

INSPECTION REPORT

BOXTED C.E. (V.C.) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Boxted, Near Colchester

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115072

Headteacher: Mrs P. Derry

Reporting inspector: M. A. Mackay
23112

Dates of inspection: 21st –24th May 2001

Inspection number: 193862

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior school

School category: Voluntary controlled

Age range of pupils: 4 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Church Lane
Boxted
Colchester
Essex

Postcode: CO4 5TG

Telephone number: 01206 272239

Fax number: 01206 271598

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J. Hunt

Date of previous inspection: 21st April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr M. A. Mackay 32112	Registered inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> English, Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education Religious education Special educational needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Characteristics of the school Standards How well the pupils are taught How good the curriculum and other opportunities are How well the school is led and managed
Mr R. Ibbitson 13828	Lay inspector		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The pupils attitudes values and personal development How well the school cares for its pupils How well the school works in partnership with the parents
Mrs J. Young 22396	Team inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas of learning for the under fives Mathematics Art and Design Geography History Music Equal opportunities 	

The inspection contractor was:

Sandfield Educational Consultants Limited

16 Wychwood Drive
Trowell Park
Nottingham
NG9 3RB

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
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?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Boxted School is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England primary school that serves the rural village of Boxted and some of the outlying districts. There are ninety-four full-time pupils, aged four to eleven, on roll. There are sixteen children in the reception class who follow the programme of study for the Foundation Stage. Twenty per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is about average. All of the pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds and none is learning English as an additional language. The pupils' attainment on entry is broad but, because there are so few pupils in each of the cohorts, the level of attainment can differ significantly from year to year. Currently, just over one fifth of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Because the school is so remote, most pupils need to use transport provided by the local education authority.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Boxted is an effective school. It provides a good education for its pupils. Standards are above average because the curriculum is very well planned, the teaching is consistently good, and the leadership and management are very effective in providing a caring and supportive environment in which the pupils enjoy learning. The pupils, therefore, work hard and achieve well. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The pupils attain above average standards because the teaching is good and the pupils work hard;
- The pupils are very well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning and to each other;
- The teaching is consistently good and often very good or better;
- The curriculum is well planned and there are many opportunities for the pupils to learn through practical, problem-solving activities;
- The school makes very good use of information from a range of assessments to plan work to meet the needs of pupils;
- The needs of pupils are well met, particularly the pupils with special educational needs, and the higher attaining pupils.
- The teaching assistants work very effectively with the pupils;
- The school makes very good provision for the pupils' well-being and for their spiritual, moral and social development;
- The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher;
- The governors are very well informed about the work of the school; their support for the school is friendly but critical.

What could be improved

- There are no areas in which the school needs to make significant improvements, but there are minor issues that the school should consider. These are included in the full report.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the school was last inspected in April 1997, the standards achieved in English, mathematics and science were judged to be satisfactory and the school was considered to provide sound value for money. Since then, the school has made very good progress in addressing all of the issues raised by the inspection. As a result, some aspects of the school's work that were identified as weaknesses in 1997 are now among its strengths. In

particular, the school has improved standards to above average in mathematics, science, art, geography and history. It has significantly improved how it plans the curriculum and how it monitors and assesses the pupils' attainment and progress. The quality of teaching has improved significantly to the point where it is consistently good. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher, and the governors make a significant and effective contribution to the life and work of the school. The school has responded very well to the last inspection.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	[Year]
English	A	A	E	E*
Mathematics	A	B	C	C
Science	A	A	A	A

Key

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

Standards at the end of the Foundation Stage are above average, and the children achieve well. In the most recent national tests at Key Stage 1, the pupils attained above the average standard in reading, well above the average standard in writing, but below the average standard in mathematics, when compared to all schools and similar schools. The inspection evidence is that standards in all three subjects are above average. The pupils did not achieve the expected standards in mathematics in the 2000 national tests because, in the period before the tests, the teaching was not as effective as it is now, and insufficient time was devoted to the subject. In the 2000 national tests at Key Stage 2, the pupils attained well above the average standard in science, the average standard in mathematics, but well below the average standard in English. The inspection evidence indicates that the pupils in the present cohort attain above average standards in science, mathematics and reading, and average standards in writing. The standards attained in English are, therefore, better now than a year ago but still lower than in the other subjects. This is partly because the most recent cohorts included high proportions of pupils with special needs and pupils admitted part way through the academic year, and partly because too little time was devoted to the teaching of writing. Standards in the pupils' writing are rising now because the teaching places greater emphasis on written language, the learning is better organised, and there are more teaching assistants to help the lower attaining pupils. The school has set appropriate targets for attainment in English and mathematics, which it is likely to achieve. The pupils attain above average in art, geography and history because those subjects are very well taught. In all of the other subjects, the pupils attain at least the expected standards. The school has successfully raised standards in information and communication technology to a point where they are in line with standards found in most schools.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils have very good attitudes to learning. They make good use of all of the learning opportunities provided at the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The pupils behave very well in lessons and at other times. They work and play happily together.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils maintain very positive relationships with their peers, their teachers and other adults. The pupils develop good personal skills that contribute to effective learning and productive relationships.
Attendance	Attendance is very good and well above the national average.

The pupils develop positive attitudes and values because the leadership and management of the school have successfully established an ethos that encourages the pupils to work hard, take a lively interest in lessons and act positively towards one another. A striking characteristic of the behaviour of the older pupils is their willingness to involve the younger ones in games activities in the playground. The younger pupils are very quick to emulate the positive attitudes and values of the older ones.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	Aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall: 34	Good	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. It was good or better in all of the lessons seen. It was very good in twenty-three per cent of the lessons, and excellent in six per cent of them. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well implemented. The quality of teaching in mathematics and science is good, and very good in English. It enables the pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Some aspects of the teaching of writing are excellent. As a result, the pupils learn very quickly, and the standards are rising. There are a number of other strengths. These include the skill with which the teachers organise learning in classes of children in more than one year group; the effectiveness with which the lessons are planned, using information about what the pupils know and can do; and the effective contribution of the skilled teaching assistants. There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching. Because the teaching is good, the pupils are interested in the learning activities, and invest much effort in what they do. The pupils regularly agree targets for improvement with their teachers and work enthusiastically to meet them. The quality of learning among all pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, is good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is very well planned and is enhanced by the number of useful links between subjects.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The pupils who have special educational needs are well supported. The teachers and the teaching assistants ensure that all of the pupils benefit from full access to the curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision is very good, particularly those aspects promoting the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. There are many opportunities for the pupils to develop positive moral values and to acquire a good range of personal and social skills.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school has effective arrangements for securing the well being of the pupils. It provides good support and guidance to all pupils. It has appropriate health and safety arrangements, including those for child protection.

The curriculum places an appropriate emphasis on the pupils' acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills, and it offers the pupils good opportunities for the skills and knowledge acquired in one subject to be used in others. The school provides particularly well for learning in English, mathematics, science, art, geography and history. However, a lack of suitable accommodation restricts the amount of indoor physical education that can be provided. The school offers few activities outside normal lesson time because most pupils need to travel on the school bus.

The school demonstrates its good care for the pupils in its arrangements for monitoring and recording the pupils' progress in English, mathematics and science. When planning what to teach and how, the school makes effective use of the outcomes of on-going assessment and assessments made each term. This is particularly important given the mixed year groups in each class and the very wide range of individual needs. The school works well in partnership with the parents. Its annual reports on pupils' attainment and progress are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the	Leadership and management are very good. The headteacher provides a very clear vision for the school's development. As a

headteacher and other key staff	result, the ethos of high standards is well established, and the pupils achieve well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors' fulfil their duties very well. They know the school thoroughly, and are very good at monitoring and evaluating the progress the school makes in implementing its educational priorities.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has excellent arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning. It sets challenging targets for both teachers and pupils.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes good use of time and the available resources to provide a well-planned and interesting range of learning opportunities.

The school has sufficient teachers to teach the curriculum. They are very well supported by an appropriate number of well-trained and effective teaching assistants. The school has sufficient resources to teach the full curriculum, but the accommodation, though very pleasant and well maintained, does not provide the facilities needed for indoor physical education lessons. There are significant strengths in the leadership of the school. The headteacher leads by example in maintaining the high standards of teaching, and has excellent arrangements for monitoring the teaching. The headteacher and governors have successfully addressed all the issues arising from the last inspection. They work closely together to ensure that the school applies the principles of best value in planning educational change and in making prudent spending decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children are making good progress in school; • The school expects the children to work hard and achieve their best; • The children behave very well; • The school is helping their children become mature and responsible; • The school is well led and managed; • The teaching is good; • Their children like school; • The parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem; 	<p>The number of parents who felt they would like to see one or more aspects of the school's work improved was not significant. Nevertheless the following were identified by a small minority of parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons; • Their children get the right amount of work to do at home.

The inspection evidence fully supports the parents' positive views. The inspectors agree with the view that the school does not provide an interesting range of activities outside lessons, but note the difficulties faced by the school on account of the very high number of pupils who must travel to and from school by bus. The parents were divided on the issue of homework: some felt too much was set, others, that too little was set. The amount of homework provided is similar to that found in most other primary schools. The school makes good use of English homework for higher attaining pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of a large proportion of the children who enter the reception class at the age of four is at the expected level, but the range of attainment is very wide and the cohorts are small. This leads to significant differences in attainment on entry from year to year. Most of the children make good or better progress towards the Early Learning Goals during their time in the reception class. As a result, they are likely to exceed the Early Learning Goals in language, literacy, mathematics, creative development, physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their personal development and social development are well above the expected level.

2. In the 2000 national tests for the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' attainment in reading was above the national average in relation to all schools and similar schools. In the writing tests, the proportion of the pupils attaining the expected standard was well above the average for all schools and for similar schools. In mathematics, the number of pupils who attained the nationally expected standard was below average for all schools and for similar schools. The test results in mathematics are not typical of standards attained at the school. In fact, with the exception of last year, standards have been average or above average since 1996. They are likely to be above average again in the 2001 national tests. The main reasons for the lower standards in mathematics in the 2000 national tests were the lack of time devoted to the subject, and weaknesses in the teaching. The school has fully addressed these issues. In reading and writing the trend in attainment in recent years has been above the national trend, but slightly below it in mathematics. There were no significant differences in the results of boys and girls.

3. Standards in the work seen in English during the inspection are above average for pupils at the end of Key Stage 1. In mathematics, too, the pupils reach above average standards because the teaching is better, and more time is devoted to teaching the subject. Standards in science are above average because the teaching now provides greater opportunities for the pupils to experience practical and investigative activities. In art, the standard the pupils' attain is above that expected of pupils aged seven. In all other subjects, the standards the pupils attain are at the expected level.

4. In the 2000 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils attaining the nationally expected standard was well below average in English, average in mathematics and well above average in science when compared to all schools and to similar schools. It should be noted that last years results in English are not typical of standards attained at the school. In fact in 1998 and 1999 standards were well above average in English. However, the Year 6 cohorts for the past two years had an unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs who found it difficult to acquire and use written language skills. In 2000, four of the eleven pupils were admitted partway through the school year and eight of them had special educational needs. In 2001, six pupils out of a cohort of eleven began the year on the special educational needs register.

5. The standard of work at Key Stage 2 that was seen during the inspection was above average in mathematics and science. Although pupils attained above average standards in reading, speaking and listening, the standard of their written work was about average. Nevertheless, this represents good achievement. Six of the eleven pupils in the cohort began the year on the school's register of special educational needs but, with greater support from teaching assistants and a stronger focus on teaching writing skills, three of them were able to come off the register before the national tests were taken. The cohort for 2002 has a more typical distribution of attainment among its pupils. The pupils in it are

in line to achieve above average standards in writing. In particular, the higher attaining pupils are achieving very well because they benefit from extra teaching that is very well matched to their needs. In art, geography and history, the pupils' attainment is above average. In design and technology, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education, the standards the pupils attain are close to those expected of eleven-year-old pupils. The pupils achieve well across a wide range of subjects.

6. The school has responded well to the key issue to extend pupils' learning in all subjects, but particularly in information and communication technology at Key Stages 1 and 2. The standards in information technology have improved because the teachers are better informed, and the curriculum places much greater emphasis on the direct teaching of skills. The teaching is beginning to make greater use of technology to support the pupils' learning across a greater range of subjects, including English, mathematics, science, history, geography and art. Overall, standards at both key stages have improved significantly since 1997. The level of achievement among all groups of pupils is good. The pupils make good progress throughout the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2.

7. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress at the Foundation Stage and thereafter because they are well supported by the teachers and by the teaching assistants, and have well-chosen learning targets in their individual education plans. The teachers receive good support from the special needs co-ordinator and the named governor for special educational needs. The school's effective use of new technology in drawing up individual education plans is helping teachers to plan more effectively for the pupils' needs. The higher attaining pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and writing because the school has good arrangements for providing them with suitably challenging work. Examples of the high standards being attained by these groups of pupils were seen in writing lessons for Years 1 and 2, and Years 4 and 5 where the teaching was excellent.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils, reported at the last inspection, have been maintained. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have very good attitudes to their learning. The pupils are well behaved and interested in activities in the classroom. During a design and technology lesson for Years 1 and 2, for example, there was intense concentration as the pupils considered how to make the materials rigid enough to construct swings and roundabouts for a model playground they were building. In a lesson for Years 3 and 4, in religious education, the pupils were still and silent as they reflected on the significance of the Jewish Sabbath, about which they had been learning through demonstrations involving role-play by the teacher and two of the pupils. Throughout the school the pupils listen carefully to their teachers and are eager to answer questions and contribute to discussions. Their very good attitudes to learning help them to achieve well.

9. The pupils behave very well in and around the school. They are fully aware of the school's code of conduct, which they themselves helped to formulate. The pupils move around the school sensibly and come into class in an orderly manner, ready to start work. In the playground, and on the playing field they are enthusiastic and active. They participate in and enjoy a good range of playground activities. Both girls and boys play football and other competitive games. They use their time well in imaginative play. For example, three pupils devised a game of their own, pretending to be galloping horses; two girls played recorders, and others picked flowers to display in the classroom. The pupils play well together in pairs and groups. Boys and girls of different ages mix freely. There were no signs of bullying or other aggressive behaviour. The pupils are friendly and polite to visitors and enjoy talking to them. At lunchtimes, the pupils wait patiently for their meals, and act sensibly at the table, enjoying the opportunity to talk to friends.

10. Relationships among the pupils and between pupils and adults in the school are very good. In discussions with some of the pupils from Years 5 and 6, all agreed that the pupils get on well with each other. The pupils feel secure in school and respect and trust the adults who care for them. This is a considerable factor in the quality of their learning and their enjoyment of school. In lessons, the pupils help each other, and, when asked to, work independently without the need for close supervision.

11. The pupils' personal development is very good. There is a good community ethos in the school and the pupils have a strong awareness of their responsibilities towards others. Older pupils, for example, help to clear away after the younger ones at lunchtimes, and prepare for assemblies. The younger children take turns in carrying registers and dinner lists back to the school office. Many of the pupils work with their parents in managing the environmental area. They also look after paths and feed the birds in winter. Through their interest in charities, particularly their concern for a Kenyan boy, whom they support financially, the pupils show their awareness of others less fortunate than themselves.

12. Attendance has improved since the last inspection; it is well above the national average and is very good. The pupils arrive punctually for school, and respond well to the registration procedures, enabling teachers to mark the registers promptly and begin lessons on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13. The school has fully addressed the key issues in the last report to improve teaching. This has been accomplished by the effective use of monitoring of teaching, and good use of opportunities for teachers to improve their classroom practice. In all of the lessons observed, the teaching was good or better. In seventy-one per cent of the lessons, the teaching was good, in twenty-three per cent of them it was very good, and in six per cent of lessons, the teaching was excellent. The proportion of lessons in which the teaching was good or very good is similar at all three key stages. Some very good teaching was observed in lessons in English, art, geography, design and technology, music and religious education. The examples of excellent teaching were in English at Key Stages 1 and 2. The teaching in the Foundation Stage was very good in language work and in lessons in knowledge and understanding of the world.

14. The teachers know how to plan lessons well and how to organise pupils effectively for learning. These skills are particularly useful in a small school where the teaching needs to take account not only of a wide range of attainment within each class but also the wide range of ages and levels of maturity. In all of the lessons, the teachers set appropriate learning objectives that the pupils understand. The teachers match the content of their teaching and the learning tasks very well to the age and attainment of the pupils. All of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and those who are higher attaining pupils, are able to participate fully in lessons. In an upper Key Stage 2 science lesson, for example, the teaching assistant working with the lower attaining pupils used skilful questions and the pupils' answers to them, to help the pupils record their observations. As a result, the pupils gained a deeper understanding of how forces of gravity and upthrust affect the weight of objects. In a Key Stage 1 history lesson, in which the pupils were learning about changes in seaside entertainment since 1900, the teacher carefully differentiated the work according to the needs of the pupils. As a result, the pupils tackled their work confidently and stayed on task until it was completed.

15. A significant strength of the teaching is the management and organisation of the pupils. The teachers expect and achieve high standards of behaviour from the pupils. They achieve this because they ensure that the pupils know that they are expected to listen carefully and work hard. The teachers give them clear instructions and have well

established classroom routines. These help the pupils to feel secure and to understand what it is they have to do. The teachers organise the pupils well for learning. This allows the pupils to participate fully in discussion work and in the many well-designed practical activities. In an English lesson at Key Stage 1, for example, the teacher used whole class sessions very well to establish the theme and nature of the work to be tackled. She used question and answer sessions to help the pupils understand what each group had to accomplish. She also used carefully graded activities that matched the needs of the different groups, and she deployed adult help well to ensure that the pupils who needed support got it. The work for all pupils was challenging and excited the pupils' interest. The lower attaining pupils had good resources such as word-bank cards that were carefully designed to help them identify patterns in their sentence-making exercises. The higher attaining pupils had ready access to dictionaries and thesauri and used them well to complete their work. In the plenary session, the teacher used large cards displaying parts of sentences. The pupils were invited to re-arrange the cards to make a set of sentences and to explain the differences in meaning that the changes created. The pupils not only hugely enjoyed this activity; they also found the exercise useful because it helped them to consolidate what they had learned about adjectival phrases in the main part of the lesson.

16. The teachers are clear about the strengths and weaknesses of each pupil's attainment. They make good use of discussion and questions during whole class and group work activities, and the observations made by the teaching assistants to assess each pupil. They also make consistently good use of marking. The teachers supplement the information they gather from these sources with more formal assessment carried out each half term. As a result, the teachers have a good knowledge of what the pupils know and can do. The teachers make effective use of this information to inform their curriculum planning, their planning for lessons and the way they deploy and use support staff and resources for effective learning. They regularly review each pupil's work and agree targets for improvement with each one. This motivates the pupils to work hard and to accept a measure of responsibility for their own learning. Because the pupils regularly agree targets for improvement, they have a good knowledge of what they are doing and how well they have done. This has a positive impact on the rate at which the pupils learn and make progress.

17. The teachers have a thorough knowledge of the national strategies and frameworks for literacy and numeracy, and teach them well. Even though the classes contain more than one age group, the teaching takes account of the recommended structures for lessons in literacy and numeracy. In literacy, these are informed by a flexible yet systematic approach to teaching reading, spelling and handwriting. The school has adapted the structure of literacy hour lessons to meet the needs of its pupils. For example, much of the guided reading work is done outside the hour, leaving more time for the teaching of writing. This has allowed the teachers to address weaknesses identified in the national tests results. Another strength of the teaching is the success the teachers have had in implementing a reading and phonics programme that is having a significant impact upon the pupils' ability to use phonic knowledge to aid reading and spelling.

18. Another significant strength of the teaching is the range of methods used to support learning. In particular, the teachers make very effective use of practical work, problem-solving activities and opportunities for firsthand experiences. They also make good use of modelling, demonstrations, resources and artefacts, and opportunities for pupils to discuss what they are learning. In science lessons, for example, the pupils are presented with many opportunities to investigate for themselves important scientific processes. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher carefully organised the activities to allow the pupils to investigate the relative strengths of bar and horseshoe magnets. The pupils were encouraged to approach their tasks scientifically by making careful observations and measurements, and by checking to see whether or not they had set up fair test conditions. In an upper Key Stage 2 design and technology lesson, the pupils were asked to investigate cams and how they could be used to control the movement of toys they were

making. The teacher carefully reviewed with the pupils what they had learned previously, but insisted that they investigate for themselves how they might solve design problems. Examples of this approach to problem solving were also seen in an art lesson. In geography and science lessons, the teaching makes effective use of the rich resources offered by the school grounds and the local area to give the pupils firsthand experiences of the topics they study. In learning about life processes for example, the pupils use the local woodlands and ponds to learn about plant and animal growth and development. During the inspection, the younger pupils were following with interest the metamorphoses of tadpoles into frogs. In English lessons, the teachers are very skilled at modelling the writing process. This helps the pupils to grasp what writers do when they plan, organise, draft and edit their work in order to make it more effective. In lessons in religious education, history and mathematics, resources are well used to support learning. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher made good use of artefacts to help the pupils understand how followers of Judaism celebrate Shabbat. The range and quality of these teaching methods motivate the pupils to work hard and help them to gain a good understanding of their learning.

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

19. The key issues for action from the previous inspection have been addressed in full. The school now has a clear, effective curriculum framework that enables the teachers to plan systematically.

20. The school has a well-planned curriculum for the children at the Foundation Stage. It is based upon the *Stepping Stones* and *The Early Learning Goals* and includes all six *Areas of Learning*. The curriculum provides a set of learning activities that are well matched to needs of the children. It is based upon the school's successful implementation of new curriculum, and its effective use of information on children provided by parents, and by regular assessments of each child's attainment and progress. The curriculum for the children in the reception class, therefore, helps them to make good progress towards the attainment of all the Early Learning Goals.

21. The school provides a broad and very well planned curriculum for the pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. The curriculum includes all of the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The school gives a high priority to the teaching of literacy and numeracy throughout both key stages. It has implemented the strategy for literacy very well, and has modified it in order to meet the particular needs of its pupils. This has had a positive impact upon the standards the pupils attain and is clearly evident in the pupils' written work, and the confidence with which the pupils discuss their writing. Furthermore, the school has been very successful in implementing an effective programme of work in phonics. As a result, the pupils' are better readers and better spellers than they were. The pupils hugely enjoy the learning activities and are highly motivated to work hard. The school provides well for most subjects, but particularly for English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, geography and history. These are well planned to allow the pupils many opportunities to engage in practical activities. The school's provision for information and communication technology is much improved since the time of the last inspection. The provision is now satisfactory overall. There is much good work done in physical education, but the lack of suitable accommodation sometimes prevents the school from providing a balanced programme of work. For example, there are no suitable indoor facilities for gymnastics, and lessons, therefore, have to be taught outdoors. This limits the range of activities the school is able to provide. The weather, too, affects the frequency of lessons. The weather for this academic year has been particularly unsuitable and has seriously

disrupted the planned work. Despite these difficulties, the school meets statutory requirements for all subjects.

22. The school has successfully adopted many of the model schemes of work published by the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*. It has devised and implemented a well-constructed two-year rolling programme for the teaching of all subjects. This has helped it to overcome the challenge presented by mixed-age classes, and has provided the pupils with the learning experiences they need at each stage of their education. As a result, the pupils acquire an appropriate range of skills, knowledge and understanding across the whole of the curriculum. Through careful and imaginative planning, the school has devised strong links among the subjects so that work in one subject supports and extends work others. For example, what the pupils learned about soil and its properties in science lessons was used effectively in art lessons in which the pupils explored 'Earth colours'. What the pupils learned about natural colours and shades in art lessons was, in turn, used to produce attractively decorated plain shapes in lessons in mathematics. The language the pupils acquired in order to discuss colours, properties of materials and mathematical shapes was well used in literacy lessons. The themes that link the subjects help to give coherence to the learning.

23. The school's subject plans for each term are well thought through. The teachers use a common format to record what they will teach and how they will teach it. They are guided not only by clear statements in the schemes of work about what the pupils learn, but also by a set of agreed statements about how the pupils are expected to develop *as learners*. The plans are carefully monitored by the subject co-ordinators and the headteacher. The teachers evaluate their own lessons and use the information well to inform future planning. For example, for each of the subjects, they make very effective use of the Programmes of Study and model schemes of work in order to meet the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment. One outcome of the school's diligent planning is the good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Its arrangements ensure that these pupils are taught the full curriculum and are helped to benefit from it through careful well-matched activities and good levels of support from the teaching assistants. Another outcome is the school's particularly effective provision of English work that matches the needs of the higher attaining pupils. This enables the pupils to tackle very challenging literary texts and extend their writing skills to a level that is well above average. The inspection revealed abundant evidence of the higher attaining pupils' very good knowledge of literature, and their skills in producing well-crafted stories and other forms of writing.

24. The school's arrangements for health education are good. Much of the work is taught through the curriculum for science, in which there is an appropriate emphasis on developing a healthy lifestyle. This is done in lessons on the properties of different foods and in work on the effects of exercise on the lungs and heart. The governors have agreed policies on sex education and drugs awareness. The school conscientiously implements them.

