

INSPECTION REPORT

LITTLE PLUMSTEAD CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Little Plumstead, Norwich

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121119

Headteacher: Mrs. Linda Phillips

Reporting inspector: Mr. M. Thompson

25372

Dates of inspection: 14 – 18 January 2002

Inspection number: 194286

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Witton Lane Little Plumstead Norwich Norfolk
Postcode:	NR13 5DL
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. Elizabeth Gotts
Date of previous inspection:	May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25372	Mike Thompson	<i>Registered inspector</i>	English; Science; Art and design.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
9121	Heather Danpure	<i>Lay inspector</i>		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?
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Team inspector</i>	Equal opportunities; Mathematics; Information and communication technology; Music; Physical education.	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
20142	Malcolm Childs	<i>Team inspector</i>	The Foundation Stage; Special educational needs; Design and technology; Geography; History.	How well is the school led and managed?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Little Plumstead Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided school situated some five miles to the east of Norwich. It serves the village communities of Little Plumstead, Great Plumstead, Thorpe End and Witton. Almost all of its 154 pupils are of white, UK heritage.

The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is, at 14 per cent, slightly below the national average. Most of these pupils have learning, emotional and behavioural or speech difficulties. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, which entitle them to extra help. Although its pupils are from a wide range of backgrounds, very few are entitled to free school meals.

Children are admitted to the Reception Class in the September of the year in which their fifth birthday falls. The youngest of these are admitted on a part-time basis for the autumn term. Shortly after admission, children are assessed using a nationally accredited 'baseline assessment'. Data from these assessments shows that, overall, attainment on entry to the school is about average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school that provides good value for money. The headteacher and governors provide clear educational direction and carefully oversee the school's work. Its pupils are well taught and their progress is carefully monitored. Overall, educational standards are above average, pupils' attitudes towards school are excellent, and standards of behaviour and pupils' personal development are well above average.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Overall, standards are above average in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and physical education.
- Throughout the school, pupils are well taught and make good progress.
- Children in the Reception Class are given a good start to their education.
- Pupils behave very well and have excellent attitudes towards their work.
- Overall, arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education are very good.
- Pupils are well cared for and their progress is carefully monitored.
- The school is good at identifying and helping pupils with special educational needs.
- The school is well led and managed.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) in Years 3 to 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in 1997. Standards in English and science in Years 2 and 6 are better, and improvements have been made in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Better arrangements for assessing pupils and monitoring their progress have been developed, and the good standards of teaching and leadership have been maintained. Both of the key issues for action from the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed.

STANDARDS

The table below shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	B	B	C
mathematics	B	A	A	C
science	A	B	C	E

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

The information shows, for example, that standards in English in the national tests for 2001 were above average in comparison with those attained in all schools nationally. However, when compared with the English test results in schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were average. The school has analysed the disappointing performance in science at some length and finds no apparent reason for the results in terms of unexpectedly low performances by individuals among the group tested. The reason may, however, lie in the higher national expectations for science. In mathematics the result of eight out of every ten pupils attaining the national target of Level 4, and half of these going on to reach the higher Level 5, was an overall grade of A. In science, nine out of ten pupils gained Level 4 and about a quarter of these reached Level 5 to produce an overall grade of C. Apart from the science results in 2001, standards in all of the 'core' subjects¹ have been above or well above average for the past three years. The school has set higher targets for its performance in English and mathematics in the 2002 tests and is well on course to achieve them.

Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average in English, mathematics, design and technology and physical education in Years 2 and 6. In science, standards are well above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Standards in ICT are average in Year 2, but below average in Year 6. This is because not enough opportunities are provided for pupils in Years 3 to 6 to practice and develop their ICT skills on a regular basis. Standards in art and design, geography and history are broadly average in Years 2 and 6. In music, no lessons were observed in Years 1 or 2 and so no judgement on the attainment of the youngest pupils can be made. In Year 6, standards are average.

¹ English, mathematics and science.

Children in the Foundation Stage² make good progress and most achieve the standards expected of them by the time they move into Year 1. Pupils achieve well throughout the school because they are keen to learn, they are well taught, and their progress is carefully monitored.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Exemplary. A significant strength of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in the majority of lessons and around the school. Good in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. When given jobs to do, pupils carry out their duties conscientiously.
Attendance	Good. Levels of unauthorised absence are low.

The School Council and Class Councils are a particularly good feature of the life of the school and strongly promote pupils' awareness of their community and their skills in citizenship.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1–2	Years 3–6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teaching was good or better in over three-quarters of the 41 lessons observed and was very good or better in almost a fifth of all lessons. There were no unsatisfactory lessons.

A significant strength of teaching is the very good relationships that teachers have developed with their pupils. Teachers are good at making their lessons interesting, and as a result pupils are very keen to learn and concentrate hard on their work. Teachers know their pupils very well, and this enables them to provide tasks that are well matched to individuals' prior attainment. Since challenges are achievable, pupils thrive on their success and develop excellent attitudes towards their work. Further strengths in teaching are teachers' skills in managing their pupils and the way in which learning support assistants are used to provide good quality help for pupils with special educational needs. Skills in literacy and numeracy are well taught.

² The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three. Children complete the Foundation Stage at the end of the Reception Year.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. A good feature of this school is the way in which it enriches pupils' learning through special events such as 'Science week'.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. These pupils have very detailed individual education plans that clearly set out what they need to learn. They receive good quality help in lessons from skilled learning support assistants.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social development. Arrangements for developing pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness are good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils flourish within the school's caring environment. All staff are sensitive to pupils' individual needs.

The school works hard to develop its partnership with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives very clear direction for the work of the school. She is very well supported by her able deputy.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors know the school very well and make an effective contribution to its work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school looks carefully at the standards it achieves and shows a clear commitment to continuous improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Grants allocated for specific purposes, such as funds for special educational needs, are well used. However, computers need to be used more to support work in all subjects in Years 3 to 6. Governors are using the principles of 'best value' well when making decisions.

The school is well staffed and is satisfactorily resourced. Some classrooms do not have adequate practical work areas, and the design of the premises makes it difficult for children in the Reception Class to experience the full range of outdoor activities normally seen in the Foundation Stage.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Teaching is good and their children make good progress.• Behaviour in the school is good.• The school has high expectations of their children.• The school helps their children to develop socially.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The homework provided.• The school's partnership with them.• The range of activities provided outside lessons.

Inspectors' judgements support all of the positive views expressed by parents.

With regard to the areas which some parents would like to see improved:

- parents have been consulted about homework and are well informed about it. There is no evidence to suggest that the amount of work given, or its content, is unsatisfactory.
- overall, the school's partnership with parents is good.
- the school has recently improved the range of activities provided outside lessons, following consultation with parents. This range is better than normally found in schools of a similar size.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school in the Reception Class is about average. Pupils make good progress throughout the school because they are well taught and their progress is carefully monitored. Results of periodic testing are very carefully analysed so that strengths and weaknesses within subjects and within individual pupils' performances can be clearly identified. As a result, individual targets for pupils' performance are now set.
2. The proportion of pupils in Year 2 attaining the national target of Level 2 in the national tests in reading and writing has improved year by year. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils attaining Level 2 in the tests has remained at a high level. When results over the past three years are taken as a whole, 93 per cent of pupils have attained Level 2 in reading and writing, and 99 per cent of those tested have reached this level in mathematics. Overall, the good standards in Year 6 have been sustained. In the national tests for this year group, the proportion of pupils attaining the national target of Level 4 has generally been above or well above average in all of the core subjects. Eighty-six per cent of Year 6 pupils have reached Level 4 in English over the past three years and, over the same period, 84 per cent have attained this level in mathematics and 93 per cent in science.
3. Higher-attaining pupils are also suitably challenged overall. In common with those in most small schools, teachers at Little Plumstead know their pupils extremely well and are often good at matching work to potential so that achievable challenges are provided for all. National test results show that the proportion of Year 2 pupils attaining the higher Level 3 is generally well above average in reading and writing and very high in mathematics. In Year 6, test results at Level 5 are more variable. The most likely reason for this is that the groups of pupils tested in Year 6 have been smaller than in Year 2 and, when year groups are small, the percentage change in results caused by differences in the performance of pupils is more pronounced. Inspection findings show that teachers are as good at providing for higher-attaining pupils in Years 3 to 6 as in Years 1 and 2. Therefore, the differences between the test performances of higher-attainers in Years 2 and 6 ought to disappear as the number of pupils tested in Year 6 increases. However, in some instances, higher-attaining pupils are not challenged enough. This occurs when over-reliance on photocopied worksheets limits opportunities for these pupils to devise their own methods of tabulating their answers, or to write at greater length.
4. Lower-attaining pupils are also well catered for. Pupils with learning difficulties are identified at a very early stage and are given good quality help. They have clear and concise individual education plans which identify future targets for improvement, and often benefit from the help of skilled learning support assistants (LSAs) in lessons. Since all pupils are often given the same basic tasks to do in lessons, the role of the LSAs is crucial in helping to 'translate' some of the terminology used and in helping pupils with special needs to remain focused on their tasks. Their help improves the quality of the pupils' work and enables them to play a full part in the lessons, therefore raising the pupils' self-esteem.
5. The school has a strong commitment to high attainment and sets challenging targets for the performance of Year 6 pupils in the national tests in English and mathematics. Inspection findings indicate that the school is likely to come close to its 2002 targets of 93 per cent at Level 4 in English and mathematics.

6. Pupils also make good progress over time because the curriculum is good. This provides a clear structure for teachers' planning and ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are developed in a step-by-step way. The way in which learning is organised in the Reception Class is more formal than in many Foundation Stage classes, with a strong focus on literacy and numeracy each morning. However, it is entirely appropriate, given the excellent attitudes and behaviour of these youngest children. In Years 1 to 6 good links are made between different subjects, and this gives pupils regular opportunities to develop skills in one subject that have a practical application in another. For instance, work about co-ordinates in mathematics is used to good effect in the study of maps in geography, while skills in art are used to good effect to enhance topics in history. The exception to this positive picture is in ICT in Years 3 to 6, where computers in particular are generally not used well enough in subjects across the curriculum, and consequently pupils do not develop their skills at a satisfactory rate.

7. Limitations of the premises also inhibit progress in some areas. For instance, the lack of an adequate outdoor area for reception children means that the seamless integration of indoor and outdoor learning recommended in the Foundation Stage curriculum is not possible. The library is too small to be used by whole class groups, and therefore the way in which the library is used and library skills can be taught is affected. The impact of this is seen in the under-developed research skills of pupils in Year 2. Lack of adequate practical work areas limits the range of art and design activities possible in some classrooms. However, the school does its best to overcome these problems. Occasional use of the main school playground and timetabled use of the school hall help to make up for lack of facilities in the Reception Class, and events such as an 'Art Day' help to compensate for art and design activities normally not possible in some classes.

