

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ACTON CE VC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Acton, Sudbury

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124686

Headteacher: Mrs D Bonnar

Reporting inspector: Mr M Johnstone  
21114

Dates of inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> October 2001

Inspection number: 193973

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Primary School  
School category: Voluntary Controlled  
Age range of pupils: 5 - 9 years  
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lambert Drive  
Acton  
Sudbury  
Suffolk

Postcode: CO10 0US  
Telephone number: 01787 377089  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs A Chapman

Date of previous inspection: April 1997

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21114	Mr M Johnstone	Registered inspector	English Science Art and design Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities Foundation stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
1112	Mr P Oldfield	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
21450	Mr D Kilborn	Team inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Geography History Music Religious education Special educational needs	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

The school is a small voluntary controlled first school for pupils aged from four to nine years of age. It is situated in pleasant rural surroundings in the village of Acton near Sudbury in Suffolk. There are 129 pupils on roll with 66 boys and 63 girls. At the time of the inspection, there were 22 children in the reception class (foundation stage). This number includes 12 children who attend part time. Most of the pupils' families live in close proximity to the school in both private and rented accommodation. Testing of children soon after entry to the reception class indicates that attainment has been consistently below the county average. A significant minority enter school with poor concentration and listening skills. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals, eight per cent, is below average. There are no pupils who have English as an additional language. Nineteen per cent of pupils have special needs, which is similar to the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. One pupil has a statement of special educational needs. This number is lower than the national average. The school has a stable staff and there have been no recruitment problems.

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

This is a good school. It is well led and managed, and all staff have a clear commitment to improvement. Children are given a good start to their school life in the foundation stage, and by the ages of seven and nine standards are above average in reading and there is some high quality work in art and design and music. Standards in all other subjects are similar to the national average. Teaching is good and is particularly effective in meeting the needs of the below average and special educational needs pupils. There is a rich and stimulating curriculum, and provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school provides good value for money.

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

- The headteacher, supported very well by all the staff, provides good leadership.
- Teaching is good overall and all teachers plan and work very well together. Classroom assistants, including parent helpers, support the teachers very well.
- In the foundation stage, children make good progress in all areas of their learning.
- By the ages of seven and nine, standards in reading are above average and there is some high quality work in art and design and music.
- Pupils with special educational needs, and the below average pupils, achieve very well.
- The school provides a rich and stimulating curriculum, relationships are very good and there is a very high level of care for all pupils.
- Governors support the school well and have a good knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement.

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

- The standards of the above average pupils in mathematics, science and writing.
- The listening skills and concentration of a small minority of mainly boys.

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

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

Overall, there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection in 1997. There were no key issues identified in the last inspection, however two less significant issues were identified. The first was to increase the number of seven-year-olds who reach the higher Level 3 in science, reading and writing in national tests. The school has done this

very successfully in reading, but despite a clear commitment from all staff, this has not been as successful in writing and science. The second was to redistribute leadership responsibilities more equitably between the headteacher and staff. This has been done effectively. In other respects, the school has done well to maintain the key strengths identified at that time.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			Similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
reading	C	B	A	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
writing	C	E	C	C	
mathematics	D	C	D	D	

Most children enter school with attainment below average, particularly in mathematical understanding and personal and social development. They make good progress in all areas of learning in the foundation stage and are on course to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and creative development. Although teaching in personal and social development and mathematical understanding is good, it does not compensate fully for the low starting point, and children are not likely to attain the expected goals in these two aspects.

In the year 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, standards in reading were high enough to be well above those in all schools, and above those in similar schools. In writing, they were in line with the national average and those in similar schools. In mathematics, standards were not high enough, being below those found in all schools and similar schools. In writing and mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels has been consistently below the national average. Taking the three subjects together, overall standards have improved since the last inspection and there has been an upward trend in line with the national trend. Provisional results for 2001 and inspection evidence, based on the work of the current seven-year-olds, indicates a similar picture in reading and writing. In mathematics, there are indications of improvement and current standards are now close to the national average. The number of pupils reaching the higher level, however, is still too small.

By the age of nine, pupils attain the standards expected for their age in writing and mathematics. In reading, standards are better than expected. At age seven and nine, there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, except in writing where the girls often do better than the boys. In all three subjects, all pupils who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.

In science, standards are similar to the national average at age seven and meet national expectations for nine-year-olds. Teacher assessments and inspection evidence indicate that standards for above average pupils could be higher. There is some high quality work in art and design and music where standards are better than expected for pupils' age.

Standards in design and technology are also good. There are no subjects where standards are below average.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	At all stages, the large majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning and try to do their best. All pupils, including the youngest pupils in the reception class, are keen to come to school and enjoy their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good overall. Pupils are polite and well mannered. No pupils have been excluded from school.
Personal development and relationships	Opportunities to serve on the school council and help teachers around the school, leads to good personal development. Relationships are very good.
Attendance	Very good.

Across the age range, there is a small minority of mainly boys with poor listening skills and concentration. On some occasions, this has an adverse effect on their learning.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 4
Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and meets the needs of the large majority of pupils well. The strengths identified during the last inspection have been maintained. Teaching in the foundation stage is consistently good and enables all the children to make good progress. The teaching of pupils who have special educational needs is good and enables them to achieve well. In the lessons seen there is a higher percentage of good teaching in Years 3 and 4. No unsatisfactory teaching was seen. At all stages, the skills of literacy are mostly taught well and numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily overall. There is a good level of consistency in the teaching of reading and writing and mathematics in well-structured lessons. Key strengths in teaching and learning are:

- the very good relationships between teachers and pupils that give all pupils a sense of security and a knowledge that their efforts will be valued;
- good questioning that encourages pupils to acquire new knowledge and increase their understanding;
- very good use of classroom assistants, including parents, and good use of other resources that ensure pupils work productively and at a good pace;
- the use of specialist teaching knowledge in art and design and music that results in high standards;
- good co-operative planning based on secure subject guidance that ensures that pupils develop key skills from year to year;
- good use of homework to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

Areas for improvement relate to:

- the planning of separate activities for the above average pupils that more consistently extend their learning beyond that of the other pupils;
- tighter and more consistent management strategies to improve the listening skills and attention of the small minority of mainly boys so that their learning is more productive.

#### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school offers a broad curriculum, covering all statutory requirements. Activities are exciting and relevant to the age and interests of the pupils. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, including some sport.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good; effective support is given to pupils with special educational needs. Staff know these pupils well and activities develop their learning in small achievable steps. This builds their self-esteem and confidence successfully. In the foundation stage, there is good early identification of pupils who may have special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good; a strong base is developed in the foundation stage where all aspects are promoted well. All adults in school provide good examples for the pupils to follow. There is a strong sense of community in the school and this builds pupils' confidence and relationships very well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school offers a very safe and welcoming environment for all its pupils and there are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. Good records are kept of how well pupils are doing in most subjects.

Within the curriculum, there is good equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, and good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend learning in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) across all subjects. The curriculum for children in the foundation stage is good. The school has established a good partnership with parents and they speak highly of the school and are very supportive of its work.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff with management responsibilities and governors are strong and effective.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are developing their strategic role well and have good knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school.



The school's evaluation of its performance	There are good procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and support of teaching and learning and curriculum development. There is good analysis of external and internal test results in order to identify areas for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Financial planning is good and resources are used well to support educational priorities and developments. The principles of best value are understood well by the headteacher and governors, and are being brought into practice effectively.

The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and support staff match the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils well. The accommodation is very good with adequate space for the numbers on roll. A good range of learning resources supports the curriculum well. Provision for the children in the foundation stage is good in all these aspects.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Their children like school and are making good progress.</li> <li>• Teaching is good and children are expected to work hard and achieve their best.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good and the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed, and they would feel comfortable approaching the school with a question or problem.</li> <li>• Children get the right amount of work to do at home.</li> <li>• There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More information about how their children are getting on.</li> <li>• A closer partnership between the school and parents.</li> </ul>

