

INSPECTION REPORT

RAVENSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124650

Headteacher: Mrs M Such

Reporting inspector: Terry Elston
20704

Dates of inspection: 17th to 20th June 2002

Inspection number: 195206

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Ravenswood Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs F Hopkins
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

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19693	Sally Hall	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19897	Arthur Evans	Team inspector	Mathematics, history, equal opportunities.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19142	Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	Children in the Foundation Stage, art and design, music, pupils with English as an additional language.	
14596	Tony Fiddian-Green	Team inspector	Science, religious education, pupils with special educational needs.	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This is a large school, formerly known as Priory Heath Primary. The new building is at the heart of a new housing development, but also serves the original catchment area. Housing is a mixture of owner occupied and housing association homes. There are 300 full time pupils and 46 who attend the Nursery part time. There are 26 more girls than boys. Nearly a third of pupils have special educational needs, which is more than normally found. Four pupils have statements of their special educational needs, which is broadly the same as national figures. Over 36 per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is higher than the national average. Nearly 12 per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, and over three per cent have English as an additional language; these figures are above average. During the last school year, 15 pupils joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 14 left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. This degree of mobility is not unusual. The attainment of pupils on entry is well below average, and lower than was reported in the previous inspection. The school suffers from significant recruitment problems, and three of the teachers are on temporary contracts.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a sound school that has suffered greatly from staffing problems. These have affected standards, which are well below average in English, mathematics and science by Year 6. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, as is the leadership and management. The school cares for its pupils well, and has achieved the 'Healthy Schools Award'. The financial management is sound, and the school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Extra support for pupils in Years 1 and 2 has led to a big improvement in their standards.
- The school has excellent links with the local community that are helping to raise standards and teach pupils about the world around them.
- The provision for children in the Nursery and Reception is good, and gives them a flying start to their education.
- Good assessment procedures are helping the school too address pupils' weaknesses effectively.
- The provision for personal, social and health education is very good, and gives pupils valuable guidance on how to live a healthy life.

What could be improved

- Year 6 pupils' standards in English, mathematics, science and geography.
- The way that the school manages the retention and recruitment of staff.
- The consistency of teaching, because around one lesson in ten is unsatisfactory, and this slows down pupils' learning.
- The systems for the monitoring of teaching, which do not give teachers clear enough guidance on how they can improve.
- Provision for higher attaining pupils, who do not achieve high enough standards by Year 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 satisfactory progress since it was last inspected in June 1997. The quality of teaching is better, but some teachers still struggle to manage pupils' behaviour. Assessment is used more effectively, and subject co-ordinators now provide good support for teachers. Standards attained by the oldest pupils are lower than before in English, mathematics, science, geography and physical education, and higher in design and technology.

The curricular planning has improved, and all subjects now meet requirements. The new accommodation is of a far higher standard than the old buildings, and the supply of resources has been strengthened. In view of recent improvements in standards in Years 1 and 2, and providing the school can appoint sufficient staff, it is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

The table 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	E	E	E	E
mathematics	E	E	E*	E
science	E*	E*	E*	E

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

The results in 2001 were especially low, and in the bottom five per cent nationally in mathematics and science. Standards have fallen since 1999. The school met its target in English in 2001, but fell some way short in mathematics. Year 2 pupils' test results were better: they were average in mathematics, below average in writing and well below average in reading. Against similar schools, though, they were average in reading, above in writing and well above in mathematics. This inspection finds that Year 2 pupils' standards are well below average in science, below average in English and geography, and average in mathematics and all other subjects. By Year 6, standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science, below average in geography, and average in all other subjects. Pupils make good progress in the Foundation Stage, but are still below average in all areas except their personal, social and emotional development by the time they leave the Reception classes. Pupils achieve well in most areas in Years 1 and 2, and have benefited from rigorous measures to raise their standards. Similar strategies are planned for older pupils this year, but the current Year 6 pupils' work shows that they have made slow progress in the long term. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets, but higher attaining pupils rarely achieve the levels of which they are capable.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	These are satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy their work, and try to do their best.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory, but although most pupils behave well in class, a few lack concentration and slow down the learning of others. Pupils behave well in the playground.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' personal development is satisfactory, and they are keen to take responsibility. Relationships are sound.
Attendance	Below average, and this affects the progress of the pupils involved.

The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attitudes and behaviour, with some success, but some still disrupt lessons. Punctuality is a problem; the new school is a long way for some to walk, and many arrive too late to enjoy the start of the school day.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but lacks the consistency to ensure good progress for all groups of pupils. In the best lessons, teachers have good and consistent ways to manage behaviour, and pupils make good progress. When teachers are not so secure, the pace of learning suffers as pupils have to be reminded constantly to behave. Literacy lessons have a sound structure, and develop pupils' reading skills systematically. The school implements the numeracy strategy well, and pupils make good progress in their number skills. Consistently good teaching for children in the Foundation Stage ensures that they settle very well into school life and learn new skills quickly. In Years 1 and 2, the good systems in place mean that temporary and inexperienced staff provide a satisfactory quality of teaching, and pupils make at least sound progress in nearly all lessons. The quality of teaching in Years 1 and 2 is good in mathematics and music, and satisfactory in all other subjects except geography where pupils do not cover enough work to attain the standards they should. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching ranges from unsatisfactory to excellent. At its best, the teaching is inspirational, but occasionally, teachers do not cover sufficient work in lessons for pupils to make the best progress, particularly higher attaining groups. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is good in mathematics, science, religious education and music, and satisfactory in all subjects except geography, where expectations of pupils are too low. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good, and ensures that they take a full part in lessons. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is inconsistent, and does not always show how pupils can improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good. It is well organised with an appropriate focus on literacy and numeracy, whilst giving pupils a rich variety of experiences. There is a good range of activities after school to enrich the curriculum. Very good provision for personal, social and health education teaches pupils how to live healthily and value the opinions of others.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Effective contributions from skilled teaching assistants ensure that pupils are included in all activities. Good provision of a co-ordinator for pupils with special educational needs, without class responsibilities, to support pupils and teachers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few pupils with English as an additional language are supported well by teachers and visiting staff, and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good provision for pupils' personal development. There is good spiritual provision in assemblies and in lessons. The good provision for social and moral development shows in the way that most pupils behave and work productively together. Cultural provision is satisfactory, but the school provides few opportunities for pupils to experience and learn about the diversity of culture found in Britain.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for pupils well. There are good first aid and child protection procedures, and the assessment of pupils' standards and progress is good. Good monitoring of attendance.

The good curriculum provides pupils with interesting lessons. The quality of information for parents, and their links with the school, are satisfactory, but few help in classes. There are excellent links with the members of the local community, who support the school very well.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher sets high standards, and has a clear idea of the school's priorities. Her good initiatives to raise standards are starting to take effect. There is sound monitoring of teaching, but not enough guidance is given on how teachers can improve. There is good support by the deputy headteacher and senior staff who work hard to raise standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors do this well. They have a good knowledge of the school, and are led very well by an experienced Chair. New initiatives to get governors more involved in monitoring the school are working well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. New self-evaluation procedures and good use of assessment are helping to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used effectively to support pupils and teachers, and the school has used funds well to target weaknesses in Years 1 and 2.

The headteacher has a firm determination to raise standards, but is thwarted by continual problems of recruiting and retaining staff, which are preventing standards rising quickly enough. There are sound induction procedures to support staff new to the school, but these are not effective when newly qualified teachers have no permanent staff around them. The new accommodation is good, although very hot in summer. The supply of learning resources is good, and supports learning well. The school has satisfactory procedures for securing the best value from its spending.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils enjoy school. • The facilities in the new building. • The quality of teaching is good. • Their children make good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The communication between the school and with parents. • The quality and quantity of information about their child's progress. • The behaviour of a few groups of pupils. • The range of extracurricular activities.

The inspection team finds that pupils do enjoy school, and that the facilities are good. The quality of teaching, and pupils' progress, are often good, but too variable. Communication is sometimes a problem, when decisions made by the headteacher are not conveyed clearly to staff and parents. The quality of information to parents is satisfactory, and the range of extracurricular activities is, in fact, good. It is true that a few pupils behave badly in lessons.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the national tests, standards attained by pupils in Year 2 have improved significantly over the last four years. Standards have risen from very low (and among the bottom five per cent nationally) in all subjects in 1998, to well below average in reading, below average in writing and average in mathematics in 2001. The school's good focus on developing pupils' writing and mathematical skills over a two year period, and extra support provided by additional teaching assistants, yielded good results. Pupils' scores rose to above those of similar schools in writing, and well above them in mathematics. Another factor that helped to raise standards was, until this year, the stability of staff. This year the school lost two experienced teachers, but the good systems put in place before this year have enabled the newly qualified teacher and two temporary teachers to maintain pupils' standards.
2. The results by pupils in the Year 6 national tests tell a different story: over the last four years they have remained well below average in English and very low in science. In mathematics, standards have fallen significantly over the same period, from average in 1998 to very low in 2001. In mathematics and science, pupils' results in 2001 were among the bottom five per cent nationally. These results were also well below those of similar schools in all subjects. Staffing problems lie at the heart of these low scores, and parents are justifiably concerned about the number of different teachers that their children have over the year. Two years ago, for example, one class had 14 different temporary teachers because of long-term sickness. These factors help to account for wide variations in standards from class to class, and explain why pupils behave very well in one class, and poorly in another. The school met its modest targets in English in 2001, but fell some way short in mathematics. There is no consistent pattern of differences in the attainment of boys and girls.
3. Standards throughout the school are generally lower than those found in the previous inspection, but comparisons are difficult because of the changes in the school's catchment area.
4. Most children enter the Foundation Stage at well below average levels of attainment. The quality of teaching and learning is good and the children make good progress. Most are on course to achieve average levels of attainment by the end of the Foundation Stage in their personal, social and emotional and physical development. They are unlikely to achieve average attainment in their communication, language and literacy, mathematical, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development, due to their well below average attainment on entry to the school.
5. By Year 2, this inspection finds that pupils' standards are below average in all aspects of English, average in mathematics and well below average in science. In writing, although standards are below average, the school has maintained the improvement seen over recent years and, while few pupils exceed national expectations, nearly all write at the expected level. In mathematics, the good focus on pupils' problem solving skills and mental calculation has ensured that they continue to do well. Pupils' attainment in science suffers from their poor reading. Elsewhere, standards are below average in geography, where too little work is covered, and average in all other subjects.
6. By Year 6, this inspection finds that standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science, and that very few pupils exceed average levels in any subject. These results, while low, show some improvements from the 2001 national tests in mathematics and science, and have benefited from useful 'booster' classes this year to target pupils who were underachieving. As in Years 1 and 2, standards are below average in geography, because of the limited curriculum, and they are average in all other subjects.
7. Overall, pupils achieve unsatisfactory standards by Year 6. They make a good start in the Nursery, and this progress is maintained in Years 1 and 2, as is shown by their national test results in 2001 and their standards this year. The school has worked hard to ensure that pupils in the current

Year 3 carry on the good work, and their end of year tests show that they have. The current Year 6 pupils, however, have not made significant progress, and the impact of their interrupted schooling is clearly evident.

8. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress towards their targets, and reach appropriate standards for their previous attainment. Teachers and support assistants understand the needs of their pupils well, and the files show that parents are generally pleased with their children's rate of progress and the amount of support they receive. Pupils are supported particularly well in literacy and numeracy lessons, and benefit from help that is well matched to their needs.

9. Higher attaining pupils make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because they are identified early by good assessment and challenged to produce their best work. In the 2001 national tests and teachers' assessments compared with similar schools, the percentage of pupils attaining higher levels was average in writing, above average in reading and well above average in mathematics and science. In Years 3 to 6, however, few pupils achieve their higher levels of which they are capable. This was also a shortcoming identified in the previous inspection. Opportunities are missed to plan work to take pupils on to the next stages in their learning, and the percentage attaining higher levels in the national tests in 2001 was well below that of similar schools in mathematics, and very low (and in the bottom five per cent of all schools) in English and science.

10. Pupils who have English as a second language achieve well, as they receive good, effective support, appropriate to their individual needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. The pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory, and parents and carers say that their children like coming to school. The pupils' attitudes are sometimes very good, but occasionally they are unsatisfactory, and are usually dependent on the teacher's skill in generating enthusiasm. For example, in a Year 5/6 physical education lesson, the pupils responded well to a teacher who conducted the lesson at a very brisk pace and set challenging work. The pupils listened carefully as he showed them what to do, and his skills gave them confidence to try new movements. They worked hard at their routines and were proud of their own and other achievements, bursting into spontaneous applause when pupils demonstrated their good ideas. In contrast, in a Year 3 art lesson, the pupils' attitudes were unsatisfactory. They went out into the environmental area to make sketches, but were unclear about what to draw. They quickly lost concentration, ran around and fooled about. The vast majority only tried to work when an adult was giving them one-to-one support. They had achieved little by the end of the lesson.

