

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MARY'S RC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Gorleston

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 121144

Headteacher : Mr P Cleary

Reporting inspector: Barbara Crane
21227

Dates of inspection: 12th – 15th November 2001

Inspection number: 196465

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils:	4 – 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	East Anglian Way Gorleston Great Yarmouth Norfolk
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Spragg
Date of previous inspection:	April 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21227	Barbara Crane	Registered inspector	English Art and design Foundation Stage English as an additional language.	The school's results and achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
19430	Trevor Hall	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
24895	Kath Hurt	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education Geography History Special educational needs.	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
20404	John Evans	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Information and communication technology Music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a voluntary aided Roman Catholic school and is about the same size as most other primary schools. It has 195 pupils, 101 boys and 94 girls, between the ages of four and eleven. Twenty-nine children are in the Reception class, five of whom attended part-time during the inspection. Children start school in the September of the year in which they are five. When they join the school, children's attainment is well below what is expected for their age. The school is part of an Education Action Zone and pupils come from a wide area that includes Great Yarmouth. There is a significant amount of deprivation in the area served by the school. A higher than normal proportion of pupils move in and out of the school at times other than is usual. Over recent years, this has amounted, on average, to about a fifth of the school's population. Seventeen per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is broadly average. Twenty-seven per cent of the pupils have special educational needs; this is above average. Two pupils have Statements of Special Educational Need, which is broadly average. Four pupils are learning English as an additional language and two of these pupils are at a fairly early stage of learning English. At the time of the inspection a temporary teacher taught the Reception children as the school was unable to appoint a permanent teacher for the start of the year.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. It provides a good quality education that results in pupils achieving well and reaching average standards in most aspects of their work by the age of eleven. The teaching is good and basic skills are taught thoroughly. The pupils' personal development is given high priority and they grow in confidence and self-esteem. The school is soundly managed and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Very good teaching results in pupils achieving very well in reading and singing.
- Most pupils have made considerable gains in their learning by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils with special educational needs do well because the school provides them with good support.
- The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is very good and so the oldest pupils learn at a rapid rate.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and get on very well together because the school provides very effectively for their personal development.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents and they hold it in high regard.

What could be improved

- More able pupils should do better in writing and mathematics.
- Standards in information and communication technology.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made satisfactory progress since its previous inspection in 1997. However, some aspects have improved at a faster rate than others. Standards in English, mathematics, science, art, design and technology, geography and history are better. A greater number of the more able pupils are reaching the level above that which is expected for their age, but there is still room for improvement in writing and mathematics. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have not improved and the school has been too slow to resolve this issue. Teaching has improved. There is now less unsatisfactory teaching and more that is of high quality. The management of most subjects has improved and the curriculum is now supported by schemes of work. There are improved procedures for assessment but these are not yet fully used to set high enough targets for more able pupils. The school's plans for improvement now include financial planning.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	C	E*	E*
Mathematics	D	C	E	D
Science	C	A	E	E

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

The results of the Year 6 pupils in 2001 were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science and well below those in similar schools for science and English. The English results were in the lowest five per cent of schools. In mathematics, the results were below those in similar schools. The school anticipated these results, as this was a lower attaining group of pupils, and a third of the year group had special educational needs. In addition, half of the pupils who took the tests did not start at the school. The school met the targets it set for this group of pupils and they achieved well, given their prior attainment. Over the past five years, the school's rate of improvement has kept up with the national trend. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001 showed considerable improvement over previous years. They were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. Compared to similar schools' results, reading and mathematics were above average and writing was average. The school sets suitably challenging targets for year groups and is on track to reach those set for the present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.

By the time they start in Year 1, the children's attainment is below that expected for their age in all of the areas of learning. Most make at least satisfactory progress from a well below average starting point. On the basis of the work seen now, standards are average in mathematics and reading at the ages of seven and eleven. Pupils of all abilities achieve very well in reading and this supports their learning in other subjects. More able pupils should be doing even better in mathematics. Standards in science are below average at the end of the infants but average by the end of the juniors. Standards in writing are below average at the end of the infants and broadly average by the end of the juniors but the more able pupils should be doing better in writing. The pupils are not reaching the expectations for their ages in ICT because they do not use computers often enough to develop and practise their skills. The pupils' attainment in music is better than expected for their ages and their singing is very good. In all other subjects the pupils reach the expectations for their ages at the end of the juniors. The school does well to get a good proportion of pupils up to average levels by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language make good progress because their needs are well met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are proud of the school and have very positive attitudes to their work. They take part enthusiastically in what the school offers them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils behave sensibly, both in lessons and out at play. The older pupils show very good self-discipline.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils of all ages get on very well together. The older ones take good care of the younger ones. Pupils are quick to see what needs to be done and use their initiative well.
Attendance	Although the picture is improving, attendance is below average. There is more

	unauthorised absence than in most schools.
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The pupils know that the school's 'golden rule' is that they should treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves. This is well displayed in the pupils' behaviour, relationships and attitudes. Pupils from all kinds of backgrounds get on very well. The pupils' confidence is built by knowing that they are valued as individuals. The school's involvement in Education Action Zone initiatives is having a very positive effect on both pupils' personal development and attendance. The pupils leave the school with a very good sense of assuredness that they can succeed.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	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 in Years 1 to 6 because:

- teachers plan interesting lessons and so the pupils are keen to learn;
- they have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and this creates a good atmosphere for learning;
- most basic skills are taught thoroughly;
- the needs of pupils with special educational needs, average ability pupils and those who are learning English as an additional language, are well met.

Teaching for the Reception children is satisfactory and they are taught the basic skills soundly. There is very good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and so the pupils here learn at a rapid rate. Teaching in mathematics is good but the more able pupils sometimes need more challenging work. Teaching in English is good. Teachers give pupils good opportunities to express their ideas and they use a good vocabulary that extends the range of words used by the pupils. The teaching of reading is very good and so pupils achieve very well. Teachers plan very good opportunities for pupils to use their skills in reading in other subjects. The teaching of the basic skills in writing is effective, but the more able pupils learn at a slower rate because teachers do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length. Expectations of what these pupils can achieve in writing are too low and teachers give them too little guidance on how to improve. Teaching in music is very good because of the high level of the teacher's expectations and expertise. Teaching in ICT is unsatisfactory because most of the teachers lack expertise and they do not plan sufficiently for the pupils to use computers to support their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The school teaches all of the subjects that it should. There is a good range of activities outside lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The well-planned provision ensures that these pupils make good progress towards the targets set for them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are quickly assessed and well supported. As a result, they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Very good. The pupils' personal development is given high priority. The school supports the pupils' spiritual, social and moral development very effectively. The pupils' awareness of their own and other cultures is well developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The staff know the pupils well and give them good support and advice.

A good range of visits supports the curriculum and about a quarter of pupils benefit from taking part in the school choir. The main weakness in the curriculum is ICT because not enough work is planned to ensure that pupils reach the standards for their ages. There are also too few opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. The infants do too little investigative work in science. There is satisfactory assessment of what pupils can do in their work but the use of this information to set targets for some more able pupils is not as effective as for other abilities. The school's partnership with parents is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher provides very strong leadership in setting the tone of the school in promoting pupils' personal development. He is less effective in monitoring what happens in classrooms. The able deputy head provides good quality support for improving teaching and learning, but has fewer opportunities to do so. She provides a good example in her teaching.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All responsibilities are carried out. The governors provide good support for the school and have a firm understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The school is developing a sound ability to measure its performance against other schools. It does not, however, check the quality of teaching and learning as effectively as it should.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The staff are well deployed and most resources are well used. Appropriate financial planning supports the school's priorities for development. Additional funding from the Education Action Zone is well used to support pupils' personal development. The school seeks good value for money in its expenditure.

Most of the subject leaders provide good support for improvement in their areas. This has not been as consistently evident in ICT and pupils' standards have suffered as a result. The school's good programme of checking teaching and learning was disrupted last year by staffing problems but has not been revived this year and so teachers who are new to the school have not had the benefit of having strengths and weaknesses in their teaching identified. The school's staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. There is, however, too little software to use with computers.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They find the school approachable. • The teaching is good and homework is well organised. • Children enjoy school and their behaviour is good. • The children are expected to work hard and do their best. • Children develop confidence, take responsibility and make good progress in their work. • They feel involved in their children's learning and know how well they are doing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some parents feel that there are not enough extra-curricular activities.