8. The school is good at ensuring that all pupils enjoy equal access to all activities. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

9. Pupils' attitudes are exemplary and continue to be a significant strength of the school. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is outstanding and contributes greatly to helping them learn and flourish. They also show a considerable ability to concentrate. For example, throughout the weekly 'Well Done' assembly in which pupils' successes are celebrated all the pupils remained focused on the headteacher and on pupils who were being congratulated. They were keen to see what was being shown and listened carefully to what the headteacher and other pupils had to say. Similarly, in lessons, pupils are very eager to learn and determined to do to their best. Pupils develop these attitudes and strong motivation to learn soon after they join the school; for instance, pupils in the Reception Class sat captivated as their teacher read them a story at the end of the day. Parents report that most of their children enjoy school, and inspection evidence strongly supports this view.

10. Pupils' behaviour is very good in the majority of lessons and around the school, and is good outside in the playground. Each class has chosen its own rules and has them clearly displayed in their classroom. Good behaviour is accepted as the norm and pupils rarely try to flout it. There was one fixed-term exclusion of a pupil last year, for a specific reason, but this type of action taken by the school is a very rare occurrence. Pupils know what is expected of them and make every effort to behave well. When required to be quiet and listen, pupils respond immediately as their teacher gives a signal by raising a hand. They then wait in silence until the teacher gives them further instructions. Pupils are polite, listen well and persevere with the work they are given. No oppressive behaviour was observed. If anything happens to make them unhappy, pupils are confident to ask for help.

11. Outside at both break and lunchtime the play is often exuberant, and even though there is limited space the playground is a safe place for games. Each break and lunchtime two pupils, identified by their blue caps, act as 'buddies' to help other pupils and the teacher on duty. They take their responsibility seriously. Lunchtime in the hall is generally a very civilised social event where pupils chat happily together. After the meal, those designated to help clear the hall do so willingly.

12. Relationships continue to be very good. All staff are very good role models for the children. They treat all pupils with consideration and respect, and the Christian ethos of the school permeates all that is done. Pupils respond very positively by showing respect for their teachers and other staff. The quality of relationships in the school gives pupils the confidence to answer questions and express their views. They are not put off if they give an incorrect answer. Pupils listen intently to what others have to say, and make no attempt to belittle anyone's response or ideas. Pupils show great tolerance and understanding of the views of others, and this makes an excellent contribution to their moral and social development. Pupils enjoy working together, and there is great interest to see which house has gained the most house points each week.

13. Pupils have responded very well to the recent introduction of Class Councils and a School Council. The pupils chosen to represent each class, whatever their age, show great maturity and a determination to put forward views on behalf of their classmates at the full council meeting. Pupils put forward sensible ideas to improve the quality of their school life. For example they suggested, and now run, a 'healthy eating' stall at which they sell fruit every Tuesday morning at break time. During council meetings individual members strongly defend their case against opposition from other members. They also ask sensible, practical questions about their ideas; for example, they would like an art and technology club, but who will run it? The School Council makes a very strong contribution to pupils' personal development and strongly promotes pupils' sense of citizenship.

14. Pupils' personal development is very good. Pupils work well in class even when not under the direct supervision of an adult, and can be trusted. They also think of others, and continue to support a child in Bangladesh through 'Action Aid'. They willingly take on various jobs in their class, such as the 'stars' from Year 1, or around the school, as librarians or as 'buddies' in the playground.

15. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development make a very significant contribution to helping them learn and do well, and help them become mature and responsible individuals. This view is strongly supported by parents.

Attendance

16. After a slight dip last year, attendance has returned to a level above the national average. However, holidays taken in term-time are reducing the level of attendance. The level of unauthorised absence is low. Punctuality is good, with most pupils getting to school in good time. They respond immediately when the morning bell rings, get to their classrooms quickly, and settle down to their work.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. Overall, the quality of teaching is good and has improved since the time of the previous inspection. Teaching was good or better in over three-quarters of the forty-one lessons observed and was very good or better in almost a fifth of all lessons. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

18. A significant strength of teaching is the very good relationships that teachers have developed with their pupils. This begins in the Foundation Stage, where the teacher has a very good rapport with the children, while setting clear expectations for their behaviour. As a result, children behave impeccably and make very good progress in their social development. Throughout the school, lessons are generally harmonious and purposeful so that learning is a pleasurable experience.

19. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge across the curriculum, and base their teaching securely on nationally recommended schemes of work. Basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics are well taught throughout the school, reflecting the guidance of the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy. A strong feature of many lessons throughout the school is teachers' enthusiasm for the subject being taught, and this has a powerful effect on pupils' interest and motivation. A very good example of this was seen in a history lesson in a Year 4 and 5 class. The teacher held the class entranced with her demonstrations of Tudor household skills such as separating wheat from chaff and spinning wool, and provided them with a learning experience that they are likely to remember for a long time.

20. Teachers' lesson plans are generally successful in identifying specific targets for each lesson and in detailing the main activities. Where appropriate, lesson plans also identify the role of learning support assistants or helpers. Where plans do not contain enough detail of how the lesson is to develop, the result can be that too much time is spent on one part of the lesson at the expense of others. For instance, over-long introductory sessions can result in not enough time for pupils to concentrate on the task in hand or for the teacher to review learning at the end of the session.

21. Activities are well organised in most lessons. Discussions are used well to open the lesson, and teachers use searching questions to check prior learning and probe understanding. In the best lessons, clear links are made with what has already been learned, and pupils are challenged to use this knowledge as a starting point. This also gives pupils confidence in approaching their new task. For instance, in a Year 1 science lesson the teacher first reminded the class about previous lessons in which they had learned about their five senses. Pupils were then asked to decide which of their senses they would need to use in describing the properties of different materials they were going to work with. Resources are generally well prepared, and class routines, such as the way in which a piece of work is to be set out, are well established. As a result, pupils are able to start work without wasting time, and develop skills of independence because they know where to find the equipment that they need and how to begin their tasks.

22. Many lessons end with a plenary session in which pupils' learning is reviewed, and these sessions are generally used effectively. In a plenary session at the end of a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher's skilful questions ensured that pupils were guided into a good evaluation of their investigation into the effect of forces on the movement of different types of model cars. However, in some lessons there was not enough time for the plenary to be used effectively, and on other occasions the plenary did not give pupils the opportunity to reflect on their own achievements during the lesson.

23. Teachers know their pupils very well, and this enables them to provide work that is well matched to individuals' prior attainment. In most cases, this differentiation occurs through the learning process or the outcome of the task rather than through different tasks planned at different levels around the same theme. For instance, in a Year 4 and 5 lesson in which pupils were designing an adventure game, the same basic task was followed by all, and the challenge was varied from group to group through the differing complexity of the pupils' game plan. A thorough scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work showed that in most classes, photocopied worksheets are widely used because these often form the basis of the schemes of work. In most cases, all pupils use the same worksheets, and the differences between the work produced by the highest and lowest attaining pupils appear in the quantity of work produced or in the quality of the answers. Lesson observations showed that while the same basic task is invariably set, teachers' skills in questioning ensure that higher-attaining pupils are suitably challenged. The skilled help given by learning support assistants ensures that pupils with special educational needs are able to cope with the same task, but at a lower level. The advantage of this method of working is that since all pupils have experienced the same basic task, all are able to play an equal part in the plenary session at the end of the lesson.

24. Learning in school is extended through a satisfactory timetable of homework, which increases as pupils move through the school. The main focus is on the basic skills in English and mathematics.

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

25. The school provides a curriculum that is broad, balanced, and relevant to the ages, needs and interests of its pupils, and it complies with all statutory requirements. The range and quality of the curriculum is good overall, and is enriched through activities such as visits to places of interest and by visitors who bring specialist skills to the school.

26. Overall, curricular provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Careful planning ensures that children in the Reception Class enjoy the full breadth of the nationally recommended curriculum, and that a good balance is struck between activities directed by the teacher and those chosen by the children. The school has done its best to overcome the difficulties presented by the design of the premises, which limit the opportunities for outdoor learning.

27. Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects, though these vary in quality and some need to be updated. The policy for ICT, for example, includes the latest guidance on Internet use, whereas other policies do not always reflect the most recent developments in subjects. The school recognises this and has clear plans to revise its policies over time. Schemes of work give good guidance as to what should be taught during each term, and a lot of work has been carried out to ensure that the pupils in mixed-age classes do not repeat work as they progress through the school. Some topics, such as history, are taught in blocks of time during the year. Overall, the curriculum allows adequate time for coverage of the foundation subjects even though a high proportion of time is spent on English, maths, and science. This is achieved through the good cross-curricular links that are being developed. For instance, skills in design and technology are developed in conjunction with work in science, when the pupils make powered models. The school also devotes appropriate time to developing pupils' personal and social skills. This is achieved through specific weekly lessons that alternate with Class Council meetings. The careful planning ensures that pupils receive an equal opportunity to cover all statutory subjects.

28. In the Foundation Stage, children with learning difficulties are identified at an early stage. They are fully integrated into all activities and greatly benefit from the good quality help that they receive. In Years 1 to 6, the curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is good. Each pupil has an individual education plan that identifies specific areas for development. These are well conceived and cover the relevant areas for improvement. The work planned for these pupils is closely matched to what is being taught to the whole class. In addition, pupils with special needs benefit from individual help or from work in small groups alongside learning support assistants. This enables them to make good progress both in the lessons and over time.

29. The school has successfully implemented the National Numeracy Strategy, and this is having a positive effect upon the pupils' attainment throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented very well and has made a significant contribution to English standards attained by the pupils. Both strategies are an integral part of work in other subjects. For example, pupils' understanding of the use of tenses is enhanced through work in history, while pupils develop their mathematical expertise in collecting and organising data in work on geography. Good opportunities exist for the pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills in a variety of situations. For instance, the youngest to the oldest pupils take an active part in discussions about the work of the School Council, while in mathematics, pupils in Years 3 and 4 demonstrated their language skills in explaining how they worked out the addition of simple two-digit numbers.

30. The range of extra-curricular activities is better than is normally found in a school of this size. There is a growing number of activities, such as a running club and a games club as well as football and netball. Others include knitting and drama, with more planned for the future. The pupils appreciate having these activities and they participate well. Provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE), is good and is timetabled along with the activities of the recently formed School Council and Class Councils. The school enhances pupils' personal development by encouraging them to take on responsible jobs. These include carrying the class registers to the office, selling fruit at playtimes and helping in assemblies. The teaching of sex education is supported by professional agencies from outside the school and by teaching staff, as questions from pupils arise. Drugs awareness is taught through work in science. In addition, the school has held parents' meetings to discuss various issues, and one of these was attended by a local police officer.