12. The pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, and is often good when the teacher has the ability to implement the school's structured system of behaviour management. The pupils respond well when they know that the teacher will not stand any nonsense: they listen in silence and do not call out. They enjoy getting rewards such as house points and stickers. The caretaker says that the pupils show respect for property and are proud of their new school. In a few lessons, the behaviour is unsatisfactory. For example, in a Year 4 history lesson, the pupils did not do as they were told. They fidgeted and some took little notice of verbal warnings and were openly defiant. This disrupted their own and others' learning. There were eight fixed term exclusions last year for outbursts of violent and disruptive behaviour. There is a good degree of racial harmony, which is valued by all parents.

13. Pupils with special educational needs generally behave well, and those who attend the Nurture Group show good progress in the way that they understand the expectations that adults have of them.

14. Children in the Foundation Stage settle into school well and enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to their work and play. Children's behaviour is very good. They are learning to interact well with their teachers, class assistants and other adults in the school.

15. The pupils' personal development and relationships are satisfactory. Most pupils co-operate in lessons, and some pupils are able to share ideas sensibly in groups. In lessons, many pupils lack confidence, and find working independently very difficult. When they are given opportunities, the older pupils are keen to take up the responsibilities offered by the school. They enjoy acting as reading 'Buddies', and helping the younger pupils in the playground. Through the good personal and social education programme, the pupils organise highly successful fundraising events. Their social skills are enhanced through the good range of extracurricular activities, especially the musical productions and residential visits.

16. The pupils' attendance is unsatisfactory and has declined since the last inspection when it was good. The attendance rate of 93.4 per cent for 2000/01 is below the national average, but the unauthorised absence of 0.1 per cent is less than that found in similar schools. Despite regular reminders from school, a significant minority of parents are not bringing their children to school on time. These pupils are missing an important start to the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory, and good for children in the Foundation Stage where, during this inspection, all lessons were judged as good or very good. Parents are pleased with the quality of teaching, with 94 per cent of those replying to the pre-inspection questionnaire saying that it was good. Many parents, however, are very concerned about the many changes in the staffing. The significant problems of the retention and recruitment of staff have had a major impact on the consistency of good teaching, and help to explain why nearly one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory. Four temporary staff taught during the inspection and, out of 15 lessons, two were unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the quality of teaching is better than that found in the school's previous inspection when nearly one lesson in six was unsatisfactory.

18. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the planning of lessons, and pupils are given more responsibility for their own learning so that both of these aspects of teachers' work are now satisfactory. The school has worked hard to develop consistent ways to manage pupils' behaviour and, whilst these generally work well, there are still occasions when teachers struggle to keep order.

19. The good quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage means that children learn at a rate appropriate to their abilities, and they make good progress. The teachers, nursery nurse and teaching assistants work seamlessly alongside each other within each class. They know the children very well as individuals, and are skilled at developing warm relationships. The teachers' planning is good for both indoor and outdoor activities. It is carefully matched to the recommended curriculum for children of this age, and links appropriately with the subjects of the National Curriculum. Each class has direct access to an outside play area with a good range of equipment, and this enhances children's independent learning. Daily routines are well organised, which enable the children to become used to the pattern of the day and to respond quickly to the high expectations for behaviour, attentiveness and following instructions. All adults in the Foundation Stage classes listen with interest to what the children have to say and, when working with them, demonstrate good skills in helping the children to develop their language for communication. The 'Sure Start' nursery nurse supports the development of children's language, and this is a good initiative. The very good teamwork between all the adults is a strength in the Foundation Stage.

20. In Years 1 and 2, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Temporary teachers benefit from good systems for the planning of lessons set up by the school last year, and this has enabled them to maintain pupils' progress. Teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach is generally satisfactory but, with none of the teachers having much experience of pupils this age, there are times when pupils are set inappropriate work, and some occasions when teachers' expectations are inappropriate. In one lesson, pupils had to weigh objects, but some of the packages were too big to fit into the balance, and this made the task impossible. Teachers' control of pupils is satisfactory but, where there are shortcomings in lessons, teachers struggle to manage the behaviour of a few disruptive pupils. This

happened in one physical education lesson, when pupils had to wait a long time before they could have their turn in a relay race, and they soon lost interest. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 teach the basic skills of literacy methodically, and pupils make steady progress in their reading. The teaching of mathematics is good, and the precise planning enables pupils of all abilities to make good progress in their numeracy skills. The quality of teaching is also good in music, where teachers are good at giving pupils the confidence to sing and play instruments. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects except geography, where teachers provide too narrow a range of work.

21. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, and very good in some Year 5/6 lessons. Significant strengths of the teaching lie in the way that teachers set time limits to help pupils focus clearly on the task in hand. By saying such as, “*You have only fifteen minutes to complete this work,*” teachers are able to ensure that pupils cover the ground necessary to make sufficient progress. Teachers’ methods are effective: they split lessons effectively into time for direct teaching, practical activities and a summing-up session at the end to see to what extent pupils’ learning has met the lesson’s objectives. They generally manage pupils’ behaviour well but, as with the younger pupils, teachers sometimes find it difficult to channel their enthusiasm in physical education and art and design lessons, and the pace of learning suffers as a result. This is not always the case, though, and one physical education lesson for Year 5/6 pupils was of high quality as the inspirational teacher had pupils working very hard in an atmosphere of fun. At no stage was the teacher in danger of losing control, and the breathless pace of the lesson ensured that all pupils made very good progress in their gymnastics skills. Teachers’ expectations are generally sound, but in subjects such as religious education, history and science, teachers often expect too little of pupils’ written work and they, therefore, miss valuable opportunities to raise standards. Teachers’ use of resources is good, and this makes many lessons interesting for pupils.

22. Looking at individual subjects, the quality of teaching in Years 3 to 6 is good in mathematics, where the pace of teaching and learning is brisk. The good structure of numeracy lessons gives pupils a good grounding in basic numeracy skills, and well-organised group work to put these into practice. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in English, but teachers give too few opportunities for pupils to write at length, and this prevents higher attaining pupils, in particular, from achieving as well as they could. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in all other subjects except geography, where teachers’ expectations of pupils are too low. In information and communication technology, the quality of teaching is satisfactory, but the pace of pupils’ learning is sometimes slow. This is because of the problems posed by pupils sitting in rows in the computer suite, and the difficulty teachers have in seeing all of them at work.

23. The teachers mark pupils’ work regularly and positively, but not all teachers give pupils enough guidance on how they can improve their work. Useful comments include in mathematics, “*please check the angles again*”, and “*label your bar chart; we don’t know what it is showing*”. However, when teachers praise pupils for incorrect work (as when one pupil was congratulated when he categorised a cow as an amphibian in science), it does little to teach pupils the necessary skills.

24. Teachers set homework regularly, and parents are pleased with the amount and consistency of the work set.

25. The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers and learning support assistants work effectively together to ensure that lesson activities match the targets on pupils’ individual education plans, especially in English and mathematics. Targets set by class teachers are clearly expressed in individual education plans, and provide appropriate stages of development. As a result, pupils make satisfactory progress in their work and in their confidence. In most numeracy and literacy lessons, learning support assistants provide good support in the whole class sessions, as well as in small group work, and they often work with individual pupils. Often they have to address pupils’ behavioural difficulties and, in most cases, they move quickly to prevent the disruption of the lesson.

26. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Specialist teachers provide good, targeted support for these pupils. A bilingual teacher, who speaks Bengali, supports pupils well. All of these pupils speak Bengali as their first language. The teacher also liaises well with their parents; she is able to converse with them in their own language, and this enables them to be fully aware of their child's needs and progress. A specialist teacher supports pupils well in Years 3 to 6, each of whom has a different first language. They receive good support in class and, when appropriate, they are sometimes withdrawn for individual support.

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

27. The school provides a good, broad and balanced curriculum, offering all the pupils a wide range of worthwhile learning opportunities. It affords a sound preparation for the high school. Total weekly teaching time meets national recommendations for primary school pupils. Each subject of the National Curriculum has an appropriate share of teaching time, with an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of English and mathematics. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy are well embedded in the school. They are proving effective in raising standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 2, but considerable changes in staffing have limited their effectiveness in raising standards by the end of Year 6. Religious education complies with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and the school meets its obligations to provide a daily act of collective worship. There is some effective specialist teaching of music for the older pupils.

28. Curricular planning is very thorough, and has improved since the previous inspection. There are clear policies for all subjects. Long term planning in English and mathematics is based soundly on guidelines provided by the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Planning for art is based on national guidelines. Planning for other subjects is soundly based on schemes of work devised by the school, following guidance from the local education authority. The school uses some of the national guidelines in the planning of some subjects, such as science, and this works well except for geography, where pupils cover too little work to enable them to attain the standards of which they are capable. Topics are studied on a two-year cycle, in order to meet the needs of the mixed age classes. Teachers in each year group plan closely together, and this enables pupils in parallel classes to cover the same work. The teachers plan very carefully for the work which the pupils will do each term and each week. This generally works well, although not enough in this planning extends higher attaining pupils, and few achieve the standards of which they are capable.

29. The quality and range of the learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are good. The curriculum provided takes full account of all the recommended areas of learning. A strong emphasis is placed on first-hand experiences, with an appropriate mixture of focused teaching and child-initiated activities. Appropriate focused teaching, linked to literacy and numeracy, is carefully planned for and effectively introduced to the children. They have many opportunities for a wide range of free choice experiences, which enable them to develop their independent learning well.

30. The school takes effective steps to ensure that all the pupils, regardless of gender or ethnicity, have equality of access and opportunity in learning. There is a clear draft race equality policy. The school has good strategies in place to prevent and address racism and it monitors these strategies well. There is a good, three-year programme to assess and monitor the school's policies for their impact on race equality.

31. There is good provision for extracurricular activities. The inspection's findings do not support the view of some parents that there are insufficient activities for the pupils outside lessons. Every teacher runs an after-school activity. These include recorders, art, craft, multi-sport, folk club, basketball, football and cricket. There is a regular lunchtime club for pupils who would rather stay indoors and a Monday lunchtime book club. The school football team plays matches against local schools. An after-school Monday Club offers pupils and parents the opportunity to share in learning together. At Christmas time, some pupils come together as a school choir. The older pupils are given the

opportunity to participate in a cycling proficiency course. The school funds a free breakfast club twice a week.

32. The teachers enrich learning further by organising a good number of school visits to places such as Kentwell Hall, the Science Museum, the Imperial War Museum, Thornham Field Centre and Felixstowe. More locally, the pupils visit the Sikh Gurdwara, the Wolsey Theatre and the offices of the East Anglian Daily Times. Year 6 pupils have the opportunity to participate in outdoor and adventurous activities during a residential visit to East Mersea. The teachers make effective use of the knowledge and expertise of visitors to the school whenever possible and this has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. These have included architects and builders involved in the construction of the new school, a Sikh visitor, the Salvation Army and the school nurse.

33. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. There are good arrangements to support pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy in the classes where teaching assistants work with individual pupils or with small groups. Individual education plans are well organised and targets are clear and achievable and are reviewed regularly. These targets focus on both literacy and numeracy, and many education plans also include targets for personal, social and behavioural development. The needs of the few pupils with statements of special educational need are met well, and annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.

34. The headteacher is responsible for co-ordinating the pupils' personal, social and health education, and this provision is very good. The headteacher has led training for staff on this aspect of the pupils' education. There is a clear scheme of work and each class has a timetabled session of personal, social and health education, during which the pupils have the opportunity to talk about issues which are of concern to them. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 have the opportunity to learn from the Crucial Crew experience at the county showground. There are clear policies for sex and relationships education and for drugs education. The teachers answer pupils' questions about human growth and development openly and honestly, with due regard to the pupils' age and maturity. There is formal sex education for pupils in Year 6. In personal, social and health education sessions, and also in lessons such as science, the pupils learn about the need for a balanced diet in contributing to a healthy lifestyle and about the dangers of substance abuse. At regular intervals, the school runs a very successful 'Learning Together' project, in which parents have the opportunity to work in partnership with their children on drugs education.

35. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall, and has improved in all areas since the previous inspection except in the provision for pupils' cultural development, which is now satisfactory. Pupils' spiritual development is good. It is enhanced through religious education, assemblies, and in some other subjects such as English and science. In assemblies, pupils enter quietly and are generally well behaved. Music is played as they come in, and an atmosphere of quiet is fostered by those staff who are present. Every week there are 'achievement' assemblies where pupils' good work and efforts are acknowledged. In one assembly seen during the inspection, the acting headteacher of the local secondary school came to lead. The message was about taking part and doing your best, and this was illustrated well by some stories from the secondary school. Although there are hymns in all assemblies, pupils do not respond well, and their singing is not inspiring. In English, Year 5/6 pupils are given good opportunities to write poetry about the natural world after the style of Brian Moses. In science, pupils are being taught to appreciate the natural world, and others showed much interest in their work on planets and the solar system. In religious education, pupils visit the church and the Salvation Army citadel. Year 3 pupils were encouraged to think deeply about questions that may not always have an answer, such as, "*How many stripes has a zebra?*" Others were asking about the making of the world. They understand that some groups of worshippers find objects such as a rosary or an icon helpful in their worship. There is always a moment of reflection and a short prayer at the end of assemblies to enhance pupils' spiritual development.

