

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHITTON COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124684

Head Teacher: A Taylor

Reporting inspector: A Anderson, 23733

Dates of inspection: 8-11 May 2001

Inspection number: 196060

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior School

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Shakespeare Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk

Postcode: IP1 6ET

Telephone number: 01473 741225

Fax number: 01473 742492

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Reverend G Baulcomb

Date of previous inspection: 28 June 1999

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23733	A Anderson	Registered inspector	Special educational needs Area Support Centre	What sort of school is it? The school's results and achievements. How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19436	M O'Malley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
4302	A J Puckey	Team inspector	English as an additional language English Information and communication technology	
22471	P Walsh	Team inspector	Under fives Geography History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?
15965	W Ellis	Team inspector	Equal opportunities Mathematics Art Physical education	How well are pupils or students taught?
18245	G Wallace	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Religious education	How well does the school care for its pupils or students?

The inspection contractor was:

NEMIC

The Eastbourne Centre  
Station Road  
Sutton-in-Ashfield  
Nottinghamshire  
NG17 5FF

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Whitton Community Primary School is a large LEA maintained school with an attached 52-place nursery. It serves a large, pre-war council estate on the north western outskirts of Ipswich. There are 301 pupils, 136 boys and 165 girls, aged between 3-11 years on the main school roll and 30 boys and 20 girls in the nursery. Many of whom come from socially deprived backgrounds, Whitton being one of the most deprived wards in Ipswich. Half the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is well above average. There are 104 pupils on the special educational needs register, which is above average. Twenty-four have a statement of special educational need which is well above the national average. Twenty of these are in the Area Support Centre and four are in mainstream school. Thirty-nine pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and four pupils from Traveller families. Fourteen children have English as an additional language which is higher than most schools, ten of whom receive extra support from a language teacher. The school has a changing population. In the last year 41 pupils joined and 31 left the school other than at the beginning or end of the school year. Pupils' attainment on entry is below the national average.

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

Whitton Community Primary School is a good and improving school. It provides a good education for its pupils and has improved significantly since the 1997 inspection and the visit of Her Majesty's Inspector in 1999. The care of pupils is good and pupils' attitudes to work are very good. Pupils achieve standards of work in lessons that are now satisfactory in all subjects because teaching is good, more than three-quarters is good or better and two-fifths of all teaching is very good or excellent. Standards in the National Curriculum tests are still too low compared with schools nationally but when compared with similar schools they are satisfactory. The head teacher, all staff and the governing body are very committed to continuing improvement. The school provides good value for money.

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

- Promotes excellent relationships and very good attitudes and behaviour in its pupils.
- Provides teaching that is good overall and often very good or excellent.
- Offers pupils very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Has very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, including the work of the Area Support Centre.
- Enjoys very good leadership by the head teacher and by those at all levels of responsibility.
- Benefits from the governors' involvement and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Monitors and assesses pupils' progress well.
- Provides very good nursery education.
- Makes good use of the highly effective teaching assistants.
- Promotes a culture of the celebration of success.

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

- Standards in all subjects, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The quantity and quality of books in all subjects and the use of the library.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school made very good progress after its 1997 inspection and has continued to make very good progress since the inspection by Her Majesty's Inspector in 1999. The school has successfully tackled the key issues, especially with regard to science. The teaching of literacy and numeracy has greatly improved even though there is more to do. Standards of attainment for the pupils currently in the school have improved, being in line with national averages in all subjects and above average in art. Teaching has improved so that there is now an increased proportion of good, very good and excellent teaching. In 1999 progress made by pupils in lessons was good in two-fifths of lessons. During this inspection it was good, very good or excellent in four-fifths of lessons.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	D	E	E	D	
Mathematics	D	E	E	C	
Science	E	E	E	C	

<i>very high</i>	A*
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E
<i>very low</i>	E*

Overall, standards are improving. There was a dip in results in 1999 but over the last four years the trend in improvement has been better than the national trend. Although compared with all schools Whitton is well below average in its test results, when compared with similar schools it is below average in English but is average in mathematics and science. In English two-thirds of pupils are now attaining average standards. By the age of seven standards are below average in mathematics. However, by the age of eleven they are close to the national average. Work observed during the inspection and from an analysis of past work show that the standards are now satisfactory in science, design and technology, geography, history, information and communication technology, music, personal, social and health education, physical education and religious education. In art, standards are above national expectations. No significant differences were observed between the achievements of boys and girls.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good: pupils enjoy school and are full of enthusiasm for and interest in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good: it is a strength of the school. This represents a very real improvement over the past four years.
Personal development and relationships	Very good: personal development is very good. Relationships are excellent between staff and pupils and between pupils of all ages and abilities. They are strengths of the school.



Attendance	Satisfactory: the school makes every effort to improve attendance. It rewards full attendance in realistic, positive ways.
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The general ethos of the school is very good. Pupils work and play together in a spirit of very good-natured cooperation. Incidents of serious misbehaviour are rare and are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Pupils understand and respect the school's code of conduct.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is good across the whole school. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is always satisfactory and good or better in three-quarters of all lessons. The effect of this is evident in the improvement in standards observed during the inspection. Teaching is good or better in more than three-quarters of all lessons taught and in two out of every five lessons it is very good or excellent. In the Area Support Centre teaching is very good and often excellent. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good or better in more than nine out of every ten lessons. For pupils aged five to eleven it is good or better in four out of five lessons. Teaching assistants across the school make an impressive contribution to pupils' learning and are a valuable asset wherever they work. Teachers' planning is a strong feature. Pupils' progress is always at least satisfactory. It is good or better in four out of every five lessons. It is very good or excellent in two lessons in five.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good: the school's planning ensures breadth and depth across all subjects and throughout the school.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good: both in the main part of the school and in the Area Support Centre. Individual education plans are very good and used very effectively.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good: education plans are monitored, evaluated and re-focused by the visiting teacher in consultation with school staff. There is no confusion between the needs of pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall: provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and for their moral, social and cultural development it is very good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good: the school has very good and successful systems for promoting good behaviour. Procedures for checking pupils' academic progress are very good.

The school works well in partnership with parents. The level of contact and exchange of information, both pastoral and academic is good. These effective links contribute well to pupils' learning. All areas of the curriculum meet statutory requirements. Child protection and Health and Safety procedures are satisfactory.

### HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good: their leadership ensures excellent educational direction for the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very well: the governors play a very good part in shaping the direction of the school. They take a very positive, active role in the life of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good: the school is fully aware of its strengths and weaknesses.
The strategic use of resources	Good: it has effectively used resources, both human and material in the struggle to raise standards.

The school has a good range of qualified and experienced teachers and support staff which meets the needs of the curriculum. Accommodation is very good and is generally very well used. The quantity and quality of resources is generally good in all areas except the number of books to enrich subject teaching.

The leadership of the head teacher is excellent. Leadership and management at all levels are very good. The governors have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school's application of the principles of best value is very good.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Children enjoy school and are making good progress.</li> <li>Teaching is good and pupils are expected to work hard.</li> <li>The school helps children to become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The number of extra-curricular activities.</li> <li>Closer links with parents and better information about progress.</li> <li>More homework.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive points made by parents. The view of the inspection team is that the school works closely with parents and keeps them informed about their children's progress. The provision for both homework and extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1 Pupils enter the nursery with attainment levels below average in all areas of learning. Their skills in speaking and listening, mathematics and personal independence are poorly developed. Initial assessment on entry to school at the age of five confirms this. Although they make good progress in the nursery, levels of attainment are still below average when pupils transfer into the main school, particularly in communications skills.

2 When compared against all schools nationally the school's Year 2000 National Curriculum Test results (SATs) for pupils aged seven are well below the national average in reading and mathematics and below the national average in writing. There are no significant differences in the attainments of boys and girls. In comparison with similar schools (those with over 50% free school meals) pupils are well above average in writing, close to average in reading and well below in mathematics. However, of the 55 pupils taking SATs nineteen (36%) had special educational needs which affect their attainment. Over the four-year period prior to the inspection seven-year-old pupils' attainment in reading and writing has shown a steady improvement, at a rate higher than that achieved nationally. Apart from a dip in 1999 there has been a steady improvement in standards in mathematics.

3 The results of the Year 2000 National Curriculum Tests for pupils aged eleven show attainment is well below average in English, mathematics and science. In mathematics, there are no significant differences in the attainment of boys and girls. In English and science girls performed slightly better than boys. In comparison with similar schools results are below average in English but in line with national expectations in mathematics and science. Thus, overall, the school's results are in line with expectations for similar schools. Of the 30 pupils taking SATs in 2000 fifteen (50%) had special educational needs which affected their learning development. Over the four-year period prior to the inspection, results in English, mathematics and science have fluctuated from year-to-year, particularly in English. Nevertheless, despite the erratic pattern of results, the trend of improvement in these subjects has been above the national trend. The school has set targets on a school, class and individual basis. These are set as part of a determined drive to improve standards. They are realistic, challenging and achievable.

4 In English standards have improved since the last inspection. Although still well below those expected for seven and eleven years olds, the gap is steadily closing. During the inspection attainment was judged to be satisfactory in all lessons. Pupils are working at or above the levels expected nationally. This is because the quality of teaching has improved significantly, three-quarters being good or better. All pupils have individual literacy targets which are reviewed and renegotiated termly. Pupils make good progress during the Foundation Stage and in both key stages.

5 From an early stage pupils learn to use speaking and listening not only for communicating but also for clarifying ideas before they write. Older pupils know how to explain their opinions and ideas about stories and extracts from books in an interesting ways. By the age of seven pupils generally have a sound grasp of letter sounds and this helps them to tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. Pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy and some eleven-year-olds give a considered response to books they have read and give good reasons why they enjoy particular authors. The reading skills of pupils with special educational needs are weak and while this causes difficulties if learning in other subjects is

dependent on reading, they are helped by teaching assistants to make at least good progress. Writing is rather better than reading, especially for younger pupils, signifying good achievement for most pupils. The highest-attaining pupils aged seven write well. They are particularly good at rewriting stories that have been told or read by teachers and often show good understanding of plot and characters. The work produced by the most able pupils aged eleven is competent and at its best is exciting with examples of extended writing which show extensive understanding of the ways characters can interact in a lively and entertaining plot. Standards of handwriting are good, which is a great improvement from the last inspection. Spelling is weak throughout the school although now improving in Years 5 and 6.

6 The attainment of pupils identified as having English as an additional language is below the averages for all pupils nationally. Fifteen pupils are on the school's English as an additional language register, ten of whom are supported by a visiting teacher. Currently, only a few pupils have difficulties serious enough to create long-term barriers to learning. The majority of pupils have a growing and reasonably secure command of English but need additional support with comprehension, writing and the acquisition of specific vocabulary, for example, in mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils generally take a full part in lessons, joining in with discussions when they feel able and taking part in most activities successfully.