25. Overall, the school makes satisfactory use of homework to support pupils' learning at home. It has a new policy to inform how homework is used. In practice, there are minor inconsistencies in its implementation, and some parents are unsure of what to expect. However, some aspects of homework practice are good. For example, the homework set in English for the higher attaining pupils is very well planned. It is challenging and successfully enriches the pupils' experience of literature. It also extends the opportunities the pupils have to write experimentally and at length. The school runs a dance club and a recorder group, but because most pupils travel to and from school by school bus, it is difficult for the school to provide a sufficiently wide range of activities.

26. The school enriches the curriculum by making effective use of visits and visitors. A visiting poet works with the younger pupils to help them explore the language of poetry. The older pupils attend performances of Shakespeare's plays. The school makes good use of visits to places, locally and further a field, to enhance the curriculum. It takes full

advantage of interschool events organised by the local cluster of small schools. For example, it arranges for its pupils to participate in a literature and art weeks, and in sessions devoted to drama and music. The activities planned for this year include dancing, singing and artwork from Bolivia and Columbia.

27. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual development. It uses opportunities in the daily acts of collective worship very well. The assemblies are well planned and hold the pupils' attention. The school chooses the themes carefully and makes sensitive use of opportunities for prayer and reflection to help the pupils to consider the spiritual dimension to life. In an assembly and act of worship on the theme of friendship, for example, the teacher helped the pupils to acquire a deeper understanding of the spiritual aspect of friendship through an exploration of how a famous composer had celebrated his friends in one of his compositions. The hymns, too, were well chosen to reflect the theme of the assembly and to deepen the pupils' understanding of the importance of friendship. The school makes effective use of contributions from other subjects to deepen and widen the pupils' spiritual development. Learning activities in art, music, literacy and religious education help the pupils to reflect on nature and humankind. In religious education lessons, the pupils learn about an appropriate range of faiths that helps them to respect the religious beliefs and values of others. The school is closely associated with the local parish church and this provides opportunities for understanding how worship can deepen spiritual understanding. The pupils are very proud of the church and are keen to show it to visitors.

28. The school provides very well for the pupils' moral development. Through assemblies, religious education and stories, it successfully encourages the pupils to think about moral issues and to consider the differences between right and wrong. The pupils are given responsibility for developing their own moral standards and codes of behaviour in discussions with teachers and other adults. As a result, the pupils have a good understanding of what constitutes moral action and good behaviour. The teachers, and other adults at the school, share expectations that pupils will be polite, show respect for people and property, and understand the need for fairness. As a result, few sanctions are needed or used.

29. The school makes very good provision for the social development of its pupils. Relationships are good between staff and pupils, and very good among the pupils themselves. As a result, the daily life of the school is harmonious, friendly and supportive. The teachers and classroom support assistants offer good role models to the pupils. They encourage the pupils to carry out tasks that contribute to the smooth running of the school. For example, the older pupils often help to supervise the younger ones at playtimes. They include them in their games. Many pupils carry out routine tasks, too, such as collecting and returning registers.

30. The school's provision for the cultural development of the pupils is good. Appreciation of their own and other cultures is fostered in lessons in religious education, music, English, art, geography and history, and in assemblies. The contribution made by activities organised by the local cluster of small schools that support the pupils' cultural development has already been noted. The school has links with the community in Durness, in Sutherland, Scotland and, through its sponsorship of a young boy called Moses, with Kenya.

31. The school successfully enhances the curriculum through its good links with the local community. It uses the history and geography of the local area well to support the pupils' learning. A local farmer makes available a swimming pool to enable the Key Stage 1 pupils to benefit from swimming instruction. A parent, who is also a qualified swimming instructor, helps with the teaching. The Key Stage 2 pupils, however, are not provided with swimming instruction because there is no suitable pool in the area and the costs, in terms of money and curriculum time, prohibit travelling further a field. The school uses its own extensive grounds very well to provide its pupils with opportunities to study plants, trees and insects. The school has developed a wide range of local contacts to support its work.

32. The school's relations with the partner schools, such as the local secondary school and the cluster of small primary schools, are good. The school has developed useful curricular links with the high school, such as the technology day for Year 5 pupils when pupils benefit from being able to use the technology resources of a large school. Work done on this day is followed up in lessons in design and technology and information and communication technology when the pupils return to their own school. The school's links with the cluster of local small schools has helped to strengthen provision for the pupils across a wide range of subjects.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. Boxted is a caring school and the high standard of care mentioned at the last inspection has been maintained. The school has good procedures for dealing with issues of child protection. The headteacher is the named person responsible for child protection matters, and all members of staff are aware of the need for vigilance. Good relationships are maintained with external agencies, who are readily contacted should the need arise. Records are kept securely.

34. The school's health and safety policy and the procedures for implementing it are good. Staff and governors regularly carry out health and safety checks, the results of which are carefully recorded and filed. There are two qualified first aiders in the school.

35. With the written permission of parents, the school may administer medicines to pupils. The school follows strict procedures for this to ensure effective control. All staff, including mid-day assistants and members of the governing body, have received training in the administration of medicines to pupils, and two members of the staff have received training in responding to the effects of food allergies in pupils.

36. The school's Christian ethos is a major influence on pupils' behaviour. The pupils are well aware of what constitutes the good behaviour expected of them. Teachers and ancillary staff serve as good role models for pupils to emulate, and pupils respond well to their caring attitudes. Procedures for monitoring and promoting behaviour are very good. The parents and the pupils were involved in drawing up the school's Code of Conduct. Members of the school staff ensure that these are fully implemented. Attendance is well monitored and all unexplained absences are followed up the same day. The school uses its reward scheme to encourage pupils to behave well, to attend regularly and to do their best.

37. Through the implementation of its sex education and drugs education policies, the school ensures that the pupils have an understanding of these matters, appropriate to their age. The school aims to give pupils the confidence they need to be able to cope with these social pressures.

38. In order to prepare the children for entry into the school, the reception teacher visits play groups in the village to meet the children. She also visits children at home. The school arranges induction mornings for these children and their parents. When they leave the school, most of the Year 6 pupils attend the local secondary school, with which the school has very good relationships. Various induction events are held at the secondary school prior to the pupils being admitted. These help to ensure a smooth transfer from primary school to the next stage of education.

39. The school has very good arrangements for assessing the attainment and progress of its pupils. The pupils are assessed soon after they are admitted to the reception class. They are assessed again at the end of the reception year to establish the progress they have made towards the Early Learning Goals. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils at seven and eleven and for tracking progress in English, mathematics

and science. The teachers supplement what they learn from formal assessments with information gained from diligent marking of the pupils' day-to-day work. This provides the teachers with useful insights into what the pupils know and can do, and what they need to do next to improve. The teachers use less formal assessment methods during lessons. For example, they make good use of questions, and the pupils' answers to them, to assess how well ideas and skills have been learned. The teaching assistants record their observations of individual pupils and share these with the teachers. The teachers make effective use of the half-termly assessments and the national tests to analyse patterns of attainment in the pupils' work and their rates of progress. The outcomes of assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress are used effectively when teachers come to plan further work for the pupils. The pupils who have special educational needs are carefully assessed and provided with appropriate support. The school is very effective in implementing Statements of Special Educational Need and the pupils' individual education programmes.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

40. The school has maintained the positive partnership with parents mentioned in the last report, and this has a direct bearing on the quality of support the school gives to the pupils' learning at school and at home. Nearly all of the parents are satisfied with their children's progress and are very supportive of the work of the headteacher and the members of staff.

41. The school encourages parents to help their children at home and gives them useful information on how to do this. For example, the parents of pre-school pupils are sent a book giving them advice and guidance. Some parents come into to school to help in the classrooms and to accompany children on school trips. One of the parents, who is a qualified swimming instructor, helps with the teaching of swimming to pupils at Key Stage 1. The reception class teacher makes home visits and organises a suitable induction programme to help the under-fives prepare for school.

42. The standard of information to parents is very good. The documents made available to them clearly emphasise the vital role parents play in their children's education. This is identified clearly, for example, in the home/school partnership statement, which sets out in detail the respective responsibilities of teachers and parents. The school has good arrangements for involving the parents of pupils who have special educational needs in reviewing their children's progress and in supporting their learning.

43. The annual prospectus and the governor's annual report to parents are both well presented. They give essential information about the school, including information on the curriculum and on major spending decisions. There are frequent newsletters to keep parents advised about every aspect of school life. All parents receive annual reports on their children's attainment and progress. The reports are detailed and enable parents to see clearly the academic and personal progress their children have made. Following receipt of the reports, the parents have an opportunity to discuss them with class teachers at one of the school's open evenings. Two other open evenings for parents are held at different times of the year. These are well attended. In discussions with parents, it was apparent that they find school staff very approachable, and feel that members of staff are willing to listen to any concerns about their children. The school uses home/school books as a useful means of communication between parents and class teachers.

44. There is a thriving school association of parents and teachers. The association holds events nearly every month and is well supported by school and parents. The substantial contributions made by the association have a significant impact on the life of the school. For example the association pays for a specialist games teacher to help pupils in Key Stage 2. The association contributes funds towards the cost of the five-day residential visit for pupils in Years 5 and 6. This helps the school to bear half the cost of the course. Although the events arranged by the association are primarily to raise funds, they also

serve as useful occasions for parents, pupils and teachers to meet socially. A good example of such an occasion is the summer barbecue.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

45. The school is very well led and managed. The headteacher, staff and members of the governing body share a well-understood vision of the kind of school they want. The headteacher is very well organised and is able to focus her time and energy effectively in managing the work and development of the school. Under her leadership, the members of the staff have formed a hard-working team that is committed to ensuring the pupils' well being and raising standards. The school effectively promotes good relationships and provides equality of opportunity for all of its pupils. The agreed aims and values of the school are, therefore, clearly reflected in its work. The very good management ensures that the daily life of the school is orderly and purposeful, and that the school's initiatives are well planned and executed. Examples of these are seen in the vigorous action taken to improve the learning environment; in the flexible way the school organises the teaching to ensure that all of its pupils have full access to the curriculum; and in the rigorous way the school has set about improving the quality of the teaching and learning. One outcome is that the standards attained by the pupils at both key stages are much higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection. Much of the work of the school demonstrates the shared commitment to improve and the capacity to succeed.

46. A significant strength of the leadership is the effective way the headteacher delegates responsibilities. The co-ordinators have clear job descriptions and make a significant contribution to the school's development by, for example, drawing up and implementing useful action plans for the subjects they manage. One outcome has been the school's success in constructing a coherent and manageable curriculum that takes account of the statutory requirements of the new *National Curriculum 2000*, and the guidance provided by the *Qualifications and Curriculum Authority*, as well as the national initiatives for the Foundation Stage, and for literacy and numeracy. In doing so, the school has successfully addressed all of the key issues arising from the last inspection.

47. The members of the governing body know the school very well. They are strongly committed to supporting it in practical ways, and to providing an effective, strategic steer to its further development. The governors have effective committees and good procedures for monitoring the school's work. Those who have special responsibilities, such as the named governors for literacy, numeracy, able pupils and for special educational needs, meet the co-ordinators and observe the work done in lessons. They carry out their responsibilities systematically and conscientiously and provide the full governing body with a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This enables it to make informed decisions about the future direction of the school and how best to achieve the outcomes it seeks. The chairperson is skilful at managing the work of the governing body. She regularly visits the school and, through discussions with the headteacher, members of the staff and her fellow governors, she has acquired a very good understanding of what the school can achieve and how to help it improve its performance.

48. The school has excellent systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of its teaching. The headteacher regularly monitors the teaching and keeps detailed, high quality, records of what is seen. The school makes effective use of the monitoring outcomes to strengthen the teaching through its programme of professional development. As a result, the school has prepared its teachers well for the introduction of national initiatives such as the literacy and numeracy strategies. Through its policy of joint planning, the school is able to use the strengths of its best teachers to influence the rest. It makes good use of outside expertise to strengthen the teaching of physical education. The school employs a very effective soccer coach who provides a good model to other teachers and who assists with the planning of future work.

49. The governing body has adopted appropriate arrangements for appraising the work and effectiveness of the headteacher. It has a useful strategy to help it implement performance management and has set appropriate targets for the headteacher. The school's development and implementation of effective appraisal and performance management procedures take account of national guidelines. It also has an appropriate induction programme to support newly appointed members of staff.

50. The headteacher, senior managers and governors work closely together to identify appropriate priorities and targets for the school. In determining the targets for attainment, for example, the school makes effective use of analyses of national test scores and other assessments. One outcome of this analysis was the decision to modify the work done in literacy to enable more time to be spent on the teaching of writing. The priorities and targets the school sets for itself are clearly identified in the school development plan and linked to appropriate action plans. An example of this is the school's good response to the pupils' underachievement in information technology. The school now has better resources, and the teachers' greater confidence in their use. However, the school recognises the need to achieve greater consistency in managing the pupils' access to the new technology.