36. There is good provision for pupils' moral development, and staff endeavour to remind pupils frequently about good behaviour and their expectations for respect and consideration for others. Rules and expectations for good behaviour are displayed in all classrooms. The behaviour of most pupils is satisfactory, although there is a significant number for whom these opportunities for moral development are having little effect. In personal and social education, pupils learn about the choices and decisions that they must make, and they learn through 'circle time' how to show respect for others, and only to talk when they are holding the soft toy. The educational programme includes awareness about the dangers of drugs, and pupils learn about bullying and how to counter this should it arise. In religious education, pupils in Year 4 have thought about good behaviour, customs and rules and who makes them. They have considered what might happen if there were no rules for people and they related this to the 'rules' that Jesus gave. There is a 'thinking corner' in each classroom where pupils go if their behaviour is unacceptable.

37. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. Some older pupils partner young children in shared reading sessions, and this enhances the social development of both groups of pupils. Years 5 and 6 pupils gain much from a residential trip to East Mersea, where they learn how to live in a small community for a few days, respecting other people's ideas, likes and dislikes. Pupils are given good opportunities to decide which charity they wish to support, and raise money for. One of the best social opportunities has been the move from the old school to the new buildings. Pupils celebrated each decade that the school had been in existence, and they welcomed the Duke of Gloucester to open the new building. Some history lessons teach pupils about social customs and groupings, for example, when Year 4 study invaders such as the Romans. There is shortly to be a school production of a musical. This involves over 50 pupils, and they are learning how to give their time and talents for the benefit of the production and the school. After school occasions, such as the art club, also enable pupils to work in social groups and enjoy the time together.

38. The provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. Although the school provides well for local and Western culture, there are too few opportunities for pupils to experience and learn about the diversity of cultures found in Britain. Some pupils were taught about the life of Martin Luther King, and one of the school's governors came to talk about her visit to Ghana. Another member of staff taught pupils how to wind on a turban, and about some of the other practices of the Sikh community. A Year 4 class has a display about bananas we get from St. Lucia. Pupils are taken to visit museums, such as the open air one at Kentwell, and a Shakespearean company have visited the school to perform for pupils. They study various artists and there are opportunities for music tuition, including some African drumming.

39. The school's partnership with the community is excellent and these links have a positive impact on the pupils' learning and personal development. The school works closely with the education business partnership and has established beneficial links with local employers. These range from 'Reading Together' with a local newspaper to creating a Mini-Museum in conjunction with a local museum service. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils were designing an outdoor area for a local sheltered housing association, following a visit from the architect overseeing the project. This enabled the pupils to gain valuable insights into the world of work, solve 'real life' problems and meet a variety of members of the local community. Visitors such as police officers enrich the curriculum and there are good links with local places of worship. The school is effective in developing its role in the local community. The school has recently hosted a successful community fun day and the pupils have planted shrubs and trees in local parks. The school welcomes volunteers into school who help with reading, numeracy and assemblies. The school encourages the pupils to think of others and they enjoy organising fund raising events for charities.

40. The school has good links with other institutions that enrich the curriculum. The Nursery has close links with two pre-school playgroups and this facilitates the children's entry to school. There are very good links with the local high school. The high school's acting headteacher led one assembly during

the inspection. Teachers from both schools meet regularly to discuss curricular issues and to exchange information. High school teachers visit Ravenswood in the summer term and take some Year 6 lessons. Before transfer, pupils in Year 6 visit the high school twice, and they gain much from their participation in work on a chosen theme.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The school has good procedures to ensure the pupils' welfare, health and safety. It provides a safe and secure environment for its pupils. Most class teachers know the pupils well, and give appropriate support to pupils on a day-to-day basis. Other adults working in school, including support staff and midday supervisors, also make valuable contributions in caring for pupils. The procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are satisfactory and the teachers make helpful comments in the pupils' annual reports.

42. Children in the Foundation Stage are cared for very well and they are very happy to come to school. They share very good relationships with their teachers and other adults in the school.

43. The school has appropriate arrangements for child protection, and has drawn up a clear policy. The headteacher is the designated member of staff with responsibility for child protection, and carries out her duties effectively. Nearly all staff, especially those new to the school, are aware of the school's procedures, but the midday supervisors have not received any written information about child protection. As part of the good personal and social education programme, the pupils are encouraged to think carefully about their personal safety.

44. The arrangements for first aid are good. Four members of staff have received training in basic first aid. Pupils who are ill or injured receive good care and attention in a well-equipped medical room. The school keeps good records of accidents and when medication is given.

45. The school pays good attention to health and safety, and has drawn up a good policy. A governor works conscientiously to monitor and co-ordinate health and safety issues. He has undertaken a risk assessment of the premises, and is vigilant of potential hazards. The school has appropriate systems in place for fire drills and testing electrical equipment. The school has secured sponsorship to fund valuable training for the considerable number of pupils who cycle to school each day.

46. The school's arrangements for monitoring attendance and improving attendance are good. Registers are marked correctly and attendance data are analysed by staff. The office staff closely monitor pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern, and make early contact with home if these pupils are absent. The school is currently receiving no support from the educational welfare office, where there are severe staffing problems. This means that a number of families are not getting the help they need, including a pupil who has been absent from school since January without good reason. This long-term absence is having a detrimental effect on his learning.

47. The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are satisfactory. The school has invested heavily in a structured system for behaviour management. At its best, the strategy works well, as was seen in a Year 4 dance lesson. The pupils were less than enthusiastic as they entered the hall, and the spacious environment gave the pupils the potential to become disruptive. However, the teacher consistently praised the pupils' efforts and attitudes, and raised their self-esteem by asking them to demonstrate their routines. In line with the guidance, she correctly sanctioned those pupils who did not obey instructions. All then behaved appropriately, except one who received a 'red card'. The teacher's rigorous application of these strategies enabled the lesson to proceed at a brisk pace. By the end of the session, the vast majority of pupils were trying their best, and working with enjoyment and pride.

48. However, the high staff turnover has meant that not all teachers are experienced in using these methods, and some struggle to maintain discipline. This was markedly demonstrated during the inspection when two different members of staff taught the same group of pupils. Although one

teacher sanctioned pupils, the behaviour in the classroom deteriorated. The second teacher constantly used praise as well as sanctions and ensured that the lesson proceeded at a good pace. The behaviour in this lesson was good.

49. The school organises a 'nurture group' that addresses the more acute social, emotional and behavioural difficulties that a few pupils have. They meet either on Monday and Tuesday afternoons, or as the second group, on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. The provision by the teacher concerned is good, and these pupils mostly benefit from this extra help. However, their needs are still present in the mornings, and on the days when they are not in these groups. Similarly, these two very small groups do not meet the needs of all pupils in the school who would benefit from such activities.

50. The procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are satisfactory. The school has drawn up a good policy for dealing with bullying which includes clear guidelines for staff. A few of the parents who attended the pre-inspection meeting felt that the school did not always sort out incidents, but the pupils say that teachers usually deal with bullying effectively.

51. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs are good. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well. Pupils with special educational needs have good opportunities to take part in all school activities. Their contributions are recognised and appreciated in celebratory assemblies. There are good procedures for the identification of pupils with special educational needs. Effective arrangements are made for the regular review of their progress, and the tracking procedures enable progress to be charted. Pupils' records provide a clear picture of their progress, together with the comprehensive input from all concerned. There is productive and regular liaison with outside agencies, which are involved, as appropriate, in the reviews of pupils' progress.

52. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science. A clear assessment policy includes a timetable of assessment arrangements throughout the school year. The teachers include opportunities for assessment in their medium term planning. The teachers track the pupils' progress carefully so that those who need extra support are identified as early as possible. Each pupil has a record sheet, which records his or her attainment against National Curriculum levels of attainment. The co-ordinator, together with the deputy headteacher, analyses information gained from assessments and from national test results carefully. This analysis is recorded for each year group in a collection of their work. This is passed on at the end of the year to the pupils' next teacher so that he or she is aware of areas of weakness in attainment. The teachers make sure that the pupils are aware of what progress they are making. This use of assessment to inform future planning is an improvement from the previous inspection and is leading to improving standards by the end of Year 2. Considerable changes in teaching staff means that assessment has so far proved ineffective in raising standards by the end of Year 6. However, the procedures which are now in place are resulting in some improvement in the attainment of pupils in the current Year 5.

53. There are no whole school procedures that are used consistently to assess and record pupils' progress in subjects other than English, mathematics and science. The teachers check the pupils' attainment in a variety of informal ways. There is an opportunity on the annual reports for the pupils to make their own assessment of their progress.

54. The school has a clear marking policy, which emphasises the need for marking of the pupils' work to be helpful. The teachers mark work regularly and positively, ensuring that the pupils are praised appropriately. Some teachers' marking is more helpful than others in showing the pupils how they might improve. For example, comments in mathematics exercise books include, "*You need more practice doing number problems and, to extend this, you should now aim towards using the M+ and M- keys, to save yourself time.*"

55. There is very good day-to-day assessment of children in the Nursery and the Reception classes. Soon after children enter the Reception classes, they are assessed using a procedure designed

specifically for this age range. The evidence from this provides a precise insight into the stage of development of each child, which enables the teachers to plan activities to meet their needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. The parents and carers are generally satisfied with the school. They are pleased that their children enjoy school, that the quality of teaching is good and that their children are expected to work hard. Some of the parents are concerned about the high turnover of staff and its negative impact on their children's learning.

57. A third of the parents who returned the questionnaire felt that the school does not work closely with the parents, but the inspection team does not share these parents' views. The school has satisfactory links with its parents and carers. The staff make beneficial home visits before the children start in the Nursery. The majority of parents see teachers as approachable, and always willing to talk with them at the start and end of day. The school invited parents to comment on the home-school agreement, but has not sought parents' views on other aspects of school life.

58. The information the school provides to parents is satisfactory. New parents are well informed through a welcome pack, visits and meetings. The prospectus and governors' Annual Report to parents are informative, and contain all the required information. The school invites parents to useful 'meet the teacher' sessions at the beginning of the school year, and these work well. Newsletters are sent to parents about three times a term, and although they give parents information about future events, they do not do enough to celebrate the school's successes. The school has arranged some helpful 'Family Learning' courses on numeracy and information and communication technology, which were well attended by parents. The parents whose children are in Years 3 and 4 receive good information each term about classroom routines and the topics their children will be studying. This is not the case for other year groups. The school invites parents to useful meetings on statutory testing and the arrangements for 'booster' classes.

59. A quarter of the parents who returned the questionnaire felt that the school does not give them enough information about how their children are getting on. The inspection team found that, during the year, the school provides parents with satisfactory information about their children's progress. There are no interim reports, but the annual pupils' reports give parents good information about what their children can do, and what they need to do to improve their work. Termly consultations with teachers give parents good opportunities to discuss how their children are progressing.

60. The parents' involvement with the school is satisfactory. The parent-governors are very supportive, and work hard to help shape the school's future. There is no parent-teacher association, but some parents are willing to help with fund-raising events and social events. Most parents have signed the home-school agreement, and support for events such as harvest festivals and musical productions is very good.

61. The school involves parents of pupils who have special educational needs well. They receive copies of their child's targets, and are invited to consultations about their children's progress each term. Their views are sought and recorded for annual reviews of statements, and there are good opportunities to become involved with pupils' education at home. This may include hearing reading, or help with giving change when shopping. The school has good contacts with parents, and keeps good records of the dates of all letters and telephone calls.

62. The parents' contribution to their children's learning is satisfactory. The school values the help offered by the small number of parents who help in the classrooms. Others help on visits. Parents are keen to support their children's learning and attendance at the consultation evenings is high. Some parents help their children with work at home and listen to their children read.

63. Induction procedures for children starting school are very good. Before starting in the Nursery, the teacher and nursery nurse visit the children in their homes in the term prior to their fourth birthday.

Prior to starting in the Reception classes, the children have two one-hour visits and a whole day in their new class, and these help them settle easily into full-time school. Parents are invited to come into the school for a meeting at the start of the children's day visit to hear about what their child will experience and to receive the school's documentation.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

64. The quality of the leadership and management is satisfactory. The headteacher has led the school well through the long process of moving schools, and the school has benefited from the headteacher's good strategic planning to achieve a smooth transfer.

65. The headteacher leads well from the front; she sets high standards for herself and others, and parents speak highly of her commitment to the school. Some parents, however, are critical of the quality of communication in the school. Changes in arrangements or staffing are not always communicated clearly to staff or parents, and this frustrates those involved. Most parents feel happy approaching the headteacher with their concerns, but access to the headteacher's office through two locked doors is not easy, and this hinders informal day-to-day communication.