7 In mathematics, attainment in SATs was well below average at the end of both key stages. However, more able pupils aged eleven were reaching levels close to national averages. During the inspection attainment was judged to have improved and to be satisfactory or better in two-thirds of lessons and unsatisfactory in only two lessons. Progress was judged to be good during the inspection at the Foundation Stage and at both key stages. The percentage of eleven-year-old pupils achieving Level 5 is close to national expectations, showing consistent progress by higher attaining pupils since the visit of Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI) in 1999.

8 By the age of seven most pupils order numbers to 100, have a developing understanding of place value to 100, begin to understand simple fractions, for example  $\frac{1}{2}$  and  $\frac{1}{4}$ , recognise sequences of numbers and describe properties of 2-D and 3-D shapes. By the age of eleven most pupils use a range of methods of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and use simple fractions and percentages to describe properties of a whole. They convert fractions to decimals, use and interpret co-ordinates, group data in frequency diagrams and interpret it and understand terms such as multiple, factor and square numbers.

9 In science attainment has improved significantly since the inspections of 1997 and 1999. Pupils' work is in line with national expectations and an analysis of work seen in the classroom shows it is continuing to rise. During the inspection pupils' attainment was satisfactory in all lessons. This is a direct result of good teaching, two-thirds of which was judged to be good and one-third to be very good. Progress is good in all sections of the school.

10 By the age of seven pupils make predictions, are aware of the criteria for fair testing, set up tests and record outcomes, for example, distances cars travel on different surfaces. They predict the effectiveness of materials for blocking out light, and distinguish between natural and manufactured materials. By the age of eleven pupils have a good knowledge of living things and their needs, the properties of materials and how they behave, and a range of forces, for example, electricity, magnetism and gravity. They use technical language correctly.

11 Attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) is in line with national expectations in two-thirds of all lessons and better in the remaining third. Progress is good in

all areas of the school. Most younger pupils use the keyboard and mouse to save, load and retrieve their work, change the font and use the delete and edit functions. By the age of eleven many pupils have the knowledge and skill required to import text and graphics from other applications and move effectively between applications.

12 Pupils' attainment in art by the ages of seven and eleven years is above that expected nationally. In design and technology (D&T), geography, history, music and religious education (RE) it is in line with national expectations and pupils' achievement is always at least satisfactory. Progress in all these subjects is always satisfactory and often very much better. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards in physical education (PE) as all lessons observed were games lessons. However, in those lessons which were observed the standard reaches national expectations.

13 The majority of pupils with English as an additional language make good progress both within lessons and occasionally in small withdrawal groups. There is no confusion between pupils with English as an additional language and those with special educational needs although a small number are correctly diagnosed as having both and receive appropriate help accordingly.

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

14 Pupils enjoy learning and have very good attitudes to school. They behave very well in lessons and around the school. Their personal development is very good and there are excellent relationships between pupils and staff. These factors have improved greatly since the last inspection and help pupils learn well.

15 Pupils are keen to come to school. They are willing to learn and respond very well to good teaching. Pupils are very interested and fully involved in their lessons. They eagerly ask and answer questions. Pupils work very hard and are keen to improve. For example, during the inspection at lunchtime, Year 3 pupils were watering seeds for their science lessons, and Year 6 pupils were doing extra revision for their SATs tests.

16 Pupils behave very well in lessons and this makes for a calm learning atmosphere. They behave very well in the dining room and playground. Pupils know what standard of behaviour is expected and respond well. The very small amount of bullying and racism is promptly dealt with. Pupils are friendly and polite. They take good care of equipment, such as in mathematics and science, and using the computers. They tidy away neatly and quickly at the end of lessons. The number of exclusions has reduced since the last inspection. Those excluded are supported well and only miss one or two days at school.

17 Pupils with English as an additional language generally have very good attitudes to their work. They cooperate well with each other and adults and relationships overall are very positive. Some of the pupils express pleasure at working in small groups where they feel confident and valued. English as an additional language provision was not reported on in the last inspection report but the high level of awareness of all staff and the effectiveness of the relatively new visiting teacher suggests that provision will continue to improve.

18 Relationships are excellent and this is a major factor in pupils' learning progress. They respect one another's views, cooperate and share ideas. For example, even the youngest pupils work well together, decorating biscuits, or taking turns as they play on the model roadway. Pupils respect the teachers and are keen to please.

19 Pupils' personal development is very good. They grow in confidence in response to the praise and encouragement they receive. They settle to group work quickly and many

work well with little direct supervision. Pupils are sensitive to the needs of others and learn how others feel. For example, during the inspection one of the assembly themes was on bullying. Year 5 and 6 pupils led the assembly with drama and poetry. They made it very clear *"how the bullied might feel, and what they could do to help"*. Pupils are learning to respect different values and beliefs. For example, during the inspection Year 2 pupils were comparing Christian and Muslim customs at mealtimes, acting out their role-play sensibly and with respect. Pupils take responsibility for their own learning through group work and research. They think through problems for themselves as part of their investigations in science, mathematics, and ICT. Pupils help responsibly with the daily routines such as collecting registers and looking after visitors. The older pupils look after the younger pupils and clear away at lunchtime. The pupils in the nursery develop independence by clearing away after activities and dressing themselves for outside play.

20 Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection. Attendance for the Autumn and Spring term of this year was 94.1% which is just below the national average of 94.4%. Unauthorised absence last year was 0.4% which is better than the national average of 0.5%. A few pupils arrive late and the school is working to rectify this. Lessons start punctually.

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

21 The quality of teaching is good and is a strength of the school. It is good or better in four out of five lessons including some lessons in which teaching is excellent. Only 1% of lessons was considered unsatisfactory. This represents a very significant improvement on the quality of teaching reported in the 1997 inspection in which more than a quarter of lessons were unsatisfactory. At that time a number of staff were in temporary posts. Since then two-thirds of the teachers have been replaced and the staff is now comparatively stable. The quality of teaching is also more consistently good for pupils of all ages than that reported during 1999 inspection carried out by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI).

22 The quality of teaching is very good in mathematics, RE, history and geography. It is good and often very good in English, and good and sometimes very good in D&T. Teaching is good in science and ICT. It is satisfactory and often good or very good in PE, and satisfactory in music. No judgement could be made about the quality of teaching in art because too few whole lessons could be observed.

23 The planning of lessons is very good. Teachers have clear objectives for what pupils are to learn. Often these are displayed or are made clear to pupils in preliminary discussion with the whole class so that pupils themselves are aware of the lesson's purpose. Teachers are well supported by schemes of work, some of which are new or relatively new. These are providing better continuity than was the case at the time of the 1997 inspection. Teachers use effective methods, often using the guidance contained in schemes of work to support the planning of individual lessons. In the vast majority of lessons the final summaries are well focused on the learning objectives and help pupils to retain what they have learned. Teachers generally involve pupils in a good balance of individual, paired, and small group work. The quiet discussions which ensue support learning effectively.

24 Where it is relevant to do so, and particularly in English and mathematics, teachers set tasks which carefully match the needs of different attainment groups within the class. Pupils have to think hard in these lessons but they are supported well by teachers and teaching assistants. Their effective questioning techniques and explanations help pupils to overcome difficulties. The very good relationships between adults and pupils ensure that pupils readily turn to the staff for help when they need it.

25 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make very good progress. Teaching assistants (TA) make an important contribution to learning. They liaise effectively with class teachers. Often, when they are designated to support one particular pupil they manage to influence the learning of several. For example, in a Year 1 mathematics lesson pupils were involved in practical work on capacity. Pupils estimated, then counted carefully how many times a small container was used to fill a larger one with sand. The TA worked intensively with one pupil but also ensured that others working nearby took care to fill the smaller container completely each time and to count carefully the number of repetitions. This significantly improved the learning of a group who, though willing and interested, were apt to work carelessly. Teaching in the Area Support Centre is invariably very good and often excellent.

26 The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is generally very good, both from the visiting teacher and classroom teachers, who, with the very effective support of teaching assistants, fully involve these pupils in all activities. Education plans for each pupil are monitored, evaluated and re-focused by the visiting teacher in consultation with the support staff and individual class teachers. Targets are precise and are regularly updated as pupils progress. Screening and assessment procedures are well used to identify pupils' special language and social needs and to monitor pupils' progress. Pupils with English as an additional language are only infrequently withdrawn from other curriculum subjects and care is taken to see that this does not restrict their access to the whole curriculum.

27 Teachers manage behaviour very well. Voices are rarely raised and classrooms are calm, busy places where pupils can work without interruption. This is a strength of the school, the more so because of the high degree of consistency across all staff in establishing clear behavioural boundaries. As a result misbehaviour is rare and minor incidents are handled deftly and effectively.

28 The school is successfully implementing the National Strategies for Literacy and Numeracy. Teachers have a secure understanding of the structures and help pupils learn the basic skills because they use the guidelines effectively. Although standards are improving in literacy and numeracy throughout the school they are still below national expectations. Having higher than average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language gives the school additional difficulties and while these pupils are making at least good, and often very good, progress, there is still a need to continue the already much improved teaching in order that pupils continue to achieve at a higher level.

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

29 The quality and range of opportunities offered to all pupils are good because the school's planning for the curriculum ensures breadth and depth. The school's curriculum meets the statutory requirements as it did in the last inspection. Curriculum provision has improved because all subjects now cover all elements of the National Curriculum. For example, the geography curriculum now includes all the elements required by the National Curriculum and the curriculum for the children under five years of age is planned from the early learning goals. The time allocated to subjects is generally appropriate although the school has quite rightly concentrated on the core subjects since the last inspection. The curriculum manager is now working with subject coordinators to review the balance of subjects across the curriculum and to extend links across subjects. Effective subject policies, clear schemes of work and medium-term plans support teachers. These provide

the basis for a broad and balanced programme which takes into account the needs and interests of the pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language. The emphasis on pupils' personal, social and health education is entirely appropriate and broadens their knowledge, understanding and skills in a practical way.

30 The curriculum for children under five years of age, both in the nursery and in Reception classes is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. It is effective in meeting the needs of all the pupils and the range of opportunities provided is very good.

31 The national strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy are well established and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The introduction of these strategies has successfully brought consistency to teachers' planning and has contributed towards higher attainment and the improved quality of teaching since the last inspection. However there is still a need for continuing emphasis on these sections of the curriculum to further raise attainment to national expectations.

32 The school's provision for personal, social and health education (PSHE), sex and drugs education is good. There is a recently introduced curriculum, which plans all elements across both key stages. The subject coordinator has begun to resource the various areas of this curriculum. The programme of work promotes a sense of responsibility amongst pupils and develops their understanding of the need to work within positive and caring relationships. For example, in one lesson pupils were able to discuss the similarities and differences between different races, cultures and faiths in a sensitive and sensible way. The curriculum provided is socially inclusive and there is equal access to all aspects of the curriculum for all groups of pupils. The integration of pupils from the specialist unit in the school into class lessons is very effective and a strength of the school. The very good support for all pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language ensures that these pupils have equal access to all areas of school life.