31. Information and communication technology (ICT) work is satisfactorily used as part of the curriculum for the pupils in Years 1 and 2. In the older classes, ICT is not a strong feature, and opportunities to use it as an effective tool are sometimes missed.

32. Links with the community are strengths of the school. The school welcomes visits from local clergy, who regularly take assemblies and take part in lessons. For example, the pupils in Year 1 staged a mock Christening, helped by the local vicar. The school regularly takes part in village activities and holds services in the local church, for example on Mothering Sunday. Other activities have included a 'thank you' assembly for local group leaders. The pupils know about local issues. Recently, for example, the school invited a planning officer from the local council to explain proposals for building development. Links with other schools are encouraged, particularly the local secondary school. There are also good links with the local university, which places teacher-training students with the school.

33. Overall, the school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education (SMSC) is very good. Provision for their spiritual development is good. Assemblies are used well to help pupils to reflect on issues such as the part that they play within the

community, and the value of friends. In one assembly, led by the vicar, the pupils were encouraged to see how special they were in God's eyes. Through reflection, prayer and music the school furthers the spiritual development of its pupils, and opportunities within lessons regularly create a sense of excitement and discovery.

34. There are very good arrangements in place to promote pupils' moral and social development. Christian values are taught and followed throughout the school. Pupils are polite and caring, and the principles of right and wrong are well taught and understood by all. The adults at the school provide very good role models for the pupils. Each class has an agreed set of rules, and pupils in the playground have 'buddies' who help to resolve difficulties or to befriend others who are feeling lonely. The recently introduced School Council is having a positive effect upon the ethos of the school, and encouraging the pupils to be more responsible towards each other.

35. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The school provides a good range of activities to develop the pupils' cultural awareness. A good emphasis is placed on all people, regardless of religion or culture, living happily together and caring for others. The school has recently held an 'African day', with different activities taking place. A visiting teacher led other activities which highlighted the contrasting features of Bangladesh. The school also sponsors a child in Bangladesh, and pupils receive regular updates about her progress. Pupils are aware of the wide range of interesting elements in their own culture. They visit local museums and places of interest within the county and occasionally further away. In art, the work of famous artists is often used as a stimulus for pupils' work, and other styles such as Islamic and aboriginal art are also studied. In music lessons, pupils learn to compare and contrast different types of performance, such as comparing African music to that of western composers.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. Pupils continue to receive good care in a safe and happy environment. Staff know pupils well and are very sensitive to their needs. The school ensures that it is well informed when children enter the Reception Class, by asking parents to fill in a detailed questionnaire about their child and providing meetings for parents and children before the school year begins. This enables children to settle in well. The school has a good system to record significant events in a child's development, using class observation cards. The PSHE programme and 'circle time' offer a good opportunity to guide and inform pupils about healthy eating, and provide sex and drugs education to support their personal development. The School Council is a very effective method of giving pupils a say in the running of their school.

37. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding. In lessons, the targeting of appropriate questions to specific pupils is effective in helping them gain confidence and make good progress. The school's computerised tracking system provides a good record and overview of what pupils have achieved in a variety of statutory and non-statutory tests. Teachers are now using this to predict what National Curriculum Levels pupils should be able to achieve in the future. The work on target-setting is a goal of the current school development plan. Information about pupils' progress is used well to support planning and the provision of tasks that are well matched to pupils' potential. Pupils have also identified some of their own personal targets to achieve, but these are separate from those set by teachers. At present, neither pupils nor their parents are told what National Curriculum Levels have been predicted for them, or given guidance on how to go about achieving them.

38. The school provides a safe and secure environment for pupils in which to learn. There are sufficient trained first-aiders to deal with any pupils who are ill or injured, but nowhere appropriate to look after them. There is a comprehensive health and safety policy and regular checks of the site by the headteacher and governors. Good consideration is given to safety in physical education lessons.

39. The school is very good at promoting good behaviour, and the behaviour and anti-bullying policy is of good quality. Good behaviour is expected of all, and this is instilled into pupils as soon as they start school. Assemblies and 'circle time' provide good opportunities to reinforce the school's Christian aims of valuing and respecting everyone. Staff are kind and considerate and readily praise and reward good behaviour and effort, for example with house points. However, staff do not tolerate misbehaviour, including bullying, so pupils quickly learn what is acceptable. Strong peer-pressure reinforces the messages given by staff and so good behaviour soon becomes second nature to pupils. All staff have received appropriate training and, as a result, are very successful in managing pupils effectively. If pupils have behavioural problems they are dealt with in a positive way and with minimum disruption to the rest of the class.

40. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are satisfactory. Registers are called quickly and efficiently and completed in full. Registrations provide a good opportunity for pupils and teachers to interact and establish a good relationship. The attendance data is transferred to a computer once a week. The secretary analyses the information and notifies the headteacher if there are any concerns. When necessary, the school requests help from the Education Welfare Service.

41. The procedures to deal with any incidents of child protection are good. The headteacher, as liaison officer, is well briefed through recent training, and she passes this information on to the rest of the staff. All staff know what to do if an incident occurs. The school reports that it has very good links with the police, who regularly visit as part of the PSHE programme. Links with social services are less well established.

42. The school has very good procedures for meeting the requirements of pupils with special educational needs. Special educational needs records, such as individual education plans, are kept up to date and are stored securely.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

43. The response from parents who returned questionnaires and attended the pre-inspection meeting with the Registered Inspector showed that, overall, they are happy with the school. In particular, they praised the good teaching, the high expectations of the staff, the progress of their children and their children's good behaviour. A significant number of parents who completed the questionnaire are concerned about the amount of homework, do not feel comfortable approaching the school and do not think the school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. However, in terms of the total number of parents, they represent a small minority.

44. The school is aware of their concerns about homework and extra-curricular activities as parents are regularly asked for their views about the school. The school has responded to these issues already. It keeps parents well briefed about homework, and has increased the number of activities provided at lunchtime and after school.

45. The partnership with parents is good. Parents' support is seen as important and their views are considered when deciding on the targets for the school development plan. Parents receive a good range of documents to keep them well informed; a leaflet about the topics to be studied, newsletters and other letters, and there is a good pack of information for new parents. The prospectus is helpful and informative. The pink reading diary and blue homework diary provide a good opportunity for dialogue between school and home. In addition, there are now termly parents' evenings to give parents opportunities to talk to class teachers about their children's progress. Parents are also welcome to see teachers informally at other times.

46. Pupils' reports, issued in the summer term, are detailed and informative and show a good knowledge of each child. The comments are good at indicating what has been studied and what pupils are now able to do. However, they rarely indicate what aspects of a subject a pupil needs to concentrate on to do better. Each report contains a section entitled 'future action'. This tends to reflect a whole-school focus, such as writing, but does not generally match the weakness identified by pupils in their contribution to the report. Pupils do have targets, but these are not recorded here for parents to see and help their children achieve. A stronger focus on how pupils could improve, and the inclusion of pupils' targets, would be helpful. Reports for pupils in Years 2 and 6 do not include a written comment about the pupils' grades, as required, although an accompanying sheet explains the significance of the grades to parents.

47. The effect of parental support, both for the work of the school and for their children, is good. Most parents listen to their children reading at home and ensure that they complete their homework. Parents are good at using the pupils' pink and blue books to write comments. Attendance at parents' evenings, particularly the one held in the spring term, is very good. A number of parents regularly provide effective help in classrooms, particularly parents of pupils in Years 1 and 2, who help with activities such as science and ICT. Parents also help in other ways, for example through the Friends of the School, which raises money to buy additional items, such as the new picnic shelter for the 'quiet' garden. Parental support is making a good contribution to the high standards that pupils achieve.

48. Communications with parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. These parents are fully involved in regular reviews of individual education plans (IEP's) for their children.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide good leadership and management. The quality of leadership ensures clear educational direction for the work of the school. School improvement and raising standards further are management priorities which are shared by the entire staff. The maintenance of a strong team of teachers and support staff is a leadership objective and, in spite of current recruitment difficulties, this is being achieved. Staff teamwork is a very significant strength. Inspiration and motivation of staff is a priority, and the headteacher and her deputy set a very good example. The published aims and values of the school are supported well by its management. The headteacher's delegation of management responsibilities to staff is effective. The management team maintains a clear focus upon the school's priorities for further development, and senior staff invariably set very good standards. The management of the school has Christian values at its heart and these are to be seen in everything the school does. The school has maintained and developed the high standards of management that were observed at the time of the last inspection in 1997.

50. The governors are good at supporting and monitoring the work of the school. They have good access to outside specialist skills and expertise, and the governing body helps shape the strategic direction of the school. Governors have an extremely keen understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and take a positive part in setting targets for development and improvement. The governing body puts great emphasis on monitoring improvement, and has very many contacts with the school. For example, all governors have responsibility for a curriculum area and will normally visit the school at least once a term to discuss the progress of their subject with the co-ordinator and to observe lessons.

51. There is a positive relationship between the governors and the headteacher, whose performance governors regularly appraise and for whom they set performance targets. The governors have responded well to the recommendations of the previous inspection report, and the key issues identified have been successfully addressed.

52. The management of special educational needs is effective, and the school has appointed an able special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) to manage the day-to-day provision. She is supported well by six LSAs, one of whom provides administrative support for two days a week in addition to her work in classrooms. Individual education plans (IEPs) are of high quality and all requirements of the first national Code of Practice are fully in place. Staff are to receive training in the requirements of the new national Code of Practice by the end of this term and there will be a meeting to introduce the changes to parents during the course of the summer term. Oversight of special educational needs is the specific responsibility of one of the governors, who has used appropriate training effectively to support this role. The governor responsible for special educational needs and the SENCO meet regularly, and the governing body is kept well informed about special needs issues. The special educational needs management team monitors the effectiveness of spending in this area, and the outcome of expenditure is most carefully matched against its specified purpose. The school's general budget is used to supplement funds for special educational needs provision, primarily through the high level of learning support assistance that pupils receive in every classroom.

53. Monitoring and evaluation of the schools' performance is a key feature. The development of good teaching practice is monitored and evaluated well. The headteacher teaches for three days each week, and this helps to provide time for all staff with curriculum responsibilities to monitor the effectiveness of teaching, planning, progress and standards in their subject. Good teachers are well deployed to influence and improve the quality of teaching in the school and, though pupils are well taught, areas of less effective teaching are addressed very well. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is good and forms part of a rigorous approach to school self-evaluation. There is a concise but appropriate school development plan, formulated after wide consultation, extending to parents and pupils, and this identifies key priorities. All the teachers have clear performance targets matched carefully to their needs. Teachers and support staff work very well together. The actions taken to meet the school's improvement targets have a considerable effect. The management team has an extremely strong commitment to improvement and there is a good capacity for continued success. The procedures for the induction of new staff are effective; even temporary staff know what is expected of them and have responded to the high expectations and Christian ethos of the school. Staff development has improved since the previous inspection and, as a result, staff training is well matched to the needs of the school.

