labelling, their models are often of a good standard.

119. Only one design and technology lesson was observed, and whilst it is not possible to give an overall judgement about the quality of teaching, the scrutiny of previous lesson plans show that teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subject. Their planning is good, and introduces pupils to a varied and increasing range of tools and materials for both designing and making. This helps pupils to build their skills systematically through the school. They have appropriate expectations of pupils' performance, encouraging them to strive for a good, finished product. Teachers pay good attention to the quality of pupils' designs, and ensure that each element is correctly labelled. Resources are used well, with good management and organisation of the classroom to ensure that they are accessible to pupils. Teachers assess pupils' progress well, with a system that shows clearly which pupils have mastered certain skills, and which may need to revisit the topic.

120. The experienced co-ordinator supports staff well. He has produced a good scheme of work, which ensures that pupils develop skills steadily as they move through the school, and gives good opportunities for assessment. The co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and

has observed some teaching in order to evaluate pupils' progress and the success of the curriculum. The school has a good range of resources, which support pupils' learning well.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Standards in Years 2 and 4 are average. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. All pupils achieve well, and enjoy their geography lessons. Apart from a small minority in Year 3, they behave well and have positive attitudes towards work. Boys and girls attain equally well.

122. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school, and this is promoting good progress by all pupils, including those with special educational needs. By the age of seven, the pupils record daily weather by means of appropriate symbols. They have a sound knowledge about Felixstowe's role as a port and seaside resort. They have used their literacy skills soundly to write imaginary postcards from Felixstowe and abroad. Most pupils have an appropriate understanding of the differences between town, countryside and seaside. They are confident with the idea of a map as a view from above, and the need for a map key. They observe features satisfactorily on aerial photographs. Younger pupils make some useful comparisons between Haverhill and the village of Hundon. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher made good use of holiday brochures to help the pupils learn about the characteristics of a seaside resort, and this worked well as pupils soon learned about the important features. In another Year 2 lesson, the teacher made good use of some photographs which he had taken to enhance the pupils' learning of the role of Felixstowe. In a Year 1 lesson, the teacher used a local map and aerial photographs well to help the pupils learn how their homes are linked with other places in the locality, and how different buildings are used. She made very good use of information and communication technology to help pupils to think in geographical ways.

123. By Year 4, the pupils have an understanding of how the features of a river and its valley change from source to mouth. They use atlases with reasonable accuracy to locate some British rivers and use four-figure coordinates accurately to locate features on maps. Year 3 pupils have a sound understanding of how maps provide information about places, such as leisure activities in the Peak District National Park. They use their computer skills effectively to generate pie charts, illustrating reasons why people move home to another area. In a Year 4 lesson, which illustrated some of the strengths in teaching, the teacher succeeded in developing the pupils' ability to research information from books and CD-ROMs. She helped them to develop confidence in expressing their own opinions, and this enabled them to decide which features of life in a rural village in India are desirable or not. At the end of the lesson, she gave the pupils an opportunity to reflect on what they had learnt and to see if their initial perceptions of India had changed. She set a worthwhile homework task, in which the pupils were to think about the advantages of living in Haverhill.

124. Management of the subject has improved considerably since the previous inspection, and is now very good. The co-ordinator has produced a good policy document, which ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. There is a clear action plan for the further development of the subject. Planning is thorough, and is based on national and local guidelines. There are good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress, and the teachers use this information well to plan subsequent work. There is a good range of resources to support learning. There are opportunities for the pupils to participate in local fieldwork and to visit Hundon. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school makes good use of loan materials from the Multicultural Loan Service to support learning about India, and a dance troupe from Ghana is due to visit the school. The pupils have a good awareness of environmental pollution and the need for conservation.

HISTORY

125. Standards in Years 2 and 4 are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. All pupils achieve well. They have positive attitudes towards work and they enjoy their history lessons. Boys and girls attain equally well.

126. It was not possible to observe any lessons in Key Stage 1, but an analysis of teachers' planning and of pupils' work indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is good. This is promoting good progress by all the pupils, including those with special educational needs. By the age of seven, the pupils have a good knowledge of some important events in British history, such as The Great Fire of London and the Battle of Hastings. They have a good understanding about life in Norman castles and have visited Stansted Mountfitchet to learn about this from first hand experience. Their discussions about the best location for a castle show a good awareness of the important factors that people had to consider. They know what life was like for ordinary people in mediaeval times. The pupils are learning how to find information for themselves from books and CD-ROM programs. They use their literacy skills soundly to write as a soldier defending a Norman castle. The pupils are familiar with some famous people from the past, such as Guy Fawkes, Florence Nightingale and Edith Cavell. Younger pupils are beginning to understand the concept of a time line, and they are beginning to use appropriate historical language, such as 'now', 'present' and 'past', in learning how motorcars have evolved over time.

127. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3 and 4 is good, and this promotes good progress by all the pupils, including those with special educational needs. In two separate Year 4 lessons, the teachers made useful links with literacy and this helped the pupils to think of questions to ask about photographs depicting life on Britain's canals in the nineteenth century. The teachers emphasised the importance of using evidence, such as old photographs, to find out about the past. The teacher made good use of information and communication technology as some pupils produced their questions on a computer. She expected more able pupils to ask more complex questions, and this ensured that they were extended fully. Teachers assess pupils' learning well, and this ensures that work is set at the correct level of difficulty. In one lesson, for example, the teacher began with an effective recapitulation of previous learning, which enabled the pupils to recall the role of the Duke of Bridgwater and the physical characteristics of canals. In the other lesson, the teacher checked pupils' progress carefully, by reminding pupils how they should, "...direct your question to the person in the photograph". In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher encouraged the pupils to find information from more than one reference book and this helped the pupils to learn how the Romans built their roads and why they were usually straight. She linked learning well to pupils' literacy work, encouraging the pupils to make use of a book's index.

128. The co-ordinator leads the subject very well. Management has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The co-ordinator has produced a good policy document, which ensures that the requirements of the National Curriculum are met. There is a clear action plan for the further development of the subject. Planning, which is based on both national and local guidelines, is good, and ensures that the teachers build on pupils' skills from one year to the next. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' progress, and the teachers use this information well to plan subsequent work. There are good resources to support learning, and they are enhanced by school visits to places such as Stansted Mountfitchet and the House On The Hill Toy Museum and by visitors, such as a Roman 'soldier', and people who talk about their experiences at the Old Cangle school. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they have the opportunity to learn about past cultures, right and wrong in people's behaviour in the past and aspects of British social history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

129. The attainment of pupils by the end of Year 2 is above average, and is significantly better than that reported in the previous inspection. Since then, the school has developed far better planning, which ensures that pupils build successfully on foundations laid before. Pupils' attainment by Year 4 is also above average. A particular strength of pupils' attainment lies in the way they use computers in many other subjects. Of special note is the way Year 1 pupils used a design program to construct an imaginary town to support their geographical investigation, and older pupils used a digital camera to compare their portraits in art with the 'real thing'. This constant involvement in information and communication technology gives them the confidence and competence that was lacking at the time of the last inspection, when computers were often 'left switched off'.

130. By the end of 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. These skills are particularly useful as they improve their punctuation in English lessons by editing text which has deliberate mistakes for them to correct. Pupils frame questions with good skill to negotiate simple adventure simulations, and are starting to understand that inappropriate questions yield inappropriate results. They research CD-ROM programs skilfully to find more about animals, famous artists and authors. Pupils have a good understanding of how to control a programmable toy and draw shapes on the screen by using a sequence of commands.

131. By the time they leave Year 4, pupils have good skills in using word processing programs. They have developed the basic work covered in Years 1 and 2 so that, by Year 4, they use desktop publishing programs well to produce 'newspapers'. In science, their work involving 'connecting' electrical circuits on the screen shows a good understanding of how to use computers to investigate hypotheses and come to a conclusion. Pupils use data handling programs well to produce pie graphs of their mathematical investigations, and produce block graphs to illustrate clearly their favourite soups in design and technology lessons. Their good understanding of how to frame questions is illustrated when they use 'decision trees' very effectively to classify animals in science.

132. 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 spelling.

133. No judgement of teaching was made in the last inspection. 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, sometimes, to allow pupils to work on their own develops their independence. Teachers cope well with the problem of teaching a whole class around two computers, by preparing them well beforehand, and organizing the curriculum so that they all have the chance to use their new skills at an early stage. In this way, for example, one teacher developed pupils' data-handling skills well by discussing with them first how the data would be collected and entered, and then moving on to the computer. Once the pupils had learned how to enter the data, and understood how to construct the 'fields', they took it in turns to put their skills into practice. Their independent work showed how successful the teaching had been, as some entered data confidently, whilst others discussed what other 'fields' could be included.

134. 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, which are now similar to those found in most schools. The timetabling of specific information and communication technology lessons works well, and ensures that all pupils have regular and demanding work on computers. The co-ordinator has made good use of Local Education Authority advisors to inform the school of the best practice, and attends useful meetings with co-ordinators from other schools to raise standards further.

MUSIC

135. Standards in music are average for pupils at seven, and above average by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 4. Many achieve above average attainment in their singing. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when attainment was judged to be average throughout the school. 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 achieve appropriate standards and take part in all musical activities. The school has addressed one of the key issues for action in the 1997 OFSTED report well, which was to achieve 'greater progression and continuity in pupils' learning'.

136. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 1. Lessons are planned well, and prepared with a broad range of musical activities that are suitably challenging. Pupils sing a variety of songs tunefully, with good control and enjoy using appropriate actions, as observed when they sang 'Heads, shoulders, knees and toes'. A Year 3 teacher, who is a music specialist, leads the music lessons for Year 2 pupils, and her piano accompaniment greatly enhances their singing. Pupils keep a steady beat when clapping varying rhythms. They listen attentively to music, such as 'The Planets' by Holst, and clearly express their ideas about how the mood of music makes them feel 'scared' or 'calm', when listening, for example, to an excerpt of discordant music about the sea. They recognise some of the musical instruments they can hear in pieces of music, such as violins, drums, tambourines and cymbals, and explain that the cymbals 'sound like the crashing of the waves'. They interpret symbols for varying rhythms well, and have knowledge of a 'rest'. They use symbols appropriately to make pictorial records of their own compositions, and to show changes in music.

137. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 3 and 4. As a result, pupils develop a good understanding of rhythm and basic musical structure. They sing a wide repertoire of songs from different eras with accurate pitch, and sing a two-part hymn, 'It's up to us', sensitively during a whole school assembly. Pupils listen attentively to a wide range of music, from classical to Glenn Miller, when entering and leaving the hall for assemblies. Teachers give pupils many opportunities to listen to music in detail, and to discuss their responses. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils listened attentively to 'Storms in Africa' by Enya before expressing their thoughts about the colours the music conveyed to them. The teacher combined this well with 'Succession', a painting by Wassily Kandinsky, to help them combine sounds and colours to portray mood and emotion in their own compositions. Year 4 pupils sing 'Listen out' tunefully, keeping good rhythm and attention to musical expression.

138. The co-ordinator's infectious enthusiasm and love of music are clearly conveyed to her pupils; this creates an air of excitement, and ensures pupils' total involvement in their learning. Her use of correct musical vocabulary, such as 'dynamics', 'timbre', 'forte', 'pianissimo', followed by clear explanations, enhances and extends pupils' learning well. This helps them to enjoy appraising and composing music. Pupils work together very well when creating their own compositions to 'make a picture come to life'. They experiment with different tempo, and use symbols, names of notes or correct musical notation effectively to record their ideas. They have very inventive ideas and use their voices and a range of percussion instruments very well to create a musical 'clown', 'storm' and 'chicken'. They perform their compositions eagerly to their classmates, and respectively appraise each other's efforts. The teacher praises them for their work, and this encourages them to evaluate their work to improve it. Her very good teaching enables pupils to make very good progress in developing their musical knowledge and skills. Occasionally, lessons taught by non-specialist teachers lack the pace and dynamism of the more successful lessons. Opportunities are sometimes missed to extend further pupils' knowledge of musical vocabulary, teachers' questioning is over protracted and pupils become restless as a result.

139. The subject is well led and promoted by the co-ordinator, who provides good support for staff. The policy and use of a published scheme, together with the national guidelines for music, provide teachers with the support to develop pupils' musical skills in a structured way as they progress through the school. There is a good range of resources, which are easily accessible. Older pupils have opportunities to join the choir and recorder group. Pupils take part in Christmas productions and an Easter assembly for pupils in Years 3 and 4. Younger pupils take part in a spring concert, which allows every member of the school to take part in making music. Pupils from middle schools visit the school to perform for the pupils. The subject 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. Standards of attainment in both key stages are average. Pupils, including those who have special educational needs, make good progress overall to attain these standards from their low starting point. These findings are similar to those reported at the last inspection.

141. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching and learning is generally good, and this is similar to the findings of the last inspection. Teachers maintain good control of pupils and observe safety rules well. They use some of the good performances of pupils to demonstrate to the whole class, and there are plenty of opportunities for pupils to progress in skills within lessons. In a Year 2 lesson, the teacher made some good teaching points so that pupils caught the beanbags better, with fewer being dropped. There is good assessment of progress shared with the pupils, and, in the same Year 2 lesson, pupils picked up the good points from others' performance and, by the end of the session, were jumping further than at first. Teachers explain new work well, and are good at demonstrating the best ways to throw, catch and jump. Pupils respond well to teachers' control and stop instantly they are asked, or a whistle is blown. They understand the need for a warm up, and can talk about the possible consequences of leaving out the warm up sessions. Teachers ensure that all pupils are fully engaged in the activities, and give them good challenges to work towards. Pupils are beginning to learn the rules of games, and have few disputes about what is fair.