33 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. Rigorous assessment procedures effectively identify pupils' needs. The individual education plans for pupils both with and without a statement of special educational needs are detailed and show what pupils need to do to improve. These plans are reviewed regularly and new targets set. When pupils are withdrawn from class lessons for individual or small-group support their access to the full curriculum is not affected because there is effective liaison between teachers and teaching assistants. The support for pupils with special educational needs in classrooms is very good because the work is well matched to their needs and the teaching assistants are skilled in how they work with a wide range of abilities.

34 The extra-curricular provision is limited although satisfactory overall. The school plans to extend the range of sporting and musical after-school clubs. There are good links with the local secondary school and a small group of pupils attend art and mathematics workshops after school. The school uses the local environment, for example, to study the locality in geography. The local community police officer is a regular visitor in school and representatives from local churches regularly contribute to assemblies.

35 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The teaching in RE lessons provides insight into spiritual values through reflection on a wide range of beliefs, customs and religious stories.

36 Teachers readily discuss feelings and help the pupils to think about emotions and develop empathy. Younger pupils reflected on the importance of Muslim prayer by role playing the rituals of praying to Allah. Assemblies provide good opportunities for reflection on deeper



aspects of life and values. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the difference they could make to the lives of others and say a prayer for their friends.

37 The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral development. It enables them to distinguish between right and wrong. From the time pupils enter the nursery, staff consistently reinforce the importance of politeness and treating one another with respect. This high degree of consistency amongst staff ensures that pupils understand what is appropriate and what is unacceptable. Behaviour is very good both in lessons and in all other areas of school life. This is because all adults rigorously implement the code of conduct and behaviour policy. Teaching and non-teaching staff provide good role models and the pupils are encouraged to be honest and trustworthy. The school has also developed an ethos that recognises and celebrates achievement so pupils feel valued for their efforts. This ethos underpins much of the success of the behaviour management in the school.

38 Provision for social education is also very good. Pupils are positively encouraged to work together in all aspects of school life. Lesson planning highlights opportunities for pupils to work together, for example in listening pairs in an English lesson. Teachers look continually for ways to develop pupils' self esteem, through the use of certificates, the '*Golden Book*', achievement boards, assemblies, regular praise and encouragement. In the nursery, staff have established routines which encourage cooperative behaviour and they constantly reinforce the values associated with helping one another. When children are dressing to go outside to play they are encouraged to help each other by fastening coats and tying shoe laces. Pupils are given some opportunities for taking responsibility such as delivering registers and helping teachers. Assemblies are well used to develop socially responsible attitudes. A class of older children held a powerful class assembly about including everyone in playtime games and explored the feelings of social exclusion and being left out.

39 The provision for cultural development remains very good. The RE curriculum includes a wide range of faiths and their customs, which gives pupils a growing understanding of the richness of their multi-cultural and multi-faith community. Music, art and literature are also used effectively to widen the range of cultural experiences. Displays in the school reflect this commitment to extend pupils' horizons and reinforce positive multi-cultural images. The whole school contributed to a large picture painted in the style of Lowry which is now on permanent display in Suffolk County Hall. A recent visit by a group of French students was successful in allowing pupils to experience first-hand how life is lived in a different culture.

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

40 The school cares very well for its pupils, and the provision for support and guidance has improved since the last inspection. The staff know the pupils very well, and provide a caring atmosphere that contributes greatly towards pupils' learning. The school receives good additional support from outside agencies. The procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very good.

41 In practice the procedures for health and safety are satisfactory, but they are not fully audited. There are satisfactory arrangements for child protection. All teachers are aware of the '*named person*' and what to do should a protection issue arise.

42 The school has good procedures to monitor and improve attendance. Attendance is closely monitored and all unexplained absence is rigorously followed up. The Education Welfare Officer effectively follows up patterns of absence. Parents are reminded about the importance of good attendance and pupils with good attendance receive certificates.

43 The school uses very effective measures to monitor and promote good behaviour. Staff expect high standards and reinforce good behaviour through recognition, encouragement and reward. The clear and simple set of school rules is well publicised and well known by pupils. The teaching assistants and lunchtime supervisors have received training in managing behaviour. Good systems are in place for dealing with any unsatisfactory behaviour. Any bullying or racism is effectively dealt with but such incidents are few. Discussions with pupils confirmed that if any behavioural issues or personal difficulties arose, they would be dealt with fairly, sympathetically and quickly by staff. These measures are very effective in generating and maintaining the climate of friendliness and cooperation which permeates the school.

44 The school monitors and promotes pupils' personal development well through its care systems, good records, and effective links with parents. The systems, relationships and attitudes promoted by the school recognise the multi-cultural nature of the school catchment and effectively meet the needs of all children. These help staff recognise developments and identify concerns. For example, in a Year 4 class a Year 7 pupil, recently arrived from Bangladesh with no previous school experience and no facility with English, was being very well supported in her induction to both the language and the school system by the effective programme provided, the sympathetic response from staff and the positive relationships with the other pupils. All pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported both through specific teaching by a designated teacher and through effective and sympathetic approaches by teachers in all classes. The PSHE programme builds pupils' confidence and promotes very good relationships.

45 Procedures for assessment, noted in the previous report as being good, are now very good. Assessment is very well planned for through the School Improvement Plan which outlines targets, success criteria and specific tasks. This is now a formalised and rigorous aspect of the school. All children are assessed in a variety of ways on a very regular basis across all areas of the curriculum and personal development and the assessments are used to help teachers plan more effectively for both whole classes and individual pupils. The policy for assessment, recording and reporting outlines principles which should be followed, the range of assessment opportunities and reporting structures and strategies. For core subjects there is a clarity about what is to be assessed, how and when it will be done and what records will be kept. Special educational needs issues are seen as part of the core responsibilities of staff at all levels. This whole-school approach ensures that the school fully complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice. Each year group has a core set of targets which cut across curriculum areas and encompass academic, learning and social skills. Closely linked to the assessment policy is the policy for presentation, marking and responding to children's work. This clearly outlines the philosophy, process and practice related to raising standards through responding to children. Specific guidelines are provided for each year group. As a result of the effectiveness of these policies, pupils confirmed strongly that they clearly understand how well they are doing and exactly what they need to do to improve. Reports to parents are effective but these, as yet, do not indicate what children need to do to improve their work. However, this is due to be included in the reports issued later this term. 87% of parents responding to the questionnaire felt that they were kept well informed about their children's progress.

46 The school, through its assemblies, reward systems, continual and consistent use of praise and the positive attitudes it promotes, generates a culture of the celebration of success. This translates the school's mission statement, *'Tomorrow's success begins today'* into a reality and is a strength of the school.

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

47 Parents are pleased with the school. In particular they think their children are expected to work hard and that they are making good progress. They confirm that their children like school. Some parents feel the school does not work sufficiently closely with them and they would like to be better informed about how their children are getting on. They have reservations about the amount of homework and the range of activities outside lessons. The inspection confirms parents' positive views. The view of the inspectors is that the school does work closely with parents and that it keeps them well informed about their children's progress. The provision for both homework and extra-curricular activities is satisfactory.

48 The school is building an effective partnership with parents that is having an increasingly beneficial effect on learning. The school works closely with parents. There are good arrangements for introducing parents to the nursery. The nursery staff make home visits and new parents are invited with their children to visit the school. Parents are encouraged to raise concerns and keep the school informed about their children. Translators are readily organised for those parents whose first language is not English. Governors attend parents' evenings to listen to views and concerns.

49 The information provided for parents is good. There are regular newsletters. The prospectus is well presented and together with the governors' annual report provides a satisfactory summary of what is going on in school. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. The end-of-year reports are satisfactory. Targets in literacy and numeracy and the school rules are sent home every term along with certificates and letters noting achievements. Parents can meet with the teachers every term in order to discuss their children's progress, and the school is quick to involve them if there are problems.

50 The contribution of parents to their children's learning is satisfactory. Many parents support their children at sports days, end-of-term assemblies and school productions. They accompany their children on educational trips and give good support to fund raising events. The Friends of Whitton School Association organise social activities and raise funds. A few parents help in school with reading and support the teachers in class with activities such as cooking and art. Compared with earlier years many more parents now support their children at interviews preparing for transfer to secondary school and more parents meet with the teachers to discuss their children's progress.

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

51 The leadership and management of the school are very good. Leadership at all levels is a strength of the school and this is a continuing improvement since previous inspections. The head teacher, ably supported by the senior management team (SMT), leads by example and provides excellent, clear direction for the work of the school. The head delegates clearly to the deputy, senior teacher and team leaders as well as to subject coordinators. She supports their work very well. Since the beginning of the school year the school has had a full SMT. Its hard work is evident in the continuing improvement of all areas of school life. Throughout the school there is a strong commitment to raising standards of achievement, the school aim, *'Tomorrow's success begins today'*, permeates everything that the school does. Teaching and non-teaching staff, work very well together, confidence and morale are high and they are justifiably proud of how far the school has improved over past years. They are all equally determined that the school continues to improve its work in all areas of the pupils' lives.

52 The governing body is very effective in fulfilling all its responsibilities. Governors are enthusiastic about their school and have an in-depth understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. For example, not only do they recognise the vast improvements in pupils' behaviour since the implementation of the assertive behaviour scheme, can explain exactly how it works and why it is so successful, they also understand the implications this has had on the learning environment, staff morale and relationships throughout the school. Their committee structure is effective and efficient, committees meet at least twice a term and report back to the full governing body at every meeting. Individual governors make regular visits to the school, meeting teachers and senior staff, sitting in on lessons and talking with pupils. They review finances well and through careful monitoring and evaluation of pupils' work they have a clear overall picture of curriculum developments and the effect these have on the progress of pupils. They continue to give good support to the head teacher, for example, the chair of governors meets with her on a weekly basis to discuss school affairs. The governing body ensures the school meets statutory requirements.

53 Monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance is carried out effectively, both in the planning stage and in the delivery of lessons. It is very well aware of its strengths and weaknesses, recognising that although the trend in the school's average National Curriculum points for all core subjects (English, mathematics and science) is above the national trend for eleven year olds, the school's results are still not high enough. Monitoring of teaching and learning is carried out at all levels of management and includes the head teacher, SMT, team leaders and subject co-ordinators. This provides staff with useful information about their teaching and areas for development, for example, the need for more training in ICT was recognised and addressed. Such work provides a good basis for identifying future professional development targets for staff.