51. The headteacher and governing body provide good management of the school's delegated budget. The members of the finance committee have the knowledge and expertise needed to make prudent use of the school's budget and special grants to fund developments that will improve the quality of learning and raise standards of attainment. They plan systematically for all expenditure, and have a clear idea about the cost of school development in relation to the benefits it brings. The school makes effective use of the available funds and grants to improve the quality of the education it provides. For example, funds raised by the parents' association have been used to enhance the playground facilities and to buy learning resources. The school has appropriate arrangements to ensure there is effective financial control and efficient administration. It has a well-trained and efficient administrative officer who provides good support to the staff and the headteacher, enabling them to concentrate on the needs of the pupils.

52. The governing body closely monitors the performance of the school and uses the analyses of assessment results, including comparison with similar schools, to target spending in ways that will support improvements in standards. Its investment in more teaching assistants is, for example, having a very positive impact on standards. The governors make effective use of the skills and knowledge of local education authority departments when seeking competitive quotations for educational services and equipment. The governors understand the principles of best value and apply them well.

53. The school makes good use of the new technologies for administrative purposes such as preparing and monitoring the budget, and recording information about the pupils. A particular strength of the school's use of technology is in the construction of individual learning plans for pupils with special educational needs. The software program enables class teachers to put together programmes of work that are very well matched to the needs of the pupils. The school also makes very effective use of information technology to produce detailed and useful annual reports for parents on the progress and attainment of their children. The school has significantly improved the use of the new technologies to support the pupils' learning. It now teaches the full Programme of Study for information and communication to a satisfactory level. It is no better than satisfactory, however, because the teaching does not yet make best use of it to support learning across the curriculum. For example, the older pupils know how to use e-mail and how to access the Internet in order to use the World Wide Web for research in a number of subjects, but their access to these resources is too intermittent to be fully effective.

54. The school has a sufficient number of qualified teachers and learning-support assistants to match the demands of the curriculum. One of the strengths of the school is

the way the teachers and members of the support staff work together to promote the pupils' learning. This is most clearly seen in the work of the teaching assistants who make a significant contribution to the pupils' development through the close supervision of learning activities. Other members of the staff, such as the mid-day supervisors, support the work of the school by promoting its values in the positive way they supervise and care for the pupils during the mid-day break. The combined efforts of teachers, teaching assistants and supervisory staff help to maintain high standards at the school.

55. The accommodation is attractive and well maintained, but not adequate to meet the needs of the pupils. The grounds provide excellent opportunities for pupils to learn about the natural world. The school has thought carefully, too, about how the play areas contribute to the pupils' personal and social development. The outdoor area used for educational play by the pupils in the reception class is well designed, attractive and safe. With the help of the School Association, the school has furnished the playgrounds with a range of markings to aid productive play. It has also provided a substantial number of seats and gardens to create quiet areas for pupils who want them. The school has re-decorated the main buildings to make them lighter and pleasanter to work in, and makes good use of the available space to display the pupils' work. The library is well situated for easy access by all the pupils. The main hall, which is quite small, is used now as a classroom for Years 5/6 and a much smaller area is used for assemblies and is also the dining room. For both these activities space is cramped. All of the classrooms are of an adequate size and suitable for teaching the curriculum. There is, however, no appropriate internal space for indoor physical education activities.

56. There is no medical room. Pupils who are unwell are looked after in the school secretary's office, which is not suitable for this purpose. Medical examinations by the school nurse are carried out in the headteacher's room, although there is no hand basin there.

57. The staff room and the adjacent headteacher's room are in a converted air raid shelter. The staff room does not have a water supply or sink. The headteacher's room is unheated except for a portable electric fan heater. Toilet facilities for adults are insufficient, but those for pupils are satisfactory.

58. The inspection took place in fine, sunny weather, but it is understood that wet weather is of particular concern to the school because of the inconvenience of having to go outside to the demountable classrooms, the staff room and the headteacher's room. Due to the general limitations of space in the school, play and lunchtimes in wet weather are likely to be problematic.

59. The school's resources are well managed. It has good resources in English, mathematics and RE and satisfactory resources for the other subjects except for the teaching of gymnastics. The school makes efficient use of most of its resources to provide a good education for its pupils. The pupils achieve well and attain above average standards in English, mathematics and science at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and science at Key Stage 2. The school is very well run, and increasingly effective in delivering the National Curriculum and the national initiatives for literacy, numeracy and the Foundation Stage. It spends its money wisely and always with an eye to improving the quality of its educational provision in order to further raise standards. Because it is small, the school receives and spends more per pupil than most schools. Nevertheless, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

60. There are no areas in which the school needs to make significant improvements, but there are a number of minor issues that the headteacher, teachers and governors could usefully address. These are:

- Plan more opportunities for pupils to use the existing resources for information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects;
- Achieve greater balance in the provision of physical education by exploring how feasible it would be to modify the use of curriculum time in the second half of the summer term to:
 - provide swimming instruction for pupils in Year 6,
 - provide extra outdoor lessons in gymnastics and dance for all pupils;
- Explore how the school could provide a greater range of activities outside normal lessons;
- Make the school's policy on the use of homework clearer to parents.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	34
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6.00	23.00	71.00	00.00	00.00	00.00	00.00

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		94
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		18

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		25

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	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2000	5	4	9

The table showing attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has been omitted because there were fewer than ten pupils in the cohort.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	5	6	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	5	8	11
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	45 (57)	73 (71)	100 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys			
	Girls			
	Total	6	8	9
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	55 (57)	73 (57)	82 (57)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

NB. The data for boys and girls has been omitted because there are fewer than ten boys and fewer than ten girls in the cohort.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	90
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	22.5

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	238454
Total expenditure	248714
Expenditure per pupil	2892
Balance brought forward from previous year	33415
Balance carried forward to next year	23155

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	94
Number of questionnaires returned	75

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	27	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	44	1	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	43	55	1	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	47	16	5	0
The teaching is good.	56	38	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	44	10	0	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	67	24	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	57	41	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	47	42	11	0	0
The school is well led and managed	52	43	4	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	51	4	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	09	28	44	5	13

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

61. Children are admitted to the reception class in the academic year in which they are five. The pattern of attainment in language, literacy and mathematics among the entrants, indicated by assessments carried out soon after the children are admitted, is similar to that found in other schools, but this varies considerably from year to year. By the time they leave the reception class, the children are working beyond the expected levels in language, literacy, mathematics, creative development, physical development, and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their personal development and social development are well above the expected level. The school has made significant improvements since the last inspection. As a result, the children are well prepared to begin work on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1.

62. The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is never less than good, and is sometimes very good. It is effective because the lessons are very well planned to ensure that the activities challenge children of all levels of attainment and help them to make good progress. The teacher and the teaching assistant share a good understanding of the needs of young children. They use well-selected topics around which they carefully prepare activities that engage the children's interest and motivate them to learn. The children are expected to think for themselves and to work hard. The children do work hard and, therefore, make good progress in lessons. The teacher takes care to make sure that the tasks are appropriate to the needs of all of the children. For example, when the whole class is together at the start of literacy or numeracy sessions, the youngest children and those who have special educational needs are catered for well because the teacher involves them in the work by asking them suitable questions. The different groups of children are set suitable tasks, and time is then well spent aiding those who require extra support. This practice has a very positive impact upon the quality of the learning of all of the children.

Personal and Social development

63. The provision for the development of the children's personal and social skills is good. It is taught well and prepares the children for what they will do at Key Stage 1. By the end of the reception year, most of the children reach a standard beyond that expected for their age. They develop a mature approach to school and each other because they are happy, secure and feel their contributions to class work are valued by the adults who care for them. They develop quickly because the learning environment is interesting and gives them access to many enjoyable and useful activities that promote social development. As a result, the children respond very positively to school and behave very well. The older pupils spend time with the children in the playground and help them to feel part of the school community. The children play and work confidently. They collaborate on simple tasks and show concern and respect for each other. They have very good manners and understand the difference between right and wrong. The teaching successfully develops the children's sense of curiosity and wonder, and makes learning fun. The teachers quickly identify the children who have special educational needs. They provide good support for these children and are careful to ensure that they are able to participate in all of the planned activities.

Language and Literacy

64. The children listen carefully and work hard in language and literacy activities. They acquire above average skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing. They make good progress. The teacher skilfully organises activities and manages the pupils well to ensure that there are plenty of opportunities for the children to express themselves orally in whole sessions and in small group activities, as well as in one-to-one work with adults. This helps to strengthen the children's spoken vocabulary. The children become confident learners as they master the early stages of writing and reading. As a result, they are well prepared for work on the National Curriculum. They enjoy using books and know that the pages tell the story through a sequence of words and pictures. They know that books are to be enjoyed as well as used for finding information. Many of the children become competent early readers. Most of them, too, acquire the knowledge and skills they need to make a good start in become writers. All of the children write their own names, and many of them use capital letters correctly. The adults work hard to keep an appropriate balance between teaching the conventions of written English and allowing the children to respond imaginatively during the emergent stage of the children's story writing. The teaching provides much that catches the children's interest and involves them exploring the relationship between letters and sounds, and how they combine to form words. The children are prompted to use their knowledge of phrases and events from the imaginative situations set up by the adults. The teaching makes effective use of questions and reminders about previous work to help the children consolidate what they learn. This has a marked effect on the children's interest in reading and writing.

Mathematics

65. The children's attainment in mathematics is above the nationally expected level because the teaching offers the children a wealth of practical problem-solving opportunities that help them to explore number work effectively. The teachers have adapted the early stage of the National Numeracy Strategy very skilfully to fit closely to the children's needs. The children are helped to make good use of computer programs to demonstrate their knowledge of numbers to ten. The children show an increasing familiarity with the use of number in all aspects of their daily classroom routines. They know and enjoy a good range of counting games and rhymes. They know the names of shapes, such as circle, square, and triangle and successfully match and sort the shapes whilst playing shape games.

66. Most of the children count confidently to ten on their own, and to twenty and higher with the support of an adult. The higher attaining children cope well in doubling numbers. Most are developing a good understanding of simple addition facts up to ten. In one lesson, the children made very good progress in developing a strategy for simple mental addition where they were required to keep one number in their head then add one on. Because they get absorbed in their activities, the children concentrate for longer than is usual for their age. As a result, they are able to talk confidently about their solutions to mathematical problems. The teaching makes good use of playground counting games and other activities in brisk introductions to new mathematical ideas. For example, five cubes were used to design different shaped one-storey structures. When the children were planning and building a model village, the teachers used what the children learned to extend their understanding of the mathematics involved. This challenging problem-solving task not only increased the children's design skills, but also fully tested their awareness of space.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

67. The children gain a good knowledge and understanding of the world through their experiences in and around the classroom. The daily routine includes discussions about weather conditions and seasonal changes. Most of the children remember what day it is, and some children remember the correct date. The teaching provides many opportunities for children to share their special news. Often, the children talk about where they live, their families and the events in their lives. They share photographs and pictures of themselves

as babies, and learn about changes over time. They enjoy exploring and learning about living things. They watch tadpoles grow legs and lose their tails. They acquire a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different materials when they design and build houses for the three little pigs. They plant out sunflower seeds and learn much from observing closely how the roots and shoots develop over time. When they design a layout for a model village, they identify suitable pathways in the woods. The children make good progress in lessons because the teacher and teaching assistant capture their imagination and ensure that children of all abilities learn as effectively as they can. The attainment of most of the children is better than that expected for their age.

Physical Development

68. Progress in physical development is good and most children will exceed the expected level of attainment by the time they finish their first year in school. They are provided with a good range of activities. These help the children to extend their manipulative skills. They gain finer control through activities that require them to cut and paint materials and use them for constructing objects. Most of the children use construction toys competently. The children benefit from being shown how to use tools, equipment and materials carefully. A particularly good example of this was the 'fixing' activity in Bob the Builder's yard, in which a group of children confidently used proper hammers to drive nails into blocks of wood so that they could help Bob 'fix things'. The children move confidently, imaginatively and with increasingly good directional control. At playtimes, they make up rules and join in playground games.

69. They show good levels of control and balance when they perform fast, slow, high and low movements. They confidently use wheeled toys. The teacher and teaching assistant encourage the children to persevere with tasks. This helps the children to further improve their skills. In lessons in the playground, the children make good use of the available space as they move sensibly and confidently. This was seen, for example, when the children made good progress in investigating different ways of travelling, using skipping ropes. The children tried very hard to follow rules and instructions in order to master the skill of jumping over a turning rope. Their good attitudes to learning extend to other activities. The children enthusiastically tackle basic tasks on the computers, using them to write their name, create sentences and different designs. The children have good access to small fixed climbing apparatus in the playground but they get limited opportunities for indoor physical education because of the constraints imposed by the lack of suitable accommodation.