142. In Years 3 and 4, the quality of teaching and learning is good, and pupils make good progress in most lessons. For example, in a Year 4 lesson on throwing, catching and batting, pupils were noticeably better by the end of the lesson, striking the ball with more accuracy, and bowling to pitch directly onto the bat without the need for a bounce beforehand. Their running and catching skills are at an average level for their ages.

However, higher standards are evident in some other skills, where pupils have received extra coaching in some cases, for example, the pupils who play tennis are able to strike the ball firmly and accurately. Teachers make good use of the skills that some pupils have to demonstrate to the class, and make direct teaching points well. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, pupils were shown that a standing jump can be improved and extended if they swing their arms in preparation. Later, they were taught some techniques about relays, and how to pass a 'baton' better by extending the carrying arm towards the receiver. They put these techniques into operation, and the shuttle relays they were doing improved correspondingly. Teachers give clear instructions and maintain good control at all times. They have established routines for good behaviour, and pupils respond accordingly.

143. There are some differences in the performance of boys and girls, but teachers do not always address these. Boys often try harder, and put more effort into their work so that they throw and jump further and develop better techniques. Teachers sometimes fail to notice this and do not plan or provide activities that will develop girls' skills appropriately. Swimming is a strength of the school, with teachers making very good use of the school's pool in the summer months, and bringing most pupils up to standards well above the expectations for their ages. Almost all pupils swim well by the time they leave the school, and many have certificates showing that they can swim well beyond the 25 metres distance.

144. The management of the subject is good and the planning shows evidence of much hard work and co-ordination, resulting in a good, balanced and broad curriculum for the pupils. There are good links with local schools and the co-ordinator leads the meetings of local 'clusters' of schools, including the schools that pupils will go to in the future. In this way there is good continuity for pupils as they move from one school to another.

145. Resources for physical education are very good and very well organised, so that teachers have instant access to them and are able to use more of the lesson time for teaching, rather than gathering equipment.

146. The field is large and helps the teaching and learning of athletics and games, and the pool is a very good resource. These good facilities enable higher standards in athletics and especially swimming, but the hall is limited in space and is restrictive when larger classes use it. After school clubs provide good opportunities for pupils to extend their skills in a variety of sports and physical activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

147. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus across both key stages. This judgement is similar to the findings of the last inspection. As they move through the school, pupils make satisfactory progress, including those who have special educational needs. Many of the lessons are story times and all pupils really enjoy these sessions, and join in enthusiastically when discussion starts.

148. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The analysis of work shows that pupils have a sound understanding of some of the stories that are important to Christians. For example, pupils in Year 1 know the story of Jairus, while Year 2 are learning about people who help the community, and are going on to hear some stories about how Jesus helped others in his life. Older pupils have a sound knowledge of Old Testament stories about Abraham and Moses, as well as the Easter stories in Christianity.

149. Teachers are able to keep pupils spellbound when telling stories about biblical characters, such as in the Year 3 lesson about Moses and the exodus from Egypt. Pupils all sat in excited anticipation while they heard about Moses and the bulrushes, his escape, and subsequent adventures. At the beginning of the lesson, pupils were able to help in the recapitulation of the story of Joseph and his brothers, leading up to the adventures in Egypt. Teachers use good questioning techniques to draw most pupils into these

discussions. Pupils had remembered most of the details of the story, and were keen to share these with the class.

150. By the time pupils reach Year 4, they have a deeper understanding of some aspects of religion, and many talk well about their ideas of the attributes of God, such as, 'big and strong like a bear', or 'high up and seeing everything like an eagle'. Learning is not restricted to Christianity, and teachers give pupils opportunities to learn about the beliefs and customs of several faiths such as Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. For example, Year 4 pupils have learnt about Ramadan and the fasting requirements of Islam, together with the celebration of Eid at the end of the fast. In Year 3, pupils learned about the Passover meal from their work about Judaism, and in Year 2 they have heard the story of Rama and Sita from the Hindu tradition.

151. Teachers have established good routines, and pupils understand that story time is a time of listening and of quiet. However, they join in well with discussions and are willing to share their ideas. Pupils are taken to visit local places of worship, and religious education is enhanced well by the visits of local ministers to take assemblies.

152. Teachers take considerable care to emphasise that belief is personal and that there is no 'right' answer. In Year 4, when pupils were seen working on their ideas of the attributes of God, teachers made sure that they understood that ideas were personal, and could not be 'wrong.'

153. The subject is led effectively, and the schemes of work provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The co-ordinator offers good support and help to teachers who may need pointers about resource material or contents of lessons. Assessment is satisfactory, and resources have been improved since the previous inspection, and are now good. They enhance pupils' learning by giving them the chance to handle or see objects such as a Jewish skull cap or prayer shawl.