66. The management of the school is satisfactory. The headteacher is clear about the school's priorities, and the school's improvement plan has a much better set of targets than the one criticised in the previous report. These are the result of good debate involving all staff and governors, and have a clear focus on raising standards in key areas of the school. The school has worked to a good action plan to address the issues from the previous report. This has led to improvements in teachers' planning, use of assessment to inform these plans and the effectiveness of subject co-ordinators. These co-ordinators now support teachers well, particularly in the provision of useful schemes of work, and the quality of curricular planning has improved as a result.

67. The improved management of pupils' behaviour has been a priority of the school for the last four years, and rigorous systems to monitor pupils' behaviour, and reward those who adhere to the rules, have effected significant improvements. This approach is not totally consistent, however, and explains variations in the quality of pupils' behaviour from class to class.

68. The school monitors pupils' standards well by careful analysis of their strengths and weaknesses. The school addressed weaknesses in the standards attained by Year 1 and Year 2 pupils by putting together a good team of teachers led by an experienced Key Stage 1 manager. They put in place very good systems to achieve consistency in their teaching, including the way they would respond to the way pupils behaved. Each class was supported by a well-trained teaching assistant, and all classes were laid out the same way so that pupils felt familiar with the layout of each room. This proved to be a very successful initiative: pupils' results in the national tests rose dramatically, and the school was used as a model for others in the local education authority in the way it raised standards. The school built well on this by moving the teachers and the pupils into Year 3, and this has continued the good work.

69. The school has good systems to monitor the quality of teaching, but there are still inconsistencies in teachers' expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. This monitoring has mostly been done by subject co-ordinators in the last year, supported by advisors from the local education authority. During this period, the headteacher did little monitoring as she focused on the move into new school buildings. Teachers are told of the specific focus of the monitoring of their lessons, and are given useful verbal feedback. The written feedback, however, says too much about what happened in the lesson, and too little about its strengths and weaknesses. This makes the setting of targets difficult.

70. The headteacher delegates responsibility appropriately. The deputy headteacher, who sets a good example by his own teaching, supports the headteacher well, and has recently taken the lead in the school's behaviour management policy. Other senior staff are given reasonable responsibilities, and take a full part in the process of making decisions about the school's management. There are no co-ordinators at present for literacy and geography because of staff leaving. This is unsatisfactory, and

gives teachers insufficient support in these subjects. A literacy co-ordinator has been appointed, and is due to start next term.

71. The Nursery teacher manages the provision for children in the Foundation Stage very well. The quality of relationships within the Foundation Stage department is very good and, together, all the adults form a very effective team. The classes are bright, stimulating and well organised.

72. The co-ordination of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator uses the school's tracking system effectively to monitor pupils' progress, and the school meets the requirements of the new Code of Practice for special educational needs. There is a designated governor, who has a good involvement in the life of the school and visits frequently, recording the details of each visit in writing. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used to good effect, and the school makes a significant contribution from its own resources, providing extra time for support assistants.

73. The school's performance management procedures are well in place, and the headteacher and staff are finding them a useful way of improving their work. The school is extending this process of self evaluation by using a commercial system to give all staff the opportunity to have their say about how well the school operates. This is a good step forward, and shows the school's commitment to improve.

74. The governors, well led by a very knowledgeable Chair, support the school well, and have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They have produced a very good policy to structure their involvement with the school, and have made a good start at monitoring the provision by their informal visits to lessons. Governors are closely involved in the performance management process, and are clear about how this feeds into the school's future planning. They have made vigorous attempts to enlist the help of the local education authority to improve the school's staffing problems. The school has no policy for the recruitment and retention of staff, and this means that individual cases are dealt with in isolation rather than as part of a clear strategic plan.

75. The school has sound systems to ensure the best value is gained from its spending. The headteacher and governing body, for example, work closely with the local education authority to monitor the school's performance against similar schools. The school's administrative assistant keeps a good record of the spending, and makes effective use of the local education authority's expertise to sort out problems as they occur with the new computerised finance systems. The administrative assistant gets good value from the funds by making full use of the competitive prices offered by the county's suppliers, but also compares this carefully with alternative sources.

76. The present staff's range of qualifications and experience are not sufficient to ensure consistently good standards of teaching and learning. The turnover of staff has been very high. Fourteen teachers have left during the past two years, mainly due to promotions and personal reasons. Despite the school's efforts, three classes are taught by temporary staff. In Years 1 and 2, two secondary trained teachers and a newly qualified teacher teach the three classes. This has resulted in the conscientious newly qualified teacher having to bear too much responsibility for leading the team. There are not enough permanent staff to lead and manage all the subjects, and this hinders the development and monitoring of standards in literacy and geography. A good number of support staff work effectively alongside the teachers. The midday supervisors maintain a happy and orderly atmosphere at lunchtime.

77. The school's induction programme for newly qualified teachers is satisfactory although, in practice, this year the new teacher has not had support from experienced teachers on a day-to-day basis.

78. The accommodation is good, and allows the curriculum to be taught effectively. The new building has had a positive effect on the morale of staff and pupils, and the caretaker and cleaners maintain good standards of cleanliness. The classrooms are spacious and the shared areas are in frequent use for group work and practical activities. The useful specialist rooms for learning support, music and

drama allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. Access for people with disabilities is good, and there is a lift and specialist toilets on each floor. During warm weather, the high temperature in the hall and in the classrooms, particularly on the upper floor, has a detrimental effect on learning. The design of the information and communication technology room hinders teaching and learning, as the teacher cannot easily see the pupils' screens. The lack of a covered play area for the Foundation Stage children limits the opportunities for physical and social development. The extensive playgrounds, playing fields, and adventure play equipment enable pupils to experience a good variety of physical activities. The wildlife area provides adequate opportunities for artwork and scientific investigations.

79. The range of equipment and materials to support teaching is good. Resources are very good for children in the Foundation Stage, and support the children's learning well for both indoors and outdoors. Learning resources are good in all subjects except mathematics, geography, and history, where they are satisfactory. The library is cramped, but has an adequate stock of both fiction and non-fiction books. The part time librarian, who is also a parent governor, has worked hard to set up a very good computerised stock control system. Under supervision, the pupils have good access to the library during the school day, and are now confident in using the computer to take out and return books, as well as making enquiries and checking how many books they have on loan. The librarian has a very good understanding of the system and provides useful data, for example, on which pupils are not regular users, popular authors and loans by gender.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

80. To improve the school's provision further, and enable all pupils to achieve according to their abilities the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

(1) raise standards in English by Year 6 by:

- a. providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;
- b. having higher expectations of their writing in subjects other than English; and
- c. giving higher attaining pupils more experience of attempting the more advanced reading skills of scanning, inference and deduction;

(Paragraphs 9, 100-102, 105, 145, 163, 168)

in mathematics by:

- a. giving more practice in interpreting and solving real life problems; and
- b. requiring them to make more use of the numeracy skills in other subjects;

(Paragraphs 112, 113)

in science by:

- a. achieving consistency between the classes in a year group so that all pupils cover the same ground; and
- b. improving pupils' skills in interpreting the meaning of written scientific investigations;

(Paragraphs 5, 120, 121)

in geography by ensuring that pupils cover a sufficient amount of work;

(Paragraphs 6, 20, 28, 137-140)

and in all subjects by:

- a. marking pupils' work so that they are clear how they can improve, and
- b. insisting on better standards of presentation.

(Paragraphs 23, 54, 108, 116, 111, 141, 167)

- (2) **develop a clear policy to help the school and local education authority to recruit and retain staff.**
(Paragraphs 1, 2, 48, 74)
- (3) **improve the quality of teaching, and establish a greater level of consistency by sharpening the monitoring of lessons, so that teachers have a clear idea of their strengths and what they need to do to improve.**
(Paragraphs 20-22, 69, 104, 126)
- (4) **provide more challenging work for higher attaining pupils, especially in Years 3 to 6, so that they achieve the standards of which they are capable.**
(Paragraphs 9, 21, 123, 120)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Ensure that all subjects have a co-ordinator. (Paragraphs 76, 108, 140)
- Provide a covered area for children in the Foundation Stage. (Paragraph 78)
- Develop whole school assessment procedures for all subjects. (Paragraphs 53, 137, 140, 146)
- Work with parents to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality. (Paragraphs 16, 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	72

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	3	37	21	6	0	0
Percentage	2	4	54	31	9	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 almost 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)	23	300
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	110

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	102

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
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	21	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	18	21
	Girls	13	16	15
	Total	27	34	36
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (57)	85 (59)	90 (76)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	20	20
	Girls	13	14	13
	Total	27	34	33
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	68 (52)	85 (70)	83 (59)
	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	22	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	8	11	14
	Girls	14	4	12
	Total	22	15	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	51 (53)	35 (49)	60 (56)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	13	12
	Girls	7	5	7
	Total	14	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	34 (41)	42 (43)	44 (30)
	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	9
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	5
Chinese	0
White	257
Any other minority ethnic group	24

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	1	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	4	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	4	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)	15.85
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.9
Average class size	25

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	237

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	46
Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	60
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2002
	£
Total income	707235
Total expenditure	731788
Expenditure per pupil	2177
Balance brought forward from previous year	62655
Balance carried forward to next year	38102

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	13
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	14
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	3
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	3
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	346
Number of questionnaires returned	72

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	43	53	1	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	44	50	1	1	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	43	18	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	49	8	6	4
The teaching is good.	33	61	4	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	43	22	3	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	36	49	11	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	35	64	0	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	26	39	28	6	1
The school is well led and managed.	29	50	14	4	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	60	7	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	26	44	22	1	6

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

81. The school has maintained the secure, caring, stable environment for children in the Foundation Stage since the previous inspection. The well-organised day-to-day routines established by the teachers enable all children to feel secure and safe and to grow in confidence. Good teaching is having a positive impact on the children's learning.

82. Children are admitted to the Nursery at the start of the term before to their fourth birthday and attend part-time. They start in the Reception classes in the term before to their fifth birthday and attend full-time. They are taught within a warm, caring, supportive environment where they feel safe and secure. Most children enter the school with well below average attainment. Although they make good progress, few achieve the recommended targets in any area of their learning apart from their personal, social and emotional development by the end of the Reception year, due to their well below average starting point.

Personal, social and emotional development

83. Standards are average in this area of learning. The children are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area by the time they leave the Reception class. They are constantly encouraged to feel confident about what they can achieve through praise, smiles and gestures. Their behaviour in and around the school is very good with only a few disagreements. They work and play beside each other well. They show a good understanding of classroom procedures. Children are aware of the teachers' high expectations of them and respond well. They are given many opportunities to choose activities for themselves, which enhances their independent learning. Most sustain concentration well for their age. Children settle well to the more structured activities, such as literacy and numeracy, and show ability to concentrate for an appropriate length of time. They attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and most are able to undress and dress themselves independently before and after movement lessons.

84. Personal, social and emotional development is promoted well in all areas of learning and the planning is thorough. The good quality of teaching, and the warm, caring relationships that adults develop with the children, help them to feel secure and to grow in confidence. The adults provide very good role models for the children, always treating each of them with courtesy and respect to which they respond positively. They are encouraged to understand the feelings of others by effective questioning. During a snack time, when a child felt it was unfair that another child had taken a second piece of cheese and cucumber, the teacher quietly asked "*What do you think we can do about this?*" The child replied "*He should only have had one piece,*" to which the teacher replied "*Yes, next time we will remind him to do that*". The children enjoy the many moments of fun and time for reflection, which help to strengthen the bond between them.

Communication, language and literacy

85. Most children make good progress in this area of learning, including those who have special educational needs and those who have English as a second language. However, few achieve the targets in this area, due to their well below average stage of development when they start school. Most children have a very limited vocabulary. Every adult within each class works very hard trying to develop the children's expressive language through clear, open-ended questioning and modelling correct language. They talk to the children individually, in groups and as a class to help all children extend their vocabulary and start to use their language and communication skills for a range of purposes. For example, when two children were painting, the nursery nurse encouraged conversations between them by saying to one child "*Ask him what he is doing*" and later, "*What can you say when you both want the brush? Talk to... about it*". The child looked at his friend, saying *look at*

my painting. Children are eager to talk about the things that interest them, such as going on holiday or about something they bring to school. Although they are encouraged to listen carefully, many have weak listening skills. The children particularly enjoy listening to stories, such as *The Gingerbread Man* and *Rosie's Zoo*. However, many still want to call out and the teachers often have to remind them to listen. Most children understand the concept that pictures carry meaning. Consistent strategies used by the teachers and teaching assistants enable the children to recognise and say the initial sounds of words.

86. Some children know that spoken words and print can have the same meaning and that, in the English culture, text is read from left to right. Many of the children have weak pencil control, and, although they are encouraged to form letters correctly, they continue to write the letters incorrectly. Most children make a good attempt at writing their own name. They are given many opportunities to write, such as in the writing corner or the *holiday shop*. In the Reception classes, children are encouraged to take books home to practise their early reading skills.