The inspection findings support all of the parents' positive views but not their concern over the provision of activities outside lessons. The school provides a better than average range of out-of-school clubs and supplements this with residential visits and other visits to support the pupils' learning and personal development.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. When the pupils start school, their attainment is well below average. By the time they start in Year 1, the children's attainment is below that expected for their age in all of the areas of learning. Most make at least satisfactory progress from a well below average starting point. The children in the Reception class learn to work and play together and understand how they are expected to behave but a significant number do not reach the targets for their age in personal and social development by the time they start Year 1. There is a similar picture in their speaking, reading and writing, and mathematical skills. Most of the children speak in short sentences, form some letters correctly when they write and recognise some common words, but few can use their knowledge of letter sounds to write simple regular words or begin to form simple sentences. Most of the children recognise the symbols for numbers 1 to 9 but a significant minority cannot count objects without touching them.
2. The pupils in the infants and juniors make good progress in most aspects of their work. By the time they leave the school, most have made considerable gains in their learning, from a low starting point. The school does well to get a good proportion of pupils up to average levels by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported. Teachers plan work that extends and reinforces their learning in basic skills, and teacher assistants provide good support. A similar picture is evident with pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The teachers check the pupils' understanding well through questions and are careful to involve them in class discussions. Pupils who join the school at times other than the start of Reception are quickly integrated into the school and their needs are assessed and met appropriately.
3. The results of the national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2001:
 - were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science and well below those in similar schools for science and English;
 - in English the results were in the lowest five per cent of schools; and
 - in mathematics, the results were below those in similar schools.
4. The school anticipated that the 2001 results would be lower than those in 2000. This was a lower attaining year group of pupils, and a third of them had special educational needs. In addition, half of the pupils who took the tests did not start at the school. The school met the targets it set for this group of pupils and they achieved well, given their prior attainment. Over the past five years, the school's rate of improvement has kept up with the national trend. The school gained an improvement award in 2001 because of its year-on-year improvement, up to 2000, in the proportion of pupils gaining the level expected for their age in English and mathematics.
5. The results of the national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2001:
 - showed considerable improvement over previous years;
 - were in line with the national average in reading and mathematics;
 - were below average in writing;

- compared to similar schools' results, reading and mathematics were above average and writing was average.
6. The school sets suitably challenging targets for year groups, based on the teachers' assessments in all years and the results of annual tests in the juniors. It is on track to reach those set for the present Year 2 and Year 6 pupils.
7. On the basis of the work seen now:
- standards are average in mathematics and reading at the ages of seven and eleven;
 - pupils of all abilities achieve very well in reading and this supports their learning in other subjects;
 - standards in writing are below average at the age of seven and broadly average at eleven;
 - more able pupils should be doing better in writing and mathematics;
 - standards in science are below average for seven year olds but average for eleven year olds;
 - the pupils are not reaching the expectations for their ages in ICT because they do not use computers often enough to develop and practise their skills;
 - the pupils' attainment in music is better than expected for their ages and their singing is very good;
 - in all other subjects the pupils reach the expectations for their ages at the end of the juniors.
8. Standards in reading are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils' writing is below average, as are their speaking and listening. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are close to the national average. This means that pupils, over their time in the school, have made good progress in English, from a low starting point. The Year 2 pupils approach reading confidently because they have been taught how to work out unknown words from the sounds of letters and the context of the sentence. They read with good attention to expression, for example, changing their voice when someone speaks in the story. The junior pupils pay good attention to the punctuation when they read. The teachers plan work that extends the more able pupils in reading, but these pupils should be doing better in writing and standards should be higher. By the end of Year 2, although standards are below average, most of the pupils form letters correctly, spell common words reasonably accurately and use basic punctuation. The pupils rarely write more than a few sentences, however, and the teachers do not give them sufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve. The Year 2 pupils' writing has simple sentences and they use unexciting words. More able pupils write more, but the quality of writing is no better and lacks structure. The pupils do not write sufficiently in other subjects. In Year 6, the pupils of average and above average ability produce writing of similar quality and this is rarely longer than two or three paragraphs. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low. The teachers' guidance in all junior classes does not sufficiently encourage the more able pupils to develop an argument, create an atmosphere or use imaginative words.
9. By the time they are seven, most pupils have a sound grasp of place value when working with numbers to 100. They add amounts of money and accurately measure in centimetres. Year 2 pupils solve simple problems, such as finding the total costs of items on a shopping list. Year 5 pupils correctly use the terms polygon, parallelogram and quadrilateral to describe irregular two-dimensional shapes. By the end of Year 6 the pupils can find several different ways of arriving at an answer and explain how they calculated. They work at an appropriate level with fractions and decimals. Although greater emphasis is being placed on mental agility, some pupils lack speed in mental calculation. The more able pupils should be achieving more than is expected of them. They sometimes mark time because they are given similar work to others.

10. By the time they are seven, pupils know about the feeding habits of different animals and understand how these relate to where animals prefer to live. They identify different materials used in clothing and begin to study properties such as opacity and transparency. They name the power sources of domestic appliances and begin to understand simple electrical circuits. However, in pupils' past work, coverage of some aspects of science is uneven and there are areas of weakness. Pupils' investigative skills have been given too little attention and, as a result, are relatively weak. By the time pupils leave the school, standards in science are average and their scientific knowledge has broadened and become better established. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the natural world, some properties of different materials and the action of forces. The pupils know about the action of helpful and harmful micro-organisms. They understand and can explain how shadows and reflections are formed and how vision occurs. Pupils recognise the action of different forces such as gravity and magnetism. While pupils' skill in practical experiments is more limited than their factual knowledge, it is progressing well as a result of well-directed teaching. They understand the importance of ensuring 'fairness' in an experiment and can apply this idea in practical examples.
11. Standards in ICT are below the expectations for pupils' ages. By the time they are seven, pupils gain some experience of word-processing and can produce captions for posters. They have satisfactory skills in using the mouse and keyboard. Some pupils know how to select pictures and put these into their work, and some use drawing programs but few are secure in explaining them. Many pupils gain experience of using ICT at home and, as a result, are more knowledgeable about some aspects of the subject, such as presenting stories and using e-mail. However, most pupils have many gaps in their knowledge, for example, in using ICT to organise and present information, or to investigate and sequence instructions. By the time they leave the school, most pupils' experience remains limited for their age. Most pupils use a CD-ROM to find things out for their work in, for example, science and history, and many are learning to access information using the Internet. However, most teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to learn the necessary skills and gain experience of applying them in all other subjects. For example, pupils do not learn enough about using computers to combine and present information from different sources and to monitor and control events.
12. Attainment in music is above average by the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school. Standards in singing are very high. By the time they are seven, pupils sing accurately, controlling pitch, pulse and volume well. Their singing is varied and expressive. By the time they leave the school, pupils' performances show improved technique and range of expression. Pupils sing their own part confidently when combining more than one vocal line. Pupils listen carefully and respond sensitively to a range of well-chosen music. The pupils do too little composing, however, and this is a weaker aspect of their attainment in music.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. Pupils' attitudes to school, good at the last inspection, are now very good. Parents rightly feel that their children enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic and eager to learn. The younger pupils in the school often find it hard to concentrate and to listen. Teachers encourage them to improve these skills by providing timely reminders and ensuring that lessons are interesting. For example, pupils in Year 3 thoroughly enjoyed playing a mathematics game, eagerly trying to work out a number closest to the target score. In music lessons, pupils take pride in their singing and work very hard to successfully produce a high quality performance. By the time they leave the school in Year 6 most pupils are attentive, self-motivated and hard working.
14. Behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils understand and abide by the school rules. During the inspection several pupils referred to the 'golden rule' of treating

others as they would like to be treated themselves. Because they have been involved in deciding school rules, pupils appreciate their value. This, and the strong Catholic ethos, means that pupils are well aware of the impact of their actions on others. Pupils enjoy playtimes, and generally play happily in the playground. Teachers make sure that they know what is expected. For instance, the few incidents when pupils react inappropriately to others are dealt with swiftly and effectively, using the school's system of sanctions and rewards. There has been only one fixed term exclusion in the past year.

15. Pupils from a range of cultural, religious and racial backgrounds and those with special educational needs, all learn amicably together. They make friends easily and help each other. "Shall I help you?" is often heard in lessons. For example, pupils help one another to access the Internet.
16. The very good relationships and personal development found in the last inspection are still a major strength, and provide a firm basis for the good teaching and learning that takes place. Teachers manage discussions well. They value pupils' ideas, and this gives pupils confidence to express their views and to respect those of others. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils gained a much deeper understanding of life in Victorian times because they listened carefully to their classmates' ideas. Pupils showed a good awareness of friendship when asked to write about what makes a good friend.
17. Local Education Action Zone initiatives like 'The Confident School' and 'Challenging Education' make a powerful contribution to pupils' personal development. Pupils in Year 6 show extremely good levels of co-operation and appreciation of others because they have learned the qualities they need to be 'an effective audience' and 'a good team player'. This showed in their avid concentration in a health education lesson when they explored ways of keeping their brains working effectively. When challenged to organise their group to produce a class presentation on the Olympic Games in a history lesson, they swiftly negotiated who would do what, and set to work. Their independence, concentration and support for each other were outstanding.
18. The school council has organised several developments in the past year. They won an award for their project to develop the school grounds. They decided what was needed and raised funds towards the cost. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility for tasks like setting out equipment or taking registers to the office. Older pupils are very caring and kind when they act as 'reading buddies' or 'playground angels' for younger pupils. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education and for life as future citizens in a multi-cultural society.
19. Attendance is well below the national average but is much improved compared with the levels at the last inspection. This is largely because the school seeks to promote attendance at every opportunity; during registration, at assemblies and by comment on individual reports. Regular attenders gain personal attendance certificates. Consequently, the level of authorised absence has been consistently reduced in line with national trends. Unauthorised absence, however, although considerably reduced, remains very high. This is partly due to a realistic and firm stance taken by the school. A small number of families do not let the school know when their children are going to be absent. Days off and holidays during term time are too common. Nonetheless, the majority of pupils enjoy school and are early. They enter school eagerly, greet their teachers cheerfully and look forward to lessons. Registration is prompt, effective and promotes punctuality. Lateness, therefore, has also been successfully reduced since the last inspection, although it remains a regular problem for a small number of pupils.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. There is now less unsatisfactory teaching and more that is very good. Of the lessons seen this time, half were good or better and

nearly a quarter were very good or better. Teaching is satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in the infants and juniors. The teaching in Years 5 and 6 and in reading and music throughout the school is very good. The teacher assistants provide good support for the pupils' learning because the teachers give them good guidance on what they have to do.