54. The strategic use of resources, grants and other funding is good. Educational priorities are supported through the school's good financial planning. The financial administration systems are efficient and effective. There has been no formal auditors' report since 1997, but the school's financial information is communicated to the local education authority (LEA)

electronically and it is closely monitored. Evidence made available during the inspection confirmed that good accounting procedures are in place. The management is very well informed of the school finances and is well supported by a local education authority financial officer. The headteacher and governors ensure that specific grants are used for their designated purpose. They monitor the effectiveness of spending decisions, and carefully measure the outcome of expenditure against the objectives set.

55. The school secretary provides a warm and welcoming first point of contact for parents and visitors. She gives good quality support to the school management in particular, and to the staff as whole. She administers the school's financial arrangements well.

56. New ICT systems satisfactorily support the school's administration. Teachers have received training in the use of ICT within the curriculum, but in Years 3 to 6 opportunities to fully integrate ICT into lessons are sometimes missed.

57. The principles of 'best value' are still being developed, but the school is intuitively using these principles well. It compares its costs with those of other schools, engages in competitive tendering, and seeks quotes for all significant purchases. In addition, the staff are required to justify their use of resources, and major expenditure decisions are usually subjected to wide consultation.

58. The overall number of staff and their range of teaching qualifications are well matched to the present number of pupils on roll. Recruitment methods have been effective in helping the school to maintain staffing levels, and, as a result, standards are being maintained. Some difficulty in recruitment is being experienced at the present time and the school is monitoring its procedures closely. The demands of the curriculum and teachers' experience are well matched. There is a positive link between teacher's strengths and the subjects they teach. Teamwork is a very significant feature and the staff works exceptionally closely as a team. Clear job descriptions for teachers and co-ordinators help to support performance management. Teachers and staff are fully aware of their roles and responsibilities. Administrative and other staff are very well deployed, and the school has good arrangements to cover and support staff absences.

59. Overall, the quality of the accommodation is barely satisfactory. Classrooms are adequate for the current pupil numbers, and the accommodation is matched to the requirements of the age range of pupils. However, there are a number of shortcomings within the premises. The library is small and cannot be used by whole class groups, and the result is that pupils in some classes have limited experience of the school's stock of books. There is not enough space for computers in some classrooms. Two classrooms do not have running water, and one of these is used as access for the kitchen staff. In addition, the hall has to be used as a thoroughfare and there is no suitable space for sick or injured pupils to be accommodated. Outdoor facilities for the reception children are limited. The school does its best to overcome these difficulties, the learning environment is stimulating, and the premises are well maintained and cleaned.

60. The school's range of books and equipment is satisfactory overall. These are stored and deployed well, are easily accessible and are generally in good condition. Most resources are appropriate to pupils' ages and needs, and regular audits of provision ensure that out-of-date or shabby materials are removed from use. The range and condition of

books in the library and classrooms are satisfactory. Overall, there are just enough computers and other ICT resources, although these are not always fully used, particularly in Years 3 to 6. The school makes good use of visits to places such as museums, galleries and field centres, to enrich the curriculum.

61. The school's income per pupil is higher than that found in the majority of schools, but is not untypical of small rural schools. When the many strengths of the school are taken into consideration, together with good levels of attainment and effective planning and financial administration, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order for the school to improve further, the headteacher staff and governors should:

- Improve standards of ICT in Years 3 to 6 by:
 - * raising teachers' awareness of the potential uses of ICT in all subjects;
 - * providing more opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills through work in other subjects.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	41
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	27

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	2	5	25	9	0	0	0
Percentage	5	12	61	22	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	Nursery	YR–Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	154
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR–Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	21

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	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	5.3
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0.2
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
	2001	14	13	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	14	13	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	26	27
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (94)	96 (97)	100 (97)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	14
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	27	27	27
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (94)	100 (100)	100 (97)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	14	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	12
	Girls	13	10	12
	Total	23	22	24
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85 (84)	81 (95)	89 (100)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	10	12	11
	Girls	13	10	12
	Total	23	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	85 (80)	82 (84)	85 (90)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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
White	153
Any other minority ethnic group	1

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR–Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.9
Average class size	25.6

Education support staff:

YR–Y6

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

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/A
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/A
Total number of education support staff	N/A
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/A
Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/A

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
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	£
Total income	338,331.00
Total expenditure	331,960.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,988.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	12,897.00
Balance carried forward to next year	19,268.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
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
Number of questionnaires returned

154
45

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	56	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	36	60	4	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	76	0	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	51	22	0	0
The teaching is good.	33	60	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	20	66	11	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	32	48	9	9	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	29	67	2	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	13	60	24	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	24	58	2	4	11
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	56	7	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	11	51	33	2	2

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

63. Children are given a good start to their education in the Reception Class. All aspects of the provision for these children are of good quality, except for the opportunities for outdoor physical development, which are limited by the small space currently available. The Foundation Stage co-ordinator provides good leadership that is reflected in the good learning achieved by children and their above average levels of attainment by the time they enter Year 1.

64. Most of the children enjoy some form of pre-school education before being admitted to the Reception Class. The school's 'baseline assessments', carried out for all the Reception children in November each year, show that attainment on entry is broadly average.

65. Overall, the quality of teaching is good across all areas of learning³. Effective planning and assessment procedures contribute to the quality of teaching, and ensure that every child is included in all the activities that are on offer. This results in the children, including those of above average attainment and those with special educational needs, making good progress across all areas of their work, with the majority achieving standards at the end of the Reception Year that are in line with or above the standards expected of them.⁴ The high standards observed at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, even though there have been significant and demanding changes in the requirements of the early years' curriculum.

66. The organisation is more formal than that found in many schools, with the mornings primarily devoted to language and mathematical skills. The morning sessions tend to focus on developing children's early skills in numeracy and literacy, and are largely directed by the teacher. In the afternoons, children have more opportunities to choose from a range of creative and investigative activities. This structure for the day is appropriate, given the above average standards observed during the inspection.

Personal, social and emotional development

67. This is the least well-developed area of learning when the children first enter the Reception Year. However, good planning and the high expectations of the class teacher and her able LSA enable the children to make very good progress, with the result that most exceed the standards expected of them nationally by the time they enter Year 1.

68. From the moment they arrive in school, usually with eager, happy faces, children act in a very responsible fashion. They take their outdoor clothes off and get ready for the day, showing a great deal of independence. Throughout the day and whatever the activity, their behaviour is impeccable. In the mornings, when their work is primarily related to developing their language and mathematical skills, they concentrate for remarkably long periods of time. The way in which they co-operate and the sensitivity they show, for instance when singing a song followed by a prayer at the end of the afternoon, are illustrations of the mature way in

³ Children in the Reception Class follow the Foundation Stage curriculum, which is divided into six areas of learning: Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Communication, Language and Literacy, Mathematics, Knowledge and Understanding of the World, Creative Development and Physical Development.

⁴ These are standards, known as Early Learning Goals, for each area of learning and the majority of children are expected to have achieved these by the time they start Year 1.

which they respond to each other and to their own feelings and those of others. Similarly, they conducted themselves exceptionally well at a meeting of the Class Council when decisions about the large toys to be selected for the new playground area had to be taken. They were able to work with their teacher and LSA to reach a sensible shortlist of toys that were both popular and well made.

69. The Reception Class is providing an environment in which the children are well prepared to become independent learners.

Communication, language and literacy

70. Children come into the Reception Class with broadly average skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Effective teaching results in good progress, with the majority of children exceeding the standards expected in speaking, listening and reading, and achieving the expected standards in writing, by the time they enter Year 1.

71. The children use language confidently and nearly all recognise their own names with ease. They enjoy using 'grown-up' language when acting out the roles of parents in the area set aside for role-play activities, pretending to be shopkeepers or visiting in the role of a prince or princess. They answer questions, using full sentences, and make good use of expression when playing different imaginary roles. The children are encouraged to develop a love of books, and even the small number of children who are not yet able to read complete sentences know how to hold a book, can interpret the pictures to tell a story, recognise some letters, and know that words have meaning. The majority read at a level above that typical of their age, recognising full stops, capital letters, and in some cases question and exclamation marks. Most know the difference between a fact and a storybook and can identify the title, author and, in the case of fact books, the contents page. Children of higher attainment read with good expression and have already developed effective phonic skills. They love listening to stories read by their teacher. There are moments of sheer joy on their faces as they become totally immersed in the imaginary world that they are hearing in words and seeing in pictures. There are ample opportunities for the children to experiment with writing and, although progress is slower in this area, most achieve the standards expected and a third exceed them by the time they enter Year 1. They are taught to hold their pencils properly and to shape their letters correctly.

Mathematical development

72. Attainment in mathematical development is broadly average when the children enter the Reception Class. However, because they are effectively taught, children make good progress and most either achieve or exceed the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1.

73. While a small number of children are still consolidating their understanding of numbers up to five, the majority has secure understanding of numbers up to ten. During the registration session, many children count up to 22 (the number on roll) as they work out how many are present in class, while in lessons they correctly add together two single-digit numbers. They use mathematical language such as '*One more than*' or '*One less than*' with confidence. Number stories, action games and rhymes give the children evident pleasure and are used effectively to consolidate their understanding of number. For example, a small group of lower-attaining children really enjoyed acting out simple additions, using stick puppets. Most children understand the difference between addition and subtraction. Opportunities to use mathematical language are taken whenever possible, and the children

have a rich diet of directed and free play activities that give them good understanding of terms such as *'larger'* and *'smaller'*. They learn the names of shapes such as 'circles', 'squares' and 'triangles', and get great pleasure from making large three-dimensional models, using boxes and other materials of different shapes. Simple mathematical problems are used well to challenge the children and extend their thinking, and many are beginning to respond independently without the need for practical activities to help them to see what they need to do.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children enter the Reception Year with knowledge and understanding of the world that is broadly in line with that typical for their ages. Good teaching ensures that their awareness of themselves, others and their surroundings increases significantly. They make good progress and most either achieve or exceed the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1.

75. They enjoy learning about themselves, and this is reflected in the pictures of themselves and the skeletons that they have made, using black paper and white straws. Living things fascinate them: for instance, class photographs show the pleasure that the children received from having the opportunity to observe and touch a kitten. During the inspection the weather was a little uncertain, and this led to some interesting and mature discussion about how the weather should be recorded on the school weather chart. The role-play area and 'shop' enable children to act out roles that are found in the adult world, and walks around the village help them to understand more about the world outside their families and their school. 'Robin's Café', within the classroom, gives the children the opportunity for role-play which consolidates their understanding of food – and especially healthy food.