87. The quality of teaching is good. Children are provided with a good range of purposeful activities to develop their use of language for reading, writing, speaking and listening, whatever their stage of development. The children benefit from good role-play areas, such as the *'holiday shop'* and the *'home corner'*. These are used very well, often with an adult involved to extend the children's vocabulary. Children are provided with paper and pencils for writing *'postcards'* or *'letters to a friend'* and enjoy using felt pens on their white boards. The acceptance of children's early attempts at writing is very good, as this enables them to become confident writers. Many of the children have difficulty with their pencil control, and their fine control is weak. The nursery nurse and the teaching assistants are used effectively with small groups when the teachers are teaching the whole group. They are well briefed, and assist the teachers in focused teaching activities. Classroom displays are rich in language clues intended to reinforce learning and a good emphasis on language development is evident throughout the whole programme of work.

Mathematical development

88. This area is taught well but, by the end of the Reception year, few children meet the recommended targets for mathematics, due to their well below average stage of development when they first start in school. Teachers are helping the children to develop their mathematical understanding well by providing a structured programme of practical experiences, which enables them to make good progress. The children recognise and name common shapes such as circle, square, and triangle. Most count numbers to ten by rote and some write numbers to ten, although often reversed or poorly formed. Counting skills are practised regularly when singing nursery rhymes, number jingles and playing sorting and ordering games. Teachers and teaching assistants provide good support by playing mathematical games with the children, which enable them to experience counting, and early addition and subtraction in a practical way. They experience working with sand and water, filling and emptying different size containers. Children in the Reception classes are learning about time and are starting to remember hours, names of the days and the months.

89. Teachers use every opportunity to extend the children's understanding of basic skills through many varied practical experiences, which are reinforced with a great deal of oral work. They ensure that all adults in the Foundation Stage classes use correct mathematical vocabulary, and provide many activities to reinforce the development of language. Adults use questions skilfully to encourage children to organise their thoughts and build on their understanding. The work is planned well, tasks are appropriate and meet the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy for young children.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

90. On entry to the school, the children's knowledge and understanding of the world are well below average for their age. During the Foundation Stage, the teachers effectively extend the children's knowledge, helping them to learn more about the world around them. The quality of teaching and

learning is good, but few children meet the expected standard by the end of the Reception year. Activities are planned and organised well in order that the children can gain in their understanding through practical experiences and interaction with an adult to extend their vocabulary. In the Nursery, good practical activities, such as playing with seaweed, plastic water creatures and shells during their water play enable the children to learn more about the seaside, as an adult effectively talks with them. Whilst making patterns in the salt with plastic, wooden or metal tools, the children learn about the use of, and textures of these through appropriate questioning from an adult. When asked “*Do we put salt in our tea?*” and “*What does it feel like?*” a child replied “*No and when I touch it, it feels soft*”. The children have planted seeds and tended them. They have learned about what the seeds need in order to grow. Watching the plants develop has also enhanced the children’s understanding of time passing. A wide range of construction toys and materials are provided for the children to explore and use their skills to make models. They confidently use the computer mouse when moving items on the screen to explore the seaside and to create patterns. The children are starting to be aware of some features of Christianity and Sikhism. They listen to Bible stories and enjoyed seeing and touching the clothes, which are worn by Sikh men and women for special occasions.

91. Teachers provide a wide range of good, planned activities, most of which start with what the children already know, and this enables them to extend their understanding and knowledge of the world. The teaching and learning of skills to use a computer competently are good. Children acquire new learning when the teacher involves them very well by effective questioning, and clear explanations of how to create their own patterns on the computer using an art program. There is a good range of role-play resources in the classes, which help to extend the children’s language and personal and social skills.

Physical development

92. The children make good progress from their below average starting point, and are achieving average attainment in some aspects of their physical control. Their handling of small tools and equipment is, however, weak. The quality of teaching in this area is good, and children in all classes make good progress in their physical control, mobility and awareness of space outdoors. The accommodation in the hall for all children in the Foundation Stage is good, as they can freely move around. They are satisfactorily developing their understanding of the use of space and their awareness of others. During their physical education lessons, the children jump, hop and run around the hall well. Younger children are learning to throw and attempt to catch large balls. Older children are learning to put out the apparatus safely before balancing on or jumping over the benches. Most dress and undress themselves, although some need help with buttons and zips. Teachers give clear instructions during physical education lessons and allow children to demonstrate good examples of their work.

Creative development

93. The children make good progress in developing their creative skills, but most are unlikely to meet the nationally recommended levels of attainment by the end of the Reception year. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and activities are well organised, with a good supply of resources. Children enjoy a good range of practical activities, which enable them to experiment and explore creatively and imaginatively. Most of the children’s own drawings and paintings are immature for their age. They enjoy making seaside collages using sand, shells, salt and seaweed. Role-play activities are carefully planned, and enable the children to play out imaginary situations well. They enjoy dressing up in the good range of clothes, which extends their imaginative play. They like to be ‘mummy’ or ‘daddy’ washing the baby and hanging out the baby’s washing on the line. These objects are often counted, which reinforces the children’s understanding of numbers well. They enjoy being the ‘shop assistant’ or ‘customer’ in the holiday shop. The children get great pleasure from their music lessons, and are eager to play the musical instruments. Most of the children call out the names of musical instruments as the teacher shows them to the children. They can clap a simple rhythm set by the

teacher. Children enjoy singing and playing percussion instruments and taking part in action songs, such as *'Clap three times'* and *'There was a princess long ago'*.

ENGLISH

94. Overall, in Year 2, standards in English are below average. They are below average in speaking and listening, reading and writing, although the latter is close to average. In Year 6, standards are well below average overall in speaking and listening, reading and writing. For Year 2, this judgement is the same as that in the previous inspection when standards were described as, 'below national average at both key stages'. In Year 6, the judgement shows a decline in standards since the previous inspection.

95. The findings of this inspection are similar to the results of the Year 2 national tests in 2001. There has been an improvement in test scores over the last four years and this has been most marked in writing, where the school has done much to improve the quality of the teaching and learning of writing skills. Year 6 pupils' standards in English have varied from year to year, but are still well below average, and have fallen since 2000. The judgement of this inspection, that standards are well below average, reflects the view of the school that pupils in Year 6 are not on track to do significantly better in the national tests than pupils did in the year 2001. The high numbers of pupils with special educational needs and the significant changes of staff that pupils have experienced can partly explain this. There are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

96. The school met its target for the percentage of pupils expected to reach the national average in English in 2001. However, very few pupils reached the higher levels. The target for the 2002 tests was for 50 per cent of pupils to reach the national average, and pupils are expected to achieve these, albeit modest, standards.

97. Pupils enter the school with well below average attainment. Therefore, their achievement in English is satisfactory by Year 2, but unsatisfactory by Year 6. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language achieve satisfactory standards compared with their previous attainment. This is because support is well planned, and effectively provided by teachers and support assistants. No differences in the attainment of pupils from minority ethnic groups were observed in lessons.

98. Many pupils enter the school with very limited skills and confidence in spoken language. In Years 2 and 6, standards attained in speaking and listening are well below average. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils listened carefully to their teacher when they were asked to describe the characteristics of 'The Little Blue Fish' and the 'Rainbow Fish.' However, there was a noticeable lack of enthusiasm to extend ideas with detail and only about a third of the pupils made significant contributions to the class discussion. Others lacked confidence or a suitable range of vocabulary for the task.

99. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils listened well because the teacher used a very good range of strategies to hold their attention as he read a 'quest' story compiled from their ideas. However, when asked to explain the effect upon them of what they had heard, only a small number responded confidently with good explanations. This lack of confidence was reflected in the writing that followed because many pupils did not have a sufficient range and choice of appropriate words to enliven their work with vigour and freshness. However, in a small group discussion intended to develop their vocabulary and use of language, pupils were particularly attentive to their teacher and some began to adapt what they said to meet the needs of the listeners in the group.

100. Standards in reading are below average in Year 2 and well below average in Year 6. Pupils in Year 2 do not have a sufficiently wide range of reading skills to read with accuracy or strategies to establish understanding of texts. Basic reading skills, such as the use of phonics and knowledge of a key vocabulary are not securely established. Therefore pupils are not particularly confident when reading and are not keen to discuss what they have read or express opinions about their likes and dislikes. Higher attaining pupils show more confidence, but overall do not read as well as they should.

101. In Year 6, much of pupils' reading is inaccurate. For example, they do not always realise when they have made mistakes in reading aloud, even when what they put into words does not make sense. Reading is not always as fluent as it should be for pupils of this age, although a few higher attaining pupils read well and with expression. A significant weakness is that pupils do not have a secure understanding of important ideas or themes in a text, although they do attempt this. Few pupils make use of the more advanced skills of inference or deduction in order to understand subtleties in texts. Most pupils talk about what they read and express their views about books that they have enjoyed, but these are limited in range of genre and author. Pupils' understanding of research and reference skills is weak. However, a few higher attaining pupils have a reasonable understanding of how to access information from non-fiction texts. Overall, more advanced reading skills are underdeveloped, and this hinders pupils' attainment and progress.

102. In writing, Year 2 pupils acquire appropriate knowledge for writing, but progress is inconsistent over time. Much of the writing is repetitive in content because pupils' vocabulary lacks range and variety. Ideas are usually developed in sequences of sentences, but spelling is not consistently accurate, and handwriting is not always legible or well formed. Pupils write for a satisfactory range of different purposes in literacy lessons, but few write at any length in other subjects.

103. By Year 6, teachers provide a wide range of tasks to promote pupils' writing in literacy lessons, but they often expect too little in other subjects, and opportunities are therefore, missed to improve pupils' skills. In one lesson, the pupils had to write the next section of a 'quest' story. Writing was fairly imaginative, and ideas were extended logically. However, because pupils' choice of words lacked range, richness and subtlety, the development of the ideas that they had was not lively or interesting. This deficiency also caused a number of pupils to work too slowly, because they could not readily find words appropriate to the ideas that they had. Little use was made of punctuation in sentences, and some pupils produced script rather than joined handwriting.

104. The quality of teaching and learning in English is satisfactory throughout the school. The previous inspection reported that 'most teaching is at least sound, with well over half of lessons good and sometimes very good'. Key characteristics of good teaching in English include teachers' effective strategies to motivate pupils and maintain their interest, and a good pace that ensures that pupils are working to meet the lesson's objectives. Where individual targets are closely linked to what pupils need to learn, they have a better understanding of how to improve their work. Teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their spoken language than was found in the last inspection, and this is starting to have a positive impact on pupils' speech. Teaching assistants are well organized and provide effective support to pupils, often using considerable initiative to help them to learn. When teaching is less effective, it is because teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should be able to do. These lessons lack pace; pupils are not sufficiently challenged to produce high quality work and they do not listen well to instructions or take an effective part in discussion.

105. In a satisfactory Year 1/2 lesson on rhyming words for lower attaining pupils, they sang the rhymes with adults, and some used their fingers to help them with the 'count down' sequence. The teaching assistant ably supported them. Pupils took part with reasonable concentration, but a number became restless after some time had elapsed. A weakness in the lesson was that the pupils were not challenged sufficiently to think of their own rhymes, or to place the words used in sequence effectively. Group work for pupils made sound use of the good resources, but there was too little opportunity for their writing skills to be developed. Indeed, some writing had capital letters in the middle of words. In a good Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher worked very hard to motivate the pupils by good use of questioning and a brisk pace throughout. This enabled them to develop an appropriate vocabulary for the guided writing on the Blue Fish and the Rainbow Fish. Pupils made good efforts in their writing, but the quality was very variable because the teacher did not stress her expectations about presentation, layout and handwriting. Therefore, some was illegible, and common words were sometimes spelled inaccurately.

106. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher worked very hard to enthuse pupils and to help them develop ideas and vocabulary for story writing. The teacher's expectations were high, and the pace of the lesson challenging. Particularly good use was made of questioning to help pupils think more precisely about what they wanted to write and how to frame their ideas appropriately. There was a calm atmosphere in the class, and pupils were able to work at a satisfactory level of independence because they knew exactly what to do.

107. The quality of the English curriculum is satisfactory overall, but there is some lack of breadth and depth to ensure that pupils have access to a rich and varied literacy experience. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and is enhanced by activities such as a visit to the local newspaper office to learn about the production of a newspaper. Pupils' cultural education is enhanced when they learn about Black history, or have a visit from a professional storyteller. Pupils in Year 6 have 'reading partners' in the Nursery. This is a good social and learning experience for both age groups, because they meet each week and share a time of reading together. The National Literacy Strategy is established, and pupils have useful targets to help them to improve their work. Information and communication technology is used to some extent to support teaching and learning, and this is an area that the school is developing further. The school uses data from tests and from the assessment of pupils' work to set targets and predict individual levels of performance. However, these data are not used sufficiently to influence curricular planning to meet the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are higher attaining.