Inspectors are in general agreement with the parents' positive views of the school. The quality and quantity of information provided for parents on pupils' progress is judged to be good. The school works hard to develop a close partnership with the parents and this too is judged to be good.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Most children enter school with attainment below average, particularly in mathematical understanding and personal and social development. They make good progress in all areas of learning in the foundation stage and are on course to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and in their physical and creative development. Although teaching in personal and social development and mathematical understanding is good, it does not compensate fully for the low starting point and children are not likely to attain the expected goals in these two aspects.
2. In the year 2000 National Curriculum tests for seven-year-olds, standards in reading were high enough to be well above those in all schools and above those in similar schools. In writing, they were in line with the national average and those in similar schools. In mathematics, standards were not high enough, being below those found in all schools and similar schools. Provisional results in 2001 broadly reflect this picture. In writing and mathematics, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher levels has been consistently below the national average. Taking the three subjects together, overall standards have improved since the last inspection and there has been an upward trend in line with the national trend. This has not been so marked in mathematics. In 2001 the school did well to get all pupils up to the national level but too few pupils attained the higher level.
3. By the age of nine, optional National Curriculum tests, the school's own testing and inspection findings show pupils attain the standards expected for their age in writing and mathematics. In reading, standards are better than expected. At all stages, there is no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls except in writing where the girls often do better than the boys. The achievements of the below average and average pupils are good. For the above average pupils, achievements are only satisfactory and should be higher.
4. Inspection findings for current seven and nine-year-olds largely mirror this position, although standards in mathematics are now in line with the national average. In all three subjects, pupils who have special educational needs receive good support and achieve well.
5. Standards in speaking and listening are average. By the age of seven and nine, most pupils talk and speak confidently in different contexts and listen carefully. When pupils enter the school, many have poor listening skills and lack confidence in speaking. With mostly good teaching, the large majority achieves well. However, at all stages a significant minority of mainly boys has below average listening skills and a very short concentration span and this affects their achievements on some occasions.
6. In reading, effective teaching is resulting in good achievements for the large majority of pupils. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils develop a good knowledge of letter sounds and combinations. This helps them to read any unfamiliar words effectively. Pupils read with good levels of accuracy and by the age of nine average pupils are developing good fluency and expression in their reading. Above average pupils talk knowledgeably about books they have read and favourite authors. They have a

good understanding of the text and read with very good expression and fluency, recognising the effect of punctuation when reading aloud. By the age of seven, average and above average pupils have a good understanding of a contents and index, and this knowledge is developed well in Years 3 and 4.

7. Standards in writing are average by the ages of seven and nine and most pupils' achievements are satisfactory. At all stages all pupils are able to write in different styles, but opportunities for pupils to write factual accounts are limited, and there is not enough extended story writing for the above average pupils. In these aspects, standards could be higher. The school is aware of this through good analysis of pupils' performance in tests, and teachers are planning more work in these aspects of writing. Standards of handwriting are satisfactory. By the age of seven, most pupils, including those who have special educational needs, form letters accurately and they are usually of a consistent size. Regular handwriting practice results in all pupils writing in a consistent joined and legible script by the age of nine. Regular spelling tests in school and for homework help raise pupils' achievements in spelling and standards are satisfactory at all stages. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of grammar and punctuation. The below average pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve very well in literacy due to very effective use of resources and teaching support during the literacy and numeracy hours. The literacy skills of all pupils offer good support to work in all other subjects.
8. Standards in numeracy are similar to the national average at age seven and nine. The achievements of the below average and special educational needs pupils are very good and most average pupils achieve well. However, the above average pupils could achieve more. Most pupils develop a sound knowledge and understanding of the use and application of mathematics, number and algebra, shape, space and measures and data handling. Pupils develop good mental mathematics skills in well-taught opening sessions to lessons. They use their numeracy skills satisfactorily in other subjects such as science, design and technology and geography.
9. In science, teacher assessments in the 2000 and 2001 tests indicated average standards, although the percentage of pupils assessed at the higher level was well below the national average. For the current seven- and nine-year-olds, scrutiny of work and lesson observations confirm this. There is no difference in the standards of boys and girls, and pupils' achievements are satisfactory across all the aspects of the subject. The above average pupils could be challenged more since much of the work they are expected to do is at a similar level to that of the average pupils.
10. By the ages of seven and nine, standards in ICT are similar to national expectations. Pupils of all abilities are benefiting from improved teacher expertise, good support from classroom assistants, including parent helpers, and the widespread use of computers to support work across other subjects.
11. At all stages, standards are better than those expected nationally in art and design, design and technology and music, and pupils of all abilities achieve well. Some of the artwork is exceptional. At all stages, standards in history, geography and physical education are similar to those expected for pupils' age and their achievements are at least satisfactory and often good. In religious education, standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

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

12. Pupils' good attitudes, values and personal development have been maintained since the last inspection. These attitudes continue to support their learning well and contribute to the pleasant atmosphere prevalent within and outside lessons. The rich and stimulating curriculum at all stages motivates and interests them well. All pupils, including the youngest pupils in the reception class, are keen to come to school and enjoy their lessons. Teachers are quick to praise good effort and this encourages pupils to try and do their best. Pupils' positive attitudes are also demonstrated by their willingness to explain to visitors what they are doing in lessons and to show their work proudly. Pupils who have special educational needs are mostly well behaved and participate well in their lessons. They are accepted fully by other pupils. Their ability to converse and to speak in public is developed well in small sessions with the special needs teacher.
13. Behaviour in classrooms and around the school is good for the large majority of the pupils and none have been excluded. During the inspection no incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour were seen and the pupils interviewed said that this was not a problem. Children in the reception class soon learn what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour, and all pupils understand clearly the standards of behaviour expected of them. The large majority of the pupils understand fully that their actions may impact on others. They show a friendly attitude to friends and visitors. Across the age range, however, there is a small minority of mainly boys whose attitudes and behaviour does not always meet these good standards. They have poor listening skills and concentration, and this has an adverse effect on their learning in some lessons.
14. Relationships are very good and pupils play happily together at break-times. Lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions where pupils chat together, well supervised and supported by experienced mid-day staff. The luncheon to which Year 4 pupils invited their parents and grandparents during inspection week was a particularly pleasant example. Over 60 adults were able to attend and to sit with their children, who had the opportunity to select the menu for the day.
15. Pupils' personal development is good, there are good opportunities for pupils to act as register and library monitors and to assist in preparing and clearing the hall. Pupils expressed full satisfaction in the work of the school council, where representatives from Years 2, 3 and 4 meet and discuss issues arising in the school. The expected work of the council was well articulated by representatives interviewed during inspection week. The pupils' personal development, through the school's provision, helps them to develop into mature young people as they progress through the school.
16. Attendance is very good and has a beneficial impact on pupils' learning. Attendance levels are well above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence reported in the past recording year. Pupils arrive at school in good time and this allows lessons to begin punctually.

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

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good and meets the needs of the large majority of pupils well. The strengths identified during the last inspection have been maintained. Teaching in the foundation stage is consistently good and enables all the children to make good progress. In the 42 lessons observed across all year groups, 7 per cent were very good, 62 per cent were good and 31 per cent were satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed. There is a higher

percentage of good teaching in the lessons for Years 3 and 4 pupils. This is due in large part to the greater maturity and developing work ethic of all the pupils rather than any significant variation in the overall quality of the individual teachers. The personal and social skills of children on entry to the school are well below the county average and there is a small minority of mainly boys who cause occasional problems for the teachers, particularly in Years 1 and 2. The teachers in three classes operate on a job share basis that involves them working for some of the time in other classes. All teachers are working effectively as a team and are committed to further improvements in their teaching.

18. Teaching and learning for children in the foundation stage are consistently good and enable all children to achieve well from a below average base on entry to full-time education. The teacher and nursery nurse plan and work well together. They provide a good range of stimulating and exciting activities across all the areas of learning. High expectations and very good relationships ensure that all children settle quickly to school life. There is good emphasis on developing early literacy and numeracy skills and books have a high profile in the classroom. There are good arrangements to find out how well pupils are progressing and the information is used well to plan subsequent work for the children. When the children who attend part time are with those who attend full time some whole class sessions go on too long, and a minority of part-time pupils, mainly boys, soon lose concentration. This causes breaks in the continuity of learning at these times.
19. At all stages, the skills of literacy are well taught overall. There have been some improvements since the last inspection brought about by the adoption of the literacy hour. There is much greater consistency in the teaching of reading and writing in well-structured lessons. Good analysis of what is working well and what is not has resulted in well thought out adaptations to the usual structure of the literacy hour. Much of the teaching is focused appropriately on the teaching of phonics (letter sounds). This has had a good effect on pupils' learning and raised their standards, achievements and enthusiasm for reading. Teachers have targeted improvement in their teaching of writing as a result of good analysis of pupils' learning. They are now extending the range of pupils' writing to include more factual writing and extending fictional writing. However, in the teaching of writing the work given to the above average pupils is not always sufficiently challenging, and learning is satisfactory rather than good. In the writing tasks provided, more attention needs to be focused on the needs and interests of the boys in order to raise standards. Teachers concentrate well on teaching spelling, punctuation and grammar and this develops pupils' learning effectively in these areas. They develop pupils' literacy skills well across all subjects.
20. The quality of teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall with good features in all lessons. Teaching enables the average, below average and special educational needs pupils to achieve well. However, more could be expected of the above average pupils, whose achievements are satisfactory. The numeracy hour is well established and gives good consistency in the planning, organisation and approach to teaching. Good questioning extends the understanding of all pupils well and mental mathematics skills are well taught. Teachers develop numeracy skills satisfactorily across subjects such as science, design and technology and geography. They use homework well to reinforce learning and use computers effectively to record data and explore patterns in number.
21. Science is well taught in Years 3 and 4 and teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. In lessons for the younger pupils, there are some missed opportunities to

introduce the correct scientific vocabulary and to encourage the average and above average pupils to make their own suggestions about how to collect data to answer simple questions. Across all year groups, teaching is very good in art and design and music and enables all pupils to achieve very well. In ICT, design and technology, history, geography, physical education and religious education teaching is never less than satisfactory, and is often good. Across all subjects, day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning and marking of their work are used satisfactorily to plan subsequent work. More could be made of assessment and marking to ensure a closer match of work to the needs of the above average pupils.

