

INSPECTION REPORT

HISTON & IMPINGTON JUNIOR SCHOOL

Histon, Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110751

Headteacher: Mrs H. Browne

Reporting inspector: Mr A. C. Matthews
Rgl's No. 19410

Dates of inspection: 5 – 8 February 2001

Inspection number: 197461

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	The Green Histon Cambridge
Postcode:	CB4 4JA
Telephone number:	01223 712192
Fax number:	01223 712193
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr N. Davies
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
A. C. Matthews 19410	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Design and technology	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
H. Griffiths 9446	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
M. Palmer 20646	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Music Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
D. Langton 3855	Team inspector	Science Geography History Religious education	English as an additional language
K. Robertson 22178	Team inspector	English	Special educational needs Equal opportunities

The inspection contractor was:

TWA Inspections Ltd.
5 Lakeside
Werrington
Peterborough
PE4 6QZ

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Histon and Impington Junior is a popular school that is larger than the average primary school, with 324 pupils on roll – 153 girls and 187 boys aged between 7 and 11 years. The school roll is stable, although it is slightly less than at the time of the last inspection. The school is situated in the Histon ward and the great majority of pupils, who come from the local infant school, are from this ward. Pupils come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds, but the majority of families live in privately owned dwellings. The school has a good reputation for helping pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs, and this is bringing in an increasing number of pupils from outside the school's catchment area. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is 5 per cent, which is much lower than the national average. This does not give a true indication of the educational background of the pupils, 116 of whom are on the register of special educational need; this represents 36 per cent, which is much higher than the national average. Fourteen pupils have statements of special educational needs; this represents 4.3 per cent and is much higher than the national average of 1.7 per cent. Just over 2.5 per cent of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds, 0.3 per cent of pupils have English as an additional language and 0.6 per cent are Travellers. These figures are all below national averages. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is above average. However, the school has a high turnover of pupils. As a result of this turnover, by the time pupils take their National Curriculum tests in Year 6, the educational profile of the year cohort, as defined by the pupils' attainment in their National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, has changed from above average to average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Histon and Impington Junior is a very good school with some excellent features. The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide leadership of the highest quality. They are very ably supported by knowledgeable governors and a dedicated and hardworking staff. The quality of teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion of teaching being very good or excellent. This leads directly to an above average proportion of pupils achieving at the higher levels by the age of 11. Pupils' attainment is above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Subject co-ordinators are very effective in their work and the well planned curriculum helps pupils develop relevant skills and knowledge as they move through the school. The school manages its budget very well and prudent financial management has helped the school to put money towards a new computer suite, the creation of a new library and extensive redecoration throughout the school. The overall effectiveness of the school is very good and it provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by governors and all staff.
- Standards are above average in mathematics and science.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, with a significant proportion of teaching being very good or excellent.
- Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, behave very well, have excellent attitudes to their work and form excellent relationships.
- The school has very effective links with parents, who give wide ranging support to its activities and are extremely happy with the education it provides.
- The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to work together in a wide range of extra-curricular activities.

What could be improved

- Computers are not used enough in the classrooms to support and extend pupils' learning in the different subjects.

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 very good improvements since the previous inspection in 1997 due to excellent leadership, clear planning and a constant evaluation of its practice. It has developed schemes of work for all subjects and this has led to improvements, particularly in the design element of design and technology. The school has improved the quality of assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress so that work is even better focused and more challenging than before. The planning of work by teachers now ensures a better challenge to pupils and engages their interest and enthusiasm. The new organisation of the school day with three hours of teaching before lunch is proving to be a very effective initiative, with teachers

making good use of the three one-hour teaching sessions. Assemblies now successfully promote pupils' spiritual development and pupils have built-in time to reflect purposefully on their own and others' experiences. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly in the proportion of very good and excellent lessons, and is having a positive impact on standards. The new computer suite is being used effectively to drive up standards, with after-school clubs providing good opportunities for the higher-attaining pupils and those who do not have computers at home, to develop their expertise. The new library is attractive, well furnished and now large enough for whole-class library lessons. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is now very good. Pupils now have excellent attitudes to school and the excellent provision for their moral behaviour has resulted in an improvement in their behaviour, which is now very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds, based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	All schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	C	B	C	C
Mathematics	B	C	B	A
Science	A	B	A	A

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

Since the previous inspection, the percentage of 11 year old pupils achieving the national standard of Level 4 has risen steadily and there has been a considerable increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in mathematics and science. When attainment in the three subjects above is aggregated, pupils' attainment has remained above the national average over the last three years. The school has identified that standards in writing need to be raised and this development is being successfully implemented. Inspection evidence shows that attainment of the pupils currently in Year 6 is above average in mathematics and science and average in English. Some pupils make exceptional progress, more often in mathematics, moving from below average on entry to the school to above average when they leave the school. The school has set very challenging targets for this group of pupils considering the very high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need. Good teaching and very careful targeting of individual pupils is helping to ensure that they reach these targets. Pupils attain at a higher level that is expected nationally in art, history and religious education. Pupils' instrumental playing and the quality of music are above average and make a positive contribution to the life of the school. In all other subjects, pupils attain the nationally expected standards.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are very enthusiastic about school and have very positive attitudes to their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good at all times.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously, get on extremely well together and show increasing confidence as they become older.
Attendance	Good. The great majority of pupils attend school punctually and lessons begin on time.