108. Although the marking of pupils' work is regular, in too many cases poor quality work is accepted, common mistakes are overlooked and little guidance is given so that pupils learn how to improve their work. At present, there is no co-ordinator for the subject, and the headteacher has taken on the role temporarily. A new appointment has been made for the next term. The school has also been adversely affected by considerable changes of staff in recent times. Currently, analysis of pupils' work and of teaching lacks sufficient rigour and identification of weaknesses to ensure, more precisely, why standards are low and what can be done to improve them. The school is aware of these issues. Library provision is satisfactory, and good use is made of the computer system for its management. Resources for learning are good.

MATHEMATICS

109. By the end of Year 2, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are average. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, when standards were below average. This results from the effectiveness of the National Numeracy Strategy in Years 1 and 2, from good use of assessment to match work to the pupils' needs and from good quality teaching. There is an increased emphasis on developing the pupils' skills in mental calculations and problem solving and on the pupils' understanding of relevant mathematical vocabulary. In the 2001 national tests for seven year olds, standards were average compared with schools nationally and were well above average compared with similar schools. There has been a significant improvement in standards over the past four years.

110. By the end of Year 6, standards in basic numeracy and in other areas of mathematics are well below average. In the previous inspection, standards were below average. Attainment in the 2001 national tests for Year 6 pupils was very low compared with schools nationally, and well below similar schools. Standards have fallen significantly over the past four years, mainly as a result of considerable changes in teaching staff. In 2001, the school failed to meet its target of 50 per cent of pupils to reach the expected National Curriculum level of attainment. A similar target has been set for this year, which pupils are on course to achieve.

111. The school has the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning as a main priority, and this year's national test results are on course to be better than last year's. There is no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls in the school. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards by Year 2, given their weak standards on entry to the school, but, by Year 6, few pupils have made the rate of progress expected of them. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English

is an additional language are fully included in learning and they are making satisfactory progress. Most of the pupils are keen to learn and to do their best. A few have less positive attitudes. Presentation of work is variable, and too many pupils take insufficient care in setting out their work.

112. By the end of Year 2, most of the pupils use quick mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to ten. They sort and order numbers to 100 easily, and have a sound understanding of place value in two digit numbers. They round numbers to the nearest ten with reasonable accuracy. A few higher attaining pupils use their knowledge of doubling and halving well to add and subtract numbers to 20, and have a good understanding of multiplication as repeated addition. Most pupils recognise multiples of five, and use different methods to add nine to a number. They use various coins confidently to make totals, and a few higher attaining pupils calculate change. Most recognise and continue simple number and shape patterns, and solve simple number problems. Nearly all name and recognise common two and three-dimensional shapes, and measure classroom objects accurately in centimetres. Most tell the time accurately to half and quarter past the hour. They record data well by means of simple tally charts and bar charts. There is some evidence of the pupils using their numeracy skills in other subjects, such as in science to make tally charts of their favourite foods, but there is little evidence of the pupils using mathematics widely in other subjects.

113. By Year 6, few pupils have a quick mental recall of number facts. They find work in shape, space and measures difficult. A few higher attaining pupils, however, use protractors accurately to draw angles to the nearest degree, and they have a sound understanding of reflective symmetry in two-dimensional shapes. Many pupils find it difficult to reduce a fraction to its simplest form, and to relate fractions to decimals and percentages. They often struggle to order decimal fractions, and lack confidence when using calculators. A major weakness in attainment is the pupils' inability to apply their numeracy skills in solving real life problems, especially when more than one step is required in the solution. They also find it difficult to solve problems when the information is presented in a slightly different way from usual. They record data by means of different kinds of graphs reasonably well, but they are less confident at interpreting information provided in graphs. Only a few higher attaining pupils identify the mode and range of a set of data. In science work on forces, the pupils construct accurate line graphs, plotting Newtons on one axis and grams on the other, but, again, teachers do not expect pupils to use their mathematical skills enough in other subjects.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is good throughout the school. Lessons are based on clear weekly plans, and most teachers make sure that the pupils are aware of what it is they are expected to have learned by the end of each lesson. The teachers move oral and mental mathematics sessions along at a brisk pace, and often make learning fun. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, for example, the teacher made effective use of a bingo game to enhance the learning of the order of numbers to 100. She extended the tasks by asking the pupils to say one less or more than the numbers on their cards, and this provided a good challenge for the higher attaining pupils. Another teacher in the same year group used a number card game to achieve a similar result. In a lesson for pupils in Year 3, the teacher used a timer to very good effect as it introduced an element of competition into learning as the pupils selected pairs of numbers that made 20 in the shortest possible time. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher introduced the use of 'follow me' cards to give the pupils as much practice as possible in doubling and halving numbers. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6, the teacher made good use of very rapid questions, which really helped the pupils to recall facts about doubling and halving of two and three digit numbers.

115. Overall, the teachers match work well to the wide ability span in each class. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, the teacher challenged the higher attaining pupils well, as they had to use a scale and record the weights of packages accurately in grams, rather than just recording which were lighter or heavier. The teachers encourage the pupils to work as independently as possible. In a Year 1/2 lesson, the teacher said, "*You can work well on your own, can't you?*" and this encouraged the higher attaining pupils to assume more responsibility for their own learning. Most teachers have high

expectations for behaviour, and this creates a good working atmosphere in most lessons. In a lesson for pupils in Year 3, the teacher said, *“That’s not the way we operate here”* when a pupil shouted the answer out, and this set the tone for the remainder of the lesson. The teachers use resources well to enhance learning. In a Year 3 lesson, the teacher used a number line well to help the pupils understand where fractions should be placed, and this helped them later to count up in fractions correctly. In a Year 4 lesson, the teacher worked really hard to motivate a group of pupils by constant use of praise, by making the pace of the lesson so fast that there was no time for inappropriate behaviour and by making instructions for tasks very clear and simple. The teachers encourage the pupils to explain their strategies. This works well because it consolidates their understanding and helps them to see where they have made mistakes.

116. The teachers mark pupils’ work regularly and positively. Some teachers give more guidance than others in how the pupils might improve their work. Useful comments include: *“Please check the angles again”*, and *“Label your bar chart; we don’t know what it is showing”*. This helps pupils to improve, but when teachers praise work that is wrong, it slows down their progress.

117. A very good policy outlines how skills in numeracy can be developed from one year to the next. The co-ordinator has made a good start in managing the subject. He recognises the urgent need to raise standards by the end of Year 6, and has developed a good action plan to address this. The use of an additional teacher allows Year 6 pupils to be taught mathematics in two ability sets, separately from Year 5. This means that there are smaller numbers in the lessons and the teachers can give the pupils more individual attention. The co-ordinator has led useful training for colleagues on the use of information and communication technology in mathematics, and on the use of assessment to inform planning for different groups of pupils. There are good procedures for assessing the pupils’ attainment and for tracking their progress. The co-ordinator analyses information from assessment and from national test results well to highlight areas of weakness and to focus teaching on them. This is beginning to lift standards. The co-ordinator has not had time to systematically monitor teaching with a view to sharing good practice. There are adequate resources to support teaching and learning.

SCIENCE

118. Overall, standards in science are well below average by Year 2 and Year 6. This is lower attainment than was found in the last inspection, and matches the results of the 2001 national tests. Considerable staffing problems, movement of pupils joining and leaving the school, and a high percentage of pupils who have special educational needs, all contribute to the low standards. All groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress in their understanding of scientific concepts. However, pupils’ weak skills in reading and writing mean that their progress by Year 6 has been too slow.

119. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory, with some that is good. Some teachers provide opportunities for pupils to investigate and try out things for themselves, but this is not consistently planned across all the lessons in this age band. An example of this good investigative work was seen when some Year 2 pupils were working on simple circuits. In their groups, they learned how to use crocodile clips and make a good connection to light up the bulb. One or two pupils took this further and found out what happened when they put two batteries into the circuit. One pupil discovered that he could make the bulb light up even if he discarded the wire, and made a direct battery connection. Sometimes, the information given to pupils is far beyond their understanding, such as in one Year 1/2 class where they were given information about nickel cadmium batteries that few understood.

120. Teachers’ planning is based securely on the school’s science programme but there is sometimes insufficient direct planning of more challenging work to stretch higher attaining pupils. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to write about fair tests, record their observations using a variety of ways or write up their experiments in any length. Some work does enable pupils to go

further, for example, finding out why a circuit is not complete, or giving explanations for changes in living things which are connected to diet or nutrients. These opportunities are not consistently applied across the age range. Teachers make sound use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in science, and the presentation to Year 4 pupils on the solar system did much to consolidate their knowledge of planets.

121. Analysis of pupils' work provides many instances of their weak literacy skills. For example, Year 2 have sorted living things and those that have never lived, but their written work is poor, and is not helped by using too many worksheets and drawings. For example, they discovered a spider on the playground, some flowers in the field, and a worm in the wild area, and drew them all. Pupils make simple predictions and understand what plants need to grow. They have a basic understanding of how to group minibeasts into those that fly and those that jump. They understand that forces are either pushes or pulls, and list some of each. Pupils have a sound grasp of how to sort materials such as wool, card, metal and rubber, and they understand that some are opaque and some are transparent. Years 1 and 2 pupils have a sound knowledge of appliances that are run by electricity, and list everyday things that they know, such as televisions and radios. They name some sources of light such as the sun, and understand that darkness is the absence of light. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are learning to observe, follow instructions and communicate what they see, but there are insufficient opportunities for them to write their findings and teachers do not address pupils' writing and neatness enough.

122. The quality of teaching and learning in Years 3–6 is good, with a range from satisfactory to excellent. Where teaching is most effective, there is a very good pace to the lessons and everything that is planned is packed into the time. For example, in an excellent Year 5/6 lesson, pupils put posters of the planets into their right order, listened to a short piece of music 'describing' each one and thought of two adjectives that would fit. Pupils were fully engaged in working out scales and distances, and then making appropriately sized models of the planets. The teacher explained the relative distances involved very well by saying that if the model of the sun was near his desk, using the same scale, Pluto would be beyond the Orwell Bridge. They all enjoyed this lesson and were very fully occupied and made excellent gains in their understanding of the solar system. Good links were made to English, music, religious education and history, but the strongest link was with mathematics when working out relative scales. In less successful lessons on the same theme illustrating the inconsistency of the quality of teaching, the whole time was spent listening to music and trying to discover what the composer, Holst, had named it. This added very little to pupils' scientific understanding of the distances involved in space, and the physical nature of the planets.

123. Teachers do not always plan enough to extend higher attaining pupils, and this is why few attain higher levels in the national tests. For example, in looking at some Year 5/6 pupils' work, it was clear that when they were studying how to separate a solid once it had been dissolved into a liquid, the experiment did not take the more able pupils onwards. They understood that some mixtures are irreversible, such as that of plaster of Paris with water, and they learned how to filter sand from water, but they were not clear about how to use the evaporation process to recover salt from a mixture. Later, when working on circuits, they were not pushed further to discover the conductivity of various materials. Pupils understand the principles of fair testing but they do not always refer to this in writing up their work. Assessment is generally good, but marking in the work seen was unsatisfactory. Most often the teacher's comments are such as '*fantastic*' or '*brilliant*', but do not give any indication of how the pupil might improve. In a few instances, incorrect things are marked as right and enthused over. For example, one pupil classified a cow as an amphibian, and an eel as a mammal, both of which were marked right.

124. Year 4 have studied some aspects of space, and in one lesson, they were making a simple model to demonstrate the orbit of the moon. They learned well from this, but the teacher had to spend too large a proportion of the time in establishing control because the behaviour of a few pupils did not

allow the lesson to continue. His experience and management skills enabled him to get them all to concentrate but, in less successful lessons, teachers could not do this.

125. Pupils benefit from the practical activities that teachers provide, and they are able to grasp most of the ideas behind the work. Presentation in their books varies from very good to very untidy, but teachers usually do not comment on this or insist upon high standards of writing and neatness.

126. Science relies on previously worked out schemes, but there are moves to improve this by using more of the national guidelines. Leadership is provided by a new co-ordinator who has made a good start by analysing what is needed to raise standards, and he understands clearly what is required to move the subject on. He is beginning to build on the strengths of the subject, such as the instances of good teaching, and already some pupils are being given a measure of independence in their investigations. The areas for development identified in the action planning include better schemes of work, ensuring that the good practices seen in some lessons are disseminated to all teachers and the monitoring of teaching and learning in science, which is inadequate.

127. Improvements since the last inspection are satisfactory, except in the progress that pupils make by the time they leave the school. The quality of teaching is better, and the leadership clearly demonstrates an ability to improve.

ART AND DESIGN

128. Pupils attain average standards in art and design by the end of Year 2 and Year 6, and these are similar to those reported in the school's previous inspection. Due to timetabling arrangements, only two lessons could be observed, both in Years 3 to 6. Judgements are based on the observed lessons, analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning throughout the school. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards, and those with special educational needs and those who have English as a second language achieve similar standards to other pupils in their year group. There are no differences in the attainment of boys and girls.

129. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Pupils in the Year 1/2 classes create colourful jungle masks using a range of collage materials. They use coloured pencils with reasonable skill to produce attractive self-portraits. Pupils mix paints well to create tones and shades of colours for their symmetrical paintings. They use clay and paints to make colourful pinch pots and self-portrait clay faces. Their work creating abstract pictures using Hessian, felt, sequins and wool is of a good standard.

130. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, there are inconsistencies, and the quality of teaching and learning ranges from unsatisfactory to satisfactory. Teachers strive hard to ensure that pupils are well behaved, so that all can learn. However, some teachers struggle to manage pupils' immature behaviour and this slows down the pace of learning. Some pupils are easily distracted and cannot sustain concentration. They take a long time to settle to work, fiddle with pencils, call out and have poor listening skills. Most teachers are confident in their knowledge of art and design. They provide pupils with appropriate opportunities to explore and choose their own materials and pupils are taught the basic skills of drawing, designing and painting. A strength of the teaching is that pupils are given many opportunities to study a wide range of artwork of famous and local artists, which enhances their own artwork. Art is used well to enrich pupils' understanding of history, particularly about the Ancient Greeks and the Tudors.

131. In Years 3 to 6, pupils satisfactorily develop their skills in observational drawing, and many produce sketches with appropriate attention to line, detail, proportion and expression. Although pupils use sketchbooks, these are not used consistently well to record observations and to develop ideas. Pupils satisfactorily refine their skills as they progress through the school, and show increasing confidence in using various media and techniques. Year 3 pupils blend pastels well for their observational drawings of flowers. They use a digital camera well, and use different applications to enhance digitally the images based on the work of Andy Warhol. They create a wide range of

different effects, such as distorting the images and changing the colours. They use an overhead projector well to enlarge the images, which they draw onto paper before painting them. Pupils use simple block prints to create attractive Greek patterns. Their Mondrian style paintings are very effective. Year 4 pupils satisfactorily recreate details of William Morris designs. They have looked at pictures of Roman pottery before making their own clay pots to hold tea lights. Pupils in the Year 5/6 classes study a wide range of headwear from different periods, cultures and theatrical costumes before creating their own designs. They have a good understanding of the styles of famous artists, for example, Picasso, Jackson Pollock, Van Gogh and Mondrian, as well as the local artist, Dale Devereux Barker, which helps them to improve their own work.

132. The co-ordinator for art supports teachers well, and has good subject knowledge. She has reviewed and rewritten the policy for art and design. The co-ordinator is aware of the inconsistent use of sketchbooks, and draft plans are in place to ensure that they are used well throughout the school in the near future. She has reviewed the good scheme of work, which ensures progression of skills across the school. The co-ordinator gives informal advice to colleagues. She monitors planning, displays and pupils' sketchbooks. The co-ordinator helped to organise *Working Together Days*, using art to extend and enhance pupils' understanding of various styles of artwork from different cultures and periods of time. The co-ordinator has set up an after school art club for pupils from Reception to Year 6 classes, which they enjoy. Assessment is mainly by informal evaluation. Resources are good. Some pupils' artwork has been exhibited at a neighbouring school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

133. Pupils' work in design and technology is average by Year 2 and by Year 6. This represents satisfactory progress, and an improvement by Year 6 pupils since the last inspection. They have benefited most from better curricular planning, and more challenging projects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and their work is sometimes among the best in the class. Year 1 and 2 pupils make a good start in their model-making, getting an early feel for movement in their models, and improving their accuracy in their building. They make sturdy wheeled vehicles after a good deal of research into what materials they will need. Their designs are sound, with a reasonable attention to detail. Their clay pots and 'faces' are made with a great deal of care, and are finished off attractively with paint.

134. By Year 6, pupils work systematically to gather information about a project, and generate a reasonable number of ideas. Their slippers, made from brightly decorated fabric, show good creative skills, and were designed with a clear understanding of the purpose for which they are used. They evaluate their work honestly, writing comments such as: "*My slippers are not the same as I wanted them to be, but they are a good first try.*" Pupils' designs are sound, and are enhanced by useful step-by-step sketches. In their best work, pupils designed and made question and answer games, using electrical circuits to light bulbs for the correct response.

135. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers' planning is comprehensive, and gives appropriate attention to the development of pupils' skills. Teachers make good links with other subjects, such as art, history, mathematics and science. This works well and gives a purpose to pupils' Roman money-holders and three-dimensional shapes made of straws. A strength of the teaching lies in the good opportunities that teachers give for pupils to research a project thoroughly. This gave Year 5/6 pupils, for example, many good ideas for their sandwich fillings, and a clear understanding of the nutritional value of their food. Similarly, Year 4 pupils gained much from researching different designs to decorate their Roman money holders. Teachers manage classes well, and this helps pupils enjoy design and technology. They make useful assessments of pupils' progress, and use the digital camera very well to record pupils' creations.

136. A good scheme of work, based on national guidelines, provides useful guidance to teachers, and states clearly how pupils' skills should progress through the school. The co-ordinator for design and technology is knowledgeable, and has responded well to criticisms of the subject in the last

inspection by monitoring the quality of teaching and planning and boosting resources and cooking equipment. The curriculum is enhanced by 'Working Together' days, when the whole school is involved in tackling different challenges, and by pupils entering a competition organised by a construction-kit company when schools match their skills against others.

GEOGRAPHY

137. It was not possible to see the subject taught, and judgements are, therefore, based upon analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of the school's documentation and discussion with the headteacher. Analysis of work indicates that the attainment of pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 is below average. This is a similar judgement to that made in the previous inspection. The progress made by pupils is unsatisfactory, because of the limited range and amount of work that they have done and their overall levels of attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make similarly limited progress.

138.

139. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning and the rate of pupils' progress judged by analysis of their work are unsatisfactory throughout the school. The previous inspection made no overall judgement about teaching, but concluded that it, 'varied from good to poor.' In Year 2, pupils have covered a limited range of work. Its quality is variable because there has not been an emphasis upon teaching pupils key geographical skills in a systematic and structured manner. Furthermore, pupils do not have the skills to record their work with accuracy and care; therefore, much of it is poorly presented. Marking gives insufficient guidance to show pupils how to improve what they do, and too little attention is given to ensure that the work is well matched to the needs and capabilities of pupils. In Year 1, pupils have also covered a limited range of work with too little stress upon its quality and content. They have spent too much time colouring worksheets and there has not been enough emphasis upon teaching them simple geographical skills that can be used in investigations.

140. Analysis of work produced by pupils in Years 3 to 6 indicates that teachers' expectations are very variable with respect to the quality and the quantity of work produced in different classes. Teachers provide too many tasks that require little of pupils, such as adding captions to diagrams of river systems. There is evidence that too much work is simply copied. This means that pupils' understanding of key ideas is insufficiently derived from either first hand experience or the use of investigative geographical skills. Therefore, pupils only make limited progress over time. This is made worse when, in some instances, work is not completed. Pupils in Year 5 have done the same work as those in Year 6. Judgements about the quality of teaching and learning are, therefore, the same, except that in one class there is a wider range of work and better standards are achieved. Teachers' expectations are not high enough because the quality of recorded work, particularly presentation, lacks care and accuracy. In Years 3 to 6, most work is marked, and pupils have helpful and supportive comments given to them. Although pupils clearly acquire some knowledge, there is much less use and development of skills because of the limited range of work undertaken. Local studies work in Year 3 is, overall, of reasonable quality, and pupils here have made sound progress in their basic geographical knowledge.

141. The school is aware of the need to revise the geography curriculum in order to relate some of its aspects more closely to the local area, and to match more accurately the needs of its pupils. Some visits to places such as Felixstowe, Thornham study centre and the immediate vicinity have enhanced pupils' learning. Some evaluation of their work has been made in the past, but assessment is not used to help plan the geography curriculum. Too little use is made of information and communication technology in the subject. The school has not had a geography co-ordinator for some time, and this has adversely affected the development of the subject. The supply of learning resources is unsatisfactory. There is no current action plan to develop the teaching and learning of geography, and this is a significant weakness when the standards achieved by pupils throughout the school are considered.

HISTORY

142. By the end of both Year 2 and Year 6, standards are average, which reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Pupils achieve satisfactory standards, and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are making satisfactory progress. Whilst most of the pupils have sound attitudes to work, there are a few who are much less positive. Throughout the school, too much work is presented untidily.

143. By the end of Year 2, the pupils are beginning to develop a sound sense of chronology. They have a satisfactory understanding of how features of everyday life have changed over time, and they know that these can be shown on a time line. Pupils construct a simple time line to show the main events in their own lives so far. They look at pictures of carriages, cars and bicycles through the ages and make sound observations of how means of transport have changed. They place a variety of bicycles reasonably accurately on a time line. When they look at photographs of buildings, most pupils have the skills to place them in sequence by their age. Pupils have a clear understanding of how some inventions have changed people's lifestyles, such as colour televisions and mobile telephones. They know something about the work of inventors such as William Caxton, Alexander Graham Bell and George Stephenson. They are familiar with other famous people in history, such as Captain Cook and Amy Johnson.

144. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have an average understanding of the major events and personalities of Tudor times. They know that Cardinal Wolsey was born locally, in Ipswich. The pupils write about Henry VIII and his wives, why Henry broke with Rome and why he dissolved the monasteries, but their weak standards in literacy make this difficult for many pupils. Pupils have enhanced their knowledge by researching information from books, CD ROM programs and the Internet. The pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the chronology of the many peoples who have invaded and settled in Britain over the ages. They know some of the reasons for the Roman invasion of Britain, and describe some aspects of life in Roman times. They find it difficult to make careful observations of artefacts, and to ask themselves questions about the use that might have been made of them. The pupils are familiar with some aspects of life in Victorian Britain, although they struggle to place some of the many inventions of that era on to a time line. They know about aspects of life in ancient Greece and they are familiar with some of the stories of those times, such as the Trojan Horse.

145. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, the teachers are placing more emphasis on developing the pupils' sense of chronology and clear understanding of time lines. A strength of some teaching is the use of drama to make learning more real. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4, the teacher dressed up as a Roman, and used two other members of staff to act out the roles of Celts. This helped the pupils to gain a better understanding of how the Celts felt about the Roman invasion, of why the Romans eventually left Britain and of the legacy they left behind. The teachers plan their lessons well, and they ensure that all the pupils are fully included in question and answer sessions. In a lesson for pupils in Years 1 and 2, when the teacher asked, "*Why do you think Brunel's bridges were important?*" it made the pupils think carefully, and helped them to understand the difficulties posed by rivers to transport before the great bridge building era of the nineteenth century. The teacher had made a simple, but effective display of photographs and posters, which provided a good visual stimulus for the pupils and helped them to understand the role played by Brunel. The teacher made effective links with design and technology, as the pupils proceeded to make bridges out of a variety of materials. This made learning both meaningful and fun for the pupils. In a lesson for pupils in Year 6, the teacher ensured that the pupils had to use their research skills to find out about Elizabeth I, including information about her visit to Melford Hall in Suffolk. She encouraged the pupils to try and place themselves in those times by asking, "*How do you think these people would feel?*" Higher attaining pupils had to write in the role of different characters in the household, before a visit from the Queen. This was obviously the first time the pupils had been asked to undertake this kind of

writing, with the result that, whilst higher attaining pupils were able to write well, few others knew how to set about the task.

146. The weakness in the teaching is the lack of opportunities given to pupils, other than those in Year 6, to use their literacy skills in order to write at length about historical topics. Too much work is done on worksheets, where the pupils write very little. Some of their history folders are more a collection of information sheets or pages printed off the Internet. The pupils are given insufficient opportunities to see history from differing viewpoints. Teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work are sometimes insufficiently high. Some teachers can manage pupils' behaviour more effectively than others. In a lesson for pupils in Year 4, the teacher and her assistant tried hard to motivate the pupils to observe some replica artefacts from Roman times, but the poor behaviour of most of the pupils meant that teaching was constantly disrupted, and little learning took place. Marking of the pupils' work is satisfactory, although, at times, insufficient guidance is given about how the pupils might improve their work.

147. Planning for the teaching of history is good. This is an improvement from the previous inspection, when there was no policy and planning was under-developed. The co-ordinator has made a sound start in managing the subject. She has audited the resources available for teaching and learning and has increased the range of historical artefacts. Resources are now adequate. The co-ordinator monitors planning and samples of pupils' work, in order to gain a sound overview of standards. She has not had the opportunity to monitor teaching, with a view to sharing good practice. She is building up a useful collection of samples of pupils' work. There are no whole school procedures for assessing the pupils' attainment. The pupils' learning and cultural development are enriched by worthwhile visits to places such as Sutton Hoo, Kentwell Hall and the Imperial War Museum. Earlier this school year, Year 5/6 pupils visited Manor House Museum at Bury St Edmunds for a series of history workshops, which the school used well to create a 'museum'. Last year, all the pupils participated in a 'Black History Month', when they focused on the role of black people in world history.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

148. Pupils' attainment in information and communication technology is average by Year 2, and by Year 6. In the previous inspection, pupils' attainment was reported to be, 'broadly in line with national expectations' for all pupils.