76. The classroom is a safe environment, and when children are working with tools and materials such as paint and glue, teachers give careful attention to health and safety.

77. The children have access to a small programmable robotic device and to two computers. These are used well by the children, who show good understanding, for their age, of how to use a keyboard, mouse and screen icons and menus.

Physical development

78. The quiet outside area is really too small to act as a natural extension to the range of activities that are available to the children indoors. The school has recognised this, and work on a playground extension was underway at the time of the inspection. In spite of this difficulty, good quality planning ensures that the children have the opportunity to experience the full range of physical activities required by the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is achieved partly by using equipment in the adjoining 'activity room', partly by using the main school playground and partly by using the school hall. Children make sound progress in this area of learning and most attain the standards expected by the time they enter Year 1.

79. Children use pencils and crayons correctly and their letter formation is generally good for their age. They use a range of tools in drawing, painting and making things, and their painting and cutting skills are good. When using simple construction kits, to make items such as wheeled vehicles, children show good control of their hand movements as they fit the different pieces together.

80. The children changed into shorts and tee shirts for a dance and drama lesson, with very few requiring adult help. When the cassette tape of the lesson began playing, nearly all the children showed that they had above average skills in speaking and listening. Most responded to instructions with ease. Some were able to give a reasonable definition of the word 'indestructible' that featured strongly in the story, and many understood what it meant. They moved around the hall at different levels with reasonable control of their movements, using different parts of their bodies very well.

Creative development

81. The children enter the Reception Year with skills that are broadly average, and they make good progress because of the good range of experiences they are offered. The activities available to them are thoroughly planned and there is an appropriate balance between children's free-choice activities and those directed by the teacher.

82. The development of children's creativity and spirituality is a strong feature of the Reception Class, and is evident in many of the activities. Examples are the expressions of wonder apparent as the children float off into an imaginary world during a dance lesson, and become 'blue balloons', or as they listen to the story of *The Sparrow who flew too far*.

83. There are effective links with other areas of the curriculum such as the making of 'fish tanks', with the use of little fibre trays. Each contained a cut out fish that the children had decorated, using foil, paper and paint. Similarly, the story of the *Blue Balloon* acted as the stimulus for 'bubble pictures' that were made by blowing through a straw into coloured water and then pressing papers on to the bubbles that resulted. In this case, the children's understanding of water and the way bubbles behave enhanced their knowledge and understanding of the world. In both cases, the work produced was of a good standard for children of this age.

84. Children enjoy selecting the materials they are going to use to make a model and then choosing and using the right tools for the job. Painting of a good standard on a variety of subjects is displayed around the classroom.

85. The quality of singing observed was above average, with the children knowing a wide range of number and action songs. For such young children, their pitch and tone are pleasing on the ear. Their sense of rhythm is generally well developed and they can repeat complex rhythms in response to clapping from their teacher or in time to a piece of music. They enjoy improvising with the tuned and untuned instruments that are available.

ENGLISH

86. Standards in English have improved since the previous inspection in 1997 and are now above average for pupils in Years 2 and 6.

87. Inspection judgements confirm the trend of improving results in the national tests for pupils in Year 2 and the trend of above average performance in the tests for pupils in Year 6. The school has set a challenging target of 93 per cent of pupils in Year 6 attaining the nationally expected Level 4 by the end of the current academic year, and inspection findings indicate that it should come close to achieving this.

88. Results of the 2001 national tests show that all Year 2 pupils attained the national target of Level 2 in reading and almost all attained Level 4 in writing. Particularly noteworthy was the school's performance at the higher Level 3. Forty-one per cent of pupils reached this level in reading and 37 per cent were awarded this level in writing. The overall performance of pupils in Year 6 was similarly impressive, with 85 per cent attaining the nationally expected Level 4 and 37 per cent reaching Level 5. However, while this performance was judged to be above average in national terms, it was only average in comparison with schools judged to be similar on the basis of broadly the same proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

89. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in developing their skills in speaking and listening, and, by the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are above average. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to their classmates, given their prior attainment.

90. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 listen very carefully to what their teachers and classmates have to say during class discussions. Speaking skills also develop well. In Year 1, the teacher has high expectations of pupils' responses to questions, and her insistence that they answer in whole, grammatically correct sentences results in good quality dialogue. Good quality class discussion is also a feature of lessons in Year 2. Most pupils in this year group speak clearly in Standard English, and those with higher attainment extend their answers in response to their teacher's encouragement. Activities such as the regular meetings of the school and class councils give pupils regular opportunities to practise their skills in speaking and listening, and give them a good understanding of the rules of 'audience'. However, the Class Council meeting observed in Year 5 and 6 was rather too formal in format, and none of the pupils had the opportunity to speak at length or to debate topics in any detail. Nonetheless, pupils in Year 6 generally speak clearly and confidently, and many show a greater command of language than is normally seen in pupils of a similar age. This was particularly evident in a class meeting with the senior planning officer from the local council during which the plans for the redevelopment of part of the local hospital site were discussed. Pupils coped well with challenging jargon such as '*alternative institutional use*' and '*dwelling unit*' during the officer's presentation, and asked relevant and perceptive questions about the planning application.

91. Standards of reading are above average in Years 2 and 6. Pupils in Year 2 have good technical skills in reading, but their skills in using books for simple research purposes are underdeveloped. Pupils in all classes show a high level of interest in reading. They make a good start because teaching is well focused, and clearly graded materials secure their progress in the early stages. The skill of sounding out new words to find their meaning develops well. As they gain in confidence, pupils are given increasing experience of 'free choice' books to develop their interest. Pupils with special needs or lower attainment continue to read graded materials and are heard reading more often, so that they make good progress.

92. Pupils in Year 2 have a sound understanding of what they read, and books are generally well matched to their ability. Those with higher attainment read aloud well, emphasising the meaning and dramatising characters. Research skills are more limited. None of the Year 2 pupils interviewed about their reading had used the school library for some time, and none were able to locate books quickly, because they were unfamiliar with the colour-coding system of classification. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 build on the good start given in Years 1 and 2 and continue to make good progress. This occurs because they are given regular opportunities to practise their skills in literacy lessons and across all subjects, and because their progress is carefully monitored. By Year 6, pupils read longer texts silently and with good concentration. Those with higher attainment are confident and fluent when dealing

with challenging texts. All Year 6 pupils interviewed about their reading spoke confidently about their favourite authors and gave good reasons for their reading preferences. Research skills in Year 6 are good. All pupils were able to locate books quickly, and confidently used contents and index pages to help them to find passages of text.

93. Standards of writing are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. Throughout the school, pupils are given regular opportunities to write in a variety of forms and for different purposes, and make good progress overall. Pupils identified as having special educational needs receive good quality help in class and the work they are given is carefully based on their prior attainment. However, an over-reliance on photocopied worksheets as the basis for written work sometimes limits the challenge presented to higher-attaining pupils when they restrict their answers to the space made available on the sheets.

94. Pupils in Year 1 are able to write in simple sentences, with capital letters and full stops used correctly. High-frequency words are usually spelt properly and pupils make phonetically plausible attempts at more complex words containing two or three syllables. By Year 2, basic rules of punctuation are soundly established. Most pupils write clear factual accounts of personal experiences and imaginative stories based on models such as traditional tales. Higher-attaining pupils are able to write at length, using devices such as chapters to separate the different parts of their stories. Good use is made of opportunities to link the development of writing skills with work in other areas of the curriculum. For instance, the writing of lists of ingredients and utensils needed to make a cake is part of a design and technology exercise, and skills in writing about events in sequence are practised in science work about planting crocus bulbs. Handwriting is of a satisfactory standard. Letters are generally well formed and of a consistent size, although much of the pupils' writing, even when produced by higher-attainers, is printed. By Year 4, the impact of regular, systematic spelling practice and pupils' increasing skills in breaking words down into small segments as part of their reading strategies is seen in the accurate spelling of simple polysyllabic words such as '*stranded*' or '*horrible*'. Punctuation is more sophisticated, with consistently correct use of inverted commas and apostrophes. Note-taking skills are being developed, and pupils are learning to refine their work through re-drafting. Improved reading skills also result in a wider range of vocabulary and a good choice of descriptive words to give writing greater interest. By Year 6, writing is produced in ink and is generally well formed and consistently joined. Spelling skills are generally well developed, with higher-attaining pupils correctly forming more complex words such as '*consequently*' and '*automatically*' in their unaided writing. Punctuation is further refined, with good use made of devices such as ellipses to indicate where missing words imply meaning. Writing takes a wide range of forms, such as journalistic prose, persuasive argument and book reviews. Pupils understand the conventions of play writing and use the work of famous authors as a model in writing, for example in the style of Charles Dickens.

95. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Of the seven lessons observed, one was excellent, two were very good, two were good and two were satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers' careful planning ensured that a good balance was struck between direct teaching, time for pupils to concentrate on written tasks, and time to review what had been learned. These lessons were also characterised by teachers' clear learning objectives and their good subject knowledge, evident in the quality of their explanations and dialogue with pupils. As a result, pupils made good gains in their learning because they were given ample time to write and because they clearly knew what they had to do. Where teaching was less successful, but nevertheless satisfactory, teachers spent too long on their introduction to the lessons and therefore left too little time for pupils to write. Exemplary teaching, as a result of great subject expertise and skill in word play, was observed during a Year 6 lesson taken by a visiting poet. Activities such as this considerably enrich the curriculum and contribute to the good standards evident. The quality of pupils' learning is also greatly influenced by their excellent

attitudes towards their work and very good standards of behaviour. A good example of both of these attributes was observed in a Year 4 lesson in which pupils were challenged to plan an 'adventure game' story. Pupils behaved impeccably and worked very well together in pairs, exchanging ideas and sharing tasks. The working atmosphere created was one in which all were able to concentrate without disturbance on what they had to do, leaving the teacher able to focus on challenging pupils to produce game plans of increased complexity. Skilled learning support assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs play a full part in lessons. They usually achieve this by explaining tasks more simply to the pupils or by helping them to sustain their concentration and improve their vocabulary through good quality dialogue.

96. The school library is small and mostly contains non-fiction books. These are generally in good condition and the classification system is clearly displayed. However, whole class groups cannot use the library and some pupils do not use it often enough. Pupils with special educational needs were observed using one of the computers in the library to improve their spelling skills, to good effect. However, ICT is generally not used enough as a fully integrated part of lessons. For example, in one lesson, pupils were given the task of using the computers for a text-editing exercise. The lesson focus was to improve the quality of ordinary sentences by turning them into 'super sentences' containing better quality adjectives and more adventurous vocabulary. Instead of being provided with a screen display of the text to be edited, pupils were expected to first enter the text themselves and then edit it – replicating the task done by other members of the class with pencil and paper. As a result, they were unable to complete the task in the time allocated, because they spent too much time in word-processing rather than using the special properties of the computer program to re-draft the sentences.