54 Developments are very well supported by detailed financial planning and the school's improvement plan links educational priorities to the budget very efficiently and effectively. Administration and financial procedures within the school are very good. Educational priorities are supported by earmarked funding, for example, the setting up of the computer suite. The principles needed to ensure that the school receives value for money as it acquires stock, services and other resources are appropriately in place. The head teacher, chair of the governing body's finance committee and the school bursar work very well together ensuring the best use of specific grants and any additional funding. The school is proactive in applying for grants and funding from public and private sources, for example, to help fund the adventure playground and the new outdoor classroom and play area. Day-to-day management of the school is very good. Members of the SMT and those in administration successfully endeavour to foresee difficulties and provide solutions. The bursar and administrative staff provide very good support for the school.

55 The school is adequately staffed overall to support the pupils on roll. With some exceptions in the teaching of spelling, teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of all subjects. This is borne out by the tremendous improvement in the quality of teaching observed across the school and teachers' enthusiasm for their work. This is a real improvement, particularly since the 1997 inspection. Teaching assistants work as integral members of the classroom teams. The inspection team was particularly impressed with the high level of support provided by these staff and the deep commitment they have to the pupils and the school in general. They are a skilled group of professionals and a strength of the school. Several have undertaken extended accredited courses to help them in their work.

56 Where possible the school makes very effective use of skilled support staff from outside. Therapists, psychologists and county advisory staff are well used to develop programmes for individual pupils with additional needs. For example, until recently, when the service was cancelled by the health service, speech therapists and the school worked

closely on a very effective programme to improve pupils' speech and language. Several pupils have speech and language therapy as a requirement of their statement of special educational needs, the current lack of therapy means that they are now not receiving their entitlement. The school has a good induction policy for new staff, which has been appreciated by both new teaching and support staff.

57 Accommodation is large and spacious and is very well used. It is kept impeccably by the school caretaker and cleaning staff. The many high-quality displays are bright and cheerful. They celebrate pupils' work as well as providing incidental learning for pupils. The school is set in the middle of a large council estate and although it does not have a playing field it has worked hard to provide a variety of play areas for pupils to ensure that they all have somewhere to relax and play, for example, the provision of shade in a very open playground and preventing footballers from occupying all the space by ensuring the netball players have their share of the playground. School meals are cooked on site in a building separate from the school. The quality and quantity of the meals is very good and they are served attractively.

58 Resources are well used throughout the school, however, there is a very real shortage of books. The library is underused because there is relatively little of interest for pupils. This is a weakness of the school. This is partly due to a loss of books last year, however the school prefers to run the risk of losing books as opposed to not letting pupils take them home. The school is aware of this weakness and plans to improve the library are in the present school improvement plan.

59 The school receives substantial additional funds for its special needs work and this is used most appropriately to enhance the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs. This is very good both in the mainstream part of the school and particularly in the Area Support Centre for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Additional funds for pupils with English as an Additional Language are used equally effectively within the employment of skilled staff and the purchase of high-quality resources. The special educational needs coordinator gives very good leadership. She has a clear understanding of the varying needs of the pupils and is well able to advise staff on how best to help them. Monitoring of pupils' progress and informal advice for teachers is regular, ongoing and effective.

60 Without exception all staff, teaching and support, have a real commitment to succeed and have the capacity to ensure that the school continues to improve as it has done since 1997. The school gives good value for money. This represents good improvement since the 1999 inspection by HMI and very good improvement since the 1997 inspection.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

61 The governing body should include the following key issues in its post-inspection action plan. They are listed in order of importance:

- (1) Continue to raise standards in both key stages in all subjects and particularly in literacy and numeracy.
- (2) Increase the number of books in the library for all subjects and increase pupils' use of the library.

## **AREA SUPPORT CENTRE**

62 The Area Support Centre (ASC) was set up two years ago to fulfil a need within the school population. It supports pupils with moderate learning difficulties and is located in the centre of the main school building and has places for 20 pupils from Key Stages 1 and 2. They all have statements of special educational need. Currently several pupils come from outside the school's catchment area. The unit consists of the teaching head of unit, one part-time teacher and three teaching assistants. Pupils are well integrated into the life of the school. Key Stage 1 pupils have literacy and numeracy lessons in the unit every morning and integrate into the main school every afternoon for all other lessons. Key Stage 2 pupils join their peers for art, design and technology, music, physical education and educational visits but remain in the unit for all other lessons.

63 Pupils' attainment on entry is very low. They make very good progress as a result of very good teaching within the unit and throughout the school. The curriculum follows the National Curriculum but is very carefully planned to match the targets in pupils' individual education plans. These targets are reviewed at least half-termly and often monthly to ensure progress is being made. Learning is greatly enhanced by the excellent work of the teaching assistants who are very skilled in their work.

64 Teaching in the unit is very good and often excellent. Work is very well planned and effectively matches individual pupils' needs. Explanations are clear. Pupils' are always aware of their targets for specific lessons. The enthusiasm of all the adults is infectious and is caught by the pupils, consequently the unit is a very happy place full of sparkling eyes (both adults and pupils) where everyone concerned is full of joy and eagerness to learn. Pupils positively sparkle and glow with pride in their achievements. Adults challenge pupils at all times and have an innate understanding of exactly the right approach to make at the right time, consequently pupils feel safe and secure in the unit. For example, one pupil who was so distressed that she could not raise her head from the table was gently won round to the extent that she was able to achieve success in her work and communicate with her teacher. Another younger pupil positively glows in his teacher's presence and is beginning to make progress. All adults, but especially the teachers, are very skilled in their questioning of pupils, giving them just the right prompts to enable pupils to achieve their tasks successfully.

65 Standards of work are improved because the staff know their pupils so well and have very effective assessment, recording and monitoring systems to track progress and inform future planning. Communications are very good and relationships are excellent both within the unit and throughout the school. Staff expect pupils to behave well, work hard and consider one another, which they do very well. Praise is used realistically and very effectively. Pupils in the ASC enjoy school and have very positive attitudes to their work. This is evident in the way they integrate so well into their mainstream lessons. They concentrate well and take a full part in all lessons. The mainstream pupils respond very well to those joining them from the unit.

66 The unit is led and managed excellently. Liaison between unit staff as well as those in the main school is very good. There is a very good working relationship between the head of the unit and the school's special educational needs co-ordinator. These positive relationships have a very positive effect on pupils' learning. The unit staff are very effectively deployed and work superbly as a dedicated and committed team. Resources are good, especially those made within the unit. The Area Support Centre functions very effectively, offers excellent support to pupils and is a strength of the school.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	79
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	85

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	33	41	19	1	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

#### Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	26	301
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		134

FTE means full-time equivalent.

#### Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR– Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		24
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		104

#### English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	15

#### Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	41
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	34

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	27	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	19	22	21
	Girls	24	22	19
	Total	43	44	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78(66)	80(75)	73(64)
	National	83(82)	84(83)	90(87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	23	24
	Girls	23	22	25
	Total	43	45	49
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	78(70)	82(70)	89(87)
	National	84(82)	88(86)	87(87)

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	16	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	8	9
	Girls	7	7	10
	Total	14	15	19
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	47(53)	50(53)	63(56)
	National	75(70)	72(69)	85(78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	7
	Girls	4	5	6
	Total	9	12	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	30(31)	40(37)	43(47)
	National	70(68)	72(69)	79(75)

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	7
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	19
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	13
Chinese	
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other	1	
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	9	
Other minority ethnic groups	10	

*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: R–Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.5
Average class size	27.4

#### **Education support staff: N-Y6**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	340

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	32.5

Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5
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*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	749414
Total expenditure	759103
Expenditure per pupil	2287
Balance brought forward from previous year	14100
Balance carried forward to next year	4411

## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	326
Number of questionnaires returned	148

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	29	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	39	3	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	42	8	3	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	46	23	5	3
The teaching is good.	52	40	4	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	41	46	8	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	28	5	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	41	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	29	47	13	7	4
The school is well led and managed.	43	41	5	6	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	45	5	1	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	30	25	14	12

## **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**

67 At the time of the inspection there were 52 part-time pupils in the nursery unit and 32 full-time pupils in two Reception classes, the older children working alongside Year 1 pupils.

68 Children enter the nursery with levels of attainment that are below expectations for this age. Many display poorly developed communication, mathematical and personal independence skills. This is confirmed by the initial assessments conducted with these young children. By the time they transfer into school at the beginning of the term in which they are five years old, levels of attainment are still below average although children have made good progress in the nursery. The good teaching in the nursery and the Reception classes is having a positive impact on children's learning. Overall, most children reach the early learning goals for five-year olds in the areas of learning by the end of the Reception stage. However, although good progress has been made in the nursery in improving children's communication skills from well below average to below average, there is still some way to go and their weakness in this area means that overall, levels of attainment are still below average. In language and literacy, however, communication skills are still below average.

69 The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. Teachers plan from the early learning goals and this means that pupils are gradually developing their knowledge, understanding and skills in the six areas of learning. There have also been improvements in how children's progress is assessed, particularly in the area of language and literacy. Teachers are clear about what they want pupils to learn and this provides the basis for the assessment of pupils' progress. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at working with small groups and checking what children have learnt. This helps teachers plan future work.

70 The nursery provides pupils with a good start. There is an effective induction programme for pupils and their parents and links between the nursery and the Reception classes are very good. Good working relationships are established with parents and carers at an early stage and this has a positive impact on pupils' learning as does the very good work of the nursery nurse and support staff.

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

71 Most of the children enter the nursery with immature skills in personal and social development. By the time they leave the Reception class most are achieving the early learning goals in this area. This reflects the skilful teaching in both the nursery and Reception classes where children are constantly encouraged to feel valued and confident about what they achieve. In both the nursery and the classes with Reception age, children play and work together well. They are beginning to show consideration towards each other and teachers consistently encourage them to share equipment, take turns in games and help to tidy away. Children are enthusiastic about their learning, for example, when decorating biscuits in the nursery or using the construction equipment in the Reception class.

72 Relationships are very good and this has a positive impact on children's learning, teachers are consistent in their expectations and this means that behaviour is very good in both age groups.

## **Communication, language and literacy**

73 Pupils enter the nursery with poor communication skills and attainment that is well below average for their age. Elements of the literacy framework are well used in the nursery, in the Reception classes teachers are now planning a daily literacy lesson based on the framework. This is having a positive impact on children's learning and on their standards of attainment. In both the nursery and Reception classes the children enjoy listening to stories and are keen to share books with each other and with adults. In the nursery the children listen attentively to the story of *'Elmer'* and although few express their own ideas accurately, most are confident to answer questions about the story. The children in the youngest Reception class also listen carefully and with interest to *'Handa's Surprise'* and several can talk confidently and with accuracy about what was happening in the story and begin to predict what might happen next. Teachers in the nursery and in the Reception classes have provided a good range of tasks and opportunities to develop children's writing. They are encouraged to think of themselves as writers, for example, in the nursery there is a role-play office where children talk on the telephone, write notes and make appointments. In both age groups there are supplies of writing materials available and children readily use them. By the time the children end the Reception year a few are achieving the early learning goals in this area of learning but overall attainment is still below average.