21. The pupils with special educational needs are taught well, whether in small groups by the special educational needs subject leader, or by the class teachers. The extra support they receive is well directed at improving their confidence and basic skills and as a result they make good progress towards the targets set for them.
22. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language are also well supported by teacher assistants. Their needs are carefully considered in class discussions and group work and teachers often direct specific questions to check their understanding.
23. A temporary teacher, who has little experience of teaching this age group, taught the Reception children during the inspection. Her planning has been well supported by a more experienced teacher and she also has the support of an able teacher assistant. The teaching is satisfactory and promotes a reasonable rate of learning. The basic skills in literacy and numeracy are taught effectively and the teacher gives appropriate support for the children's personal development. The needs of children who are learning English as an additional language are taken into account and the teacher is careful to check their understanding and include them in discussions. The teacher has not had the benefit of having her teaching observed so that she can improve areas of relative weakness as a result of feedback and suitable guidance.
24. Teaching in English is good. The basic skills are well taught. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to extend their skills in speaking and listening and to develop a wider vocabulary. The teaching of reading is very good. The teachers' very good example in reading aloud is followed by the pupils. The teachers are clear about what will be learned in each lesson and provide challenging work for pupils of all abilities. Teachers make good links between recognising and reading the pattern of sounds and remembering to use it when writing. Teachers ensure that the pupils use their skills in reading very effectively to support their learning in other subjects, such as history or science, when they research information. Most of the teaching in writing is effective and the basic skills are covered well. This enables most pupils to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they leave the school. However, teachers plan too few opportunities to write in other subjects. The teachers' expectations of what more able pupils can achieve in writing are too low. The teachers' guidance, in all of the junior classes, does not sufficiently guide the more able pupils on what they need to do to improve.
25. Teaching in mathematics is good in both the infants and juniors. Pupils are eager to learn because teachers are enthusiastic and provide interesting activities so that pupils concentrate and work hard. The teachers make sure that pupils know what they will learn and check what has been achieved at the end of the lesson. Teachers do not ensure that younger pupils always stop and listen when they are speaking. This means that pupils sometimes miss instructions and valuable teaching points. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' use of mathematical terms. The main weakness in teaching arises from the less effective planning for the more able pupils. Too often, teachers plan similar tasks for all the class with extra support for less able pupils. The more able pupils sometimes mark time because teachers do not plan work at the higher levels of which these pupils are clearly capable. For example, questions asked of them in mental agility sessions are not pitched at a hard enough level.
26. Teaching in science is satisfactory in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes. Teachers' planning is much improved since the last inspection. As a result, teachers are now more confident about the work that is to be covered, the order in which topics are to be taught and the expectations that are appropriate for each year group. This is ensuring a

better balance of investigative with factual learning, and pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, are becoming more adept with experimental tasks. The infant pupils, however, have limited independence and cannot carry out scientific tasks without considerable support. The teachers do not plan enough activities for the infants to experiment and try out their ideas. As a result, pupils' investigative skills are relatively weak.

27. Teaching in ICT is unsatisfactory. Most teachers lack expertise and do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to learn the necessary skills and gain experience of applying them in all other subjects. For example, pupils do not learn enough about using computers to combine and present information from different sources and to monitor and control events.
28. The quality of teaching in both history and geography is sound in the infants. In the juniors it is sound in geography, and good in history where the best teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6. Teachers transmit their own enthusiasm well in their lively introductions and well-managed discussions. There is a good balance between giving information and questioning that encourages pupils to think hard and interpret what they hear.
29. The teaching in music is very good. One teacher teaches all classes, and he has a very high level of expertise and knowledge of the subject. His enthusiasm is transmitted to the pupils and his high expectations are rewarded by the pupils' eagerness to improve their performance. There are, however, too few opportunities planned for pupils to compose music.
30. The quality of teaching in physical education is satisfactory throughout the school, as it was in the last inspection. Teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn, and plan activities that help them achieve this. Because planning is better, pupils are active and work hard throughout the lessons. Pupils behave sensibly because teachers manage their classes well.

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

31. The school teaches all the subjects that it should and provides well for average and lower attaining pupils. Teachers and support staff provide very well for pupils' personal, social and health education. The curriculum includes appropriate planning for sex education and the dangers of drug misuse.
32. The curriculum is sufficiently broad overall but there are some areas of weakness. Provision for ICT is not yet fully secure and, as a result, pupils' knowledge and skills are below average in this subject. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to use computers as a regular feature of their work in other subjects. In science in the infant classes, while pupils' factual knowledge is fully emphasised, investigative skills are given too little attention. In English, there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise extended writing and pupils do not write sufficiently in other subjects. The pupils have too few opportunities to compose in music lessons.
33. Most of the weaknesses in planning identified at the last inspection have been remedied. There are now clear guidelines for the teaching of all subjects, including literacy and numeracy. These improve learning by enabling teachers to plan for better progress through the school. In science, for example, these guidelines are bringing greater precision and clarity to teachers' lesson planning and this is beginning to result in more effective learning. National guidelines for the teaching of numeracy have helped to improve standards. Teachers welcome the structure the guidelines bring to lesson planning. This has sharpened the focus of mathematics lessons and improved pupils' mental calculation. However, some weaknesses in planning remain. For example, although the guidelines for ICT have been adopted, they have not been fully implemented.

34. The school has worked hard to improve its provision so that more pupils reach the level expected for their ages at the end of the infants and juniors in English and mathematics. Lower ability pupils and pupils with special educational needs often make good progress, even when the work is very challenging for them, because they are well supported. Higher ability pupils, for whom the work is sometimes too easy, do not achieve as well as they should in writing and mathematics.
35. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. These extend pupils' learning, particularly in physical education and music. In addition, residential trips are provided for Years 5 and 6 and most year groups go on day visits linked with topics they are studying, for example, in history and art. These bring relevance and interest to pupils' learning and help to promote pupils' social and personal development.
36. Links with the community are good. The school enjoys constructive links with the parish and church, with other local primary schools, with secondary schools and with the local college. It provides work experience placements for high school pupils and nursery nurses. Pupils and teachers from the school figure prominently in local musical events.
37. The provision for pupils' spiritual education is very good. The school's ethos is very warm and encouraging. Teachers provide opportunities in assemblies for pupils to think about aspects of their faith, their lives and those of others. Teachers and support staff model relationships that reflect thoughtfulness and awareness of others, and this encourages pupils to behave with similar consideration. Teachers include valuable opportunities for reflection in some lessons, for example, in music and art, but in other subjects, such as science, they do not provide enough.
38. The provision for pupils' moral education is very good. Teachers successfully promote among pupils a clear sense of right and wrong. Pupils are encouraged to think about the moral choices they make and to consider the interests of others. School rules emphasise thoughtful behaviour and the importance of treating others as you would wish to be treated yourself. The effectiveness of this approach is seen in pupils' very good understanding of the impact of their actions on others.
39. Teachers provide very well for pupils' social development. The school's positive ethos and the very good relationships that teachers encourage contribute strongly to this. In lessons and discussions, pupils co-operate and support each other very well. Older pupils support younger pupils through 'buddying' arrangements, for example, in reading. The school council provides useful social experience for pupils in Key Stage 2. Teachers are attentive to the social and personal needs of pupils, for example, when framing questions and choosing pupils to present their work. This is very effective in building pupils' self-esteem and confidence.
40. The school provides well for pupils' cultural development. Pupils learn about aspects of their own culture through lessons including English, music, art and history and through visits to the school by musicians, authors and theatre groups. The pupils perform a range of music from European and other cultural traditions and join in local events, such as the Victorian Christmas, where these are celebrated. Pupils learn about cultures other than their own, for example, through their studies of India, using resources from the local multi-cultural centre. Pupils gain a good understanding of some key features of faiths other than their own, including Judaism, Islam and the Sikh and Hindu religions, and learn to value them.
41. All pupils have full and equal access to the curriculum because the school works hard to identify those needing extra help and to ensure that they get relevant support. Good procedures and regular staff discussions mean that pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are quickly identified from the Reception class onwards. The special educational needs subject leader makes sure that pupils are set clear and achievable targets. These are reviewed and amended regularly. Teacher