22. The teaching and learning for pupils who have special educational needs are good. There is careful and detailed diagnosis of individual needs. Teachers use an appropriate mix of withdrawal and in-class support. Good planning and monitoring of work results in a good match of work to the individual needs of each pupil. Classroom support assistants are an effective part of planning and teaching and have a marked effect on pupils' learning. There are high expectations that all pupils participate fully in the literacy and numeracy hours. All teachers are aware of the targets in pupils' individual education plans and use these well in the general work that they plan.
23. In general, key strengths in teaching across all subjects and at all stages, and their resultant positive impact on learning are:
- the very good relationships between teachers and pupils that give all pupils a sense of security and a knowledge that their efforts will be valued;
  - good questioning that encourages pupils to acquire new knowledge and increase their understanding. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson when discussing a problem the teacher asks 'what kind of sum do I need to do and how shall I set it out?';
  - very good use of classroom assistants, including parents, and good use of other resources that ensure pupils work productively and at a good pace;
  - the use of specialist teaching knowledge in art and design and music that results in high standards;
  - good co-operative planning based on secure subject guidance that ensures that pupils develop key skills from year to year;
  - good use of homework, particularly in literacy and numeracy, to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

Areas for improvement relate to:

- the planning of separate activities for the above average pupils that more consistently extend their learning beyond that of the other pupils. Extending the setting of individual learning targets for the older pupils so that they have a clearer understanding of what they have to do to improve;
- tighter and more consistent management strategies to improve the listening skills and attention of the small minority of mainly boys so that their learning is more productive.

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

24. The school offers a broad curriculum, which meets all statutory National Curriculum requirements, including provision for religious education. It provides a very good and exciting range of learning experiences for all pupils. There is a good curriculum

for the youngest children in the foundation stage. It is securely based on the early learning goals for children under six years of age. There is good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural education and this provides a strong base for learning.

25. Overall, the good curricular provision noted at the time of the last inspection has been maintained well and regular reviews and modifications to policies and schemes of work have taken place for all curriculum subjects. These provide useful guidance for what has to be taught at each stage. As a result, curriculum planning is good and ensures a good degree of continuity in pupils' learning. The proportion of time allocated to each subject is appropriately based on pupils' needs with good emphasis on teaching of literacy and numeracy.
26. The school is committed to the ideals of inclusion for all pupils and makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs. The Code of Practice for special educational needs is implemented and has been reviewed. All pupils who are entitled to them have good individual education plans. These contain realistic targets for pupils agreed with teachers and parents. Pupils' progress is checked carefully through liaison between staff, and individual education plans are updated appropriately. All pupils have access to all extra-curricular activities and all aspects of the National Curriculum.
27. Provision for personal, social and health education is good with an appropriate policy of teaching drugs awareness in association with other local schools. Aspects of health education are dealt with in a progressive way. The youngest children start with work on knowledge of the body and foods that are healthy, and work progresses to the development of aspects such as self-esteem and responsibility with older pupils. The governors have a policy not to teach sex education in school preferring to leave this to parents. If questions do arise in the course of lessons in science, they are dealt with sensitively.
28. A good range of extra-curricular activities takes place during lunchtime and after school. Teachers give of their own time to these activities, which include sport and creative arts. Links with the local community are good. The school is involved in the wider village community and has good links with local churches, community associations, organisations and groups. Visits are regularly made to the school by visiting speakers from the community. These contacts make a good contribution to the pupils' learning. For example, a mother brought a new baby into class as part of an 'ourselves' project and contributed significantly to pupils' perception of change. A good number of nationally known and professional musicians have visited the school to enrich and support music work. Visitors provide pupils with a wide variety of interesting experiences. There are very good links with feeder nurseries and play groups, especially the one located in the school. The school maintains good contacts with the middle school with visits by pupils and staff and joint curriculum ventures. These ensure a smooth transfer for pupils.
29. Provision for spiritual awareness is good. The school has established a clear caring and sharing environment based on Christian values. Class and school assemblies provide an appropriate time for reflection. A good sense of awe and wonder is created in lessons, for example in a science lesson in Year 2 where pupils were fascinated by the power of magnets, in the reception class when looking at a toad, and the changing of liquids into solids in a cooking lesson. In literacy lessons, pupils are regularly fascinated by poems and stories and gain inspiration from aspects of great art and music.

30. Provision for pupils' moral development is good and from the reception class onwards, strong emphasis is placed on aspects of right and wrong and the impact individual behaviour may have on others. Relationships throughout the school are very good and the good example that is set by adults impacts well on pupils' behaviour and attitudes. Pupils throughout the school have a sense of responsibility towards their school environment and they tidy work areas after use and co-operate well in groups. At the early morning breakfast club for example, pupils of all ages take responsibility for their belongings and clear away before school starts.
31. Provision for social development is good. In all classes, pupils are given responsibility as monitors and they learn to share and co-operate with others. In the reception class, children learn good manners and take responsibility for tidying work areas and undress and dress themselves for movement lessons. Pupils throughout the school are polite to visitors and respectful to their teachers, although a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, occasionally exhibit immature patterns of behaviour in lessons. Pupils gain knowledge about social responsibility from their history work on famous people such as Florence Nightingale and show good empathy towards the social conditions of the time. In their own lives they learn about responsibility through roles such as register and assembly monitors and helping younger children at lunchtimes.
32. The school promotes cultural provision well through its broad and balanced approach to the curriculum. Teachers and visitors provide a wide range of enriching experiences in classrooms. Visits are made into the local community to learn about the history of Acton, and the part the church and other institutions play in the life of the village. Visits further afield to places of environmental and historical interest develop well pupils' sense of cultural identity. Music is well promoted and is used frequently in school assemblies for singing and listening. In movement lessons it provides the inspiration for pupils' creative responses. Music of different styles, times and cultures informs and celebrates different festivals during the year. Literature and art from other cultures is used effectively as a basis for work in English and art and design. For example in literacy lessons when older pupils write Haiku poems and younger pupils listen to stories from different countries. Religious education work has raised pupils' awareness of faiths other than Christianity, for example when studying Judaism older pupils become familiar with many of the artefacts used in the religion and their significance.

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

33. The school offers a very safe and welcoming environment for all its pupils and there are good procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare. These aspects of the school's work have been maintained well since the last inspection. All staff and helpers have a genuine concern for all pupils whatever their needs, working well with individuals or groups to promote learning. The headteacher is the designated person for child protection and is appropriately trained. All staff are fully conversant with child protection procedures.
34. The health and safety of pupils is of a very high standard. All staff at the school have had recent first aid training and minor accidents are duly recorded and dealt with in a calm and professional way. Parents are informed about injuries sustained by their children in line with school policy. Governors carry out regular health and safety checks and all teachers emphasise the potential dangers in lessons such as science and design and technology.



35. There are very good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and good contact is maintained with the educational welfare services. Good behaviour is expected and the large majority of pupils respond well. The behaviour and discipline policy includes a classroom code and appropriate rewards and sanctions. There is no separate policy for bullying but the pupils do know the school's requirements and respond well. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good.
36. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic and personal development are largely informal but very good. All adults who work in the school know pupils very well and have a high duty of care to every pupil whatever their individual needs. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported very well. The high levels of care and support they receive ensure their full inclusion in all the school has to offer and enables them to achieve well.
37. Assessment and its use as a tool for developing pupils' learning have developed well since the last inspection. Assessment procedures across the school are well developed in English, mathematics and science and are satisfactory in other subjects. The information gained is used satisfactorily to inform planning. Assessment procedures are good in the foundation stage and information is used well to group pupils and plan their work.
38. Soon after entry to the reception class, the local education authority framework is used well to establish a good base from which to judge the progress of individual children. The information is used effectively to group pupils and provide work that matches their needs successfully. In the rest of the school there is a good range of recording systems in English, mathematics and science, including reading records and diaries, end-of-topic assessments and portfolios of work. This information is used satisfactorily to plan subsequent work, although it is not yet effective in matching work sufficiently accurately to the needs of the above average pupils. Teachers have introduced personal targets for pupils in English but this is not firmly established and does not extend to other key subjects.
39. For pupils who have special educational needs, record keeping is good and well maintained. Assessment procedures are well used to identify individual needs and form the basis of good individual education plans. They also indicate when it is appropriate to move pupils up or down the various stages and when they may no longer need additional support.