## **Mathematical development**

74 By the end of the Reception year most children are on course to attain the early learning goals for mathematics. The good teaching in the nursery and in Reception classes supports the good progress made in this area of learning.

75 Children come into the nursery with few mathematical skills and staff work hard to develop these skills before they transfer into school. For example, a group of four-year-olds in the nursery concentrated well when working with the teacher making repeating patterns on a pegboard. The teacher directed her questions skilfully to a wide range of ability with questions like "*Which colour goes next?*" "*Why is this pattern different?*" and this helped the children to make progress. By the end of the Reception year most children count and sequence numbers to ten, some do this to twenty. Most are beginning to use mathematical vocabulary such as *'before'* and *'after'* accurately when ordering numbers out of sequence. They write some numbers accurately and they enjoy joining in with the actions of number rhymes and songs.

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

76 Many children enter the nursery with low levels of general knowledge. As a result of an appropriate, well-planned curriculum and good teaching, most are well on the way to achieving the early learning goals by the end of the Reception year. In the nursery children begin to be able to talk about themselves and their family. By the end of the Reception year they talk about and draw themselves as babies, the sorts of toys they played with and what they ate. In the nursery children play with fruit in the home corner and name some of them. By the time they are at the end of the Reception year they can recognise a wider range when playing in the shop and know that some of them grow in different countries. Adults support children well in investigating their surroundings, for example, when they go to look at the shops on the estate. Children know that a simple map of the neighbourhood shows streets and houses and that plants grow from a seed. Most children use the computer independently for simple programmes on colour and shape matching. They control the mouse and recognise some letters on the keyboard. In both year groups children select resources and use simple tools. For example, children in the nursery carefully spread icing on their biscuit using a small spoon.

## **Physical development**

77 Standards in pupils' physical development are above average. There is a safe outdoor play area with suitable large play apparatus and equipment. The nursery children are confident when using this apparatus and are well supervised by adults. They walk, run and balance on the apparatus and some are confident to climb unaided, travelling under and over most of the equipment. They follow a number line painted on the playground, jumping from square to square. By the end of the Reception year children are gaining confidence in all aspects of physical development. They throw and catch bean bags and large balls with some accuracy and confidence and use the confined space in the hall well when playing games. Children in the Reception class use the water play apparatus with dexterity, manipulating the water wheel and pouring water with accuracy. They thread beads on to a lace and most cut paper unaided.

## **Creative development**

78 Attainment in this area of learning is average. The progress children make from entering the nursery until the end of the Reception year is good because the teaching motivates children so they learn well. Children enter the nursery with quite low levels of creative skill, staff provide a range of interesting activities which motivate children and so they learn well. In the nursery, children are keen to have a go at painting, printing, collage and other creative activities. They experiment with a wide range of materials and confidently choose what they want to stick on their picture. They are taught how to mix paints and use a range of colours in their paintings. Staff in the nursery and the Reception classes are enthusiastic and this enthusiasm spreads to the children. A Reception teacher uses role-play very effectively when involving children in retelling a story, encouraging them to act out the parts of animals and the characters in the story. There is a good range of opportunities for music making in both age groups and children join in singing and action rhymes with real enjoyment.

## **ENGLISH**

79 Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. They are still well below those typical for seven and eleven year olds nationally but the gap is closing. Pupils enter the nursery with attainment well below average in literacy. They then make good progress but standards are still below national expectations when they enter the main school. Progress continues to be good so that in lessons about two-thirds of pupils are now attaining average standards in both key stages. Results in the 2000 national tests show that in reading at the age of seven standards were comparable with those in similar schools and in writing they were well above them. At the age of eleven standards were below those of similar schools. Pupils achieve standards which are still well below the national average in reading at seven but which are just below them in writing. Standards by the age of eleven are still well below national averages. Standards in spelling are weak, especially in Key Stage 1. Test results have risen over the past four years at a better rate than the national trend for younger pupils and a broadly similar one for the older pupils. The school did well to achieve its targets for 2000. Those for the next two years are still well below the national targets, but reflect the high proportion (one-third) of pupils with special educational needs.

80 The school is making a determined effort to improve literacy. All pupils have individual targets in literacy for each term. These are sent home and discussed with parents and, subsequently, renegotiated for the following term. Targets are also set for groups of pupils in each class. Boys and girls achieve broadly similar standards throughout the school. Inspection findings indicate that standards of English in lessons are improving and are now

average for about two-thirds of pupils in all classes. With poor attainment on entry and more than a third of the pupils correctly diagnosed as having special educational needs, this represents good progress. However, the school is not complacent and the continued improvement of standards in literacy is rightly its major priority.

81 When pupils enter the nursery they lack confidence in speaking and their listening skills are poor. Reading skills are poorly developed and very few pupils have had the experience with pencils and crayons which would enable them to write easily. These limitations are soon addressed by effective teaching. Despite their initial lack of confidence, pupils progress well and by the age of five standards are almost to the level expected for their age. The achievement of girls and boys is broadly similar overall but in the early stages the achievement of girls in writing exceeds that of the boys. The girls use a wider range of vocabulary and their sentence structure is generally more sophisticated than that of boys.

82 From an early stage pupils learn to use speaking and listening not only for communicating but also for clarifying their ideas before they write. Pupils learn to use unusual vocabulary from an early stage, for example, they are comfortable with the names of a wide range of fruit and animals. Older pupils know how to explain their opinions and ideas about stories and extracts from books in interesting ways. For example, in Year 6 pupils listened very intently to each other's writing and made sensitive and positive suggestions for how it might be improved. The pupils enjoyed this activity which helped them improve their work. In some lessons, drama is well used to promote communication in a range of forms and in a dramatic performance of *'The Listeners'* a Year 5 and 6 class worked with enthusiasm and enjoyment, showing marked gains in speaking and listening skills as well as confidence and social skills. Pupils were still talking about it as they went home.

83 From the well-below-average level of their skills on entry to the school, pupils make good progress and attain standards in reading which, whilst still below, are getting closer to the national average by the age of seven. Pupils generally have a sound grasp of letter sounds and this helps them to tackle words that are unfamiliar to them. They get excellent support from learning assistants who support them in small group work. Most pupils enjoy reading and often can be seen looking at books which are attractively displayed in each classroom. Pupils then read with improving fluency and accuracy and some eleven-year-olds give a considered response to books they have read and give good reasons why they enjoy particular authors. Older pupils are good at finding the information they need from different sources including CD-ROMS and they often choose to read a wide selection of fiction and poetry. The reading skills of the average and above-average pupils are sufficiently well developed to enable them to cope with most texts, but improving the skills of reading comprehension still remains a major priority for other pupils. The school makes good use of Additional Literacy Support (ALS) in Years 3 and 4, and Booster Classes in Year 6 to support pupils for the Key Stage 2 tests. The reading skills of pupils with special educational needs are weak and while this causes difficulties if learning in other subjects is dependent on reading, they are helped by teaching assistants to make at least good progress. Pupils who have English as an additional language receive excellent support three times a week from a visiting teacher, which enables them to make satisfactory progress. Coupled with the high level of awareness of these pupils' needs by all staff this ensures that they are fully included in all aspects of the life and work of the school. In a Year 4 class one such pupil was seen to be silently mouthing the words of the teacher to herself as she tried hard to follow the lesson and this helped her to succeed.

84 Writing is rather better than reading, especially for younger pupils, signifying good achievement for the majority of pupils. The highest-attaining seven-year-olds write well. They are particularly good at rewriting stories that have been told or read by teachers and often show good understanding of plot and characters. They also write imaginative poems.

The work produced by the most able eleven-year-olds is competent and at best exciting. It includes some examples of extended writing, which show extensive understanding of the ways characters can interact in a lively and entertaining plot. Pupils can write for a range of purposes and audiences. Year 6 pupils have produced an excellent collection of illustrated storybooks for younger children, using word processing and pictures with skill to give interest and clarity. They use different forms of writing appropriately, for example, in reporting experiments in science and writing journalistically in history and RE. By the age of eleven, the average and above-average pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of grammar and punctuation and have most of the writing skills they need. However, in spite of the good provision and support, pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language still have difficulty with writing.

85 Pupils are introduced to the use of ink in Year 3 and generally use it cleanly and effectively although its use is inconsistent throughout Key Stage 2 and expectations should be clarified for all pupils. Standards of handwriting are good because is well taught from the start. This is a great improvement from the last inspection. Pupils regularly practise forming their letters correctly and the school uses a common style. Teachers consistently expect good standards across all subjects. Spelling is weak throughout the school. This is because pupils' knowledge of letter sounds is insecure. Sometimes teachers do not stress spelling patterns sufficiently, which causes average and below average pupils to spell less well, although now it is improving in Years 5 and 6. The quality of teachers' marking is satisfactory because it is done conscientiously and is always up to date. However, it does not focus sufficiently on pupils' achievements and what they need to do to improve their writing further.

86 Although standards are still not high enough, pupils' progress reflects the quality of teaching in English which is always satisfactory and usually good or very good throughout the school. This is a marked improvement from the last inspection. Two-thirds of the teaching seen was good or very good and there were no unsatisfactory lessons. Teachers across the school have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing. In Year 5 and 6 teaching was exceptional when choral verse speaking was used successfully to arouse pupils' interest in a poem. The success of this lesson was evident later when the pupils again engaged with poetry through drama which enhanced their understanding of mood and atmosphere, the main focus of the lesson. Teachers invariably share learning objectives with their pupils so they know what they are expected to learn and how this links to previous work. This discussion helps pupils to make connections across subjects, using their skill in writing in different forms to record work clearly in subjects such as history, geography and science.

87 Teachers try to interest pupils in new words and a richer vocabulary. They insist that proper technical terms are used and they encourage pupils to select descriptive words accurately. ICT programmes support this, for example Year 3 pupils had to replace 'said' in a passage with more imaginative words, using highlighting and over-typing. Teachers use varied approaches to writing and frequently provide opportunities for pupils to be clear about their ideas before they begin to write, as with pupils taking part in the dramatisation of a story in Reception.

88 Teachers have implemented the National Literacy Strategy very effectively and this is a major reason why standards are rising. All elements of it are well covered which gives a good structure for learning and teaching. Planning is very thorough so both teachers and pupils know exactly what to do and rounding off sessions are well used to reinforce the key learning points of the session and to make links with what the pupils will learn next. Not all teachers have sufficient knowledge about the teaching of spelling to enable pupils to achieve as well as they should. They encourage pupils to try out spellings for themselves but few teach pupils how to identify common spelling patterns, recognise words within words and

learn spelling rules. Consequently pupils have few strategies to help them to learn to spell and this is reflected in the mis-spellings in their everyday work.