assistants provide good support for these pupils in lessons so that they make good progress, sometimes coping with similar tasks to their classmates. The subject leader provides a good boost for younger pupils' language and literacy skills when she teaches them individually or in groups.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The school provides a good level of care for all of the pupils. The school presents a secure, clean and warm environment. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare in school and on visits are good. All staff are aware of the strict criteria to be observed in child protection and the procedures are good. The school has good access to educational, medical and social agencies when required.
43. The school conscientiously promotes regular attendance and punctuality as good habits to be fostered for the future. These efforts are mainly very successful in consistently reducing absence. Monitoring is thorough and all unexplained absences are followed up daily, particularly with the families who regularly cause concern. The school and the educational welfare officer work very hard with a small number of families to encourage and support a better response from the parents.
44. Procedures for monitoring and promoting self-discipline are very good. There is a good, comprehensive behaviour policy consistently promoted by staff in all year groups. Consequently, an atmosphere of growing responsibility and industry is evident as pupils proceed through the school. This is a strength of the school and shows improvement since the last inspection. There is a wide range of rewards and sanctions. Codes of conduct are displayed in every class and about the school as constant reminders. Mid-day supervisors support the pupils well by promoting a happy atmosphere during lunch breaks. Lapses of conduct are generally dealt with successfully in an atmosphere of disappointment. The school ensures all pupils know how very seriously these occasions are viewed and involves parents as appropriate. The systems for promoting the absence of bullying and harassment are very good. Occasional name-calling is sorted out sensitively with all concerned. Bullying is rare and occasions dealt with swiftly and effectively.
45. The school's assessment of how well pupils are doing has improved since the last inspection. The Reception children are assessed shortly after starting school and again at the end of the year. The results are used appropriately to match the work to their needs. A range of optional national annual tests in reading, writing and mathematics is used in the junior classes, in addition to the results of other reading tests. The school has adopted the end of unit tests that are linked to the national guidance for most other subjects, although these have not yet been used for sufficient time to have any impact. A good system is established for tracking the progress of individual pupils and year groups in English and mathematics and this is used well to set targets for lower and average attaining pupils. The information gained from assessment is well used to plan work to get pupils up to an average standard, but not beyond this, in writing. The targets that are set for more able pupils are sometimes not high enough in writing and mathematics.
46. Pupils with special educational needs are quickly identified and their needs are met through extra support and adaptations to work in the classroom. Pupils who are learning English as an additional language receive good support and are fully integrated into the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parents hold the school in high regard. They are very pleased with what the school provides and achieves for their children. Parents have confidence in the staff and find them friendly and helpful. They feel welcome in school. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection report.
48. The school has good and effective links with parents. Parents rightly feel that the quality of information provided, particularly about pupils' progress, is good. There are interesting newsletters covering all activities and requirements of the school year. The school prospectus is comprehensive, with a good mission statement indicating strong pastoral care, and clear aims and values. The governors' annual report gives a full review of the past

year's school activities but could do more to inform parents on areas governors have discussed, the decisions taken and how they impact on the school.

49. The quality of information to parents about their children's progress is good. Parents spoken to during the inspection said they get to know what their children are doing through the year. Teachers are available at the end of the school day to discuss any small concerns. Appointments may be made for more formal matters. Pupils' work is always available to view. There are good annual written reports which are individual to the pupil, detailed and evaluative. Parents are invited to comment and a good number take up the opportunity. Attendance at consultation evenings is good.
50. The school fosters and appreciates the contribution of parents to children's learning at school and at home. The home/school agreement has been well received. Parents are strongly encouraged to hear their children read at home and many say they enjoy the opportunity. Parents' opinions are valued. Home/school reading records, however, are not always used to advantage by some parents. A small number of parents and friends help regularly in school and they make a good contribution to the daily activities. Many more help with trips and visits. Parents and extended family enjoy sharing in events, masses and celebrations, when the whole family of the school can meet together. The members of the Friends of St Mary's Association work very well together. They organise a variety of social and fund-raising events which have included, in the past year, discos, race nights, barbecues and a very successful Rag Night. Significant funds are raised which provide extra resources for the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. There are some strengths, but there are also areas for improvement. The headteacher provides strong and effective leadership in promoting the pupils' personal development. He is a driving force in creating a climate in which the pupils feel valued as individuals and confident that they can succeed.
52. The school has faced a challenging time over the past year, with long-term staff absences and difficulties in recruiting staff. This curtailed the programme of monitoring teaching and learning that supported improvements in the previous year. However, the headteacher has not yet reinstated this programme in the current year, now that these difficulties have been overcome. This means that teachers are not benefiting from feedback that helps to improve their teaching or ensuring that best practice can be shared. The headteacher's analysis of the school's performance is satisfactory and has resulted in a suitable plan for improvement. The right priorities are identified. However, the pace at which targets are pursued, for example improvements in the provision for ICT, has sometimes been too slow. The school has experienced some difficulties with the computers and printers in classrooms, but has not always been as quick to seek help to remedy faults as it could have been. This has had a negative impact on the pupils' learning. In addition, the school has been slow to purchase appropriate software to support the pupils' learning.
53. The role of the subject leaders has been clarified and extended since the previous inspection and most subjects are now managed effectively. The English and mathematics subject leaders have looked at samples of work and teachers' planning to draw out points for improvement. These have been included in the school's planning for development. There is no subject leader for geography and this means that no one is in a position to gain an overview of the subject and guide its development.
54. The school generally plans well to improve the teachers' expertise in areas where it is lacking. Performance targets have been set for the headteacher and the teachers. The priorities in the school's development plan are reflected in the courses that teachers attend to improve their understanding and teaching. Teachers who are new to the school are appropriately supported. The newly qualified teacher has a mentor who provides good

support. In September, several of the teachers changed the year group in which they teach and they have been well supported by subject leaders so that they know at which level to pitch the work.

55. The deputy headteacher provides a good lead in analysing the pupils' performance and identifying areas for improvement. She has devised a good system for tracking pupils' progress and this enables the school to set challenging but realistic targets for individuals and groups of pupils.
56. The management of special educational needs is good. The subject leader ensures that procedures run smoothly and that support is carefully focused where it is needed. She provides good support for colleagues in identifying specific needs and the targets needed to move pupils forward.
57. The governors provide good support for the school and fulfil all of their responsibilities. They have a secure understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher provides them with good information about the pupils' performance and the targets that are set for year groups. The governors have agreed a framework to find out more about the school's work and have produced good, perceptive reports after visiting classrooms.
58. The school's accommodation is satisfactory, although there is very little space available outside classrooms for group activities and the corridors are very narrow. The resources are satisfactory, although those for ICT are not used effectively to support better standards and there is insufficient software. The staffing is appropriate to meet the needs of the curriculum. The school secretary provides high quality support for the day-to-day running of the school. Good use is made of new technology to support its administration.
59. Financial planning is good. The school seeks to get the best value from its expenditure. The priorities in the school's planning for improvement are considered by the governors and suitably supported in the allocation of the budget. The school makes good use of its specific grants to improve its provision and the pupils' standards. For example, extra funding through the Education Action Zone has been well used to improve attendance through the facility to make contact with parents on the first morning of any pupil's unexplained absence. The Education Action Zone initiative on building pupils' confidence through 'critical thinking' has been very successfully embraced by the school and has had a positive impact on the self-esteem of the oldest pupils as they approach the end of year tests. The standards achieved by pupils are sustained by good use of booster classes and additional support for lower attaining pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

1. Improve the standards reached by the more able pupils in writing and mathematics by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what these pupils can achieve;
 - improving the use of assessments to plan work that focuses on specific areas of weakness in writing;
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length;
 - ensuring that teachers plan suitably challenging work for more able pupils in mathematics. (Paragraphs 8, 9, 24, 25, 32, 34, 45, 68, 70, 80.)

2. Improve standards in information and communication technology by:
 - improving teachers' expertise;
 - ensuring that teachers plan more opportunities to use computers in lessons;
 - ensuring that computers and printers are in working order;
 - providing a suitable range of software to support the pupils' learning. (Paragraphs 11, 27, 32, 58, 73, 81, 107-110.)

3. Improve the monitoring of teaching and learning so that:
 - the teaching and the progress made by children in the Reception class improve;
 - the weaknesses in teaching and learning are identified and supported appropriately;
 - the best practice in teaching is identified and shared. (Paragraphs 23, 52, 65.)