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

40. Parents speak highly of the school and are very supportive of its work. Many parents interviewed during the inspection week did feel very informed and were particularly pleased that they may see teachers at the end of any school day so as to discuss any concerns. A few parents had particularly chosen the school because of its good reputation in the area. The strength of the partnership with parents has been maintained well since the last inspection.
41. The school values the partnership with parents and works hard to keep them well informed about events at the school and of the work undertaken by their children. Good relationships are established firmly as soon as children start school in the reception class and are developed well as pupils move up the school. The quality of information provided for all parents is good. The governing body has sought

parents' views to fully respond to any concerns at its annual meeting. The school provides for good opportunities each term so that parents can discuss their children's progress and examine work done in classes. The annual reports of pupils' progress to parents are good and show the teachers' good knowledge of the pupils and of their abilities. Good links are established with the parents of pupils who have special educational needs and information on progress is shared regularly.

42. The very active friends association has raised excellent amounts of money in social and fund-raising events to support the work of the school. For all to see is the millennium clock purchased by them in the school hall. The association has provided computers and books to support learning. The events organised by the association are well supported by the headteacher and her staff. Most parents give good support with homework and good numbers help in the school. They give valuable help to teachers by supervising groups in many subjects, for example in the computer suite and art and craft activities.
43. There were a few concerns expressed by a small minority of parents, most noticeably about a lack of knowledge about their children's progress and that the school may not work so closely with them. Inspection evidence does not support these concerns.

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

44. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff with management responsibilities and governors is strong and effective. The school is a happy and harmonious community with a rich and stimulating curriculum. The strengths identified in the last report have been maintained. One area for development identified at that time was to redistribute curriculum responsibility between the headteacher and staff more equitably. This has been done successfully. The other area, to increase the percentage of pupils attaining Level 3 in the writing and science tests for seven-year-olds, has not been so successful.
45. In her teaching and commitment to improvement, the headteacher leads by example. All adults who work in the school provide good role models for the pupils. There is a clear and shared view of the way ahead. This is reflected in the good school development plan that identifies relevant priorities and targets and reviews progress towards them. The school's explicit aims and values are reflected well in its work. Values regarding personal relationships, equal opportunities and respect for others are strongly promoted and appreciated by the parents. The school does well to ensure that the average, below average and special educational needs pupils achieve good standards. It is aware that the above average pupils might achieve more and is seeking ways to improve this aspect of the school's work.
46. There are good procedures for the monitoring, evaluation and support of teaching and learning and curriculum development. All teachers and adult helpers work and plan well together and there is much sharing of ideas and informal discussion of what works well and what does not. There is good analysis of external and internal test results in order to identify areas for improvement. This, for example, has revealed some shortcomings in pupils' performance in writing when compared with reading, and in some underachievement by the above average pupils. The school is now focused on these aspects for development. Despite teaching for two days a week, the headteacher has managed to monitor the quality of teaching and learning

in all year groups. She checks regularly on the work produced by the pupils and hears all the pupils read. This gives her a firm grasp of what is happening with pupils' learning and what needs to be done to improve. There are sound performance management systems, and the governors have set the headteacher appropriate targets. These include, for example, an increase in the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level in national tests.

47. There is good management of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and this is effective in helping these pupils to achieve good standards. All statutory requirements are followed and there is appropriate parental involvement at all stages. Management of the foundation stage is effective and gives all children a good start to their formal education.
48. The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well. They are developing their strategic role well under the leadership of an active and knowledgeable chairperson. She has a high profile in the school and provides daily support for teachers and pupils, for example in ICT and science. This gives her a very valuable insight into how the school works and how effectively it meets the needs of the pupils. All other governors visit the school when possible and see lessons taught in connection with their individual subject responsibilities. Critical questions are asked at meetings, for example with regard to the pupils' performance in tests and the impact of major spending on standards. In these ways, the governors have good knowledge of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school.
49. Financial planning is good and resources are used well to support educational priorities and developments. All grants are used effectively for their designated purpose. The principles of best value are understood well by the headteacher and governors and are being brought into practice effectively, for example when purchasing goods and services. Plans to reduce the teaching commitment of the headteacher so that a more formal and regular monitoring of teaching and learning can be implemented have been carefully analysed from a cost effectiveness stance. Good awareness of future pupil numbers, financial commitments and the impact of staffing costs ensure that governors have a firm grip on the school's finances. Budget monitoring is secure and the minor recommendations of the latest auditor's report have been implemented.
50. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and classroom assistants match the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils well. There is a good in-service training and this is effective in keeping teachers up to date with developments in their subjects. Classroom assistants for pupils who have been identified as needing additional help are well trained and provide very good levels of support. The school's administrative staff provides very good support in ensuring the smooth day-to-day running of the school. ICT is used effectively to support administration in the school.
51. The accommodation is very good with adequate space for the numbers on roll. Provision for the children in the foundation stage is good with an attractive and safe outdoor space. Additional internal space outside the classrooms has been used to create a library, computer suite and general work areas for groups of pupils. These are used well by all pupils. In all areas, a good range of learning resources supports the curriculum well. They are used well to develop pupils' learning in all subjects. The strengths identified in staffing, accommodation and learning resources identified in the last inspection have been maintained. In some areas, for example the provision for ICT, they have improved.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52. In order to improve on what is already a good quality education, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

! improve the standards of the above average pupils in writing, mathematics and science by:

- ensuring that there is a closer match across all year groups between the work the above average pupils are expected to do;
- raising teachers' expectations of what these pupils might achieve;
- extending the work begun in English on individual target setting to mathematics and science, particularly for this group of pupils.  
(paragraphs 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 20, 24, 39, 46, 64, 67, 69, 73, 80)

! develop more effective strategies to improve the listening skills and concentration of the small minority of mainly boys and ensure they are consistently applied across all classes

(paragraphs 5, 13, 32, 65, 77, 92, 113)

**In addition to the key issues above, the school should also consider including the less significant but associated issue in its action plan:**

! ensure that writing activities are targeted more effectively to the needs and interest of the boys.

(paragraphs

19,

63)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	42
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	26	13	0	0	0
Percentage	0	7	62	31	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y1 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	123
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	10

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y1 – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	23

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

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.1	School data	0
National comparative data	5.2	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 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	15	15	30

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	11	14
	Girls	14	14	14
	Total	28	25	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (77)	83 (68)	93 (86)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	12	15	14
	Girls	14	15	13
	Total	26	30	27
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (64)	100 (82)	90 (77)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
Ite	117
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: Y1 – Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	24.4

#### **Education support staff: Y1 – Y4**

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	54

*FTE means full-time equivalent*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	266,488
Total expenditure	261,258
Expenditure per pupil	2,074
Balance brought forward from previous year	6,000
Balance carried forward to next year	11,230

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0.3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	122
Number of questionnaires returned	33

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	55	42	3	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	36	9	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	52	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	58	6	0	0
The teaching is good.	79	21	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	33	12	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	18	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	30	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	58	27	12	3	0
The school is well led and managed.	76	24	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	70	27	3	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	30	0	0	0



## **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**

53. The school admits all children to the reception class in the September following their fourth birthday. Older children are admitted full time from September and all other children attend part time until the beginning of the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were ten children who attended full time and twelve who attended part time.
54. Assessment on full-time entry to the reception class indicates that many children enter with below average attainment, although the full range is represented. The school's baseline assessments of pupils' attainment are below the county levels and for some year groups they are well below, particularly in mathematics and personal, social and emotional development.
55. Children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in all the areas of learning as a result of consistently good teaching. Most children are on course to attain the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world, and physical and creative development. Fewer children are on line to achieve the personal, social and emotional and mathematical goals as a result of their low attainment on entry in these areas.

#### **Personal, social and emotional development**

56. Children experience a wide range of opportunities to extend their learning in this area. Teaching is good and children make good progress, many from a low base on entry. Classroom routines are very well established and most children are beginning to understand the importance of taking turns, sharing and giving others the opportunity to speak. A minority of part-time pupils, mainly boys, exhibit immature patterns of social behaviour and do not readily follow instructions. This behaviour slows their learning in most areas and is time consuming and demanding for the teacher. The teacher enjoys very good support from the morning non-teaching assistant and liaises well with her regarding admissions from the privately run afternoon pre-school group. This is run in the classroom adjacent to the reception classroom. This pre-school group run by the same non-teaching assistant makes a significant contribution to the children's ability to settle in the reception class, as routines and activities are based on the foundation stage objectives. Children learn about 'right and wrong' when comparing the actions of Little Red Riding Hood and the Wolf. They show good empathy with a classmate describing a new baby at home and most are beginning to show concern for and awareness of living things when planting acorns and talking about mini beasts. Most are able to co-operate well in groups, for example in a mathematics lesson about shape. Some children tidy up very well after practical sessions without direction and many undress and dress themselves when changing for a movement lesson.