89 The substantial minority (one-third) of pupils who have special educational needs have detailed Individual Education Plans (IEPs) which are followed carefully. This results in good learning support which is well focussed on their needs and they participate fully in all activities. Pupils with English as an additional language are similarly well supported and their particular needs are not confused with those pupils with special educational needs. Although both groups of pupils work hard and achieve well, their literacy skills remain below average and learning is a constant struggle.

90 The management of English is very good. The literacy coordinator has observed all teachers and provided helpful feedback to improve their teaching. She also systematically evaluates colleagues' planning for coverage and effectiveness and regularly leads the staff in moderating and levelling samples of pupils' writing which helps focus teachers on expected standards. As a result of her evaluations, significant improvements have been made to the teaching of reading and writing and, while raising standards in literacy is a constant battle, she is effectively leading a determined drive to raise them and has charted an impressive action plan to do so.

## **MATHEMATICS**

91 In the national tests carried out in 2000 attainment was well below the national average for pupils aged seven and eleven, however, the number of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 grades by the age of eleven years was close to the national average, indicating that teachers are successful at stretching the higher-attaining pupils. In comparison with schools serving pupils from similar backgrounds standards were well below average for pupils aged seven, and close to average by the time they reach eleven. The inspection carried out in 1999 by HMI also indicated that standards were below average at the end of Key Stage 1 but that by the end of Key Stage 2 they were close to the national average.

92 The evidence from this present inspection confirms this. Pupils enter the nursery at below average levels in numeracy. Their literacy skills are well below average and these also affect numeracy in those aspects where discussion and explanation are particularly important. Standards by the age of seven are below average. Standards by the age of eleven are close to the national average. However, almost all the lessons observed were based on pure number which is less reliant, for success, on pupils' literacy skills than, for example, solving written problems or interpreting graphs and diagrams which explains the average standards they achieved.

93 Over the last three years the trend of improvement in national test results has been below the national average at the age of seven. It has been better than the national trend by the age of eleven years.

94 Pupils make good progress during the Early Years. By the age of five most pupils can count numbers of objects up to ten and find the number which comes before or after a given number. They recognise two-dimensional mathematical shapes and a few describe their properties in simple terms. Most make sets of small numbers of objects and some recognise and create simple number patterns. By the age of seven most pupils order two-digit numbers as a result of their developing understanding of place value. They use addition and subtraction. A few pupils understand that these are opposite processes which helps them when making mental calculations. Most pupils know that angles are a measurement of turn and can recognise right-angles. They construct simple graphs, charts and tables, to present information and a few are beginning to interpret the data.



95 By the age of eleven pupils have made good progress. Most pupils are beginning to explain the strategies they use when making mental calculations because teachers consciously try to develop pupils' reasoning and explanatory skills. Pupils use effective written methods of adding and subtracting and multiply and divide by single-digit numbers. Most convert simple fractions to percentages and use either to describe the proportions of a whole number. They use and interpret coordinates and find the perimeter and area of rectangles. Many pupils show confidence in their knowledge of tables. They have a good understanding of negative numbers, for example, in the context of temperature and calculate fractions and percentages of three-figure numbers. A few use a range of graphs and diagrams, often computer-generated, interpreting them and drawing conclusions. They measure angles accurately when constructing triangles. Pupils make good progress during Key Stage 2. Throughout the school pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of good planning by class teachers, good support from teaching assistants and the quality of the liaison between them. Mathematics is used well in other curriculum areas. For example, younger pupils record weather patterns using simple graphs and in geography visitor numbers and their impact on coastal erosion is recorded in pie charts by older pupils. Others maintain a food diary and use computer graphics to present information about the proteins, fats and carbohydrates in their diets.

96 Pupils have positive attitudes to mathematics. They work hard in lessons, listening carefully to teachers and cooperating well in small-group work. Behaviour is very good. An important factor in this is that staff are highly consistent in their expectations so that, as pupils move up the school, they are always treated with respect, they treat others similarly and the habit of working quietly without disturbing others is well established.

97 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan carefully, using the structures of the National Numeracy Strategy and match the work carefully to the needs of different groups within the class. Teaching assistants make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Like the class teachers they engage pupils in discussion which helps them to overcome difficulties. For example, younger pupils were learning to recognise coins and to remember their relative values. After a careful whole-class introduction, pupils worked in attainment groups which moved round different related activities. When working with the teacher the tasks set and the teacher's questioning about coins closely matched their present level of understanding. When working with the teaching assistant (TA) they bought fruit and vegetables from a shop and, again, the prices and the dialogue initiated by the TA was carefully pitched so as to help them learn. In a few lessons, the final summaries, when pupils are drawn back together as a whole-class, lack rigour. They do not always return to the learning objectives for that lesson so that pupils are not sufficiently helped to think about and remember what they have learned. Teachers are effective in helping pupils to explain their strategies when doing mental and written calculations. Often this is in front of the whole class and helps pupils both to reason through what they have done and to reflect on alternative ways of arriving at accurate solutions. Standards of teaching are now better than at the time of the 1999 HMI inspection and very much better than those reported in the 1997 inspection.

98 The school is making strenuous efforts to raise standards in mathematics. The subject is well coordinated. Change is planned carefully, its impact on standards is evaluated and the staff are united in their determination to make improvements. Targets for pupils' personal improvement are negotiated with individual pupils on a termly basis. They are also discussed with parents and progress is reviewed. In addition, targets are set for different attainment groups within each class. Improved standards are apparent in Key Stage 2. Standards in Key Stage 1 have remained low. Raising standards is a continuing priority for the school. In the years since the 1997 inspection, staff turnover has been high but

appears to be stabilising. This and the much improved quality of teaching indicates that the school has the capacity to succeed.

## SCIENCE

99 Attainment in science has improved significantly since the inspection of 1997 and the HMI inspection of 1999. The improvement in test scores for pupils aged eleven over the last three years has risen at a higher rate than that for schools nationally despite a slight dip in the results in 1999. It is now in line with averages for similar schools and from the analysis of work seen in classrooms, is continuing to rise. By the age of seven attainment in science is close to national averages. This also represents an improvement since the 1999 inspection. Overall standards are average and in some cases, good. From a low starting point when they start school at five, seven-year-olds, have a sound understanding of the classification of materials and living things into plants and animals, natural and man made. They also refine their classifications by identifying very specific criteria, for example animals with big or small ears. Since the last inspection, the school has worked hard to develop pupils' understandings and experiences of scientific investigation. They understand and apply these principles and many pupils have developed an understanding of a fair test. Because of this work pupils are now able to set up simple experiments, for example, exploring electrical circuits, observing that water can change from steam to water to ice and back again under the necessary conditions and how plants absorb water. They can structure their investigations, observe closely and, with the support of well thought out materials, predict outcomes and record observations and results.

100 By the age of eleven pupils have progressed well, as indicated by the improving test results. They have sound knowledge and understanding across the breadth of the subject. Their knowledge of habitats and the differences between living and non-living things is good. They know how different materials behave, for example the similarities and differences between the behaviour of liquids and *particle* solids. Most pupils understand the meaning of a fair test and are able to construct investigations applying the necessary principles. This also represents an improvement since the last inspection and using investigations is becoming a strength of the subject teaching. However, this way of learning science is more pronounced in the early part of Key Stage 2 than later on, when building up and accumulating knowledge becomes more important because of the influence of the Year 6 tests. The presentation of work by the pupils is good. They take a great deal of pride and care in what they do.

101 Overall teaching in science is good. No teaching seen was less than good and a substantial amount was very good. The high quality of teaching seen was characterised by the teachers' clear learning objectives based on the specific focus for the lesson, very good planning for the needs of the subject and the learning needs of the pupils. Teachers use specific scientific vocabulary well and encourage the pupils to use similar language. The pace of lessons is very good, with some teachers using clearly timed elements with specific expectations so that pupils move rapidly through the learning process. This teaching, assisted by effective intervention at individual, group and whole-class levels and probing questions, results in developing pupils' critical thinking about their investigations, improving their observations and increasing their assimilation of knowledge. Teachers have good subject knowledge, enabling them to explain processes with clarity. They match tasks and activities appropriately to the learning objectives of the lessons and prepare and use resources well. ICT is used effectively for pupils to record and analyse the outcomes of observations or investigations, for example the use of spread sheets and pie charts to analyse the balance of a daily diet. These teaching approaches promote effective learning and progress. Teachers manage their pupils very well and because expectations are high pupils attain very good standards of behaviour, involvement and cooperation throughout the lessons.

102 Science is managed well. There is an effective development plan which is part of the overall school improvement plan and the school has made an appropriate response to the requirements of the new National Curriculum by adapting the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme of work to its own curriculum needs as stated in the aims of the school's science policy. The coordinator effectively monitors planning and attainment in the subject, having a clear view of strengths and weaknesses. Resources for the subject are adequate overall. The provision of equipment and materials for practical and investigative science is good. However the access to and supply of books in the library and reference materials to support learning in science is inadequate.

## **ART**

103 It was only possible to observe one full lesson in art due to timetable arrangements. However, on the basis of the wealth of art displayed in classrooms and around the school, and scrutiny of pupils' work at the end of lessons, standards in art are above the national expectation at the end of the Foundation Stage and for pupils aged seven and eleven. This is because the school has a clear policy and scheme of work which ensures pupils build on their skills year-on-year. In addition teachers are committed to raising standards, recognising the contribution art makes to pupils' learning. The standards achieved are similar to those reported in the 1997 inspection.

104 Pupils' drawing skills develop soundly throughout the school. They work from observation, personal experiences and imagination. Their developing skills in using line and shape are also used effectively to support work in design and technology. The use of colour and pattern in painting is good. In the nursery, pupils are encouraged to mix paint carefully to create a range of colours and to experiment. For example, they explore different ways of making stripy patterns. Pupils make good progress in collage, using a range of materials including textiles. They use different textures, patterns and colours in their work, sometimes designing in pencil first, before making thoughtful choices from a range of materials. Pupils also make good progress in print making. Younger pupils experiment with different materials such as fruit, vegetables and sponges, dipping them into paint and pressing them on to paper to create different shapes. Older pupils learn to create their own printing blocks, sometimes rotating or partially over-laying the images to create new patterns.

105 Although there is some evidence of three-dimensional work by pupils of all ages this is less consistent than the other areas of experience and standards are lower. Because sculptural work is more spasmodic, pupils' understanding and use of form is less well developed than is the case with line, shape, pattern and texture.

106 As pupils move up the school they study a wide range of artists from different periods and cultures. They achieve high standards, usually attempting to use the artist's style in their own work, rather than attempting a mere copy. For example, Year 6 pupils covered most of the Van Gogh pictures they were studying, leaving a small window which exposed only a few square centimetres. In their own pictures they greatly enlarged what could be seen, successfully mixing the colours and applying the paint in a similar manner. A joint venture by everyone in the school has resulted in the painting of a large picture of the school and its occupants in the style of L S Lowry. This painting now hangs in Suffolk County Hall.