Creative Development

70. In creative activities, the children's attainment is likely to exceed the level expected in most schools by the end of the reception year. The teachers and teaching assistants plan creative opportunities very well to fit in with the topics selected and the needs of the children. Because the teaching and the curriculum activities are good, the children develop above average creative skills. For example, the teaching provides them with many opportunities for experimenting and designing, using a wide range of media and materials. The children colour-wash and draw what they see to create their interpretation of a story or picture. They used a good range of media when they drew, painted, designed and made models, for their 'pig' topic. When choosing colours and materials, the children show a growing understanding of how to mix, match and blend materials. They confidently experiment with pattern and shape to complete pictures and patterns. The children use pencils, crayons and brushes accurately when they paint, draw and colour. When they discuss their stories and when they are engaged in role-play activities, they show high levels of creativity and imagination. For example, in role-playing a builders' merchant, the skilful intervention of the teaching assistant helped the children to assume the roles and responsibilities of office clerks, telephonists and storekeepers. They answered queries on the telephone from potential customers, took orders and discussed the appropriateness and availability of materials. They listen carefully to music; they sing songs tunefully and

recite well-known rhymes accurately. They enjoy creating sound-rhythms and accompaniments for their ideas during music sessions. In small groups, they make sound effects for their show about the big wolf and the three little pigs.

ENGLISH

71. In the national tests for 2000, the level of attainment among the Key Stage 1 pupils was above average in reading and well above average in writing when compared with all schools and with similar schools. At Key Stage 2, the level of attainment was well below the average for all schools and very low in relation to similar schools. However, this cohort was untypical because eight of the eleven pupils had special educational needs, and four of them arrived partway through the key stage. There were also weaknesses in the way literacy work was organised that meant that insufficient time was devoted to teaching writing skills. The school recognised this and has since reorganised the way literacy work was organised.

72. In the work seen, nearly all of the pupils attain above average standards in speaking, listening, reading and writing by the age of seven. By the age of eleven, eight out of the eleven pupils attain above average standards in reading, speaking and listening, and average standards in writing. A few reach higher standards in some aspects of their writing, particularly in poetry and sustained pieces of narrative. Overall, this represents good achievement. Six of the eleven pupils in the cohort began the year on the register of special educational needs, which, though not as high as last year, is well above average. All of the pupils have made good progress, three of them enough progress to enable them to come off the register. Their high levels of achievement are due to changes the school has made to the way the learning in the subject is organised, and to the contribution made by the larger staff of teaching assistants. The standards attained by the present Year 5 cohort are significantly better, partly because there are fewer pupils with special educational needs, and partly because the higher attaining pupils are benefiting from specialist teaching that matches their needs very well. All of the pupils are benefiting from more time spent on writing tasks and from the greater contribution of teaching assistants. The school has raised standards significantly since the last inspection.

73. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils speak confidently on a wide range of subjects. They acquire a good vocabulary of subject-specific terms that helps them to discuss what they know, and to ask sensible questions. When discussing language work, for example, the pupils confidently use the names of the more common parts of speech to discuss their sentence work. In their group activities, the pupils discuss the behaviour of words and how they are used. They talk animatedly about the characters and events in the stories they read. The pupils show a lively interest in spelling and phonics and are very keen to talk about how sounds are built up and how to spell them. The pupils listen carefully to the teachers, teaching assistants and each other. Because they do so, they have a clear idea of how to set about their learning tasks. Because they pay attention, they remember and understand most of what is being taught. As a result, they learn well and make rapid progress. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are relaxed and confident speakers who willingly engage in useful discussions about the texts they study. Because they listen carefully, they absorb information quickly and securely. They acquire a large vocabulary which they use well when asking questions or making contributions to class discussions. In an English lesson for pupils in the lower Key Stage 2 class, for example, the pupils talked excitedly about alternative endings and used terms such as *powerful verbs*, *conjunctions*, *adjectives*, and *nouns*. In discussing the author's style and the techniques he used to hold his readers' interest, the pupils accurately used phrases such as *'He has used short sentences to create suspense,'* and *'the writer uses alliteration a lot, and he ends his chapter with a cliff-hanger.'* In a lesson for the higher attaining pupils in Years 4 and 5, the pupils used a very extensive vocabulary to discuss how writers achieve their effects. In doing so, they successfully teased out a number of authorial devices employed by the

authors of challenging novels such as *The Silver Sword*, *Rebecca's World*, *Alice in Wonderland*, and *The Secret Garden*.

74. The pupils at both key stages read well. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have developed good reading habits. Most pupils read regularly at home as well as at school. Many benefit from being encouraged to read to parents or older brothers and sisters. Nearly all of the pupils read fluently and with a fair degree of expression. In one lesson, the teacher and the pupils discussed how to get good expression when reading aloud. They looked for cues from the writer, such as exclamation marks, words in capitals and broken or incomplete sentences that end with a series of dots '...' to signal suspense. The pupils have a very good knowledge of sounds and how they are made by combining letters. They use their knowledge of letter sounds well to read unfamiliar and difficult words. By the end of Key Stage 2, most of the pupils read fluently and with a good degree of independence. They read regularly at school and at home, and they often elect to bring books from home to read at school. Many of the pupils read non-fiction books, and some have extensive personal collections of books at home. Most of the pupils use the school library and some use the public library in Colchester. The pupils have a good understanding of how their own library is organised. They locate books easily and are very familiar with the different parts of reference and information books that give important information about what topics are covered. For example, they talk about how the *contents* and *index* pages are organised and what a *glossary* is. Of the pupils interviewed during the course of the inspection, all could talk sensibly about the characters in the novels they read. Many expressed preferences when discussing authors and the range of fiction available to them. They are very aware of the authors who are currently popular, such as J. K. Rowling and Dick King-Smith. In a lesson for the higher attaining pupils, the pupils demonstrated a good grasp of character and plot, and a voracious appetite for good literature. In previous lessons they had read and discussed excerpts from the novels of Emile Zola and Emily Bronte.

75. The pupils write well by the end of Key Stage 1 because the teaching is very good and sometimes excellent. The pupils know well the conventions for punctuating sentences. They have a good understanding of how to write interesting and varied sentences because they are taught how to construct them by building on short, simple sentences by adding adjectival and adverbial phrases, and by using conjunctions to create compound sentences. Most of the pupils spell simple, regular words well, and some of them tackle more complex words with a good degree of success. The pupils write well in a wide range of forms, including: diaries, description, recounts, menus and other instruction writing, stories, poems, letters and character sketches. One of the strengths of the writing is the pupils' work in poetry. They write a wide range of poems that feature good uses of imagery and other devices such as alliteration and rhyme. Another strength is their ability to write pieces of sustained work. For example, their accounts of the Nativity are well constructed and extend to four or more pages. Most of the pupils are beginning to develop a readable, cursive script. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils write at the expected level across the full range of forms. They build on all the forms learned at Key Stage 1 and extend their range to include note taking, and drafting in preparation for factual writing, such as the accounts they write on the social conditions prevailing during the Victorian period, and writing intended to persuade the reader. The pupils develop a wide vocabulary that they use effectively in the retelling of myths such as Theseus and the Minator, and in excerpts from *Wind in the Willows*. They write interesting poems, such as *The Den* and *Classroom Chaos* that make very good use of exciting language. Most of the higher attaining pupils, particularly in Years 4 and 5, have a flair for language that helps them to establish atmosphere in their stories and hook the readers' interest. For example, after studying Van Gough's painting, *The Bridge at Arles*, and reading an excerpt from a novel by the French writer, Emile Zola, the pupils wrote their own mystery story. Most of them, like the author of this piece, succeed in writing good prose that catches the readers' interest:

The train I was travelling on flashed through the countryside. Aaaagh! A sudden scream rang through the air. Then there was silence... No noise was

to be heard except for the waves and breath of the Lombardy poplars rustling in the wind. The shore waves crashed against the rocks in the night's darkness, splitting in into different shades ...

76. The pupils willingly tackle pieces of extended writing. Most of them, for example, wrote a long narrative with the title *Academy High* in which they developed interesting characters and plot lines. They arranged their work into chapters and employed cliffhangers and other devices to hook the reader's interest. Most of the pupils spell at the expected level. They study word endings such as *tion*, *cian* and *sion* in such words as communication, musician and invasion. The pupils are able to draft and edit their work. They enjoy working on their sentences to make them more interesting. There are examples of pupils substituting livelier verbs in the active voice to increase the dramatic impact of their writing. Although all of the pupils have developed a readable, cursive script, it is too large. It gives the impression of immaturity, which is not deserved, and it slows the writing.

77. The quality of the teaching is never less than good and is often very good, occasionally excellent. The teachers have good subject knowledge and a good understanding of how to implement the literacy hour. As a result, the teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. One of the many strengths of the teaching is the close attention paid to modelling good writing. The teachers make very effective use of the opportunities provided by the Framework for Literacy to teach the pupils the skills of sentence construction. Consequently the pupils, even at Key Stage 1, have a good idea of how to vary their sentences to keep the reader's interest. In an inspirational lesson at Key Stage 1, for example, the teacher helped the pupils to expand a simple phrase, *The cat*, into a basic sentence such as *The thin cat was sleeping*, and from there, step by step, to *The thin cat was sleeping softly on the computer all afternoon*. She helped the higher attaining pupils to use their new understanding of how sentences are constructed to explore with them how moving adjectival and adverbial phrases might produce subtle changes in the meaning of the sentences they write. Another strength in the teaching is the teachers' skilful organisation and management of the pupils and their learning activities. The activities are well planned to meet the pupils' needs. In literacy lessons, for example, the teachers deploy teaching assistants well to support the work of groups of pupils. The teaching assistants and class teachers work closely together to ensure that all pupils have an opportunity to contribute to class work. The teaching assistants provide good support to the pupils with special educational needs. This enables the pupils to keep up with the work of the rest of the class and to make useful contributions to lessons. Because the teachers have well-established routines, the pupils know what is expected of them and know what to do. In lessons at both key stages, the pupils were able to use reference books such as dictionaries and thesauri without the need to consult the teacher. The pace of lessons is another strength. The teaching demands that pupils pay attention, work hard, and work at an appropriate pace. Consequently, the pupils achieve well in lessons. In many of the lessons, the teachers used a wide range of methods to ensure that the teaching was effective. In an excellent lesson at Key Stage 1, for example, the teacher used high quality resources, well-constructed work sheets, good demonstrations and explanations, as well as practical tasks that caught the pupils' interest. Another significant strength of the teaching is the use of marking to support pupils' learning and encourage them to improve. The teachers use a simple but effective set of symbols to alert pupils to aspects of their written work that could be improved. A brief note explaining what the pupil needs to do next accompanies each symbol. This helps the pupils to acquire a good understanding of their learning. Because the teaching is never less than good, the pupils are inspired to work hard and to enjoy language work. They are highly motivated to learn and they want to do the best they can. The pupils, therefore, behave well and achieve good results.

78. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator is an exemplary teacher who is able to support her colleagues well. She has a very good knowledge of the National Literacy Strategy and has been influential in ensuring that the school implements it well. Consequently the school has adapted it to meet the needs of the pupils. One outcome of

this is the creation of more time for the teaching of writing. This initiative is beginning to bear fruit. The curriculum is well planned to ensure that skills learned in literacy are used in other subjects, and that lessons in other subjects provide opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy skills. The school makes appropriate provision for the pupils to use computers to support the pupils' learning. For example, pupils are taught how to use a word processing programs to organise and present their work more effectively.

MATHEMATICS

79. The results of the national tests in 2000 show that the standard attained by the eleven-year-olds was average when compared with all schools and with the results of similar schools. Because the cohort of Year 6 pupils tested was very small, and the number of pupils in the cohort who were on the register of special educational needs, was large, the data does not reflect a lack of progress. The results for seven-year-old pupils were below the national average when compared with all schools and similar schools, partly because the school did not devote sufficient time to teaching mathematics at this key stage, and partly because the teaching had weaknesses.

80. Standards of attainment are now above average at the end of both key stages, and in all aspects of the subject. The significant improvement in standards at Key Stage 1 is due mainly to better teaching, arising out of a change of staffing, but also to more time spent teaching mathematics to pupils aged seven. Standards at the school are significantly higher now than they were at the time of the last inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the higher attaining pupils, achieve well. This is because the teaching is now consistently good or better, and the curriculum is broader and better balanced. It provides the pupils with good opportunities to make progress. Some of these opportunities arise out of the school's successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. The school now employs a larger staff of teaching assistants than it did. They support the teachers very well. The knowledgeable co-ordinator works hard to ensure the best possible provision and standards. These factors have ensured that the school has made good progress in raising standards of attainment since the last inspection, but particularly so over the last year. The school is continuing to implement effective strategies to raise standards still further.