#### **Communication, language and literacy**

57. Most children learn effectively and achieve well because teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and cover a wide range of skills. There is good use of role play to extend children's imagination as when they take turns as different characters from the Little Red Riding Hood story. The teacher uses the sessions at the beginning and end of lessons to reinforce skills and asks questions to develop their speaking

and listening well. All children, including those with special educational needs, are encouraged to contribute to whole class discussions. Singing rhymes and traditional songs extends children's vocabulary effectively. Early reading skills are developed through good use of a range of attractive books, which are discussed with the children after a visit to the school library. Children learn to read simple words from a word wall and practise letter sounds. They are well able to distinguish between picture and print and above average children name the contents and index pages. An attractive reading area encourages children to investigate books. Parents are encouraged to support their children in reading and looking at books. Most children write their own name and above average children copy simple sentences they have constructed and read them back to an adult. They receive good support from the non-teaching assistant and parent helpers in writing their own sentences using a computer.

### **Mathematical development**

58. Children experience a good range of opportunities to extend their mathematical learning. Teaching and learning are good. For example, in a lesson on shape the teacher ensures that all children have apparatus and equipment appropriate to their ability. This enables below average and special educational needs children to make very good gains in their knowledge by constructing towers with solid shapes. Average and above average children match cards to shapes and create new combinations of their own. Most children count to ten and beyond and above average children add numbers up to ten successfully. They count on to 20 from a given number. The teacher uses the number line effectively to enthuse the children by playing 'catch out' games. Planning is good and the teacher uses many counting rhymes and games to promote children's understanding of number well. They have opportunities to explore mathematics through role play when setting out places in a class café and selling drinks and cakes. Children with special educational needs are well supported by the classroom assistant and they make good progress. Children enter the school with below average levels of mathematical understanding, and despite consistently good teaching many will not attain the early learning goals.

### **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

59. Pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world as a result of good teaching. Through their work using different books they learn of different animals and insect habitats. When a child arrived in school with a toad he discovered on the way to school, the teacher seized the opportunity well to use first hand experience to examine, touch, discuss and eventually release the toad into the school pond. When drawing recognisable self-portraits and looking at the differences between a baby and themselves, children develop well their concepts of time and change. They show fascination as the teacher shows the inside of an apple, and changes powder and liquid into a solid 'whip' pudding in a science technology lesson. In their physical education lessons they learn that exercise is necessary to maintain a good healthy body and they link this well to their healthy eating programme of fruit at break-times. The teacher provides a good range of opportunities, visitors and resources. Children show a good understanding of change over time when recording the weather and seasons. All children have experience using computers and develop good early mouse and keyboard skills. Most are on course to attain the early learning goals by the time they are six.

## **Physical development**

60. Pupils make good progress in their physical development. When using the hall they show good control of their movements and many move in an expressive manner when matching their movements to music. They are aware of the need to warm up and of the effect that exercise has on their bodies. Teaching is good and the teacher enthusiastically joins in the lesson moving with the children. Good use is made of children's work to demonstrate and make good teaching points. This helps the progress of other children and encourages them to experiment and refine their own movements. All children, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their understanding and knowledge of their body. The teacher provides a good opportunity within the classroom to ensure children develop their physical skills in a variety of ways. They demonstrate good physical skills when using the computer keyboard to make simple sentences and when constructing towers of varying shapes. Resources such as pencils, crayons, scissors and paintbrushes are used effectively to encourage development of appropriate physical skills. They develop their hand eye co-ordination well when using a paintbrush to paint recognisable self-portraits, when cutting and sticking bags for cakes and when weaving with different materials. Children are given good opportunities to develop their physical skills when riding confidently a range of wheeled vehicles on a designated play area. All children are on course to achieve the early learning goals.

## **Creative development**

61. The children make very good progress in their learning as a result of effective teaching. The children experience a wide range of techniques in art and many show ability well above that expected as a result of good teaching and opportunities to work with a good variety of paints and materials. They make well-balanced attractive collages of sunflowers having seen pictures by Van Gogh and recreate imaginative paint patterns using their fingertips. They mix colours appropriately for their paintings and demonstrate good hand eye co-ordination when making their own books of the hungry caterpillar. They show good control when using small brushes to create recognisable self-portraits. They regularly sing action songs and rhymes and know a good number from memory. These support learning well in literacy and mathematics as when singing 'ten in a bed'. They recognise a range of untuned percussion instruments and play them in turn with good control. They use a range of tools, paints and crayons creatively in their pictures and models as when making wheeled vehicles in technology. The classroom environment is very attractively displayed with children's creative work. There are good role play areas for children to recreate and imagine a variety of situations from their lives at home and in the classroom. Work in the creative area of learning impacts well on the development of language, physical and co-operative skills. Most children are well on course to attain the early learning goals.

## **ENGLISH**

62. Standards have improved since the previous inspection and are typical for seven- and nine-year-olds. The school's average points score for both reading and writing is higher than at that time. Over the past four years, improvement has mirrored the national trend in writing and has been more rapid in reading. In the 2000 national tests for seven-year-olds, standards in reading were well above the national average and above those in similar schools. In writing, standards were in line with the national average and those in similar schools. Overall, not enough pupils attained the higher levels in writing. Provisional results for seven-year-olds in 2001

and the school's own testing of pupils in Years 3 and 4 indicate that these standards have been maintained. In reading, there is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls, although in writing girls do a little better than boys. Inspection findings reflect these standards.

63. As a result of mostly good teaching, pupils of all ages achieve well in reading. In writing, the average and below average pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. The achievements of the above average pupils are satisfactory but could be higher. Teachers realise this and are beginning to set individual performance targets for these pupils in order to provide greater challenge.
64. Standards in speaking and listening are average. When pupils enter the school, many have poor listening skills and lack confidence in speaking. With mostly good teaching, the large majority achieve well so that by seven years of age, most pupils speak clearly and respond appropriately to what others have to say. By the age of nine, pupils talk and speak confidently in different contexts and listen carefully. However, at all stages a significant minority of mainly boys has below average listening skills and a very short concentration span. On some occasions, when teaching does not hold their attention consistently, their learning slows to a satisfactory rather than good rate.
65. At all stages, pupils of all abilities do well to attain high standards in reading. Good teaching throughout the school and very effective additional adult support, particularly for the below average and special educational needs pupils, ensures all pupils achieve well. Pupils enjoy reading and are proud of their achievements. By the ages of seven and nine, pupils with special educational needs and average and below average pupils develop a good knowledge of letter sounds and combinations. This helps them to read any unfamiliar words effectively. One below average seven-year-old pupil read the word 'anniversary' using this method and beamed with delight at his success. Pupils read with good levels of accuracy, and by the age of nine average pupils are developing good fluency and expression in their reading. Above average pupils talk knowledgeably about books they have read and favourite authors. They have a good understanding of the text and read with very good expression and fluency, recognising the effect of punctuation when reading aloud. One pupil giggled loudly when reading an amusing passage in her book. By the age of seven, average and above average pupils have a good understanding of the contents and index pages of a book, and this knowledge is developed well in Years 3 and 4. All pupils use the school library regularly and effectively to aid their reading development.
66. Standards in writing are average by the ages of seven and nine and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. At all stages, all pupils experience some writing in different styles. However, opportunities for pupils to write factual accounts are limited and there is not enough extended story writing for the above average pupils. In these aspects, standards could be higher. The school is aware of this through good analysis of pupils' performance in tests and teachers are planning more work in these aspects of writing. By the age of seven, average and below average pupils write in complete sentences and most use capital letters and full stops with satisfactory accuracy. They develop their ideas in a sequence of sentences, for example to retell a traditional fairy story. Above average seven-year-olds use interesting vocabulary in their writing, for example when writing about a troll, a pupil in Year 2 wrote 'I live in a dark and misty place. I am very ugly and my clothes are torn and tatty'. In Year 4, pupils write good poems about cats and write interesting character profiles, book reviews and letters.

67. Standards of handwriting are satisfactory. By the age of seven, most pupils, including those who have special educational needs, form letters accurately and they are usually of a consistent size. Regular handwriting practice results in all pupils writing in a consistent joined and legible script by the age of nine. For most pupils, standards of spelling are satisfactory and most pupils spell common simple words accurately. Regular spelling tests in school and for homework help raise pupils' achievements in spelling and standards are satisfactory at all stages. Average and above average pupils spell most common words accurately most of the time. Pupils develop a sound knowledge of grammar and punctuation so that by the age of nine they use speech marks correctly in their writing and recognise common parts of speech.
68. In the lessons seen across all year groups, teaching is almost all good and is never less than satisfactory. This is similar to the judgement made at the time of the last inspection. There have, however, been some improvements brought about by the adoption of the literacy hour. There is much greater consistency in the teaching of reading and writing in well-structured lessons. The teachers plan these together and in consequence are able to develop these key skills progressively from year to year. Good analysis of what is working well and what is not has resulted in well thought out adaptations to the usual structure of the literacy hour. This has included separate and well-focused group reading sessions in all year groups. Teachers in the reception and Year 1 classes are also using a programme that is tightly targeted on the development of phonics (letter sounds). Pupils enjoy this and respond enthusiastically. As a result of careful analysis of pupils' writing and results in national tests, teachers are now beginning to extend the range of pupils' writing to include more factual writing. Teachers' expectations of behaviour and what the average, below average and special educational needs pupils might achieve are generally high. The achievements of most pupils are good, particularly in reading. However, in writing, teachers in all year groups do not always ensure that the work given to the above average pupils is challenging enough and their achievements are satisfactory rather than good. In the writing tasks provided, more attention needs to be focused on the needs and interests of the boys in order to raise standards.
69. All teachers use resources well to capture the pupils' interest. In a Year 4 lesson on poetry, for example, the teacher used an overhead projector effectively to point out the characteristics of a poem and stress the use and effect of punctuation. A good selection of modern poetry books was then used to act as a stimulus for the pupils' own writing. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher made very good use of a sentence maker (word cards placed in a slot to build up a sentence) to help a group of special educational needs and below average pupils with their reading and writing. Teachers make good use of the computer suite and computers in classrooms to consolidate and extend pupils' writing, spelling, and grammar and punctuation skills. Classroom assistants, including parent helpers, are used effectively to support pupils' learning. This is particularly good in the development of learning for below average pupils and those who have special educational needs. The individual education plans for pupils who have special educational needs are well focused on the development of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Targets move learning along in simple attainable steps and this ensures they make good progress in the subject and achieve well.
70. All teachers develop pupils' literacy skills well across the curriculum. Reading and writing are developed well in other subjects. For example, pupils use their reading