107 No judgement can be made about the quality of teaching or pupils' responses in lessons because so few were observed. The subject is very well coordinated, strengths and weaknesses are accurately identified and the school has a vision for developing the quality of work.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

108 Only two lessons were seen in each key stage during the inspection but significant evidence of planning, lesson notes and pupils' work was provided to enable appropriate judgements to be made. Overall standards in the subject have improved since the last inspection. Across the school they are in line with national expectations, although the work in Key Stage 1 indicates a greater breadth than that in Key Stage 2.

109 By the age of seven pupils are aware of the designing and making process. They know that they have to take into account the purpose and function of the object they are making and make plans accordingly. They are also aware of the importance of evaluation in the designing and making process through the use of support materials which require responses to the statements, '*Things I have done.*' '*Things I could have done better.*' Pupils use simple tools with a degree of accuracy and precision. They cut out specific shapes for their models and structures, for example, circles for wheels, strips for climbing frames and triangles for pigs' ears. They build models from a wide range of materials including boxes, straws, paper plates, card, paper, natural materials and fabrics. They plan a structure either on paper or on the computer and replicate it from commercially produced constructional materials. They design and make hinges for moving parts of puppets by bending materials and fixing them with paper fasteners.

110 By the end of Year 6 pupils implement designing and making strategies. They plan their designs by the use of annotated drawings and use a variety of materials effectively including fabric, card, wood and papier maché, to create their products. They use a variety of tools and skills for measuring, cutting, shaping and constructing to produce such articles as replica Egyptian artefacts, fabric hangings, purses and book designs including pop-up books. They consider a problem, research and devise solutions and develop criteria against which to evaluate the effectiveness of their solutions. They also have the skills to execute their designs. The range of work in Key Stage 2 is not as extensive as that in Key Stage 1 because of the pressures caused by the implementation of national strategies in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

111 The attainment above is as a direct result of the good and very good teaching throughout the school where the approaches to lessons are well planned, yet flexible. Expectations are high and teachers develop very enthusiastic responses from their pupils. Much of the work seen linked directly to other aspects of the curriculum and had a specific purpose, for example, books for younger children to use, fabric pictures related to the focus of Literacy Strategy lessons which helps pupils improve their reading. Other features of effective teaching included clear objectives and planning for the lessons, good subject knowledge related to the whole process of designing and making and very good interventions by teachers to question, demonstrate and respond to pupils' learning needs at all levels. Teachers also provide structured frameworks which help pupils gain a clarity about the designing and making process so that no part of the process, from problem to evaluation, is missed out. Demonstrations were also particularly effective where the teacher deliberately went through a trial and error process to emphasise specific design needs, for example, the need for structures to be stable. The behaviour and attitudes of the pupils are very positive. They are interested in their work, cooperate well and are always ready to rise to a challenge. This is due to the quality of teaching which has improved significantly since the last inspection where much was unsatisfactory.

112 The subject is managed well. There is an effective development plan which is part of the overall school improvement plan and the school has made an appropriate response to the requirements of the new National Curriculum. An effective policy and scheme of work appropriately combines elements of the Local Education Authority's scheme and the

Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's scheme. The recent implementation of this scheme provides a relevant structure for learning which ensures progression throughout the school. The coordinator effectively monitors planning and attainment in the subject, having a clear view of strengths and weaknesses, although the coordination needs further development in Key Stage 2 to ensure a broader range of learning opportunities. Resources for the subject are good overall. The provision of equipment and materials for practical work are good, but the supply of and access to books in the library and design focused materials which can support pupils' ideas and aspirations for high quality design are insufficient. The school has a room dedicated to art, design and technology which is well used and this provision effectively supports the learning in these areas.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

113 The last time the school was inspected standards in geography were below average by the age of seven and well below average by the age of eleven. Since then they have improved and now pupils are reaching national expectations for their age by the ages of seven and eleven. Standards have improved because the curriculum is well organised and all areas are effectively taught in a systematic way. Pupils make good progress in all classes. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work is well planned for a range of abilities and they are very well supported in lessons by teachers and teaching assistants.

114 By the age of seven pupils answer questions about their own locality from simple observations. They make street maps and plan their route to school. They answer questions about the traffic flow in the area following a traffic survey. The improvement in pupils' work is largely due to good teaching, which now includes elements of fieldwork. For example, the younger pupils visited the shops in the locality as part of the work they were doing on buildings. Good use was made of a project to redesign the school grounds and children drew up their own plans for the area. By age of eleven pupils have developed a range of geographical skills. They confidently carry out a study of a location and investigate the climate in the region. For example, pupils studied the effects of the monsoon in India and Pakistan on the local inhabitants and their lives. They accurately recorded the rainfall and temperature and wrote newspaper articles to describe the effects of flooding. There are effective links with social and cultural development.

115 Teachers are now more confident about geography. Although there is evidence of some fieldwork for the older pupils, for example, a visit to investigate the coastline, this needs to be extended further. Only one lesson was observed in each key stage because the focus this term is on history but a large sample of pupils' work was analysed and discussions held with pupils. These show that teaching is always sound and is often good or better. This is an improvement on the last inspection when teaching in Key Stage 2 was unsatisfactory. The improved teaching is mainly due to better curriculum planning and assessment of pupils' work. Teachers are planning a range of tasks and activities in lessons, which match the abilities and interests of pupils, and there is now little use of photocopied materials in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work and take care to present it accurately. Younger pupils in Year 4 have carried out a survey of the effects of rubbish on the school environment. This included collecting and classifying waste and investigating the opportunities for recycling. The results of the survey were carefully and accurately recorded using graphs and using their skills learnt in mathematics. In the lesson observed in Key Stage 2 the teacher used skilful questioning to find out what pupils had remembered from the last lesson. She promoted lively discussion, which kept pupils interested and keen to finish the tasks she set them.

116 Leadership of the subject is sound, this is an improvement since the last inspection. The coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and there is a detailed improvement plan. There is now a policy in place and the curriculum is planned using national guidance. The coordinator supports colleagues in planning their geography work. At present there is little monitoring of the work pupils do other than an annual display of geography work. Resources are slowly improving and ICT is beginning to be used. The stock of geography books in the library is poor and inadequate to support pupils' learning effectively.

## **HISTORY**

117 At the time of the last inspection, although seven-year-olds were achieving average levels of attainment, eleven-year-olds were below average. Standards in history have improved due to better curriculum planning, accurate assessment and more confident teaching so all pupils now make good progress and reach appropriate standards for their age.

118 By the age of seven pupils are developing an understanding of the importance of historical figures and events. They can retell the story of the Battle of Hastings and know why William the Conqueror was important. They are able to use a range of resources, for example, pictures of the Bayeux Tapestry, to help them talk and write about what happened in the past. Younger pupils are able to talk about how their beach holidays are similar and different from those in the past. They are beginning to use photographs to help them make sensible observations about life in different times. Younger pupils in Key Stage 2 are beginning to understand why the 20<sup>th</sup> century was important and to discuss how things have changed in the last hundred years. They enthusiastically discuss the details of fashion, clothes, transport and families shown in a wide range of photographs and write about what they find out. By the age of eleven pupils' skills of historical enquiry have developed further. They can use their detailed knowledge of the Tudor period to help them talk and write about explorers at that time. They use a range of resources to help them find out information, they use accurate historical vocabulary and they can talk confidently about major historical figures of the time such as Henry VIII. They can order events in an accurate chronological order and have a good knowledge of important dates. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the work is planned at their level of understanding and teachers and teaching assistants support them very well in lessons

119 In Key Stage 1 teaching was satisfactory or better in all lessons seen. Teachers motivate pupils well by getting them interested in their work, for example, one teacher used a puppet show to demonstrate *'Punch and Judy'* as part of a lesson on leisure now and in the past. Teaching was good or better in all lessons seen in Key Stage 2. Teachers are confident and have a wide knowledge of the work they are teaching. They are skilled in asking a range of questions, which encourage the pupils to think more carefully about the task they are doing. Lessons are well planned and teachers ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and how they will do it. Pupils enjoy history lessons. They work hard and learn well. They are keen to ask and answer questions and they concentrate well in lessons. They work sensibly in pairs and small groups, for example, studying and discussing what they can find out from photographs they have brought from home. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good because they are interested in the work they are asked to do and are challenged to do their best.

120 The subject is well led. This is an improvement since the last inspection when leadership was unsatisfactory. The coordinator has been in post for nearly a year and has an enthusiastic approach to the subject. She has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and knows what needs to happen to continue the good

progress already made. There is now a history policy and a scheme of work which guides teachers' planning. The coordinator is building up a portfolio of pupils' work, which clearly shows what they can and should do. This is helping teachers to ensure that work is planned to match the wide range of abilities in each class. The coordinator has started to build up a range of history resources and there were some new artefacts in evidence during the inspection. However, the library's history book stock is poor and the range of books is currently not good enough. Loans from the Education Library Service provide better quality books, which teachers use in their classrooms. ICT is starting to be used by teachers in history lessons, for example CD-ROMS and word processing. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

121 By the ages of seven and eleven pupils' standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are in line with national expectations in all aspects of the subject except modelling and control. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection and is due to vastly improved resources and better teaching. Of particular note is the ICT suite of 16 personal computers (PCs) with an additional PC in each classroom and one in the library.

122 ICT starts with a high profile in the nursery and, throughout the school, pupils make good progress in presenting and communicating information. Scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display reveals satisfactory and often good standards of work in word processing and data handling. Teachers are very skilled at using ICT to generate labels and titles for displays and these provide good models which pupils are quick to emulate. Most younger pupils use the keyboard and the mouse to save, load and retrieve their work and change the font and use the delete and edit functions. By the end of Year 6 many pupils have the knowledge and skill required to import text and graphics from other applications and move effectively between applications. Some carry out more complex procedures, cutting and pasting text and importing data using recently purchased scanners. Pupils make good use of PCs both in the ICT suite and in classrooms to access information. The teachers in Years 5 and 6 have started to take lessons in other subjects in the ICT suite, making increasing use of the facilities it provides. Although the school is connected to the Internet its use for accessing information and for using email is mostly limited to teachers and is not yet sufficiently opened up to pupils. The school recognises this and it is planned to be developed after forthcoming staff training. Throughout the school pupils are learning to use CD-ROMS to gather information, for example in history and geography. In all classes pupils enjoy using CD-ROM dictionaries to find and check spellings in their everyday work and make good use of the spell-check facility when word processing stories straight on to the screen.