81. By the end of both key stages, the pupils are confident in applying the skills and concepts they have learnt to solve mathematical problems. They use a range of methods for solving number and money puzzles and other mathematical-based problems. For example, the pupils in a Key Stage 1 lesson successfully used their problem-solving skills to help them plan routes for a floor turtle. The higher attaining pupils at both key stages find it easy to use their skills and knowledge in order to solve problems. There is not a great difference between the standards reached by average pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is because pupils who find learning difficult are given every opportunity to develop their own approaches because they receive very good support from the teachers and the teaching assistants. This enhances the progress and the standards they attain in applying their skills, not only in mathematical investigations but also in other subjects, such as geography, art and music. By the end of Key Stage 2, all of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, confidently and accurately apply their knowledge and skills in a range of circumstances. A particularly good example of this was seen when pupils investigated a number of facts about the ingredients of biscuits, and presented their final results in a range of graphs.

82. At the end of both key stages, standards in number are above average. Key Stage 1 pupils have a secure understanding of place value up to 100. They confidently add and subtract numbers of two digits and understand simple fractions well. The pupils have a good understanding of the four rules of number. The higher attaining pupils work accurately with three digit numbers and show aptitude when handling data. Most Key

Stage 2 pupils are accurate when using the four rules of computation with numbers up to 1000. They have a good understanding of equivalent fractions and of decimals. Some talented, higher attaining-pupils have a well above average understanding of number, which they use confidently across a range of computation work. Their skills are well demonstrated in work they do on interpreting data represented by co-ordinates in four quadrants. The lower attaining pupils receive very good support, enabling them to feel fully secure on place value when working with decimals.

83. The pupils attain above average standards in shape, space and measure at both key stages. The Key Stage 1 pupils, including most of those who have special educational needs, easily identify a range of two and three-dimensional shapes and have a good understanding of their properties. The pupils benefit from well-planned opportunities to use the programmable robot to help them deepen their understanding of angles. The pupils are skilled at telling the time and at estimating and using standard and non-standard measures to compare amounts. At Key Stage 2, the pupils build securely on these skills. They have a very good knowledge of shape and standard measures and use it to work accurately with perimeters, capacity, mass and time.

84. The pupils are good at using their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as science, geography, design and technology. They make good progress through both key stages because there are many opportunities for the pupils to transfer their skills naturally.

85. In the lessons observed, the teaching was consistently good. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Throughout the school, the teachers' planning is securely based on the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines. Lessons are very well structured and the teaching and learning are brisk. This encourages the pupils to develop very positive attitudes to their work and to behave very well. Because of this, they work industriously, concentrate well and put a great deal of effort into their what they do. The co-ordinator and other teachers have good subject knowledge. They teach the basic skills of numeracy very well, and plan well for their use in other subjects such as science, information and communication technology and design and technology. The teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they facilitate learning very effectively. They make it very clear to pupils what is expected of them. The teachers use effective methods to get new ideas across. They match the needs and abilities of all pupils well. The classroom assistants make a significant contribution to the quality of teaching and learning at the school. They effectively support the pupils who have special educational needs by developing teaching points and by guiding and encouraging the pupils in tackling their work. The teachers make very effective use of assessments. Some very good on-going assessment was observed in lessons, in which, for example, errors were explained clearly and pupils were given time to enter into discussion so they could clarify their understanding and put right their mistakes. This practice helps the pupils to make good progress. The way the teachers mark work is extremely helpful in identifying what the children have done well and what they need to do to improve further. The teachers set the pupils challenging individual targets. The homework they set helps the pupils to consolidate and extend what they learn in class.

SCIENCE

86. The pupils' attainment in science is above average by the end of both Key Stages. The school has been successful in raising standards since the last inspection. Pupils now make good progress and achieve well. The standards the pupils attained in the national tests in 2000 were well above average. The evidence of the inspection indicates that the school has maintained these high standards. Standards at the school are significantly higher than at the time of the last inspection.

87. By the age of seven, the pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of life processes. For example they draw and accurately label parts of the body. They talk and write confidently about the five senses, particularly the senses of taste, sight and hearing. The pupils draw accurate diagrams of the human eye and tongue, and record what they know about them. They have an appropriate knowledge of the processes of growth in humans and animals. The pupils' learning is much enhanced in this aspect of the subject because they have access to excellent facilities for studying natural science. During the inspection, for example, the pupils made close observations of the tadpoles in their classroom and in the small pond in the Mediterranean garden, close to the playground. They commented excitedly on the progress made by the tadpoles and explained that they would soon turn into frogs. The pupils know about healthy eating and how to strike a balance in the foods they eat. They have an appropriate understanding of how medicines are used to help the body recover from illness or injury. In their work on forces, the pupils demonstrate good knowledge of electrical circuits. They know how to construct a simple circuit and how to incorporate light bulbs and switches. They talk knowledgeably about the dangers of electricity, particularly in relation to its use in domestic equipment and equipment used at school. The pupils' work illustrates an appropriate understanding of some of the properties of light. For example, the pupils talk and write about how the properties of some materials cause them to reflect or absorb light. They talk about 'shadow shapes' and how shadows are formed. They give satisfactory explanations of why we pass through periods of day and night. The pupils understand the need for fair tests and for making accurate observations when they are engaged in practical work.

88. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a good understanding of the solar system and Earth's place in it. They draw accurate diagrams to show the relative positions and orbits of the planets and the moon. They give clear explanations of how the seasons are affected by the Earth's movement around the sun and good explanations of how the Earth's movement about its own axis creates night and day. The pupils keep moon diaries in which they accurately record the moon's phases. In some of their most recent work, the pupils show a good understanding of forces such as magnetism, gravity and upthrust. They conduct well-planned investigations. They acquire good insights into scientific principles when they plan and carry out investigations. In one lesson, for example, the pupils used force metres to measure, in Newtons, the mass of a number of objects suspended in air, then closely observed the effect on mass when the objects were suspended in water. From their close measurements and observation, the pupils were able to explain the effect of upthrust. The pupils do much work on life processes and have a good understanding of the human body and how it works. They name the main bones of the human skeleton and show how they work in conjunction with muscles to enable movement. They have an appropriate understanding of the digestive system and the blood circulatory system. They write confidently about the importance of good diet and exercise in maintaining health and promoting growth. They identify which foods are harmful to teeth and explain why it is important to clean teeth properly. The pupils successfully carry out investigations into the effect of exercise on the lungs and on the rate at which the heart and the pulses beat. In discussions with the inspectors, they demonstrated good recall of other aspects of science work, including the processes of evaporation and condensation, the types of materials that would and would not dissolve in water and the methods for extracting dissolved or suspended materials. The pupils used a wide range of scientific terms accurately when discussing their work.

89. The teaching is good throughout the school. The main strengths include the teachers' planning and management of practical activities that encourage the pupils to investigate for themselves the materials, forces and behaviour of physical phenomena. In a lesson on magnetism for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, the teacher skilfully set up activities that encouraged the pupils to make close observations and accurate measurements of the relative strengths of horseshoe and bar magnets. She helped the pupils to record their observations in tables and to draw conclusions from the information they collected. Another significant strength of the teaching is the way the teachers and teaching assistants work

together to support the pupils' learning. The teaching assistants are always well deployed to support groups and individual pupils. They keep notes of their observations on pupils' progress and they share these with the teachers so that future planning responds to the needs of the pupils. One outcome is that the work is well matched to the needs of the pupils, providing them with sufficient challenge and interest to maintain high levels of motivation. The pupils, therefore, work with enthusiasm, and persevere with challenging tasks. The teachers' and teaching assistants' good teamwork ensures that all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are well supported. As a result, these pupils get good access to the curriculum and complete the activities planned for them. The teachers plan the lessons well to include opportunities, through discussion and question and answer sessions, to review what the pupils know and understand. The teaching makes good use of plenary sessions to consolidate learning and to establish what progress the pupils are making. The teachers maintain very high standards of discipline. They have high expectations of the pupils' behaviour. Consequently, no time is wasted and the pupils work at a good pace. Occasionally, teachers miss opportunities to respond to pupils' contributions. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, for example, when the pupils were investigating the strength of magnets by counting the number of paper clips that could be suspended from them, the teacher did not follow-up the observation made by some of the pupils that the number of paper clips suspended depended upon the amount of overlap between them. In an upper Key Stage 2 lesson, the teacher did not follow-up a suggestion from one pupil who, in discussing the effects of the upthrust on objects suspended in water, suggested that it might be a good idea to test sponges, since they absorbed water and the other materials they were using did not. Her hypothesis was that the sponge might weigh the same in or out of the water, or possibly weigh more. Apart from this minor area for development, there are no significant weaknesses in the teaching.

90. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has produced, in consultation with her colleagues, a suitable action plan to further develop science throughout the school. She has a clear view of the standards the pupils attain and how to raise them. She also has a good understanding of the strengths of provision – opportunities for practical work and strong links to other subjects, and where provision could be strengthened – by making greater use of information and communication technology to support the pupils' learning.

ART

91. The pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages is higher than expected of pupils aged seven and eleven. The pupils make good progress at both key stages. This is shown in the increasing amount of detail they include in sketches and in their use of increasingly sophisticated techniques for achieving effects of style, tone and shading. The pupils make effective use of computer programmes to create abstract designs. The older pupils' designs are complex and attractive, and show a flair for greater colour co-ordination. The pupils successfully experiment with colour and texture when studying a range of styles from the works of famous artists. By the end of the Key Stage 2, most of the pupils have a good knowledge of how to create the colours and shades they need to express themselves. They use this knowledge well when they match and blend colours to create suitable backgrounds for their work. The younger pupils show a good understanding of techniques such as colour washing and collage when they create particular effects in pictures of the seaside and in underwater scenes. They learn how to block and sponge print, and compare these techniques with those used in painting. The older pupils use picture stimuli as a focus for literacy work. Their writing reveals a sensitive and mature response to the painting of great artists. The pupils create atmosphere and excitement in their writing, drawings and paintings inspired by their investigation of Constable's 'The Hay Wain'. The impressive links that have been established between subjects not only enhances the pupils' learning but also increases the opportunities the pupils have for creative and artistic work in other subjects at both key stages. The Key Stage 2 pupils extend their knowledge of compositional drawing and painting when they create original designs using a range of

media. They demonstrate their skills in shape and form when they observe their friends and draw portraits of them in the styles of Paul Klee, Modigliani and Picasso. The pupils successfully tackle large-scale pieces of art. A good example of this kind of work is the collaborative version of Van Gough's *The Bridge at Arles*. This work helped the pupils to develop observational skills and to share ideas about the intentions of the artist. In another display, a study of form and colour, the pupils used their knowledge of colours and printing techniques to produce attractive work on shapes that tessellate. To do so, they used ideas for shades gathered from work on soils and minerals done in science lessons.

92. The quality of teaching is never less than good, and is sometimes very good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision of the place art has within an integrated curriculum and appreciates the importance of helping pupils to develop skills as well as knowledge. Lessons are very well planned, showing a purposeful link with other curriculum areas. The pupils are encouraged to express themselves creatively in whatever they do. The brisk pace of lessons, the teachers' choice of topics and the very good use of questions are strengths of the teaching throughout both key stages. These enable the teachers to challenge the pupils to develop their own style and interpretation in their response to each other's work as well as to the work of famous artists. The teachers have high expectations of their pupils' abilities and this encourages the pupils to produce high quality work. The pupils' enthusiasm is obvious from the way they collaborate, discuss ideas and work imaginatively to produce finished products, or design plans. The sensitivity and quality of the displays in school are a fitting tribute to the pupils' efforts and show the high standard of work to best advantage.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

93. The pupils attain average standards by the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection. Recent improvements to the teaching are beginning to bear fruit. This can be seen in the most recent work of the pupils, in which the standards of work seen were above average for some elements of the subject.

94. By the age of seven, the pupils acquire an adequate understanding of mechanisms and structures from their work on roundabouts, seesaws and playground designs. They know how to make and use basic construction methods including how to join materials appropriately using appropriate methods such as glue and split pins. The pupils know how hinges work and how to make and use hinges in their own designs. They achieve satisfactory standards in the recording of their designs and in selecting and using a range of suitable materials to complete them. Most of the pupils understand that design and technology is about identifying human needs and problems, and setting about meeting and solving them. Examples of work like this are seen in the topics the pupils do on Joseph's coat, homes, and the work they do on food technology when they study the benefits of designing meals that contain more fruit and vegetables. In a lesson on designing and making a model playground, the pupils demonstrated their understanding of the need to conserve materials and reduce waste. They used tools, including scissors, sensibly and with an eye to safety. The pupils designed and constructed simple swings and roundabouts. They paid close attention to what they were doing when they used glue to join the different parts. During the lesson, all of the pupils made progress towards completing their models. For example, they successfully applied what they had learned about the use of cross members to make their structures stronger by making them more rigid.