skills effectively to research work in history and geography and write about Florence Nightingale, Grace Darling and the Battle of Hastings. Opportunities are planned in all subjects for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example in a science activity session for pupils in Years 3 and 4, pupils were encouraged to share ideas and predict outcomes as a group.

71. The subject is well led and managed. There has been good analysis of pupils' performance in both national and school based tests. This has helped the school identify key areas for improvement, for example in widening the range of pupils' writing experiences and the introduction of personal targets for pupils. A very good planning base has been developed and there are good arrangements for tracking pupils' individual progress through reading diaries, phonic skills assessment sheets and regular assessment of progress in reading, writing and speaking and listening.

## **MATHEMATICS**

72. Standards for pupils aged seven are broadly in line with the national average. In the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds the school did well to get all pupils to reach the average Level 2. Not enough pupils, however, reached the higher Level 3 in the tests and overall pupils' achievements were below the national average and for similar schools. Since the school's previous inspection the rate of improvement has been in line with the national trend although the number of pupils achieving higher Level 3 has not increased. Optional national test results, lessons observed during the inspection and a scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that standards for pupils aged nine are in line with national expectations. Throughout the school there is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
73. The achievements of the below average and special educational needs pupils are very good and most average pupils achieve well. However, the achievements of the above average pupils are satisfactory and should be better. The work they are expected to complete in some lessons is similar to that given to the average pupils.
74. By the time they are seven, pupils count back correctly in ones and twos from 20 and quickly say which number comes before or after a given number. Average and above average pupils know number bonds up to 20 and have a good idea of place value of numbers up to 100. They choose their favourite colours and record these successfully in graphical form. Pupils have good understanding of shape and space and measure accurately in centimetres and metres after estimating the measurement of objects in the classroom. They use simple addition and subtraction sums competently to solve problems and round up to the nearest ten. They use coinage correctly to solve a variety of money problems up to £1. Pupils take a pride in their work and present it well.
75. By the time they are nine, pupils subtract and add numbers rapidly up to 100 and have good strategies for rounding up numbers to predict approximate results. Average and above average pupils accurately complete number sequences and patterns and solve shopping money problems set by other pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in their knowledge of the properties of a variety of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Above average pupils in Year 3 have a good understanding of symmetry from undertaking practical research and carefully recording their findings. Pupils accurately measure and weigh objects within the classroom and represent their findings satisfactorily in graphs and charts. They are encouraged to estimate and collate and read information, which they use to solve problems effectively.

Numeracy skills are used satisfactorily in other areas of the curriculum. In science, for example, pupils record their findings in tables and charts using tallying and number skills. In geography, they create pie graphs on a computer to detail the frequency of bird nesting.

76. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with good features in all lessons seen. Planning is based securely on the National Numeracy Strategy and ensures coverage in all areas of mathematical learning. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which they apply well to their preparation of lessons. They use resources effectively and a good feature of most lessons is an effective quick-fire mental recall session of numbers. Pupils enjoy these sessions and they have a good impact on their understanding of number bonds and patterns. All teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour but in some lessons a small minority of boys display inappropriate behaviour, which slows the rate of their own and other pupils' learning. Activities provided for the above average pupils do not always extend their knowledge and understanding enough and this slows the rate of their progress. Teachers make good use of learning objectives (what pupils will learn in a lesson), which they reinforce effectively throughout lessons. The session at the end of the numeracy hour is used well to reinforce what has been learnt and to identify and share effective strategies. Good questioning of pupils enables the teacher to improve their understanding and is an important part of the assessment process. In a Year 3 lesson, for example, the teacher targets questioning well and ensures pupils of all abilities are involved. In the lessons seen good use of homework reinforces learning, and computers are used appropriately to record data.
77. Management of the subject is good and the co-ordinator makes good use of a variety of assessment data, including assessment tests, to set clear targets for improvement throughout the school. This has been successful in raising the attainment of below average and average attaining pupils but has not yet sufficiently improved the attainment of the above average pupils.

## **SCIENCE**

78. In the year 2000, teachers' assessed standards for seven-year-olds are similar to those in other schools nationally. The percentage of pupils assessed at the higher level, however, was well below the national average. This is a similar situation to that at the time of the last inspection. Provisional assessments for 2001 and inspection findings confirm this. Over the past few years, assessments of pupils on entry to the school indicate attainment, though fluctuating from year to year, has gradually declined. School testing of pupils in Year 3 and 4 indicates that standards are at least comparable with those expected for pupils' age. The school has done well to increase the percentage of pupils reaching national levels but has not been as successful in improving the standards of the above average pupils. There is no difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls.
79. By the age of seven, pupils are developing satisfactory scientific enquiry skills. They are beginning to realise that their original ideas might change as a result of an investigation. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on magnetism, after predicting which materials might be attracted or repelled by a magnet they proceeded to investigate for themselves. They enjoyed the practical nature of the activity and were fascinated by the outcomes. Their enthusiasm had a marked impact on their learning. These first-hand experiences are a key factor in pupils' learning, as in a Year 1 lesson where a mother brought in her baby to show the pupils. Observation and questioning developed their understanding of human needs and growth

effectively. A scrutiny of pupils' past work indicates that all pupils develop a sound understanding of scientific enquiry, life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes. The work shows that most of the average, below average and special educational needs pupils achieve well. The work of the above average pupils, however, is not significantly different from that of the average pupils and their achievements are not as high as they could be. In lessons too many teachers provide insufficient opportunities for the above average pupils to develop their understanding beyond the planned activities.

80. This general picture is reflected in the work in Years 3 and 4 where standards for most pupils are at least as expected for pupils of this age. There is a good range of work across all the areas of science. Most pupils are beginning to make more detailed observations and develop a good understanding of what constitutes a fair test.
81. This was evident in a good science day organised by teachers in Years 3 and 4. Pupils moved around various activities to develop understanding of forces. Through these activities they developed a good understanding of pulleys, levers, friction and gravity, and how they might find answers to questions through investigation. Average and above average pupils were able to explain why various tests were or were not fair, for example when rolling a toy car down a slope, they noted that the angle of the slope needs to be the same each time. Pupils were highly motivated by the activities and enjoyed the work.
82. In the lessons observed, teaching is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 and 4. In lessons for the younger pupils there are some missed opportunities to encourage the average and above average pupils to make their own suggestions about how to collect data to answer simple questions. In work on magnets, pupils were not encouraged to develop vocabulary sufficiently, for example they continued to use the term stick rather than repel. At all stages, lessons are well planned and effective use is made of good quality resources. The practical nature of the work stimulates the pupils and captures their interest. Classroom assistants, including parents, are used very well to develop pupils' understanding in group activities. The teachers' good subject knowledge in the Years 3 and 4 science day, moved learning on very well for pupils examining the effect of different surfaces on the speed of a toy car and when examining the nature of a lever and pivot. This was exemplified in questions such as 'what do you think will happen?' and 'why do you think that happened?' Encouragement to use the correct vocabulary also extended the pupils learning further. Across all year groups, pupils are given opportunities to record their work in an appropriate variety of ways, including tables, charts and more detailed factual accounts of an investigation. Teachers use computers satisfactorily to support pupils' work in science, for example in Years 3 and 4 pupils use CD-Roms to find out about friction and forces. All teachers make pupils aware of potential dangers in scientific work at the beginning of lessons and reinforce this effectively during group activities.
83. Co-ordination of the subject is sound. There are two new co-ordinators who have taken temporary charge of the subject until a permanent appointment is made. A good scheme of work forms the basis for effective joint planning between reception, Years 1 and 2 and between Years 3 and 4. Teachers have a detailed knowledge of each other's work and this gives a strong foundation from which to plan for the development of skills from year to year. Good end-of-topic assessments of pupils' progress are made and these are used satisfactorily to plan subsequent work for



most pupils. These assessments are not so effective in planning more challenging work for the above average pupils.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