97. The National Literacy Strategy has been well implemented, and teachers' skills in planning have resulted in a good curriculum being provided for pupils. Pupils' progress is carefully monitored, and periodic assessments are well used to inform future planning. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored by the headteacher, who has a clear overview of standards throughout the school.

MATHEMATICS

98. The standards the pupils attain in Years 2 and 6 are above those expected nationally. This is a similar picture to that reported at the time of the last inspection.

99. Results of the 2001 national tests for pupils in Year 2 continued the trend of above average standards in mathematics seen in the results for the previous two years. All pupils attained the national target of Level 2, and the proportion reaching the higher Level 3, at over 50 per cent, was well above average. Overall, the school's results were above average when compared to those of all schools nationally and when compared to the results of schools of a similar type. Overall, results of the 2001 national tests for Year 6 pupils were well above average and continued a trend of steady improvement since 1999. More than three-quarters of the pupils reached the national target of Level 4 and over a third attained the higher Level 5. These results were about average when compared to those of similar schools, with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. The school has set a challenging target of 93 per cent of the pupils presently in Year 6 to reach the expected Level 4 in the national tests for 2002, and is likely to be successful in achieving this.

100. The school has worked hard in recent years to implement the national numeracy strategy and in deciding which schemes of work and resources to use. The schemes are now fully in place, and are having a positive effect upon the standards the pupils are attaining.

101. Pupils' learning is good throughout the school. They are provided with a wide range of activities, which develop their mental abilities and enable them to work out problems in different ways. The oldest pupils have a good understanding of how to apply their knowledge to solve a variety of different problems. Over time, this is having a positive effect on the progress the pupils make. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and pupils are well motivated both to solve their set tasks and to devise different methods of calculation. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are given a good range of tasks that make them think. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher's good knowledge of the pupils' abilities helped the pupils to build upon their previous learning to correctly make numbers such as 23 or 54, using a simple abacus and number cards. In a Year 2 lesson, the pupils made good gains in their learning when working out the answers to simple money problems at the beginning of the activity. The recognised quickly how to add different sums of money, and used the correct mathematical vocabulary to describe their calculations. The great majority of the pupils work hard in response to the challenging tasks set for them by their teachers.

102. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 continue to make good progress in their learning. A close scrutiny of pupils' past work indicates that they cover a wide range of activities that supports this good progress. For example, pupils in Year 6 know the difference between 'mean, mode, and median' and how to work out the probability of which letters of the alphabet can be drawn randomly out of a bag. In Year 5, work on two- and three-dimensional shapes indicates that the pupils have a good knowledge of their properties. In lessons, the pupils have good levels of mental calculation, often working out quite difficult questions quickly and accurately. In a Year 3 and 4 class, the pupils worked out different ways of making 20, using simple number cards, and they know that $8+12$ or $12+8$ will result in the same answer. The higher-attaining pupils also recognise that a number such as 69 broken down to 60 and 9 will help them to add more quickly. By the time the pupils are in the oldest class, they manipulate numbers quickly, and work out simple equations, using brackets correctly to separate numbers. Other pupils accurately solve problems such as 10 multiplied by 0.175 and 175 divided by 100.

103. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour are consistently good, and often very good, throughout the school. The great majority of the pupils are well motivated within lessons. They listen very well during introductions and are well motivated to want to know more. They often discuss alternative ways to work out answers and occasionally think up ways not thought of by the teacher. Work in exercise books is generally well presented and provides pupils with much better opportunities to learn how to set out their work correctly than when using photocopied worksheets. When in groups, pupils work together well, often correcting each other's errors sensitively. In the plenary sessions, when learning is reviewed at the end of lessons, the pupils are enthusiastic to share their answers, but also listen well to what others have to say.

104. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress within lessons. In many classes skilled LSAs give them good quality help. This help is well targeted and planned to address their specific needs. For example, a pupil with severe special needs played a full part in lessons and worked well with other pupils because of the LSA's sensitive support and 'low key' oversight of his work.

105. All six of the mathematics lessons observed were of good quality. This consistently good teaching is having a positive effect on the progress the pupils make throughout the school. Teachers plan their lessons carefully, organise their classes well and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They are good at motivating their pupils, who are nearly always eager to give of their best. The introductions to lessons capture the interest of the pupils quickly, and skills are developed well. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the lively start, using a large number line combined with a quick review of what the pupils had learned previously, promoted good learning and high levels of interest. In Years 3 to 6, the teaching builds well upon the good start made in the younger classes. The lessons are well planned, with different ability groups highlighted well. The activities combine a lively and stimulating introduction with good activity work. In a Year 3 and 4 class, no time was wasted in challenging the pupils to use mental calculation and alternative ways of finding answers. This then progressed to well-organised activities, where the grouping of pupils according to their potential attainment resulted in good progress by all. In a Year 4 and 5 class, the teaching was particularly successful in getting the pupils to think up different ways of solving problems by using 'lazy' methods and 'short cuts'. The oldest pupils have challenging work in nearly all their activities and, in one lesson, showed how well they were able to multiply decimals.

106. The headteacher is the subject co-ordinator, and manages the subject well. The schemes of work and materials used have been carefully chosen and planned to provide a good range of activities. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented well, and teachers have received appropriate training. The policy gives a secure overview of the subject, although it does not yet have any guidance about the school's view on teaching and learning. The procedures for assessment are good and provide an informative range of information for both daily and longer-term reporting, and the planning of future lessons. The resources for the subject, such as practical apparatus, are generally plentiful and of good quality. However, computers are not used enough to develop pupils' skills in Years 3 to 6, where activities tend to reinforce rather than challenge or extend the pupils' thinking.

SCIENCE

107. Overall, national test results for pupils in Year 6 have steadily improved since the time of the previous inspection, although there has been some year-on-year fluctuation within this upward trend due to differences between the groups of pupils tested. For example, results of the most recent national tests in 2001 showed a downturn, with pupils in Year 6 attaining only average standards in comparison with the national picture. When compared with results from schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, standards were well below average.

108. Inspection judgements confirm the general upward trend in standards and show that the current group of pupils in Year 6 is likely to improve on last year's performance in the national tests. Standards in science are well above average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. All pupils, including those identified as having special educational needs, make good progress as they move through the school.

109. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only three science lessons were observed. Judgements are based on the evidence from these lessons, a close scrutiny of samples of pupils' previously completed work and teachers' planning, and discussion with the subject co-ordinator.

110. Pupils are given a very good start to their science education in Year 1. The teaching is of high quality and pupils are interested and excited by their work. In a lesson observed in this class, pupils were challenged to describe the properties of unknown substances and then to describe the changes that occurred when liquids were added. Interest was considerably heightened by the teachers' pronouncement that the substances came from other planets and were called '*Fluzzit*' (bicarbonate of soda), '*Splodge*' (soap flakes), '*Crome*' (cornflour) and '*Plond*' (playdough). The lesson was very well prepared and well supported by parent-helpers, who carefully followed the teacher's notes to ensure that good observations and descriptions resulted. In Year 2, pupils continue to develop their skills well because of the good emphasis placed on investigative and experimental work. A lesson observed in this class focused on pupils constructing a way of testing the distances travelled by a variety of model cars. Good teaching, together with pupils' interested response, resulted in pupils making well-reasoned, simple hypotheses about the vehicles' movements and gaining a good working knowledge of the principles of 'fair testing'.

111. In Years 3 to 6, work in science continues to be used well to develop pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy. For example, pupils in Year 3 used their existing knowledge of materials well when classifying a variety of everyday objects according to their properties. In discussion with their teacher, they listened carefully and used correct scientific terminology when answering. Previous work completed in this class involved the use of measuring and recording skills as pupils accurately charted the length of a shadow during the course of the day. Skills in science are also transferred to work in other subjects, as observed in a Year 4 and 5 lesson in design and technology in which pupils used their knowledge of electrical circuits in designing and making models. Although no science teaching was seen in Year 6, evidence from examples of pupils' previously completed work shows that the emphasis placed on investigative work is as strong a feature in this year group as it is in others. In order to ensure that all pupils cover all elements of the curriculum, even though they are grouped in mixed-age classes, science topics are taught in 'cycles'. Therefore, pupils from the Year 6 and 5 class have also used their knowledge of electrical circuits in a design and technology activity. Samples of work from Year 6 pupils also showed good understanding of the effects of the movement of the earth in terms of the changing length of day and night, and the seasons of the year.

112. In Years 3 to 6, much of the recorded work in science is based on the format determined by photocopied worksheets. The advantage of this system is that it ensures similar coverage of the subject by all pupils. However, opportunities for pupils to devise their own methods of tabulation and recording, and to write at length about topics, are often limited by this approach. During the course of the inspection there was little evidence of the use of ICT in science lessons, and very little in work already completed by pupils.

113. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Of the three lessons observed, one was very good, one was good and one was satisfactory. Strengths of teaching lie in teachers' thorough preparation, the clarity of their explanations, their skills in questioning and their management of pupils. This good teaching results in good learning, with pupils engrossed in their tasks and working at a good pace because they know precisely what they have to do. Pupils' excellent attitudes and behaviour contribute strongly to the very good working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils identified as having special educational needs enjoy equal access to the breadth of the curriculum. Teachers are skilled at matching work to their potential, and they receive good quality help from learning support assistants in class, which helps them to play a full part in lessons.

114. The curriculum has significantly improved since the time of the previous inspection, with nationally recommended guidance from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority now forming the basis of planning. The curriculum is considerably enriched through a wide range

of science activities. For example, there is an annual 'Science Week', which has included activities such as a 'Science Show', activities for parents, and an 'Investigation Day'. Pupils also take part in science events involving other schools, such as the 'Science Olympiad', which the co-ordinator helps to organise. The co-ordinator works hard to ensure that all pupils have received equality of provision, despite the mixed-age groupings within Years 3 to 6. She has achieved this by the way in which she has constructed the curriculum and also through her rigorous monitoring of what pupils have done. Overall, resources for teaching science are adequate and are well used. The very good leadership provided in the subject has made a strong contribution to the improved standards.

ART AND DESIGN

115. Standards in art and design are broadly in line with national expectations in Year 2 and Year 6, a situation similar to that reported at the time of the previous inspection in 1997. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school and all enjoy full access to the breadth of the curriculum, even though the facilities in some classrooms limit what can be taught.