95. By the age of eleven, the pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the processes of designing and making. They are able to identify a need and record their ideas for solutions clearly in designs in their workbooks. Their designs include different views of the proposed product. Their drawings are well annotated with details of the materials to be

used and the methods of joining them. They show a number of solutions, including the use of glue, hinges and split pins. In their work on slipper designs, the pupils demonstrate their ability to work within the limitations of the available materials and with a fair degree of accuracy. The finished products are attractive and serviceable. The pupils' display of their work includes a booklet in which they record how well they have understood the design process, the construction process and the processes of evaluation that lead to improvements in future products. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, the pupils solved the problem of how to create movement in a 'monster' toy by using stored energy in a balloon, pneumatics and hinges. By the end of the lesson, the pupils were able to identify different pneumatic systems and how they worked. For example, they explained how a balloon might be used in their designs but noted its limitations. They examined and discussed the two-way operation of a pneumatic system based on a simple syringe pump. They made sensible suggestions about how this knowledge might affect their designs. They considered a sequence of actions to help them realise their designs. In an upper Key Stage 2 lesson, the pupils explored how cams might be used to create movement in toys they were making that were based upon what they had learned from a study of the mechanisms in some Victorian toys. In the course of the lesson, the pupils successfully overcame a number of design problems including the following: cam shafts that were too short; glide guides getting in the way of the masthead; cams that were too thin and allowed the shaft to slip; and guides that were badly positioned. Some of the pupils relied too heavily on trial and error in the initial stages but, with the help of the teacher, began to evaluate the results of their work to overcome the problems they encountered. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had successfully completed working models that clearly demonstrated what they had learned about the function and use of cams.

96. The quality of teaching is good, and sometimes very good. One of the strengths of the teaching is the opportunity it gives pupils to think for themselves in overcoming design and make problems. This was clearly demonstrated in lessons at both key stages. Another strength is the teachers' skill in organising and managing the pupils for practical activities. This allows the pupils scope to use tools safely but with a good degree of independence, and with support when it is needed. This is achieved by the effective deployment of teaching assistants who use discussion and questions very well to guide the pupils' work and to support those who find solving problems or handling tools difficult. One outcome of this is that the pupils of all levels of attainment work at a good pace and achieve well, even when the work is challenging. Because the pupils get just the right amount of support, they work hard and persevere with tasks in order to overcome problems. They show considerable pride in their finished products and are keen to demonstrate how well their models work. Teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to ensure that all pupils are able to contribute to the lessons. They make close observations of the pupils at work and visit each group in order to assess how well the pupils are doing. There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching.

97. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the subject's development, and has been successful in raising the profile of the subject throughout the school. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure there are good links to other subjects such as science, mathematics, art and English. The co-ordinator carefully monitors teachers' planning and the standards the pupils attain. The school enhances the curriculum in a number of ways. For example, the Year 5 pupils participate in a technology day at the local high school. The school has established useful links with local designers and craftsmen such as weavers in order to enhance the design and technology experiences of the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

98. By the age of eleven, the pupils attain standards that are higher than those found in most schools. Most of the pupils achieve well because the teaching ensures that they gain a good knowledge of people, places and environments, as well as helping the pupils to learning how and where to find information. The standards attained are better now than at the time of the previous inspection.

99. When studying the immediate locality of the school, the pupils successfully describe the position of prominent landmarks in appropriate geographical terms. They read and draw simple maps and plans of the area. By the age of seven, the pupils understand how to compare and contrast their own locality with places further away. For example, they identify the nearest seaside location to Boxted, and differences between Colchester and the neighbourhood of their school and village. The pupils show an ability to translate their thoughts into recorded work when they design simple route maps that include symbols to show how to get from home to the school playground. They are able to represent the basic layout of the classroom and the layout of the school. They use a computerised remote controlled vehicle to design routes and plot directions. The older pupils in Key Stage 2 compile fact files in order to compare living and working conditions in Kenya, where they sponsor a boy called Moses, with the lifestyle they are familiar with at home. In doing so, they become familiar with atlases and the range of information provided by them on climate, population, agriculture and industry. The pupils use detailed maps and plans with the a high level of accuracy when they study facts and features of different locations in order to identify what causes rivers to flood. They conduct an in-depth study of the many uses of water that enables them to analyse the causes and effects of pollution and disease on farms, families and industries.

100. The pupils develop a good awareness of the importance of caring for the environment. They take a particular pride in their playground. They know how to look after their school grounds and suggest ways to keep the school and playground tidy. The pupils at Key Stage 2 explain how the environment can be damaged and how and why litter causes pollution. When considering features in the immediate locality of the school, and where they live, they compare their lifestyle with living-conditions in the Greece, Egypt and India. The pupils successfully use precise geographical vocabulary, and communicate their ideas clearly and enthusiastically. Throughout school, the pupils use very good quality well-chosen photographs and resources well to aid their research.

101. The quality of teaching is good. It helps the pupils to make good progress and achieve well. Many of the pupils make very good progress in lessons when they are involved in individual or group research tasks. The teachers manage discussions extremely well; their questions skilfully lead pupils into a deeper understanding of issues such as, *What causes water on the land and in rivers to flood?* Pupils are encouraged to listen carefully and to appreciate the contributions of others. One of the strengths of the teaching is the effective way it uses fieldwork and the value it places on providing the pupils with first-hand experience. This offers the pupils very good opportunities to draw upon their own observations. As a result, they make good links between different aspects of the topics they study. The teaching provides the pupils with good opportunities to develop their skills by interpreting evidence from pictures, maps, and photographs. They have begun to help the pupils to use the Internet as a research tool. For example, they helped the pupils to investigate different time zones during a visit to the computer suite of at the local High School. The teaching makes very effective use of educational visits to develop and extend the pupils' knowledge and skills.

HISTORY

102. By the age of eleven, the pupils attain standards that are higher than expected in most schools. The pupils achieve well because they are given many opportunities to gain a good knowledge of people, places and environments in the past, and a chance to compare

what they have found out with what they know about the present day. The good teaching ensures that the pupils' research skills are developed systematically as the pupils learn how and where to find information. The standards attained are higher than at the time of the previous inspection.

103. The pupils at Key Stage 1 show a good understanding of the past when they describe a favourite holiday, or compare how they live with life in Victorian times. They successfully explain differences between being cared for as a baby and gradually looking after themselves as they get older. They compare the size of clothes that fitted them when newly born with their school clothes now. Their awareness of the right clothes for different situations and climates is heightened when they discuss how fashions have changed since the Victorian period. They focus on similarities and differences in seaside entertainment in 2000 and in 1900. Their awareness of change over time is heightened by the perceptive use of audio-visual equipment to set the scene for class discussions. The good choice and use of reference materials to aid investigations means pupils easily identify the most significant changes in lifestyles over time. Teachers at Key Stage 2 use this very good practice just as effectively. As a result, the pupils show increasing awareness of the difference between the past and present when they study the ancient Greeks and Egyptians. They explain how lifestyles and living conditions have improved over time. Their knowledge increases significantly because of the number of fact-finding tasks and in-depth discussions offered to them. They are helped to bring the past to life as they research the Tudors and investigate the social and political conflicts during the life of King Henry V111.

104. The way the teachers skilfully integrate different curriculum areas enhances the study of this subject at both key stages, and has a very positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning. For example, in Key Stage 1, as part of the 'seaside resort' study, the pupils discussed how fairgrounds had changed over time. They planned, designed and made different rides, in design and technology lessons, compiled a class picture in art, and wrote about significant changes to the seaside in their English lessons. They made comparisons with the present day arising from the research they did in geography lessons on favourite holiday resorts. In upper Key Stage 2, the pupils research life in Tudor times and choose areas for individual topic work. In lessons in art and design, and in technology lessons, they plan, design and make large collage pictures of Tudor people, including pictures that portray the wives of King Henry V111. In science lessons, they test the materials used to create the pictures, and in English lessons, they record what they learn in extended written pieces, which they collate in a book. The pupils at Key Stage 2 have a good understanding of how environmental changes, and the increases in pollution, might affect future generations.

105. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers make good use of educational visits to help the pupils develop the skills they need. The pupils make good progress and achieve well at both key stages because the pupils are given many opportunities to research, collate information and discuss their findings. Those with special educational needs are well supported in their learning. This results in all pupils gaining sufficient confidence to enable them to identify links between the areas they study. Throughout school, the teaching makes good use of well-chosen resources, photographs and artefacts to deepen the pupils' knowledge and strengthen and extend their research skills. As a result, the pupils have extremely positive attitudes. They are developing a strong awareness of the importance of history in their environment as they progress through school. They take a particular pride in local traditions and in the historical aspects of the immediate environment, such as the village church and local houses. They have produced an impressive Millennium Banner as part of a whole school project for the community.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

106. The pupils attain the expected standards by the end of both key stages. The school has successfully raised standards since the last inspection because it has acquired better resources, and its teachers are more confident about teaching the subject.

107. By the age of seven, most of the pupils use information technology effectively for exchanging and sharing information. For example, they know how to use a basic word processing program for writing stories and completing work in other subjects. When they present information, they consider the best size and type of font for their purpose. They know how to complete some basic editing tasks in order to improve what they have written. They sometimes use a graphics program to create pictures to accompany what they have written. The pupils successfully use computers to make things happen on and off screen. Most of them are confident with the mouse and keyboard when using them to make choices from pull-down menus. In a recent lesson, the pupils demonstrated how they could use a keypad to give instructions to a programmable robot. They successfully determined the turtle's route across the classroom by keying in how far and in what directions they wanted it to travel. By the end of the lesson, they were able to make the turtle follow more than one instruction, and make it pause and 'sing'. The pupils have begun to use computers to find things out. To do this, they sometimes use simple graphs and databases. Some of the programs they use support learning in other subjects such as English and mathematics. The pupils know how to store information on disk and how to retrieve it.

108. By the end of Key Stage 2, the pupils are reasonably confident when using computers to find out about things and to exchange and share information. For example, they confidently use word processors to present work in English, history and science. The pupils make good use of the formatting tools available to them to change features of their texts such as size, style and colour of the fonts they use. They make effective use of the *delete*, *cut* and *paste* functions in the course of editing their work, before they print it out. The pupils use clipart and graphs to illustrate their work. They have begun to use technology to help them collect and interpret information. In recent work in science, for example, the pupils used databases and spreadsheets to create a good range of graphs and tables in which they presented what they had learned about the proportions of ingredients used in the manufacture of different brands of biscuits. The pupils have begun to use e-mail and the Internet, but use it less often than they could because the teachers are not very successful in managing the pupils' access to the available resources. Most of the pupils are familiar with a small range of basic modelling programs and use them to manipulate events on screen. For example, pupils in lower Key Stage 2, recently used a commercial program to design and present their dream bedrooms. By the end of the lesson, the pupils had a clear idea of modelling and simulation as special ways of representing possible actions or objects. They used what they had learned in order to evaluate the outcomes of work they had done earlier. The pupils know how to use CD ROMs to search electronic encyclopaedias and other sources of information to support learning in history, science and art. The school has the resources to introduce the pupils to ideas on how information technology may be used to control or monitor events outside the computer itself and to pose questions such as 'What happens when...?' However, the teaching sometimes misses opportunities to use these resources more often and more imaginatively. Some pupils expressed disappointment about the lack of opportunity to use such resources, particularly e-mail and the World Wide Web on the Internet.

109. In the lessons observed, the teaching was good, but the evidence from other sources, such as discussions with teachers and pupils, lesson plans and pupils' work, indicates that, overall, teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. This is largely because the co-ordinator has provided good levels of support to colleagues, and partly because the school had provided a well-structure and appropriate scheme of work based upon the guidance documents published by the *Curriculum and Qualifications Authority* and the local education authority. The main strengths of the teaching are the teachers' attention to developing the pupils' knowledge and understanding of appropriate technical terms so that they can discuss their work. Another strength is the

teaching of aspects of the subject other than those associated with computers. The pupils, for example, are taught to make confident use of tape recorders, photocopiers, video recorders and digital cameras. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teaching helped the pupils to become familiar with the operation and use of a tape recorder. By the end of the lesson, the pupils were able to load the cassette, record sounds, and play back the results. In the course of the lesson, the teaching helped the pupils to understand the importance of the design and positioning of the controls for ease of use. It also helped them to understand the conditions necessary for good quality recordings – for example, the need to be close to the microphone when speaking and the need to reduce any extraneous noise. In the lessons seen, the teaching was characterised by good classroom organisation and very good use of discussion and question and answer sessions. Another strength of the teaching is the way the pupils' work is displayed. Pictures, text, graphics, charts and tables are attractively displayed to illustrate the work the pupils have done. The pupils appreciate the fact that their work is valued and they are justly proud of what they have achieved. Because of these strengths, the pupils are highly motivated to learn. They invest much effort and interest in learning tasks and are keen to share the results of their work. The teachers cover the statutory curriculum in a series of well-planned lessons. However, they do not always plan adequately for, or manage successfully, the pupils' access to the available computer facilities to support learning in other subjects. The networked computers linked to the Internet are not used as often as they could be. Some of the older pupils expressed disappointment at the lack of opportunities they had to search websites for information or to use the e-mail facilities. That said, there are no significant weaknesses in the teaching.