84. The high standards noted at the last inspection have been maintained. Across all year groups, the work seen is better than that expected for pupils' age and some of the work produced is outstanding. The subject has a high profile with pupils' work being celebrated in displays all around the school. The specialist knowledge of some teachers is tapped into very effectively and teaching in the two lessons seen in a joint reception and Year 1 lesson and in Year 3 was very good. The art and design curriculum is interesting for the pupils covering experiences with a good range of materials and in a wide range of media. These factors account in large measure for the high standards and achievements of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs.
85. On the basis of the two lessons seen, a scrutiny of pupils' work and photographic evidence across all year groups, pupils use a variety of materials and processes well to communicate their ideas. They design and make attractive images and artefacts in two and three dimensions. Pupils in Year 1, for example, use brushes and paint confidently and effectively to produce symmetrical images of butterflies, and use needle and thread well to create a spider's web. Pupils in Year 3 begin to investigate and combine the visual and tactile qualities of clay when making good tiles with a relief design. Pupils of all ages enjoy the activities and use tools sensibly and carefully. They persevere well when things go wrong and are proud to show their finished work. Observational drawings of bicycles by above average Year 1 pupils indicate very good skills and a careful eye for detail in such young pupils. Two paintings by reception children inspired by the work of Kandinsky are of outstanding quality. There is also very high quality collages made from different coloured wool in Years 3 and 4 and ceramic work based on a study of wildlife.
86. Teaching is very good and develops the confidence as well as the skills of the pupils. Good planning across the school ensures that all pupils have rich and varied experiences of different materials and processes. It builds on skills effectively from year to year. Very good use is made of adult support to keep pupils focused on the tasks and to help them when things go wrong, for example in a Year 1 activity, two parents helped pupils produce a simply embroidered spider's web successfully. Computers are used well to generate ideas for art work, for example in Year 1, pupils used a drawing program well to compose a picture of an animal. Pupils in Year 3 composed very good symmetrical patterns using a computer program. Teachers use the work of artists such as Van Gogh, Picasso and Monet to inspire the pupils and draw attention to the use of design and colour. They link artwork to work in other subjects and this impacts well on pupils' learning. For example, pupils in Year 3 design good posters on electrical safety in science and create an impressive collage of the Medusa in history.
87. The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator teaches art and design to all reception, Years 1 and 2 pupils and provides teaching support in Years 3 and 4. This ensures she has a firm grasp on how the subject is developing across the school. Pupils' work is assessed through photographic evidence and pupil portfolios and information is used to target future developments in the subject. A very good range of resources has been built up and the enthusiasm of all staff for the subject transmits well to the pupils.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

88. It was only possible to observe one lesson during the inspection. On the basis of this lesson in Year 2 and a scrutiny of pupils' past work across the year groups, standards are better than those normally expected for pupils' age at seven and nine. There is no difference in standards between boys and girls. The standards reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained.
89. From the reception class, pupils are introduced to a good range of experiences involving making models. They make good vehicles from cereal boxes and other empty food cartons. This work is developed well and pupils make good progress when designing and making good working models of windmills. They also make good models of vehicles with moving parts. Pupils in Year 2 progress to designing and making more complex models of vehicles with axles and wheels that are carefully constructed using good joining techniques. Average and above average pupils use pictures and words to show how their designs will be constructed. With good support from teachers and classroom assistants, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well and make models of a good standard.
90. Skills and techniques are developed well in Years 3 and 4. Pupils make realistic plans for achieving their aims and use tools, equipment, materials and components well to develop models built to their specification. This was exemplified in the plans and finished models of a well-constructed model village made by pupils in Years 3 and 4.
91. The teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory but evidence from pupils' past work indicates that much of the teaching is good. Teachers use computers effectively to develop pupils' understanding in the subject, for example a teacher in Year 2 encouraged pupils to generate designs for a model aircraft on the computer before making models. Teachers' good knowledge of the subject resulted in Year 1 pupils' good achievement when designing and making a model crocodile using simple pneumatics to operate the jaw.
92. Teachers make good links with other subjects and this makes the work more meaningful for the pupils. For example, pupils in Years 3 and 4 made well-constructed Greek temples in a history lesson. Teachers use the expertise of parent helpers very well in activities such as cookery where pupils design and make pizzas, biscuits and pastry. The potential hygiene hazards in such activities are clearly outlined to the pupils. In the one lesson observed, pupils were learning effectively how to follow instructions carefully in order to achieve a desired aim. They were able to follow simple plans in order to construct models using a commercially produced construction kit. Whilst the majority made sufficient progress and achieved the aim, a few pupils were not on task for short periods and began to play with the equipment.
93. The subject is effectively led and managed by two co-ordinators who work well together. A good scheme of work has been developed and is supplemented by nationally approved guidelines. This documentation forms a good base from which teachers plan their lessons and helps to ensure key skills are developed from year to year. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly and photographic evidence and models are kept as a record of pupils' progress in the subject. Useful assessments of pupils' progress are also made at the end of a block of lessons and the information is used satisfactorily to inform subsequent work.

## **GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY**

94. Attainment for both subjects is similar to that expected for pupils aged seven and nine. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching and the achievements of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are mostly good. This represents an improvement from the previous inspection when both teaching and learning were judged to be only satisfactory.
95. In history, by the age of seven, pupils develop a sound understanding of aspects of the past. They place objects and events in order, as when studying the history of trains. They reflect on changes and compare kitchens and washdays of the past with their own home experiences. Pupils in Year 1 compare the toys of today with those of the past and have growing awareness of the improvement in technology. Pupils know of famous people beyond living memory, for example they know about Florence Nightingale and her work with the sick and injured. They comment upon the effect she had upon hospitals, hygiene and link this well with their health education.
96. By the age of nine, pupils are beginning to develop a satisfactory knowledge of the aspects of Britain and the wider world. In their studies of Alexander the Great and Greek culture they develop a sound knowledge of the various characteristics of an ancient civilisation. Average and above average pupils use good research skills to find information from non-fiction sources, for example when using the computer to identify the lands conquered by Alexander. They analyse their research notes from books well to form a picture of his life and times. They are beginning to interpret the past in different ways through historical enquiry. Throughout the age range, pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in developing key history skills and build up a sound knowledge of key events and characters.
97. In geography, by the age of seven, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of changes in the weather and record findings and temperatures using a thermometer. They use weather symbols on maps of the British Isles well to record the weather in Acton and other areas. Pupils in Year 1 match photographs of the school to places accurately and have a growing awareness of places in the area such as Lavenham and Sudbury. They compare aspects of the city and the countryside and state preferences, for example one pupil wrote 'I like Acton because it's quiet'. Pupils in Year 2 use a computer program effectively to identify areas in Sudbury and Acton. They draw an accurate route map from the school to the church and explore maps of the area finding significant features and the symbols that represent them.
98. By the age of nine, pupils have good mapping skills, which they use to locate buildings and features of different and contrasting areas. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in using field work, maps, photographs, books and pictures to support their work and have an appropriate geographical vocabulary to communicate their findings. Aspects of world geography are explored effectively by looking at contrasting locations such as India and areas linked to their history work on Ancient Greece. Throughout the school, pupils who have special educational needs achieve well in the subject and develop their knowledge of key skills such as mapping effectively.
99. On the evidence of the lessons seen, a scrutiny of pupils' work and current planning, teaching and learning in both history and geography are mostly good. Teachers have a secure knowledge in both subjects and make very good use of a variety of resources, including computers, which stimulate learning and interest.

Pupils' progress is assessed after units of work, for example mapping skills in geography and research skills in history. These are used satisfactorily to assess the levels of new work, for reporting to parents and to inform the middle school upon transfer.