In addition to the issues above, the governing body should consider the following when drawing up its action plan:

- Ensuring that the infant pupils have more opportunities for investigative work in science. (Paragraphs 10, 29, 32, 84.)
- Ensuring that pupils have better opportunities to compose in music lessons. (Paragraphs 12,32, 117.)
- Ensuring that there is a subject leader for geography. (Paragraphs 53, 104.)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

38

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

20

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	7	11	17	1	0	0
Percentage	5	18	29	45	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than 2 per cent.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	195
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	32
Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	48
English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4
Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.7
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	13	15	28

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	10	12
	Girls	13	14	14
	Total	24	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (75)	86 (61)	93 (86)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	11	11
	Girls	14	13	14
	Total	24	24	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	86 (75)	86 (79)	89 (75)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	16	9	25

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	15	14	17
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	60 (85)	56 (81)	68 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	*	*	*
	Girls	*	*	*
	Total	12	16	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	48 (85)	64 (89)	60 (96)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

* Ten or fewer boys/ girls took the tests in 2001. In accordance with the guidance given to governing bodies the results are not reported.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	159
Any other minority ethnic group	16

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	28

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000/2001
	£
Total income	432752
Total expenditure	433165
Expenditure per pupil	2081
Balance brought forward from previous year	6161
Balance carried forward to next year	5748

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	195
Number of questionnaires returned	54

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	33	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	50	2	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	43	2	0	11
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	46	4	0	4
The teaching is good.	57	37	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52	37	7	0	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	17	2	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	30	0	0	6
The school works closely with parents.	44	43	7	0	6
The school is well led and managed.	48	43	4	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	43	4	0	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	19	35	11	11	24

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

60. Children start in the Reception class in the September of the year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection there were 29 children in the class, five of whom were attending part-time. A temporary teacher taught the class, as the school could not recruit a permanent teacher for the start of the school year. This teacher has little experience of teaching Reception children but is supported by an experienced teacher assistant and has been given very good support in planning the curriculum by a more experienced teacher. In addition, the school has arranged for the temporary teacher to observe good practice in other schools. The teacher is conscientious and readily acts upon guidance from colleagues. When the children start in the class, their personal and social development, language and mathematical skills are well below what is normally seen for their age. They make satisfactory progress, but few children are likely to reach the targets for their age, in any of the areas of learning, by the time they start Year 1.

Personal, social and emotional development

61. The children make satisfactory progress, but their personal and social development is unlikely to reach the level expected for their age by the end of the Reception year. Many of the children find it hard to settle into the routines of the school day and some appeared tired and fretful, even in the morning. Through the teacher assistant's warm support and encouragement, they are helped to gain in confidence and feel secure. The adults know the children well and give good support to help them organise their belongings, book bags and lunchboxes. The teaching is satisfactory in this area of learning but there are times when the children spend too long on the carpet, and become restless. The children are given good opportunities to choose activities and materials, although some lack the capacity to organise themselves, when they play in the role-play area, for example, and need greater guidance from adults to sustain the activity. The teacher is working effectively to extend the children's ability to share resources and work together, which many of them find difficult. Many of the children seek attention from adults and frequently need reassurance that what they are doing is right. Good routines are established for tidying away at the end of sessions and moving from the classroom to other areas of the school, such as to the hall for lessons in physical education.

Communication, language and literacy

62. Teaching is satisfactory and the children are making satisfactory progress in learning the sounds of letters. The teacher assistants watch closely as the children learn to form letters correctly and work with them individually to improve pencil control. In one lesson, for example, the teacher's clear explanations enabled a group of pupils to form the letter 'e' correctly. She used good prompts such as, "Remember to start at the dot and stroke the cat's whiskers," that reminded them of the smooth movement needed to form the letter. Most of the children use short phrases or single words when they reply to questions or talk to adults. A significant number have indistinct and immature speech and do not readily enter into conversations with each other or adults. They find it hard to listen to each other, but listen more carefully to adults and follow instructions. The teacher and classroom assistant take good care to support the pupils who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. They check the pupils' understanding and are careful to direct questions at these pupils so that they are included in discussions.

63. About a third of the children write their names correctly, but most, at this stage of the year, form very few letters correctly and although they know that the marks they make carry meaning, few are recognisable. By the end of the Reception year, few children are likely to reach the targets for their age. They listen to stories and some are starting to predict what will happen. One higher attaining child 'read' the sentence on his worksheet and remembered the words elephant and egg, but many struggle to express their ideas and need a great deal of reinforcement to remember words. Sometimes the pace of lessons is slow as the teacher deals with emotional outbursts from individuals or reacts to children who seek reassurance and this leads to other children losing interest and becoming distracted.

Mathematical development

64. Few of the children are likely to reach the targets for their age by the time they leave the Reception year, although they make satisfactory progress. The teaching is satisfactory and the adults make a good effort to extend the children's mathematical vocabulary. In one lesson, for example, the teacher introduced the term 'faces' to children when they were learning about cuboids and cubes. The introduction to this lesson was good and the teacher's questions and explanations enabled the children to learn about the properties of a cube and cuboid, sphere and cylinder. The children then located these shapes in objects in the classroom. Most, however, could only remember the term 'sphere' by the end of the lesson. Most of the children join in counting rhymes but most do not recognise or write all of the symbols for numbers 1 to 10. Most of the children can count five objects but need to touch objects to count reliably to ten. A significant minority do not match objects correctly, even when touching them and counting, or recognise two spots on a die immediately as a quantity of two, and have to count them each time they see them in the game. A small number of children are not secure in naming colours. Some of the activities planned go on for too long and the children lose interest. There are also occasions when the adults do not insist that the children listen to what is being said and the children misunderstand what they have to do.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

65. Most of the children are not likely to reach the expectations for their age by the start of Year 1. The teacher plans an appropriate range of activities for the children to learn about why things work or happen. Evidence from the children's previous work shows that teaching and learning are satisfactory, but it was weaker in the lesson seen. The children know that the year has different seasons and that some animals "go to sleep" in the winter months. They describe the weather each day and, in one lesson, because of the teacher's good prompting, remembered the term 'dull' that had been chosen for a day on the weather chart in the previous week. During the inspection, the children were working on light and shadows. A good range of resources is readily available for children to experiment with, including torches and prisms. The teacher had also previously taken photographs of the children outdoors that showed their shadows on the playground. In one lesson, a group of more able children learned, through experimenting, that shadows of their hands grew smaller as they moved away from the source of the light. The children know, through the teacher's good guidance, that it is important to be careful with electricity. In the lesson seen, while the activities planned were appropriate and interesting, the teaching was unsatisfactory. This was because the children who were not working directly with the teacher assistant made very little progress because they lacked guidance on what to do. These children became distracted and noisy and so the teacher spent too much time sorting out problems with behaviour. The children are keen to use the computer and most can locate the cursor and click on an image on the screen. The children's limited language often prevents them from explaining what they are doing, or want to try. In working with construction kits, for example, children sometimes become frustrated when they cannot fit parts together, or they lose concentration in building a complex structure.

Physical development

66. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and the children steadily extend their skills but most are unlikely to reach the targets for their age by the end of the Reception year. The pupils' larger movements, in outdoor play and physical education lessons, are more controlled than finer movements with pencils, scissors or glue. The teacher plans suitable activities for the children to practise these skills but a significant number of children lack accuracy and control when writing or building with small blocks. The children's short attention span limits their ability to persevere with tasks. In outdoor play, the children climb confidently and control wheeled toys appropriately. In a lesson in the hall, the children learned to refine the way that they moved to "prowl like a lion" and to lift their heads at a given sound. More use could have been made of demonstration to further their understanding of how to improve their movements. The children showed a reasonable awareness of space, when they moved around the hall, and did not bump into others. They were able to stop on command.

Creative development

67. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but few children are likely to reach the expectations for their age when they leave the class. A suitable range of activities is planned for them. The children make reasonable progress in singing familiar action songs and rhymes, although some have difficulty in keeping to the rhythm and remembering the words and actions. Their skills in drawing and painting are generally poor. This is evident in a display of self-portraits, where most show an immature depiction of the human figure and some appear to be a series of unrelated marks on the paper. The children show poor control over materials and most of their drawings are very small. When they colour pictures, few keep within the outline. In role-play, the children experience difficulty in co-operating and rarely start a dialogue that enables them to sustain play. Some good resources, such as a range of fruit in the 'greengrocer's shop', stimulate brief play, but few children persevere for long without adult support. In one lesson, for example, a group of children initiated a role-play using a birthday cake but did not sustain it because all of them wanted to be the child whose birthday was being celebrated. The role-play area is too crowded with resources and this sometimes results in disputes between children. A couple of children, however, used what they had learned about animals hibernating to create a nest, by joining two large cardboard boxes, and persevered to fit themselves snugly into it.