116. Attractive displays of the pupils' art show that pupils enjoy full access to the breadth of the curriculum and make a substantial contribution to the school's welcoming environment. These displays include well-detailed, colourful clay tiles, large three dimensional wire sculptures covered in self-hardening modelling material, string prints, and attractive silhouettes of trees made from twisted paper mounted on painted backgrounds.

117. The Year 1 classroom is rather cramped, and pupils in the Year 2 class do not have a practical work area, with a sink and work-surface for 'messy' activities. Nevertheless, pupils in these classes produce work of a satisfactory standard overall, with some pieces of high quality. In both year groups good teaching and pupils' excellent attitudes towards their work help to overcome the difficult working conditions. In Year 1, pupils first looked at pictures of Andy Goldsworthy's work, using natural materials, before creating their own sand sculptures and effective collages made from leaves, sticks, seeds and straw. In Year 2, following a theme of *'Mother Nature – Designer'*, pupils produced some finely detailed observational drawings of segments of fruits such as tomatoes, lemons, peppers and kiwis. This work was well proportioned and carefully coloured to capture the different tones within the centres of the fruits. In this task, about a third of pupils in this class were producing work of a higher standard than is normally expected of the year group.

118. Evidence from photographs and samples of pupils' previously completed work show that good links are made with other areas of the curriculum to help to develop pupils' skills as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 3 made Viking 'jewellery' and decorated shields as part of their history topic, while geometric shapes cut from paper were used to produce Islamic designs. Sketchbooks are used best in the Year 4 and 5 class, with good examples of studies in perspective and experiments in the use of pointillist techniques in the style of Georges Seurat. In Year 6, pupils used viewfinders to 'frame' everyday objects in the classroom before drawing them in close-up or from unusual angles. Pupils' skills in line drawing and their use of shading to create the impression of depth were broadly average for their age group. In this lesson, good use was made of a digital camera to complement the drawing task. Everyday objects, which pupils had photographed from unusual angles, were studied during the plenary session at the end of the lesson and compared to pupils' observational studies.

119. The quality of teaching was good in all three lessons observed. Each lesson had a clear focus, which was discussed with pupils at the start of the session. Techniques were well taught, and resources needed for the lessons were well prepared. As a result, pupils set to work quickly because they knew clearly what they had to do and where to get the equipment they needed. Pupils' excellent attitudes to their work and their very good behaviour contributed strongly to the very good working atmosphere. Pupils concentrated hard on their assignments for lengthy periods, and tried their best to improve on what they had done.

120. There is clear direction for the school's work in art, and activities such as 'Art Day' enrich the curriculum.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

121. Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6. This is a similar position to that found at the time of the last inspection. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only two lessons were observed during the course of the inspection. One of these was good and the other was very good. Overall, inspection evidence indicates that teaching is generally good and leads to good progress for all pupils, including those of prior high attainment and those with special educational needs. Teachers receive good support from the policy and the national guidance used by the school as the basis for its planning.

122. Effective leadership ensures that from Year 1 onwards the pupils are introduced to the full process of design: from the identification of purpose, the choice of materials and the initial design, through to the evaluation of the final product. Throughout the school, teachers have high expectations of the quality of making, and pupils achieve good standards of precision and finish in their products. The individuality of design and the good quality of evaluation are further strengths that can be observed across the school.

123. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed making figures of clowns with moving parts. These were designed well and the final products were of good quality. Similarly, food technology played an important part in the choice of menu for the sixth birthday of Fluffy, the class teddy bear. Elements of the design process were also evident in the attractive decorations that the children had created for his birthday. Equally good quality work was to be seen in the invitations to his party. High standards and good progress are maintained in Year 2, where the pupils designed and made attractive baskets of different sizes. Using the stimulus of the story of *Joseph and his Coat of Many Colours*, pupils worked on their class computer to design multi-coloured coats that they were then able to make, using collage. In both cases the pupils had successfully designed products that met their purpose and which they had refined to produce final articles of an above average standard. The work about Joseph made a sound contribution to the pupils' spiritual development.

124. In Years 3 and 4, a well-planned and challenging lesson encouraged the pupils to concentrate hard as they attempted to describe the different characteristics of four different pizzas in terms of their appearance, smell, taste and texture. The final task was to attempt to identify the ingredients that had gone into the production of each pizza. The teacher, supported by two adult helpers, constantly challenged the children in discussion, and as a result most pupils were successful in correctly identifying the ingredients. Throughout the lesson, the pupils' behaviour was very good as they contributed to group and class discussions in a sensible and mature way. The place given to consideration of personal hygiene and healthy eating were also positive features of this lesson. Very good links with science were observed in Years 5 and 6, where the pupils' work in science on electricity was used by the teacher to challenge them to design a circuit using a single switch that could be

used as some form of alarm. This was a stimulating experience for the pupils, and the room was alive with purposeful activity as they worked in pairs to produce solutions. The outcomes were imaginative and included devices for identifying when the sea had broken through local defences or a river had risen dangerously high. Consistently effective teaching with high expectations results in above average standards being maintained across Years 3 to 6. Examples of work previously completed by pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed pupils' good understanding of the use of cams to animate models, and well thought out 'ball mazes'.

125. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are responsible, value the contributions of other pupils and adults, work very hard, and treat with respect each other and the resources they are using. Their positive response to their teachers and learning support staff is reflected in the above average quality of the planning and evaluation. The high quality of co-operation between pupils makes a significant contribution to their moral and social development.

126. Resources for work in design and technology are generally satisfactory, but not enough use is made of ICT to help to develop pupils' skills.

GEOGRAPHY

127. Overall, standards in geography are broadly in line with what is expected nationally for pupils in Years 2 and 6. In terms of the recording of work, standards are better than those expected, and in pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject they are broadly in line with expectations.

128. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. At the time of the last inspection a similar position was found at the end of Year 2, while standards were judged to be above those expected at the end of Year 6. There have been significant changes in the primary curriculum since then and the school has done well to maintain provision at its present level. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only one lesson was observed during the inspection. Judgements are based on this lesson, together with a scrutiny of pupils' previously completed work in their folders and on display, and discussion with pupils and teachers.

129. The recently appointed co-ordinator has conducted an audit of the curriculum and the resources that support it, and provides satisfactory leadership for this subject. Planning is based on national guidance, and teachers ensure that all parts of the National Curriculum programme of study are followed. Continuous assessment in lessons and at the ends of individual units of study ensures that the work given is matched well to the prior attainment of each pupil, including those of higher ability and those with special educational needs. The skill of the teachers, their high expectations and the way in which they present this subject ensures that most pupils enjoy learning about their own country and other parts of the world. Inspection evidence shows that the quality of teaching is generally good and that the support provided by learning support assistants is also an important feature in ensuring that pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities.

130. Pupils in Year 1 learn about the area around their school and think about ways in which their locality could be made safer. Children in Year 2 were observed studying the imaginary island of Struay in the Inner Hebrides. There were strong links with their work in literacy as the children studied the book *Katie Morag and the Two Grandmothers*. There were equally strong links with mathematics as they successfully completed maps of the key features of the island, which showed that most had secure understanding of co-ordinates. They also understood the reason for a map having a key. In discussion, Year 2 pupils

remembered their walk around the school grounds in Year 1, and they knew that Norwich is the largest nearby town and that America is 'a long way to go'.

131. Pupils in Years 3,4 and 5 enjoy contrasting village life in Little Plumstead with life in a village in Bangladesh. This choice of study derives from the school's sponsorship of a Bangladeshi girl through 'Action Aid'. The curriculum is enriched by activities such as the exciting 'Bangladesh' and 'Africa' days, where pupils were given the opportunity to hear at first hand about life in these countries and to experience dress, dance, food and art. Photographic evidence confirmed the richness of these experiences and their effectiveness in heightening the awareness of pupils of other people in the world. Similarly, pupils in Years 5 and 6 contrast life on the Norfolk Broads with life in the Lake District. Pupils also enjoyed a 'French' day and their visits to places such as Banham Zoo, Snettisham and The Ecotec Centre.

132. By Year 6, pupils are ably considering issues that concern their own community and the wider world. For example, in an English lesson observed in Years 5 and 6 the pupils worked hard to consider the implications of the possible future development of part of the local hospital site. Pupils were given good experience of the technical language used in relation to planning matters, and showed maturity in their judgements and good literacy skills in their writing of persuasive letters to the local planning officer. Some higher-attaining pupils showed a good grasp of the issues and the important effects that cost can have on planning decisions.

133. In the single lesson seen, the behaviour of the children was very good and they helped and supported each other well. Their contributions in discussion were a real strength and they were able to work independently, treating with respect the resources they were using.

134. When account is taken of the curriculum opportunities it offers, geography makes an important contribution to the social, moral and cultural development of the pupils. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used satisfactorily in Years 1 and 2 to support the curriculum, and its use is planned Years 3 to 6, although ease of access to computers is sometimes a difficulty for the pupils. Other resources are up to date, easily accessible and used well.

HISTORY

135. Overall, standards are in line with what is expected nationally of pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils' skills in recording their history work are above average, while their knowledge and understanding of the work is about average. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those of high attainment and those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress across the school. At the time of the last inspection, attainment exceeded expectations at the end of both the infant and the junior phases. There have been many changes in the primary curriculum since then, and the school has worked hard to maintain the provision of the full National Curriculum programme of study.

136. The co-ordinator, who is also responsible for geography, has given considerable time to identifying the curriculum and resource needs of this subject, and has made a sound start to planning its future development. The planning of lessons is based on national guidance, and teaching is regularly adapted in the light of continuous assessment in lessons and upon the completion of each unit of study. The high expectations and skill of the teachers has made history an exciting subject to learn, and observation in lessons and discussion with pupils confirmed that most enjoy this work. Observations of lessons and other inspection evidence confirm that the quality of teaching is good overall. Four lessons were observed

during the inspection; one of these was of the highest quality, two were good and one was satisfactory.

137. Pupils in Year 1 enjoyed comparing toys from the past with modern toys, and they were able to do this having already completed a lot of work about *'Homes Long Ago'*. There were moments of wonder, as the pupils' eyes widened when they discussed why they thought a particular toy was old. Different pupils proudly told the story of the old or new toy they had brought in, amongst them a teddy bear that was over 100 years old and a metal doll's pram that had belonged to a pupil's mother. Skilled questioning from the teacher helped the pupils to identify indications of the age of a toy, such as whether it looked worn and shabby, whether it had lost much of its stuffing and if the materials used would not be used today. The pupils decided that the doll's pram had to be old because it was made of metal and it would be made of plastic today, *'because you can bend plastic more easily.'* Discussion of the fact that metal would rust was a good link with science. The creation of a 'Victorian Home' and a 'Toy Museum' in the classroom helped to bring history alive. The pupils have their understanding enriched by visiting the Toy and Castle Museums in Norwich. Pupils in Year 2 enjoyed talking about what they knew about Florence Nightingale, and showed a secure understanding of her story and the importance of keeping hospitals clean.