100. Management of both subjects is good. The co-ordinators have managed to maintain a high profile in the school for both subjects despite the emphasis on the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Good schemes of work have been developed which give a secure base for learning and provide for the effective development of skills from year to year.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

101. By the ages of seven and nine, standards are similar to national expectations. The standards reported at the last inspection have been maintained. This represents good improvement since national expectations in the subject have risen markedly. Well-targeted training for all teaching staff as part of a national initiative has raised teachers' confidence and competence. Good use is made of the new facilities in the computer suite to focus on specific skills. These skills are being used well to support learning in other subjects within the classroom such as research work in history and geography, data handling in mathematics and word processing in a good range of literacy work. In common with other local schools, assessment sheets are used effectively to track pupils' progress and to inform the next teacher. This information is then passed to the middle school to which pupils transfer.
102. From the earliest stage when children start school they are introduced to ICT. They experience using listening centres (earphones and tape recorders) and begin to use computers with confidence. Pupils in Year 1 print their finished work when writing simple stories about the weather. They select and choose words from a word bank using a mouse and make sentences of their choosing. Pupils in Year 2 write longer stories about themselves and use correct key functions to create spaces and capital letters. Average and above average pupils recognise text can be edited to improve it. They explore musical sounds on a computer program, understand how musical items can be reorganised and make good progress when selecting information about Acton for their geography work on maps. Pupils are introduced to the control aspects of the subject when using a programmable toy. They are beginning to see how they are able to plan and give instructions in order to make something happen.
103. Pupils in Year 3 use the computers effectively to research aspects of Viking culture in history, and compose simple musical pieces which they share with other pupils. In literacy work, pupils in Year 4 use computers well in literacy lessons to wordprocess and edit their original poems about dinosaurs and snakes. They access art programs to design their spelling and reading log covers. Pupils highlight, underline and change text to bold unaided when writing instructions for a playground game. They create suitable graphs illustrating frequency of birds nesting in mathematical data handling. They are aware of how a video works and use video recorders, for example in work in science, they watch information videos on forces. They know how the video operates and how they can rewind and pause the tape.
104. The quality of teaching is good overall. All teachers receive good support from classroom assistants, students and parent helpers. In the activities observed during the inspection all pupils, including those with special educational needs, made good

progress as a result of this support. Pupils have good attitudes to the subject and enjoy their work on computers. The good levels of individual support keep them on task well since any technical difficulties are dealt with swiftly. All pupils show respect for the equipment and treat it with care. Pupils of all abilities are benefiting from improved teacher expertise and good resources. Teachers use computers well to support work across other subjects and this extends and consolidates pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. The subject is well led and managed and the scheme of work gives good guidance to teachers in their planning. It ensures the progressive development of skills as pupils move through the school. Teachers' planning is monitored to ensure consistency and the co-ordinator has kept abreast of current developments in the subject.

## **MUSIC**

105. Pupils throughout the school attain standards better than expected for their age and achieve well. This is an improvement since the last inspection when standards were reported to be average. One of the teachers with specialist knowledge of the subject takes lessons across the school and this has helped to raise the standards and achievements of all the pupils. They enjoy their music making, have good attitudes and work very well when co-operating on group tasks. The ocarina and samba groups perform confidently to larger audiences in school assemblies and local community events. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported in music making sessions by classroom assistants and achieve well.
106. By the age of seven, pupils have a good sense of rhythm and maintain a beat well when clapping. They keep in tune when singing in lessons and assemblies and know a good number of hymns and songs from memory. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils successfully work together to perform their own compositions using graphic scores. They recognise the structure of a performance and refine and improve their scores by changing pace and dynamics. Pupils listen and appraise a good range of music, which gives them a good awareness of different sounds and effects to use in their own work.
107. By the age of nine, pupils listen to and evaluate a range of music and recognise that it conveys different moods and reflects the time and place of its composition. Pupils in Year 4 choose music for assemblies sharing their research and evaluations with the other pupils. They devise their own symbols for personal written compositions using a good range of tuned and untuned instruments. In a Year 3 lesson, pupils learnt the speed of different standard notations like crochet, quaver and minim by marching in time like soldiers to a given rhythm. They are given good opportunities to improve their performance commenting positively upon the work of other pupils accompanied by spontaneously clapping. They know the potential of many of the very good range of instruments and successfully repeat short melodic patterns and produce their own musical patterns to fit into a group performance.
108. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The specialist teacher develops all the required elements of the music curriculum effectively. Good features of the lessons seen were the enthusiastic manner and good subject knowledge of the teacher, good class and group management, good pace to lessons, the very good use of the high quality and plentiful resources and the very positive response of pupils to the subject. These features enable pupils of all abilities to achieve well. Pupils use computer programs to explore musical sounds and this is beginning to extend their knowledge and understanding in the subject. Careful evaluations are made after each unit of work and pupils record their own achievements in folders enabling the

teacher to access progress effectively. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has worked hard to attract a good range of visiting musicians to the school. This extends pupils' knowledge and understanding of different types of music and raises the profile of the subject throughout the school.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

109. The work seen in games and gymnastics is similar to that expected for seven- and nine-year-olds and the achievements of all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are satisfactory. There is no difference in the standards of boys and girls. This is a similar judgement to that made at the last inspection. Due to the way the physical education curriculum is organised and the time of year, it was not possible to see any work in dance and athletics. Pupils in Year 4 go swimming in the summer term and records indicate that they make good progress in the development of key skills. With good support from above average pupils and from teachers and classroom assistants, pupils who have special educational needs take a full part in all lessons and achieve well.
110. By the age of seven, most pupils develop confidence when working at different heights on apparatus and have a good awareness of space. They work enthusiastically in games and gymnastics and co-operate with each other well, for example, when working on curling and stretching and putting away equipment in a Year 1 lesson. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in copying, repeating and exploring simple actions with developing control and co-ordination. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were able to copy the movements of the teacher in rocking and rolling activities. The above average pupils then put a series of simple actions together effectively in a sequence. In Year 2, almost all pupils are able to throw and catch a large ball with reasonable accuracy and control and show good hand-eye co-ordination when developing the skills with a small ball.
111. In Years 3 and 4, pupils have sound bat and ball skills and keep a small ball bouncing on a racket five or six times with good control. They know that exercise is good for the heart by making it beat faster. They understand the need to warm up first before taking part in any physical activity and that this gets energy to the muscles. In a Year 3 lesson to develop stamina through a series of exercises performed in quick succession, pupils persevered well but were soon out of breath.
112. Teaching is mostly satisfactory and occasionally good. The strengths identified in the last inspection have been maintained. Lessons retain a good structure with warm up, key activity and cool down sessions. There is good attention to the safety aspects of the subject so that pupils understand how they must behave in a gym. Teachers have high expectations and these are reflected in their dress and active involvement in activity. This sets a good example for the pupils and impacts well on their learning. They are encouraged to work quietly and, when required, to co-operate in pairs and larger groups. The introduction of a competitive element into the work is effective in motivating the pupils. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils were excited and challenged by the question 'see which pair can throw and catch the ball most times without dropping it'.
113. The one weakness identified in the last inspection was the missed opportunities for feedback discussion of pupils' performance and how improvements might be made. Progress with this aspect of teaching has not been entirely successful. Some evidence of feedback to pupils was clear on a few occasions but more work is still needed on this teaching strategy. There were a few other areas for development in

some of the lessons. When working in groups on large apparatus some pupils wait too long to take their turn and in a few lessons, some loss of attention by a small minority of mainly boys disrupts their learning when they are not dealt with firmly enough.

114. The co-ordinator has only taken over this year, the previous co-ordinator having left the school. There is a good scheme of work linked effectively to nationally approved guidelines. These help teachers plan their work to develop key skills progressively. There is no whole school assessment of pupils' progress and this makes it more difficult for teachers to build on what pupils can already do. A satisfactory range of extra-curricular sport, such as gymnastics club, football skills coaching and inter-school rugby has a good effect on pupils' learning and enthusiasm for sport.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

115. Overall standards meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus at ages seven and nine and pupils' achievements are satisfactory. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
116. By the age of seven, all pupils, including those who have special educational needs, are increasingly aware of the impact of their behaviour upon others and the need to consider different feelings and points of view. They illustrate this by 'sad and happy' examples based on a friendship theme. When comparing seasons linked to geography work they develop perceptions of the changing nature of the world in which they live. They are aware that different faiths have objects and symbols that are special to them such as the Cross with Christians and the Torah with Jews. By studying Christian and Jewish Festivals they become aware of similarities and differences underpinning the beliefs of the religions. Above average pupils are able to discuss these with increasing maturity. Most pupils understand the special nature of different places of worship to religions and know the significance of the Passover and Easter festivals. They know stories from Jewish and Christian origins such as Moses leading the Jews from Egypt, Jesus riding into Jerusalem and miracles such as the feeding of the five thousand and the saving of the daughter of Jarius.
117. Older pupils in Years 3 and 4 link their study of religions well to personal responsibility and strengthen their social and moral awareness well. Average and above average pupils show good empathy for the lives of children less fortunate than themselves and show good respect and a positive attitude to religious beliefs other than their own.
118. Teaching in the lessons seen was satisfactory. Teachers give clear explanations and use questioning well to make pupils think. Most pupils respond positively to their lessons and co-operate well. They are keen to respond when asked to give examples from their own experiences. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils reflected on the impact of bad behaviour and in Year 3 they showed appropriate concern for environmental and school care. A small minority of boys who display inappropriate behaviour are dealt with in a patient and understanding way by teachers and classroom assistants. They are included in all class and group activities but occasionally disrupt the flow of lessons. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils' speaking, reading and writing skills.
119. The subject is well led and managed by the committed co-ordinator. Planning is thorough, well based on the locally agreed syllabus, and there is a good range of

artefacts to support teaching. Pupils regularly visit the local churches and visitors to school from different faith communities enhance their knowledge. Teachers' planning is monitored regularly and the co-ordinator gives good support to teachers in the planning of their lessons.