ENGLISH

68. Standards are better than at the previous inspection because the teaching has improved and the school has looked at what works well and needs to improve in the subject. More pupils have achieved the level expected for eleven year olds, year on year. The results in 2001 dipped because of the particular nature of that year group. The school's good tracking of pupils' progress indicates that the lower attaining pupils, those of average ability and those with special educational needs, achieve well in reading and writing, speaking and listening. The evidence from the inspection supports this view. On the basis of the work seen now, standards in reading are broadly average by the end of Year 2. Pupils' writing is below average, as is their speaking and listening. By the end of Year 6, standards in reading, writing, speaking and listening are close to the national average. This means that pupils, over their time in the school, have made good progress from a low starting point. The teachers plan work that extends the more able pupils in reading, but these pupils should be doing better in writing and standards should be higher.
69. Teaching in English is good. The basic skills are well taught. The teachers plan good opportunities for the pupils to listen and to speak. They extend the pupils' vocabulary in speaking well. Teachers give a good emphasis to hearing pupils read in groups and individually, so that they can track pupils' progress carefully. Support staff give very valuable assistance with reading. The teaching of reading is very good. In a Year 2 lesson, for

example, the pupils learned quickly about the different combinations of vowels that make the same sound because of the teacher's good explanations and questions. The teacher made the link between recognising and reading the vowel pattern and remembering to use it when writing the word very well. She effectively extended the pupils' understanding of the features of poems in the same lesson. After introducing the term 'repeated rhyme' to the class, several pupils used the term when they found this feature when they looked at poems. Higher attaining pupils picked out repeated phrases, alliteration and word combinations. Lower attaining pupils recognised that although 'white' and 'right' sound the same, they are spelled differently. Teachers make very good use of the assessments they make to organise the pupils into ability groups for reading. The Year 2 teacher, for example, altered the composition of groups for reading after the autumn half-term because some pupils had forged ahead more quickly than others. The pupils are keen to read and enjoy books. The teachers read aloud expressively and this lively reading is picked up by the pupils and used when they read. Teachers ensure that the pupils use their skills in reading very effectively to support their learning in other subjects, such as history or science, when they research information.

70. Most of the teaching in writing is effective. The basic skills are covered well and enable most pupils to reach the standard expected for their age by the time they leave the school. By the end of Year 2, although standards are below average, most pupils form letters correctly, spell common words reasonably accurately and use basic punctuation. Their handwriting is neat. The pupils are rarely, however, required to extend their ideas beyond a few sentences or receive guidance on what they need to do to improve. For example, Year 2 pupils have written about a pirate attack, but after an interesting start their accounts quickly reverted to simple sentences with unexciting words. More able pupils wrote more, but the quality of writing was only marginally better and lacked structure. The pupils learn to write in different forms; for example, a Year 3 pupil wrote a list of what he imagined a Jedi Knight might have in his pocket. Pupils in Year 4 have written letters to describe what their lives are like at the court of James I. In general, however, pupils do not write sufficiently in other subjects. The teachers' expectations of what more able pupils can achieve in writing are sometimes too low. When writing poems, for example, Year 3 pupils were not expected to write any more lines, re-draft their ideas or include rhyming patterns in the time given. While the lower attaining pupils made good progress in this part of the lesson, the more able pupils could have achieved more. In Year 6, the pupils of average and above average ability produce writing of similar quality and this is rarely longer than more than two or three paragraphs. The teachers' guidance in all junior classes does not sufficiently encourage the more able pupils to develop an argument, create an atmosphere or use imaginative words. The teachers' assessment in writing is well used to plan work that focuses on what needs to improve to bring pupils' work up to an average standard, but not beyond this.
71. Teachers use resources well. For example, in a lesson with Year 1 pupils, the teacher used a collection of toy farm animals to make learning about the sounds of vowels more interesting and the pupils responded well when asked, "Who has the animal with 'i' in the middle of its name?" In the same lesson, the teacher's lively reading of the story meant that the pupils maintained their interest and were, by the end, able to identify from which animal's point of view the story was written.
72. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by both the teachers and teacher assistants and so they learn at a good rate and approach their work confidently. In a small group lesson, for example, the special educational needs teacher used a game successfully to improve a pupil's understanding of the sounds of letters. Teachers and classroom assistants give good support for pupils who are learning English as an additional language. They do this very effectively by checking their understanding through questions in class discussions and in group work.
73. Teachers often set targets that are above the expected level for their age for more able pupils in reading. They are more reticent to do this in writing because they are less sure of what

pupils need to do to improve and reach the higher level in writing than reading. As a result, the work they set for more able pupils is often the same as the average pupils. There are too few opportunities for the pupils to write at length, so that they learn to organise their work into more than a couple of paragraphs, and develop their ideas more fully. Opportunities are missed for the pupils to write in other subjects and so the pupils do not often practise or extend their skills for relevant purposes. There is very little use of word-processing to present written work.

74. The subject is well led. The subject leader has identified many of the weaknesses in writing through the monitoring of pupils' work. Improving standards in writing is the school's priority. A great deal of work by the subject leader has resulted in better tracking of pupils' progress and the identification of areas where teaching and learning need to improve. This has led to success in raising standards in reading, through better organisation of guided reading sessions and improved use of assessment to set targets.

MATHEMATICS

75. The pupils in Year 2 and Year 6 attain the standards expected for their ages in numeracy and all other areas of mathematics as they did at the time the school was last inspected. However, the attainments of many pupils on entry to the school are now much lower, particularly in mathematical awareness, and the school has to work harder to achieve these standards. The teaching has improved and, as a result, pupils' achievements are good. Teachers have enthusiastically adopted the planning guidelines for the National Numeracy Strategy. They are more confident, their expectations are higher and lessons have a better structure. Standards are rising because now more pupils reach the levels expected for their ages than before.
76. One factor that contributes positively to this is the good support the school provides for less able pupils and those with special educational needs. In a Year 2 lesson, a group of these pupils made good progress in learning their two-times table along with their classmates because the teacher encouraged them to use plastic counting cubes as a visual support, and a teacher assistant helped them as they worked. This gave them plenty of practice and repetition, so that they were able to remember some of the facts when they were later asked to count in twos.
77. By the age of seven, most pupils have a sound grasp of place value when working with numbers to 100. They add amounts of money and measure accurately in centimetres. They use their skills to solve simple problems, like adding the costs of items when shopping in Year 2. In Year 1 the pupils investigated their different kinds of home, producing a picture graph to record their results. However, there are too few such opportunities for older pupils higher up the school to investigate and solve mathematical problems. By Year 6, their skills in this aspect are weaker than in other areas.
78. There is now a much better emphasis on developing pupils' mental agility in numeracy lessons. The teacher in Year 6 challenged pupils to "tell me about 90" and later 180. They very eagerly came up with interesting facts like "a 180 degree angle is a straight line" and 4 times 45 is 180. The teacher prompted them to think harder by challenging them to multiply 4 times .90 and other decimal amounts. However, pupils are sometimes slow with mental activities. This was best seen in a lesson in Year 4 when pupils were learning to identify the patterns in number sequences. They soon found the pattern, but sometimes struggled to complete the sequence because of their hesitancy in counting back from a given number. More could still be done to help pupils develop speed and accuracy in counting and using multiplication facts.
79. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are eager to learn because teachers transmit their own enthusiasm in lively introductions and

plenary sessions. They provide interesting activities so that pupils concentrate and work hard. The teachers are clear about what pupils are to learn, often displaying the lesson aims, discussing them with the pupils and then checking that they have been achieved at the end of the lesson. They generally develop a good rapport with pupils so that they follow instructions carefully and behave well. Sometimes, particularly in the youngest classes, teachers do not ensure that pupils stop and listen when they are speaking. This means that pupils sometimes miss instructions and valuable teaching points. There is a good emphasis on developing pupils' use of mathematical terms. A very good example was seen in Year 5 when the teacher's brisk questioning meant that pupils correctly used polygon, parallelogram, quadrilateral and other shape terminology to describe irregular two-dimensional shapes.

80. The main weakness in teaching arises from the limited provision for the more able pupils. Although the number of pupils reaching higher than expected levels in Year 2 and Year 6 has shown some improvement, it is still not as high as it should be. This is because teachers concentrate their efforts at pupils reaching the average level for their age. Too often, teachers set similar tasks for all the class with extra support for less able pupils. As a result, the brighter pupils sometimes mark time because teachers do not plan work at the higher levels of which they are capable. For example, questions asked of them in mental agility sessions are not pitched at a hard enough level. Other tasks are sometimes adapted for them, but they tend to be more challenging in what they are asked to record than in the actual mathematics. For example, a pupil worked on doubling numbers using small numbers but, when asked by the inspector, he quickly and very accurately doubled numbers with totals exceeding 100.
81. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their work. An ideal opportunity was missed, for instance, when pupils produced graphs of the frequency of lottery numbers in Year 6.
82. The subject co-ordination is sound. The school has already noted some of these weaknesses in the recent review of mathematics undertaken by the subject leader. He has prepared an action plan to bring about improvements. As a result, the school is well placed to further improve its teaching and standards in mathematics.