110. The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has good subject knowledge and is able to support her colleagues well. She sets a good example in her own practice in the classroom. She has successfully raised the profile of the subject throughout the school, and has prepared the teachers and teaching assistants well for the government-funded training that they will receive soon. The co-ordinator has helped the school to invest in, and effectively use, new technology for a range of important tasks. For example, the pupils' annual reports are prepared on computer and so are the individual education plans for the pupils on the school's register of special needs. As a result, the reports are detailed and contain more information about each pupil's progress and areas for development than is found in the reports in most other schools. Similarly, the education plans produced for pupils with special educational needs contain well-designed targets for improvement that help the teachers and the teaching assistants to provide effective support for their learning.

MUSIC

111. By the end of both key stages, the pupils attain standards that are in line with those expected of pupils aged seven and eleven. Some Key Stage 2 pupils reach a higher standard. The standards are similar to those at the time of the last inspection. The school encourages pupils to develop musical appreciation through singing, composing and performing in a number of ways. Some Key Stage 2 pupils have recorder lessons each week; others use music to develop dance skills in an after-school club. These activities have a positive impact upon the pupils' interest, enthusiasm and achievement.

112. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils use their voices expressively when singing songs and rhymes. They maintain a good beat when clapping to songs and to music of different tempos. The pupils identify high, middle and low notes when they play a range of un-tuned instruments. When playing percussion instruments, they show a good understanding and feel for mood and rhythm. They recognise and explore ways in which sounds can be arranged. They successfully use symbols in invented notation to represent their ideas. The pupils collaborate well in producing pleasing compositions.

113. By the age of eleven, the pupils sing a varied repertoire of songs competently, in unison and in two parts. They pay attention to musical expression, singing clearly and tunefully. They play un-tuned instruments confidently and become proficient performers. They pupils acquire an appropriate understanding of musical structures and use these when composing cyclic patterns. They offer sensible and imaginative suggestions about variations in timing in order to produce the most pleasing effects.

114. The teaching is good throughout both key stages. The talented co-ordinator ensures that her colleagues are confident with the aspects of the curriculum they teach. The use of joint planning and, at times, lesson exchanges with the co-ordinator, helps to ensure that the pupils are offered a range of effective learning opportunities. The main strength of the teaching lies in the detailed whole school planning. It enables the teachers and teaching assistants to appreciate the structure of the curriculum and understand how it is to be taught. The teachers' commitment, preparation and delivery of the subject positively affects how well the pupils learn and encourages in them a sustained interest in music. As a result, the pupils at both key stages, are enthusiastic and have extremely positive attitudes to all aspects of music making. They listen carefully and respond very well to the teacher's guidance. They understand what is expected of them and apply their knowledge fully to the different aspects of the subject. The pupils behave very well in lessons. They share instruments sensibly. They work industriously in groups and show increasing confidence when they perform their compositions to the class. The pupils make good use of opportunities to evaluate and improve their performance during music-making sessions. This has a positive impact upon the progress pupils make.

115. The subject is organised and managed very effectively. The co-ordinator supports her colleagues well. She ensures that the pupils develop a good appreciation of music from different traditions and cultures from participating in assembly each day. She encourages the teachers to make effective use of the available resources to enhance the pupils' skills of composing and performing. Many opportunities are planned for pupils to perform throughout the year. These include whole school performances, local festivals, class assemblies and village events. The celebration of these special times with the local community impacts significantly on the pupils' personal development and positively aids their learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

116. The pupils attain the standards expected of seven and eleven-year-olds in most aspects of the subject. However, because the school has no suitable indoor facilities for gymnastics and dance, it has to teach them outdoors, but can do so only when the weather conditions are favourable. The inspectors note that the weather conditions have been particularly poor for most of this academic year and that, as a result, less time than usual has been devoted to the subject.

117. No lessons at Key Stage 1 were seen, but the teacher's planning and records indicate that most pupils are likely to attain the expected standards in games, dance and athletics, and above average standards in swimming. They achieve the latter because a local farmer allows them the use of her domestic pool, and a parent, who is a qualified instructor, supports the teaching. The pupils achieve broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2 in invasion, striking and fielding games, in athletics, and in net and wall games. In football, for example, the pupils know how to pass and receive a ball with an appropriate degree of control and accuracy. They have a satisfactory awareness of space and are beginning to play tactically by finding spaces when their team has possession of the ball, and by marking a man when the opposing team has possession. The school has invested wisely in specialist games coaching that is beginning to raise standards of attainment. The pupils attain satisfactory standards in athletics. They successfully work to improve their own performance in a number of activities including running, jumping and throwing events. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 learn much about adventure sports when they spend a week at an outdoor residential centre. The privately owned swimming pool is not adequate for the

teaching of swimming to pupils at Key Stage 2. A combination of high transport costs, very small cohorts and lack of curriculum time prevents the school from providing swimming instruction elsewhere. Although a substantial proportion of the pupils are able to swim twenty-five metres by their age of eleven, it is mainly because their parents make provision for them out of normal lesson time.

118. The quality of teaching is generally good. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of games are stronger than they were because the teachers are fully involved in the lessons that are taken by the specialist soccer coach. His lessons are very well structured and suitably challenging. As a result, the pupils learn quickly and are highly motivated to improve their game skills. During the lessons observed, the pupils made good progress in marking and passing the ball. They visibly grew in confidence during the lessons, and took pride in applying new skills to their game. For example, as a result of good instruction and support from the coach and the class teacher, the pupils learned to use space well and to keep the game flowing. By the end of the lesson, the pupils knew they were better at passing and intercepting the ball than they had been. Another strength of the teaching arises out of the good relationships between the coach and the teachers, and between the adults and the pupils. As a result, the pupils listen carefully and work hard to improve their skills. The lessons are well planned, too. This ensures that all of the pupils participate and benefit from the work done. The teaching and coaching encourage the pupils to evaluate their performance in order to improve the quality of what they do. The teaching makes good use, too, of the skills of the teaching assistants. They work closely with class teachers to provide well-paced learning activities that are challenging and enjoyable. Because they are effective in their role, the teaching assistants free the teachers to concentrate on developing the strengths of individual pupils.

119. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator has worked closely with the headteacher to overcome some of the many limitations placed upon the school by inadequate facilities, very small numbers of pupils, and the school's isolated location. This had led to wise investment in outside expertise in some aspects of the subject but has not succeeded in overcoming all of the problems. The school does not have adequate indoor teaching space for delivering the programme of study for gymnastics. The teaching has to be done outside, when the weather permits. The particularly unfavourable conditions prevailing for most of this academic year have prevented the school from providing much of the work it had planned for gymnastics. The school provides opportunities for its pupils to participate in inter-school competitions. For example, it participates in events, organised by the cluster of small schools, such as athletics, rounders, football and scatterball. The school also organises a sports day in which all of the pupils are involved. Because most of the pupils need to travel to and from the school by coach, there are very few opportunities for pupils to benefit from activities outside normal lessons.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120. By the end of both key stages the pupils attain the standards expected of seven and eleven year olds as set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has maintained standards since the last inspection, and has improved them among some pupils, particularly those in Years 3 and 4, where the quality of the teaching is very good.

121. By the age of seven, the pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge of religious beliefs and practices from learning about Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism. They know some of the principle beliefs associated with Christmas and Easter. They describe, in simple terms, some of symbols and sacred words associated with religious belief and its expression in worship. For example, they talk about *God, the Father* and *God, the Creator*, and about Jesus being the *Son of God*. They recall some of the principal events in the life of Christ, including His nativity and crucifixion. The pupils know about Christian baptism and Hindu naming ceremonies. When they learn about the Holy Bible and the Jewish Torah, they link

their own love of books to the idea that all world faiths have sacred and revered texts. They are beginning to understand that such texts provide people with a guide to beliefs and to ways of living. The pupils have a satisfactory grasp of how Christian belief is founded upon the example of Christ, his teaching and his ministry of healing. They recall, for example, the miracle Jesus performed on blind Bartimaeus, and they talk about how the story illustrates faith in God. From lessons on the Torah and the Holy Bible, the pupils acquire a satisfactory knowledge of some biblical texts, such as the books of Moses, sacred in both faiths. As a result, they know some of the Ten Commandments and understand that Moses was an important religious leader of the Jews.

122. The pupils make at least satisfactory progress, so that by the end of Key Stage 2, when they reach the age of eleven, most of them have an appropriate knowledge of the faiths they learn about. They acquire a deeper understanding of the meaning of religious stories and symbols when they learn about Hindu gods and goddesses, early Jewish history, and the life and teachings of Jesus. They recall well the events of the Passion of Christ and they make satisfactory use of religious terms to describe ideas and beliefs about God. They talk about the example set by some devout Christians, such as St Francis of Assisi and Mother Teresa of India. The pupils acquire a sound understanding of some aspects of Christian worship when they learn about some of the religious services at the local Anglican Church. As a result, they have an appropriate understanding of baptism, confirmation and Holy Communion. The pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of Jewish synagogues, the significance of the Torah, and some of the important Jewish beliefs, practices and religious festivals. They have a good understanding, for example, of the central importance the Shabbat has in Jewish family life. From discussions about groups to which they belong, the pupils come to an appropriate understanding of initiation ceremonies in Christianity and Judaism such as baptism, confirmation, Bar Mitzvah and Bat Mitzvah. The pupils know that as well as providing guidance on relations between people and God, religious texts and religious leaders from all of the world faiths teach their adherents about how they should treat one another.

123. The quality of the teaching is good overall, and is sometime very good. The strengths of the teaching include good opportunities for pupils to learn about religious ideas and practices through role-play and through first-hand experience of religious artefacts. In a lower Key Stage 2 lesson, for example, the teacher helped the pupils to re-enact how a typical Jewish family might celebrate the Shabbat using candles, a tablecloth, salt, bread and wine. This gave them a very good idea of how Jewish families celebrate the occasion and why it is of central importance to them. The effective use of learning resources is a consistent feature of the teaching. In a Key Stage 1 lesson, for example, the teacher used a torch and an e-mail letter very effectively to help the pupils understand how, like these items, sacred religious texts 'show the way' and contain important messages about God's relationship with his people. Another strength of the teaching is the effective use of well-planned learning tasks. They provide good opportunities for the pupils to demonstrate what they have been learning. In an upper Key Stage 2 lesson on synagogues, for example, the teacher asked the pupils to plan and write an information leaflet for visitors to a synagogue. This helped the pupils to consolidate what they learned about what they could expect to see in a synagogue, how they would be expected to behave and how they should dress. It also helped the pupils to see the similarities between churches and synagogues. The pupils noted that both have special places from which religious leaders address their congregations, both allot prominent places to Holy Scriptures, use ritual that features prayer, readings and song, and that, in both, people are expected to observe certain kinds of behaviour. Tasks such as these help the pupils to a deeper understanding of the religious idea of reverence and to broaden their respect for the beliefs and values of others. Among other significant strengths is the effectiveness of the teacher's organisation and management of the pupils. Consequently, the lessons have good pace and the pupils learn quickly. Another strength, common to all of the teaching, is the effectiveness of the teaching assistants. They are well deployed by the teaching staff and make a significant contribution to the success of the lessons. They do this by offering good levels of support

to the lower attaining pupils, enabling them to keep up with the rest of the class. The teachers make effective use of discussion and question and answer sessions. These help the pupils to refine their ideas and to consolidate their learning, as well as helping the teachers and teaching assistants to assess what the pupils know and can do. Much of the teaching, too, is characterised by very good relationships between adults and pupils. One outcome of this is that the pupils are encouraged to invest much intellectual effort in their learning and to persevere with tasks. As a result, most pupils develop very positive attitudes to learning. There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching, or in the quality of the pupils' learning.

124. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator is a skilled teacher who has good subject knowledge. This has enabled her to provide effective support to other teachers, particularly in planning the curriculum and in devising effective ways to make learning in the subject challenging but interesting.