138. Throughout Years 3 to 6, the curriculum is extended by visits to local historical houses and museums, so that pupils are given opportunities to evaluate evidence and to make judgements from the evidence available. Although ICT is also used to support work in history, ranging from a digital camera to CD ROM's and the Internet, it is not a regular enough feature of pupils' assignments.

139. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 looked in a mature fashion at the way the Vikings lived, the distances they travelled and the reasons why they set out on such long journeys. In this lesson strong links were made with geography, as pupils identified the different parts of the world travelled by the Vikings. Skills in literacy were also practised, through the use of dictionaries to identify historical terms, the use of books to obtain information, and the development of pupils' skills in speaking and listening. The effective support provided by a learning support assistant enabled all the pupils to be fully included in the lesson.

140. History came alive in Years 4 and 5 as the pupils returned to Tudor times. They became children of the time: winnowing grain and then taking wool from a complete sheep's fleece, and creating their own woollen thread by using a hand spinning machine made out of a knitting needle and a potato. In this lesson, the levels of interest and excitement were high and the rate of learning was very good. Once again, the effective use of a learning support assistant ensured that every pupil was fully included in the activities. This was history teaching at its best, which enabled the children to learn from realistic first-hand experiences. At the same time, the expressions on their faces as the rough fleece turned into strands of wool in their hands was a real moment of amazement.

141. In Years 5 and 6, the need to evaluate evidence and to make sensible judgements was further extended. The pupils looked at issues of evidence in relation to the Tudor period and saw how that evidence might be different from that available when studying dinosaurs or cave men. There was a challenging discussion that really came alive for both teacher and pupils when the finding of bones in an excavation was raised, and the conclusions which might be drawn were considered if the head and body had been

separated. The work set was matched to the prior attainment of the pupils, with higher-attaining pupils considering the judgements made in a quite complex newspaper article about the picture of *'The Ambassadors'*. These pupils were able to explain very well the key information contained in the article.

142. With the exception of a little restlessness in one Year 3 and 4 lesson, the behaviour observed in lessons was impeccable. The way in which pupils contribute to discussion, whatever their age, and the way in which they listen to the views of others is a real strength of the school. Across the school, pupils look at the differences between 'then' and 'now', and the comparisons that they make provide a positive contribution to their moral, social and cultural development. Pupils effectively take responsibility for their own learning, and they carefully look after the satisfactory range of resources available in school and the additional artefacts that are borrowed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

143. Owing to timetable arrangements, little direct teaching was observed in lessons throughout the school. Activities within other subjects were observed, past work scrutinised, and informal discussions held with pupils before a judgement was reached. The pupils in Years 1 and 2 reach the standards expected, and make sufficient progress in their work. The older pupils in Years 3 to 6 do not make sufficient gains in their learning over time, so that by the time they reach the end of Year 6 the standards they attain are below those expected nationally.

144. In Year 2, the pupils have sufficient knowledge and understanding of how computers are used in everyday appliances such as telephones, and toys that use technology to control them. The pupils know the main features of the computer such as the mouse, keyboard, and screen, and can load a CD-ROM. Work in other subjects indicates that the pupils use the computer and software to investigate work in history and literacy. The pupils have looked at the keyboard and its functions, labelling the different parts accurately. In a lesson in Year 1, the pupils worked well with a programmable toy, and they made reasonable guesses about distances to enter and 'teach' the toy. The teacher was effective in making the activity both exciting and understandable, and this helped the pupils to make good gains in their learning. The activities chosen are generally relevant to the interests of the pupils, for example the use of a program to build the pupils' research skills, assisted by an adult.

145. Some direct teaching was observed in a Year 4 and 5 class and in a Year 5 and 6 class. The teaching in these lessons was satisfactory, and the teachers showed a good technical knowledge of the computers and programs that they were using. Even though the pupils experience the breadth of the National Curriculum, the number of computers in school is barely adequate and makes this more difficult to achieve. The opportunities for the pupils to have 'hands on' time with computers is too short to enable them to practise their skills regularly, and as a result some forget what they have learned. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 lesson, the teacher explained carefully the features of web sites, and the use of a text-based program to build up a story using graphics and web site features. In reality, much of the activity was theoretical and the amount of time the pupils would have to wait before completing their work later in another lesson makes their progress slow. In a Year 5 and 6 class, the teacher also had a good knowledge of how to use both the computer and software when investigating the use of databases in a history lesson about the Tudors. The pupils responded very well by listening intently to the teacher and in carrying out simple activities away from the computer. However, the progress made by many in gaining skills in using databases was insufficient, particularly for the higher-attaining pupils. There are exceptions. In a Year 3 and 4 class, some pupils worked on a number of tasks from word processing to

designing simple wallpaper with repeating patterns. The pupils had a secure grasp of the basic functions of the word processor and graphics program and made good progress. Other pupils in another class could explain how to use a digital camera to take pictures of objects from unusual angles. Past work indicates that the oldest pupils have used other programs on the computer to design stained glass windows, using art software, but the amount of work seen generally was limited in quantity and variety.

146. The co-ordination of ICT is satisfactory overall, and the subject is promoted appropriately in Years 1 and 2. The policy gives clear guidance for staff, and the scheme of work follows national guidelines. Most of the staff have had nationally provided training recently, and this is contributing to maintaining standards, particularly in the younger classes. It is not yet influencing the standards attained by the older pupils. Overall, the monitoring of the subject is not sufficiently developed in assessing the rate of progress made by the pupils.

MUSIC

147. Only two lessons were observed: a Year 3 and 4 class, and a Year 5 and 6 class. Other inspection evidence came from listening to the quality of singing in assemblies and from discussion with pupils. No judgement can be made about the standards reached by pupils in Year 2, but pupils in Year 6 attain the expected standards. At the last inspection, the attainment of the oldest pupils was judged to be above average. It is likely that the strong focus placed on literacy and numeracy over the past few years has to some extent adversely affected standards in music.

148. The pupils sing in tune in assemblies and they join in with some enthusiasm when the music is played to accompany them. They need little encouragement to sing, and the youngest pupils in Year 1 and 2 are very enthusiastic to show how well they perform. In Year 3 and 4, the pupils cover a satisfactory range of work. The skilful planning of the class teacher enabled the pupils to practise their skills in clapping to a beat, listening to others, and using xylophones to compose simple musical phrases. The pupils sing particularly well, with good expression and phrasing. The enthusiastic approach of the teacher helps them to sing without being self-conscious, and this improves their performance. In a Year 5 and 6 class, good teaching encouraged the pupils to appreciate the styles of music from different countries, and the involvement of the pupils in clapping to the beat extended the value of the activity. Discussion with the pupils indicates that they have good opportunities through the year to perform in concerts and on special occasions. The pupils with special educational needs make good progress within the lessons. Although not all the teachers are helped by learning support assistants in lessons, they are skilful in involving pupils of all abilities in music making.

149. The subject is managed satisfactorily overall. The policy and schemes of work provide sufficient guidance for planning work, although music is not always linked effectively with other topics being studied. Other activities are arranged, including music festivals, Easter and Harvest services and Christmas performances for the parents. Provision for music within the school is enriched through peripatetic violin tuition for a small group of pupils. Music resources are generally satisfactory and all pupils have the opportunity to play an instrument.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

150. Owing to the way in which the timetable was arranged, only indoor lessons were observed during the inspection. One lesson in gymnastics was seen in Year 2 and three in Years 3 to 6. The standards that the pupils attained in the lessons observed are higher than those expected nationally for pupils in Years 2 and 6. This represents an improvement in standards in Year 6 in comparison with those reported at the time of the previous inspection. Discussion with pupils and scrutiny of planning indicates that pupils experience a satisfactory range of activities during the year, such as football, swimming, and other outside activities.

151. Younger pupils in Year 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress within lessons. They move with control when warming up in response to the teacher's direction. They stop, move quickly, slowly, and combine different movements well. In the main part of the lesson they move in different and original ways to illustrate a variety of travelling across a mat. Some use 'pencil' rolls, tight jumps, and tight rolls. In other groups the pupils chose to move by using different foot movements. The higher-attaining pupils develop more subtle rocking movements as they progress over the mats. The activities are well organised and gradually demand higher levels of skill from the pupils. The demonstration of a backward roll by the class teacher and other pupils also helped the pupils to see what was required. The teacher's involvement offered a good role model for them. The pupils responded very well, and their learning improved as the lesson progressed. Overall, the good teaching is having a positive effect on motivating the pupils and in developing their gymnastic skills. The teacher made good arrangements to include pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs.

152. The older pupils in Years 3 to 6, including those with special educational needs, are attaining better than expected standards in gymnastic and dance skills. Outside activities were not planned during the inspection. Although no swimming activities took place, careful records kept by the school indicate that the pupils make good progress in gaining the skills necessary. The teaching was satisfactory in one lesson, good in another, and very good in a gymnastic lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class. The pupils make good gains in their learning in gymnastics. They developed a good range of movements over a bench, and the restriction of only moving along and not over the bench helped them to be more inventive. They extended these movements into sequences, using different levels, and some included stretching movements. In another lesson in a Year 3 and 4 class, the pupils invented a number of original movements when listening to *'Night on the Bare Mountain'* by Mussorgsky. The teacher encouraged the pupils to work in pairs, to develop their actions by shadowing each other, then to combine these into a sequence. The encouragement of the teacher helped pupils not to be self-conscious, and the quality of the movements increased as the lesson progressed. The pupils in a Year 5 and 6 lesson showed a good sense of dance movements in preparation to be 'aliens' connected to work in another subject area. They used a variety of different hand and body movements to recreate the imagined mood and movement in preparation for their chosen creature. The majority of the pupils made good gains in their learning, but the highest attaining pupils did not make as much progress. The class teacher showed good levels of technical skill in promoting artistic movement, but did not plan sufficiently well to allow greater challenge and progress to be made by the higher-attainers. Throughout the school, teachers emphasise the health and safety aspects of the subject well and the importance of warming up before exercising.

153. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory. A newer member of staff is the temporary co-ordinator. She has reviewed the policy and scheme of work with the help of the local adviser. The scheme of work ensures a broad coverage of all the activities needed. Additional activities such as lunchtime clubs and additional sports tuition in the summer term are incorporated, and this enhances the curriculum further. The school arranges a residential trip annually to supplement activities. The policy gives the staff guidance in helping to plan, and assessment procedures provide a picture of the pupils' abilities across the subject. The resources are generally satisfactory, with hall and outside grass areas providing space for activities. Planning for swimming in Years 3 to 6 ensures that the subject fully covers the requirements of the National Curriculum.