SCIENCE

83. Pupils' attainment in science is below average at the end of Year 2 and average by the time pupils leave the school. This is broadly consistent with recent test results and is confirmed by analysis of pupils' past work, observation of lessons and discussions with pupils.
84. By the time they are seven, pupils have some factual knowledge of living things, electricity and well-known materials. For example, they know about the feeding habits of different animals and consider how these relate to where animals prefer to live. They identify different materials used in clothing and begin to study properties such as opacity and transparency. They name the power sources of domestic appliances and begin to understand simple electrical circuits. However, in pupils' past work, coverage of these aspects of science is uneven and not carefully sequenced, leaving some areas of weakness. For example, pupils have an insufficient understanding of light, sound and the action of forces. Pupils' investigative skills have been given too little attention and, as a result, are relatively weak.
85. By the time pupils leave the school, their scientific knowledge has broadened and become better established. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the natural world, some properties of different materials and the action of forces. For example, pupils know about the needs of green plants and the action of helpful and harmful micro-organisms. They understand how shadows and reflections are formed and how vision occurs, and can explain these effects clearly. Pupils recognise the action of different forces such as gravity and magnetism. While pupils' skill in practical experiment is more limited than their factual

knowledge, it is progressing well as a result of well-directed teaching. In discussion, higher ability pupils show ingenuity in devising experiments. They understand the importance of ensuring 'fairness' in an experiment and can apply this idea in practical examples.

86. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the infant classes and very good in the junior classes. Lesson planning is much improved since the last inspection. As a result, teachers are now more confident about the ground that is to be covered, the order in which topics are to be taught and the expectations that are appropriate for each year group. This is bringing a better balance between investigative and factual learning and pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6, are becoming more adept with experimental tasks.
87. However, this progress is slower with the younger pupils. Here, pupils have limited independence and cannot carry out tasks without considerable support. Their progress is also slowed by difficulties with writing and other forms of recording. The current Year 2 class had many changes of teacher last year that disrupted pupils' learning in science. Because of this, Year 2 pupils have gaps in their scientific knowledge and experience that must be made good before learning can progress to the expected levels. Teachers are responding positively to this by identifying areas of weaker knowledge that need to be reinforced; however, they do not plan enough activities for the infants to experiment and try out their ideas.
88. Teaching in Years 5 and 6 is consistently very good. It results in rapid and secure gains in knowledge and effectively promotes the skills and approaches that science requires. Teachers encourage an openly investigative approach to science that enables pupils to understand how scientific knowledge is gained. A good example of this was seen in an experiment pupils devised to separate a mixture of sand, chocolate, iron and sugar. Here, more able pupils showed imagination in drawing together a range of different processes, including the use of magnetism, sieving, filtration and evaporation to separate the constituents of the mixture.
89. The management of the subject is satisfactory. Effective assessment procedures have been introduced, linked to the national guidelines for the subject. Too little use is made of ICT to support the pupils' learning in the subject, for example in presenting graphs and tables of their findings in experimental work.

ART AND DESIGN

90. Standards have improved since the last inspection. The school has adopted the national guidelines for the subject. The teachers' planning is now supported by a scheme of work so that lessons build upon the skills and knowledge that pupils have already been taught. Only two lessons were seen during the inspection, one in Year 1 and the other in Year 3. Nevertheless, it is evident from looking at pupils' sketchbooks, work on display, the teachers' planning and discussions with pupils that the pupils reach the standards expected for their ages at seven and eleven. Pupils make satisfactory progress in the subject and the teaching is sound.
91. By the end of the infants the pupils know how to mix colours to create the desired shade for painting. They know that adding white makes colours lighter. The pupils observe carefully when, for example, they draw faces or figures and they try to get the proportions right. Some pupils add details to enliven their drawings, such as tiny hairs on the stalks of flowers. The pupils use line appropriately to show form, but there is very little use of shading. They paint pictures from their imagination and use fabric and paper to create collages. In the lesson seen with Year 1 pupils, the teaching was satisfactorily extending the pupils' ability to interpret pictures and draw a portrait that shows the person's interest. Some of the pupils struggled to represent the human figure, but through patient teaching, most improved by the end of the lesson. The teaching in this lesson was satisfactory, with some strengths. The teacher's good questioning enabled pupils to understand better what clues to look for in portraits that show what type of person is depicted. The task set, however, was too hard for

some of the children, who became frustrated at their attempts to draw a portrait and lost concentration.

92. In the lesson in Year 3, pupils learned that the composition of a picture often tells something about the relationship of the figures. The teaching was good. By the end of the lesson, the pupils recognised formal and informal groupings of figures. They had previously taken photographs of each other and could explain why they showed informality in relationships through relaxed poses and facial expression, or more formal relationships through serious expressions and upright stance. One group of pupils, looking at an Impressionist picture that showed a man and woman sitting in a garden with their backs to the viewer, decided that it was very difficult to judge what their relationship was, because their faces were not shown. The teacher provided the pupils with a good choice over the media to use and some painted, while others create a collage that depicted a relationship. In Year 5, pupils have used natural and man-made objects to create interesting compositions based on the theme of bonfire night. In Year 6, there is some good work in sketchbooks on refining drawings to show movement. The pupils show an appropriate understanding of how to use colour to create different moods. They talk confidently about the work of a good range of artists from different times and cultures. There is little evidence of much three-dimensional work other than clay.
93. The subject is well managed. The subject leader has ensured that the teachers' planning for lessons draws on the scheme of work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Timetabling arrangements did not allow any design and technology lessons to be observed during the inspection. Therefore, no overall judgements can be made on the quality of teaching or on pupils' attitudes to learning. Discussions with pupils and analysis of a small but representative sample of recent work show that standards in design and technology are broadly average at the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school.
95. This is an improvement over the findings of the previous inspection when standards were found to be below average in both infant and junior classes. The school has responded to this by introducing effective guidance on planning. Teachers are now much clearer about what should be taught to each year group and the order in which knowledge and skills should be introduced. Events such as the technology week have also given a stronger impetus to the subject, motivated pupils and improved pupils' learning.
96. By the age of seven, pupils use simple tools to shape and join junk materials to make three-dimensional models of homes in a frieze illustrating the Great Fire of London. They make rubbings of tiles in preparation for further work on Tudor homes. Their work shows suitable accuracy in making and in planning to achieve an overall effect.
97. By the time they leave the school, pupils are clear about some important principles of designing and making. They recognise the need for careful planning, the value of accurate labelling in diagrams and choosing the right materials and tools to achieve an intended result. They understand the importance of evaluating their product, as it progresses, with a view to improving it. Many pupils have good experience of working within design limits and a fixed budget. For example, Year 6 pupils designed and made towers to support a weight, working with limited materials within imaginary cost constraints. Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about their work in design and technology. They show a sound overall grasp of the design process and the practicalities of making.
98. Standards in design and technology have improved. However, to be fully effective in raising standards, the recently introduced schemes of work need to be supported by systematic assessments. These should enable teachers to track progress more effectively and plan for sustained improvement.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

99. The pupils attain the expected standards by the ages of seven and eleven years in geography and history. The last time the school was inspected, the standards pupils attained by the age of seven were below average, and average by the time they were eleven years old. Since then, the school has introduced a new scheme of work that ensures a better coverage of the skills, knowledge and understanding in both subjects. This means that pupils now move forward in each year group because teachers are clear about what they are to learn in their planning. Lessons are well focused, and objectives are often discussed with pupils. This has brought about improvements, particularly in Years 1 and 2. In view of their low skills and knowledge on entry to the school, pupils' achievements are good.
100. Practical topic work helps the pupils in these two classes to develop an awareness of places and developments over time. In a topic on 'Homes' in Year 1, pupils studied their own homes and learned about the different types, using words like 'detached' and 'semi-detached' to describe them. They thought about their journey to school and drew simple maps to show their own home in relation to school. They know that homes were different in the past, and that people did not have telephones and electric lighting. Pupils' awareness of places widens in Year 2. They learned about places further away when they investigated Benjamin Bear's travels to other places and countries. They used maps and globes to find out where he travelled. Writing about their own holiday destinations made them think carefully about the different features there. They begin to explain why events happened in the past, like the Great Fire of London spreading so quickly because of the timber buildings and lack of equipment to fight the fire.
101. Good displays of pictures, photographs and artefacts boost pupils' learning higher up the school as they study topics further away and long ago. A display in the Year 4 class extended pupils' awareness of life in India, and the impact of monsoons. They studied photographs, so that they appreciate why people living there adapt to the climate in the clothes they wear, their homes and the jobs they do. Pupils in Year 5 wrote thoughtful accounts of 'My Life as a Miner' and other roles in Victorian times because they had examined artefacts and pictures about life then. Sometimes there is a heavy use of worksheets that involve pupils in colouring pictures and filling in words, for instance in Year 3 and 4. This limits the way pupils respond to their learning, particularly the brighter pupils. More could be done to enable pupils to use their ICT skills, for example when they produce rainfall graphs in Year 5.
102. The quality of teaching in both subjects is sound in the infants. In the juniors it is sound in geography, and good in history where the best teaching was seen in Years 5 and 6. Teachers transmit their own enthusiasm well in their lively introductions and well-managed discussions. There is a good balance of giving information and questioning that encourages pupils to think hard and interpret what they hear. In a lesson in Year 5, pupils gained a thorough understanding of the lives of rich and poor Victorian children when they discussed the toys they had. Questions like "What would it be made of and why?" meant that pupils had to sift through their knowledge of life in Victorian times and then explain. Pupils are keen to offer ideas because relationships are very good. They know that their teacher and classmates will value what they have to say.
103. Excellent teaching was seen in history in the Year 6 class where the teacher challenged pupils to plan a presentation for their class about the origins of the Olympic Games and its impact today. The pupils in this class are benefiting considerably from the 'Challenging Education' Education Action Zone initiative introduced recently. This is proving to be highly successful in promoting their co-operation, independence and initiative. Pupils worked in groups, quickly organising their roles and setting to work. They worked very hard in a short time devising and producing their posters. Some acted as Internet researchers, others illustrated or produced the text. The levels of co-operation and behaviour were outstanding. There was a strong sense of purpose to sort out the key points and present them imaginatively. They had produced topic folders at home and this information provided a good