149. In Year 2, pupils enter information on to a database with average skill, retrieve appropriate files and search for information systematically. Analysis of work indicates that they create block graphs, control devices such as a 'floor turtle', import graphics into a text and copy, resize and colour graphics. By Year 6, pupils enter programs confidently, and construct a simple database into which they input data and save the information. They have used the Internet to search for information, and have word-processed a range of texts in different subjects. Evidence suggests that pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress against their prior attainment. A significant weakness is that many pupils throughout the school have weak keyboard skills.

150. On the evidence of an analysis of pupils' work and lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 1 to 2. In Year 2, a good lesson was the result of clear direction and instruction by the teacher so that pupils learned the specific skills of searching for and sorting data. They worked at a good pace, and with close interest. Analysis of work in Year 2 shows that teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work are satisfactory, and that there is appropriate acquisition of both skills and knowledge for a satisfactory range of operations.

151. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In a good Year 6 lesson, the teacher gave clear instruction to the whole class and to individual pupils. This enabled them to develop their understanding of how to open and interrogate a database. The teacher made good use of the 'interactive whiteboard' to demonstrate the various operations needed. However, the position of

the monitors made it difficult for some pupils to see the whiteboard. Some struggled when entering data because their work on the keyboard was slow; they were uncertain about the function of different keys, and the typing was laboriously carried out, often with one finger. At times in all the lessons seen, pupils became noisy, but this was mainly because they were excited about the tasks. Occasionally, however, noise levels increased to such a pitch that pupils found it hard to concentrate. When they were asked, pupils were willing to discuss what they did, and most gave clear explanations that indicated that they understood the tasks. A lesson in Year 4 on the entering of data about the planets in the solar system was well presented, and the teacher had good subject knowledge so that pupils' queries were quickly answered. When teachers are not so secure in their knowledge, pupils make mistakes and do not then know how to correct them.

152. A sound scheme of work informs teachers' planning, and the school has a policy to protect pupils from undesirable Internet material. Good use of specific funding has been made to establish a well-equipped computer suite. However, the arrangement of the room causes difficulties to pupils, particularly the youngest as already noted. The co-ordinator is aware of this problem. The use of information and communication technology in other subjects is developing well. The school has established good links with the community: pupils have visited the computer offices of a local newspaper, and the co-ordinator has provided computer lessons for parents and their children in Year 4. Some links have been established with a national on-line training service with links to business and industry. A good computer-based system to assess pupils' work has been established, and is being currently developed in use. The co-ordinator has a good action plan, with appropriate priorities to review resources, develop the scheme of work and complete all staff training in the use of information and communication technology. A strength of the current situation is that assistants have been trained well, and provide very good support for pupils and teachers in lessons. Overall, good improvements have been made in curricular provision and the management of the subject.

MUSIC

153. By Year 2 and Year 6, pupils attain average standards for their ages. This is similar to the judgements of the previous inspection report. All groups of pupils achieve well in music, and enjoy their work. Pupils with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language make good progress, as they receive good support.

154. There is a wide range of attainment, but by the time that they are seven, most pupils sing songs well from memory, and invent and change patterns with percussion instruments. Working in small groups, they make good progress as they experiment with percussion instruments to try to change the length of notes. They easily make loud and quiet sounds, but find it more difficult to change the length of the notes. In one lesson, after much discussion and experimenting, some pupils successfully performed before the class, making differing length sounds on percussion instruments. Pupils listen attentively to two contrasting pieces of music, and realised that one piece was played with mostly long notes, whilst the other piece was comprised of mostly very short notes.

155. By Year 6, pupils sing songs tunefully from memory, and compose and perform their own short compositions. They sing songs such as *A life on the ocean waves* and *Join in with the band* with appropriate rhythm. They can chant *Concentration Rondo* whilst keeping a steady pulse using body percussion. They learn much about music making when they listen attentively to music on synthesisers by composers such as Vangelis, and when they are played *Barisgede*, a ritual spear dance piece of gamelan music from Indonesia. They work co-operatively in small groups to compose their own music using tuned and percussion instruments, and show great pride when they perform before the class. Year 3 pupils are learning how pentatonic scales are used in music. Year 4 pupils clap and chant a rhythm which includes a rest, and compose and perform short rhythmic patterns using percussion instruments.

156. The quality of teaching and learning is good. However, a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and learning was observed. Teachers strive hard to ensure that pupils are well behaved so

that all can learn. However, when teaching and learning are unsatisfactory, teachers struggle to manage pupils' immature behaviour, and this slows down learning. Particularly good progress was seen in the lessons taught by the peripatetic music specialist. She used her good subject knowledge very well to inspire pupils. She shared her aims for the pupils' learning with them, and used excellent resources to inspire them. With this very good lead, pupils' own performance improved noticeably during the lessons. In one lesson, it culminated in their working well in groups of three to compose their own rhythmic pattern. Each group had a drum and two other percussion instruments. Two pupils played two different eight beat Kaherva cyclic pattern rhythms, which consisted of four open sounds and four closed sounds. The third pupil improvised a rhythmic pattern over the top of two other patterns. By the end of the lesson, each group was successful in varying degrees, but each group enjoyed performing to the class. They thoroughly enjoyed playing the African djembe drums, which the teacher had borrowed from the County Music Centre.

157. Most pupils are enthusiastic, and eager to be chosen to take on responsibility. Younger ones particularly enjoy singing, whilst older ones show that they can use their initiative when working in groups. They take turns, help each other and most listen attentively to the teachers. They applaud the skills of others and recognise the efforts made by those who are rather shy when performing. The teachers encourage pupils to evaluate what they see and hear, which helps them to develop their speaking skills and enrich their musical vocabularies. This is particularly helpful to those who are learning to speak English as an additional language and to pupils who have special educational needs. As a result, these two groups of pupils make good progress in lessons.

158. The co-ordinator provides sound support to teachers, but has not been able to monitor the teaching of music this year, due to other commitments. She has introduced a published scheme of work, which has given the staff confidence to teach music. The school makes effective use of a peripatetic music teacher, who teaches pupils in Years 3 to 6 for one term. The co-ordinator plans to review the scheme of work next year, with the introduction of the national guidelines for music in mind. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively to record pupils' musical compositions. This works well because it helps pupils to understand how well they are achieving, and where they can improve their work. Assessment opportunities are sound, and the peripatetic teachers provide the class teachers with a useful evaluation sheet of pupils' progress. During the autumn term, pupils are able to join the choir. They sing at the carol service, to the local elderly people and in the local shopping area at Christmas. Resources are good, and have a positive impact on the quality of pupils' work. The music room provides the school with good accommodation for teaching music. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 enjoy performing in the summer production. Pupils visited the local theatre last Christmas to see *Rock and Roll Cinderella*. Music plays an important part in the celebration of various cultures and festivals during the school year.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

159. By the end of Years 2 and 6, pupils' work in physical education is average. These are lower standards compared with those reported in the last inspection, mainly because pupils' behaviour and concentration are not as good as before. Nevertheless, pupils make satisfactory progress given their below average physical skills on entry to Year 1. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, and some of their games skills are the best in the class.

160. Year 2 pupils combine running, jumping and walking movements into sequences with average levels of co-ordination. They compete enthusiastically in relay races, but a few become easily distracted and disappoint other team members as they keep making mistakes. They create a good range of wide and tall shapes in gymnastics, and have a basic knowledge of why they have to warm-up before vigorous exercise.

161. Year 6 pupils' skills in gymnastics are average. They use apparatus with reasonable skill, and jump, roll and land confidently. Pupils' dance skills are average: most show reasonable control, and develop an interesting sequence of moves. In games, pupils compete enthusiastically, and a few show

good hockey skills. Some challenges, however, are very robust, and less confident pupils think twice before holding on for too long with the hockey puck. Pupils' swimming skills are average, and around three quarters swim to the expected standard by the time they leave. Pupils' best skills are in athletics, and the school has won the local tournament in three out of the last four years.

162. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but ranges from unsatisfactory to very good. In the best lessons, teachers' control of excitable pupils is very good; this channels pupils' enthusiasm and enables them to produce high standards. Where the quality of teaching has shortcomings, pupils are allowed to chat to each other when the teacher is talking, and then have little idea what to do. Teachers use plenty of praise to motivate pupils, and this gives pupils of all abilities the confidence to try different moves. Teachers warm pupils up carefully, and demonstrate skills well, using higher attaining pupils effectively to illustrate their points. In the best lesson, the teacher used music very effectively in the warm-up, and pupils worked extremely hard to keep up with the beat. He made good suggestions to improve pupils' work, giving just enough guidance to develop their own ideas. This had a good effect on pupils' learning as they were able to refine their movements and attempt more adventurous challenges. Teachers' planning has a sound focus on the systematic development of basic skills, and this ensures, for example, that pupils learn the correct way to jump and land. The teaching of swimming is good, and is enhanced by the use of a qualified instructor.

163. The physical education co-ordinator supports teachers well, and has worked hard to develop their skills. The school uses a good scheme of work that provides a clear structure to help non-specialist teachers plan lessons. There is a good supply of resources, and a very good hall. Assessment procedures are basic, and this is an area that the co-ordinator is addressing.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

164. By Years 2 and 6, pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This matches the findings of the last inspection report, and shows that standards have been maintained. Many pupils' writing skills are weak, and their written work is often too brief. Teachers do not always insist on good standards of presentation and handwriting. The subject is making a good contribution towards pupils' personal development, particularly their spiritual development. They learn about customs associated with worship, visit a local church, and the Salvation Army citadel, and have visits from local clergy. Pupils make satisfactory progress, including those who have special educational needs and those with English as an additional language.

165. It was not possible to see any religious education lessons in Years 1 and 2, and so the judgements are based upon analysis of pupils' work and discussions. These show that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the main events of the Christmas story, and some Old Testament stories such as Daniel and the Lions. They have a reasonable understanding of some aspects of the Sikh religion, and they have written prayers. The member of staff who is a Sikh helps by demonstrating various aspects of the faith, such as the five articles that some Sikhs wear to show their commitment. Pupils have drawn pictures of the ceremonial comb, the shorts and the bangle, which symbolise the eternity of God. They made a model of this bracelet using pipe cleaners and silver foil. Pupils understand something about celebrations, such as birthdays and bonfire night, and they relate these well to religious celebrations like a baptism or Christmas. They have made Mothers' Day cards, and thought about how difficult it is to make some decisions in their lives, and how they have helped people. One pupil wrote sensitively about the time she made a drink for her small cousin.

166. In Years 3 to 6, the quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils in Year 3 were trying to write questions about some of life's imponderable notions, including, "*Where did we come from*", and "*Why is water called wet?*" Several made satisfactory attempts at this, but the overall concept was too deep for many, and they simply wrote out the questions given to them by the teacher in the first part of the lesson. Years 5 and 6 were seen talking about 'milestones' in life. One group used a

'birthday box' to good effect that contained candles, balloons and all the things needed for a celebration. They talked knowledgeably about Christenings and school celebrations, such as Sports Day and Christmas parties. Some chose to talk about the Leavers' assembly or the school's opening celebrations when they moved to these buildings. The teacher moved them on to think about celebrations that happen in Ipswich, and then across the world. The World Cup football featured largely here.

167. From an analysis of pupils' work, it can be seen that some pupils in Year 4 have studied some aspects of Islam, such as the Five Pillars, and the scriptures, the Qur'an. They have a reasonable understanding of the revelations to Mohammad (pbuh) and that the Muslim scriptures are written in Arabic. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand something about the Khalsa in Sikhism, which signifies total commitment to the faith. They know that the word for a Sikh temple is "gurdwara" and that this means a doorway. The analysis of pupils' books showed that they had completed work of a good standard on symbols. For example, they thought about and drew road signs such as 'Ahead Only' or 'Give Way'. They related this well to the signs seen in religious faiths, such as the cross or the fish sign found in Christianity. Some of them related this to work in English, and understood that there are sayings that are not to be taken literally such as, 'he has green fingers', or 'he is the salt of the earth'.

168. Marking in some books does not offer any help for pupils to improve their work, and only celebrates such as "*a lovely Christmas tree drawing*".

169. The breadth and balance of the curriculum are broadly satisfactory, and are based on the local schemes of work. It does not, however, always meet the needs of all pupils in the school. In some classes, too long a time is taken working towards a topic. For example, in their work on 'milestones', pupils took two or even three lessons over non-religious events, which is too long. Not all teachers ask enough of pupils' writing, and often the work in their books tells little about what pupils have learned.

170. The co-ordinator has only recently taken over the subject, and has made a satisfactory start by analysing what is being done, and arranging to go on some in-service training herself. There has been no opportunity for her to monitor teaching and learning, although she has begun to compile a collection of pupils' work. The school has a good supply of learning resources that help to make lessons meaningful to pupils.