123 When ICT skills are directly taught and then applied, pupils' attitudes are very positive. They work in pairs on the PCs with high levels of enthusiasm and cooperation, taking turns fairly and learning from and teaching each other. Pupils concentrate well when teachers are explaining the task to them and work is generally carried out with the minimum of fuss. This is particularly the case in the ICT suite when they sometimes have to wait for the teacher's attention. Some teachers are good at using the skills of higher-attaining pupils to support others in these situations which helps progress. Good additional support is provided by the ICT instructor and teaching assistants, who help the pupils whose literacy skills are weak.

124 The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory and mostly good which is a huge improvement from the last inspection when no specialist ICT teaching was seen. A fresh programme of staff training in ICT starts next term and the school is determined that this will meet the identified needs of staff and so further improve the quality of teaching. Currently most teachers' subject knowledge is sufficient to cope with the demands of the software they

are using and the knowledgeable and effective coordinator is very accessible for help. Long, medium and short-term planning is modelled on the national guidance and ensures that all pupils will have full access to the curriculum. Currently modelling and control are planned for but are under-represented in practice. Work with monitoring has improved since the visit by HMI in 1999. During lessons pupils' work is formally assessed to help teachers' planning for the next session. In the best lessons a brief plenary is well used for pupils to identify what they have learned and many pupils show a genuine pleasure in achievement. Most pupils' work is kept on file and the coordinator is now printing examples, assessing and levelling them with teachers and compiling a school portfolio which indicates attainment by National Curriculum level. This is a positive development which helps to raise expectations and standards further. The pace of work in the ICT suite is sometimes slow as teachers try to give individual attention to those pupils who need support, and greater attention needs to be given to planning for the needs of higher attaining pupils. Every class is timetabled to have a sustained period of time in the ICT suite each week and this has greatly improved direct teaching and provision since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the help they receive from support staff in classes, as do pupils with English as an additional language. All pupils have full access to the curriculum. Little use is yet made of the new PCs in the library for finding information, including Internet access. PCs were infrequently used in classrooms during the inspection but scrutiny of work suggests that they are well used, for example, to access information and spellings through CD-ROMS. ICT is also used in art for pattern making, in science and geography for data handling and in design and technology for planning.

125 The school is rightly considering how the ICT resources can be even more fully utilised to support teaching and learning in all subjects, and how skills learned in the ICT suite can be applied more in other lessons. Currently the ICT suite is only timetabled for about half of the week, however, the school is currently planning how this valuable resource could be used more fully.

126 The coordinator is very effective and is well supported by the very strong links which the school has with the head of ICT at the High School to which most pupils transfer. She has constructed a thorough ICT improvement plan which sets out development of the subject in the future. She has good subject knowledge and good technical skills, but she is also a full-time teacher and the school should consider what technical assistance might be needed in the future to keep everything operational all of the time. The coordinator has carried out an audit of the knowledge and skills of all teachers and plays a key role in the staff-training programme. Her role includes monitoring and evaluating teachers' planning, the quality of teaching and standards of work. It is important that she receives support in doing this so that the quality of teaching can be further improved.

127 The school has made a huge commitment to improving resources and staff training over the last year or so and the future is well planned for. Resources are now generally very good, but teaching would be greatly helped by the provision of an interactive whiteboard to allow better class and group teaching and staff training. Learning would be improved by the addition of three more control sets so that the pupils' entitlement to the use of control can be better delivered.

## **MUSIC**

128 Pupils throughout the school attain standards expected for their age and enjoy their music-making activities. Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes and this has affected some of the specialist music teaching highlighted in the previous report. However, pupils are making good progress in lessons in all age groups because teachers are becoming more confident and are well supported by the new coordinator. Pupils sing



confidently and with real enjoyment and enthusiasm in assembly and in the weekly whole-school singing session. There are additional opportunities for pupils to perform as teachers organise musical events for parents. Pupils with special education needs are also making good progress because they are very well supported in music lessons by all adults.

129 Younger pupils sing well with expression and enthusiasm. They clap simple rhythms and compose and perform simple pieces using unpitched percussion instruments. There are good links with literacy, for example when a Year 1 class improvised sounds to accompany a story, which the teacher read. Older pupils use symbols and staff notation such as minim, crotchet and quaver to represent rhythms. They perform their own compositions using untuned percussion instruments. They work well together in small groups and are able to perform their finished pieces using a simple musical score. In a Year 4 lesson the teacher successfully involved several pupils with special educational needs and also a non-English speaking pupil in a simple performance. However pupils rarely record their efforts in order to listen to, assess and improve what they have done.

130 Only two music lessons were observed during the inspection and teaching was sound in one and good in the other. Discussion with the coordinator confirms that although there is a wide range of teacher knowledge and confidence, most staff are not music specialists, all teachers are able to teach music to their own class. Teaching is effectively supported by the coordinator who checks the planning and suggests additional activities and resources.

131 Leadership in the subject is good. The coordinator has been in post for almost a year and has an accurate understanding of what needs to be done. She has reorganised the curriculum and provided resources to support music teaching. There is a policy and scheme of work, which provides guidance to help teachers plan their lessons. The range of musical instruments, some of which are in poor condition is limited. However the coordinator has already begun to tackle this by prioritising resources and ordering new instruments. The range of extra-curricular music activities is also limited and there are plans to re-establish the choir and organise a recorder group.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

132 It is not possible to make an overall judgement about standards in physical education (PE) as all the lessons observed were games lessons. The standards attained by the end of the Foundation Stage and both key stages in games are in line with those expected nationally. This is similar to the standards which were reported in the 1997 inspection.

133 By the age of seven pupils can throw and catch, using bean bags and a range of balls, with reasonable accuracy and control. They have a good awareness of one another when moving in the relatively confined space of the hall or the outdoor play area so that there are almost no collisions and practice is uninterrupted. The older pupils in Key Stage 2 develop satisfactory standards in dodging and marking opponents in handling/passing games and in striking/fielding games when working in small groups. Boys and girls work together happily and there are no significant differences in the standards attained. Pupils make sound progress throughout the school.

134 Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and are enabled to take a full part in the activities so that they, too, make sound progress. In an indoor lesson in Year 1, for example, sensitive support was provided by a teaching assistant which enabled one pupil to participate fully in the lively races, and, at appropriate points the supporter quietly and appropriately distanced herself from the pupil, encouraging her to develop greater independence in situations where she was able to cope.

135 Pupils have very positive attitudes to PE. They enjoy the lessons and participate enthusiastically. They listen carefully to teachers' instructions and respond well to their guidance for improvement. Teachers involve pupils in many paired and small-group situations and pupils cooperate very well, playing fairly, yet relishing the competitive element.

136 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and often good or very good. This is a significant improvement on that reported during the last inspection. Teaching is more variable in Key Stage 2 than in Key Stage 1 but is still satisfactory overall. Teachers plan carefully and have clear learning objectives. Generally they use appropriate methods to meet these objectives so that pupils are clear about what is expected of them and receive much individual and small group practice which helps them to make progress. In parts of some lessons group sizes are too large so, for example, individuals have too little contact with the ball and both activity levels and progress are diminished. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour very well so that they habitually respond to adults and their fellows respectfully and work hard throughout the lesson. In the nursery PE lesson, for example, the teacher took every opportunity to remind pupils about saying please, thank you, and not interrupting another child who was speaking, without losing the flow of the lesson or the sense of fun which pervaded it.

137 The school is presently trialling an LEA scheme of work for PE which is ensuring that provision is broad and balanced. Resources are good and, despite having no playing fields, the school makes good use of its two halls, equipped with an appropriate range of fixed and movable apparatus, and the very large hard area.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

138 The school follows the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for the teaching of religious education. At seven, the end of their time in Key Stage 1, pupils' standards are satisfactory and often better and in line with syllabus expectations. This is similar to those reported in the last inspection, although the evidence from the work sample suggests that pupils' understandings of religious ideas is above expectations. This is because of the strong emphasis which the school places on the exploration and understanding of feelings and emotions related to religious stories and traditions rather than just focusing on events and facts. For example in a Year 1, lesson where the content was the story of the raising of Jairus' daughter, the pupils were asked to think about how the main characters in the story would have felt, rather than just what they did. In a Year 2 lesson on Islamic prayer practices, role-play was used - finding the direction of Mecca, laying out the prayer mat, washing hands, covering head - very effectively to develop empathy with the religious practices. Pupils' range of knowledge strongly reflects key elements of Christian traditions and beliefs, along with a knowledge of other major faiths like Judaism and Islam. At a very simple level pupils are learning that stories from religions have a deeper meaning than their literal interpretation. By the age of eleven, pupils have developed a good knowledge of a wide range of faiths, building on those experienced in Key Stage 1, often exceeding expectations for their age. This is an improvement since the last inspection and is partly as a result of the cyclical nature of the RE curriculum through which pupils revisit aspects of different faiths at deeper levels as they progress through the school. They have a detailed knowledge and understanding of many faiths and their key elements - God, worship, beliefs, sacred writings, holy people and places, moral codes and ceremonies. For example, they have a good understanding of the importance of religious writings through exploring the different natures of oral and written traditions. They recognise that in most religions there are people and characters which followers emulate - Jesus in Christianity, Mohammed in Islam. Progress in the subject is good.

139 Teaching in the subject is very good overall ensuring that pupils make good progress. This was the case in nearly two-thirds of the lessons seen. Teachers have good subject knowledge, and are able to translate it into effective learning objectives and teaching strategies which gain and maintain pupils' attention, interest and inquisitiveness. The use of role-play which provides opportunities for pupils to explore issues, ask questions and suggest meanings is significant in developing pupils' religious understandings. The school invites visitors representing local faiths. This helps pupils understand religious beliefs, symbols and their roles in worship and religious traditions. Teachers have good questioning skills, using correct religious vocabulary. This positively promotes learning. In the very good lessons teachers read or told stories with expression and commitment. They achieved a calm, thinking environment which encouraged well-considered responses from the pupils, good levels of discussion and very good behaviour. Expectations of the pupils are high in terms of their engagement with the focus of the lesson and expected levels of understanding.

140 Assemblies are used effectively to support the teaching of RE. The use of religious stories from many traditions and the opportunities provided to reflect on them complement the learning in RE lessons.

141 The management of, planning for and development of the subject is very good. There is a new policy and the programme of teaching which is drawn from the agreed syllabus is designed to ensure that the RE has an appropriate emphasis on Christianity, balanced by studies of other major religions. The school has made this its own, reflecting the many cultures of the pupils in the school, with highly developed medium-term planning, which identifies what the pupils should be learning about, key ideas, activities and resources. This is a significant improvement on the findings of the last inspection. The coordinators have good plans for developing the subject which are incorporated into the school improvement plan. They focus on raising standards through more consistent monitoring of learning outcomes, developing assessment practices through agreeing levels of attainment and developing training and materials. Resources for the subject are sound overall. The provision of artefacts is well organised, making them readily available for lessons. However, the supply of and access to books to support pupils' learning is inadequate. Books in the library are very limited and focus mainly on Christian traditions with few covering other aspects of the syllabus.