basis from which to start. As a result, pupils have a thorough understanding of life in Ancient Greece and the long-lasting impact of some of its features. However, their awareness of chronology is relatively weak. Pupils struggle to place the different periods they study in the correct order on a timeline because teachers do not emphasise this aspect enough.

104. There is a new subject leader for history, but none for geography. The history subject leader is settling into her new role but no one has a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses in geography and so teachers who are new to the school lack support or guidance in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

105. Standards in ICT are below average for pupils in Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school. This is unsatisfactory in terms of improvement since the last inspection.
106. There have been some barriers to improvement. The school has experienced considerable difficulty with the reliability of most of its computers and the set up of the computer system has required extensive modification. The national training for teachers has not yet been delivered. The Education Action Zone initiative to raise teachers' expertise has been satisfactorily used to improve their confidence. The curriculum is fully planned, but very little work with computers was seen during the inspection and there is little evidence of recent work at an appropriate level. As a result, pupils in all classes make slow progress in the required range of skills and knowledge and gain too little experience of using computers to support their studies in other subjects.
107. The school recognises that standards in ICT are too low and has identified the subject as a key area for development. There is no specialist subject leader at present, although sound plans are in place to appoint one with good subject knowledge from within the staff later in the year. These difficulties have slowed progress towards better overall standards but do not fully justify the weaknesses in provision. At present, the management of ICT is unsatisfactory due to insufficient emphasis on the subject and a lack of urgency in seeking improvement. Not enough has been done, for example, to share and build on the existing skills of some staff. There is too little software to support the pupils' learning in other subjects.
108. A very limited amount of teaching was seen during the inspection, but the evidence from pupils' previous work indicates that too little emphasis is placed on planning opportunities for the pupils to use computers. Teaching is therefore unsatisfactorily promoting the pupils' learning.
109. By the time they are seven, pupils gain some experience of word-processing and use it, for example, to caption posters about conservation. They follow simple maths and literacy programs, showing suitable fluency with the keyboard and mouse. Some pupils have used clip-art and colouring programs but are insecure in explaining them. Many pupils gain experience of using ICT at home and, as a result, are more knowledgeable about some aspects of the subject, such as presenting stories and using e-mail. However, most pupils have many gaps in their knowledge, for example in using ICT to organise and present information, and to investigate and sequence instructions.
110. By the time they leave the school, pupils' experience remains limited for their age. Individual attainment covers a wide range, from those pupils who use computers regularly at home to those who have no experience other than that gained from lessons. Most pupils use a CD-ROM to find things out for their work in, for example, science and history, and many are learning to access information using the Internet. However, most teachers do not plan enough opportunities for pupils to learn the necessary skills and gain experience of applying them in all other subjects. For example, pupils do not learn enough about using computers to combine and present information from different sources and to monitor and control events.

111. Teachers in Years 5 and 6 are beginning to involve ICT purposefully in pupils' learning. For example, higher attaining pupils in Year 6 designed and printed a format for recording a science investigation, but could not print it because of problems with the printer. Some pupils with special educational needs make good use of computers to present their work, merging text and pictures. Pupils are interested in using computers but are often hesitant in describing in detail what they have done and are frustrated because the hardware often does not work.

MUSIC

112. Attainment in music is above average by the end of Year 2 and by the time pupils leave the school
113. By the time they are seven, pupils sing accurately, controlling pitch, pulse and volume well. Their singing is varied and expressive. Pupils follow the teacher's advice carefully and bring out in their own singing the points that he demonstrates. Pupils listen very carefully and are sensitive to the detail in their own and others' singing. They are appreciative of each other's performances and confident in performing on their own. These positive attitudes result from the effective working atmosphere and good relationships the teacher builds in lessons. It also reflects the teacher's own receptiveness to pupils' performances and the way in which he carefully balances advice with praise and encouragement. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and pupils enjoy their music.
114. By the time they leave the school, pupils' performances show improved technique and range of expression. There is very clear progress from year to year. Pupils sing their own part confidently when combining more than one vocal line. They manage expressive detail, such as a contrast between short and sustained notes, very well. When learning a new piece, they quickly gain a feeling for the overall effect they are trying to achieve, sometimes combining voices with an instrumental accompaniment. Pupils listen carefully and respond sensitively to a range of well-chosen music. For example, when listening to extracts from the Carnival of the Animals, they readily grasped the music's mood and character and found apt words to describe them.
115. The teaching is very good. The same teacher takes all classes and he has a very high level of expertise and knowledge in the subject. His enthusiasm is transmitted to the pupils and his high expectations are rewarded by the pupils' eagerness to improve their performance.
116. The school provides many valuable opportunities for pupils to perform in lessons and assemblies and at school concerts. Pupils also take part in local musical events such as the Norfolk County Music Festival and achieve considerable success in these. There is an extra-curricular recorder club, a very active choir which performs to a high standard, and a range of well-supported instrumental music lessons, including violin and cello. These make a valuable contribution to pupils' musical education and, by building pupils' confidence in performing, improve their personal confidence and social skills.
117. The overall standard of singing is high and is a strength of the school. Pupils also gain good experience of listening to and exploring a range of different kinds of music. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to compose music and so this area of their learning is weaker. This aspect of the subject needs to be given more emphasis.
118. The subject leader has excellent subject knowledge and communicates it very successfully. The above average standards that the school achieves result primarily from the high quality of the subject leader's teaching. In this, he is well supported by other members of staff with musical skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. The school has maintained the satisfactory standards found in the last inspection in Year 2 and Year 6. The guidance for teaching physical education provides a sound steer for teachers' planning and ensures that all the different areas and skills are taught systematically as pupils move through the school. As a result, pupils achieve well.
120. The quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, as it was in the last inspection. However, no unsatisfactory lessons were seen this time. Teachers are now clear about what pupils are to learn and plan activities that help them achieve this. Because planning is better, pupils are active and working hard throughout their lesson. Pupils behave sensibly because teachers manage their classes well.
121. Dance was the school focus in the term of the inspection. Well-chosen music was used effectively and stimulated pupils' performance considerably in all the lessons seen. For example, in a lesson taken by the subject leader in Year 2, pupils varied their movements when warming up to music, striding out or marching to the tempo. They used space carefully. In Year 6, pupils adapted their dance effectively to move quietly and slowly to calm music or to punch and stamp to a louder, faster tempo. In this good lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to watch and learn from others' performances. She made sure that they thought carefully about good features by telling them, "At the end I'm going to ask for your opinion, and you will need to explain why you think the dance was effective." This helped other groups who then improved their own performances by incorporating some of these ideas, such as using high and low movements or clapping to the tempo.
122. The use of demonstration was a strong feature of all the lessons seen. However, in spite of this, the younger pupils are not as imaginative in their movements as they might be. For example, pupils in Year 2 enjoyed taking on the role of a circus tightrope walker, but their dances did not improve as much as they might because they were unsure how to vary their movements. Sometimes, they did not listen carefully enough when the teacher was talking, so they missed useful teaching points. More demonstration was needed to show them different, more interesting, movements.
123. Older pupils learn to swim at the local swimming pool. By the time they leave the school most of the pupils in Year 6 swim 25 metres and are confident in the water. The school offers a range of clubs that pupils enjoy, like football, netball and kwik cricket. Even the youngest pupils in Years 1 and 2 take part enthusiastically in the 'Top Play' club that improves their ball control and other skills. Competitive sport is not a strong feature in the school, although some pupils do benefit from their involvement in local sports, for example Gorleston Rangers and other football teams.
124. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The subject leader has a clear view of how the subject is developing and what needs to be done next.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education is inspected under Section 23.