Throughout the school politeness and very good behaviour are the norm. Pupils have excellent relationships with each other and show very good understanding and consideration for others. Pupils are confident, have

excellent attitudes to their work and respond very positively to the good teaching. They take part enthusiastically in the large number of extra-curricular activities and benefit socially from the other good opportunities that they are given. School records show that some families are persistently late and when this happens the start of the day is disrupted for the whole class.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good, with a significant proportion being very good or better. This good teaching has a very positive impact on pupils' learning. All lessons observed were satisfactory or better: 49 per cent were good, 36 per cent very good and 4 per cent excellent. The teaching in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons by specialist teachers is particularly good, but teachers in the classrooms do not use computers enough to support pupils' learning in other subjects. The teaching of basic skills is very good in numeracy and good in literacy. Teaching in science is good overall and often very good. In the great majority of subjects, teachers have very good subject knowledge, plan lessons carefully and use questioning well to challenge and develop pupils' understanding. As a result, pupils achieve well and make good progress in the great majority of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well taught, with the co-ordinator for special educational needs and part-time visiting specialist teachers giving very good support to these pupils, Traveller children and those pupils with English as an additional language. The use of teacher expertise is particularly effective in the teaching of ICT and French and in some religious education, gymnastics and music lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good overall and is very well supplemented by a wide range of extra-curricular activities. The use of ICT across the curriculum is unsatisfactory.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils with individual education plans have clear targets set for them and make good overall progress towards meeting these targets.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. The support is supplemented by specialist teaching provided by the local education authority.
Provision for pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school makes excellent provision for pupils' moral development, very good provision for their personal and social development and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	There are very good procedures for looking after pupils' personal welfare and for monitoring their academic performance.

The school curriculum has improved since the last inspection, with the National Numeracy and Literacy Strategies well established and contributing positively to pupils' achievement. Parents give good support to their children in the homework that is set and some give valuable help in the classroom and when accompanying school trips. Very good opportunities exist for the older pupils to take responsibilities. The School Council is now a very well established part of school life. It provides a valuable insight into pupils' thinking and gives them an idea of how society works. The school is a very caring environment where pupils are valued, challenged and flourish.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership and is very well supported by all staff, who are committed to raising standards further. Subject co-ordinators provide very good leadership and work hard and successfully to raise attainment in their subject areas.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are very supportive of the school, visit on a regular basis and play a full part in the school's strategic planning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Test results are carefully analysed and challenging targets set. Subject co-ordinators regularly monitor standards in their subject and make recommendations for improvement. The monitoring of teaching is very good and has been used very effectively in the appraisal process for teachers.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school has used the budget most carefully to maintain high standards in a period of financial restraint.

Leadership and management are a great strength of the school and have helped it build on the good standards mentioned in the last inspection report. The school's commitment to constant evaluation of its practices is helping it improve even more. There is very good delegation to subject co-ordinators, who are very well supported in their role. As a result, the school has a very good curriculum. The setting of end of key stage targets for pupils on entry to the school shows a strong commitment to raising standards. Governors have a wide range of skills and have had a significant impact on the many improvements since the last inspection. More use could be made of their expertise to help the school monitor its developments. Resources are generally well used, except for classroom computers to support pupils' learning in other subjects. The refurbishment of the school swimming pool and library and the creation of the ICT suite, together with the planned grounds' improvements, indicate that the school and governors are constantly planning improvements to the pupils' learning environment. The school applies the principles of best value very well, particularly in consultation with parents, when buying resources and in the monitoring of its end of key stage results.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Three hundred and twenty four questionnaires were sent out, of which 120 (37 per cent) were returned.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school is very well managed and very approachable. The commitment of all staff to the education of the children. Children enjoy coming to school and make good progress. The school promotes good values and attitudes. The teaching is good and children behave very well. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities. The school has very good relationships with parents and works closely with them in the education of their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of homework. Information about children's progress. The way the school works with parents. The range of extra-curricular activities.

The inspectors fully endorse all the parents' positive comments about the school. However, they do not agree with the parents' concerns, except with regard to homework, where inspectors judge that provision and the use of the homework diary is inconsistent across the school. Newsletters keep parents well informed about school events and reports fully meet statutory requirements. The school has worked very hard and successfully to improve its links with parents. It has a very good range of extra-curricular activities when compared with other schools and these are thoroughly enjoyed by the many children who take part.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The results of the 2000 National Curriculum tests for 11 year olds show that pupils exceeded the targets set for them by the school and that their performance, when compared with national averages, was average in English, above average in mathematics and well above average in science. When compared with schools that draw their pupils from similar backgrounds, the results were average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils achieving the higher Level 5 was well above average in mathematics and science and average in English. The school's trend in the last three years is broadly in line with the national trend.
2. Inspection evidence for the present group of 11 year old pupils, which has an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and a very high proportion of pupils with statements of special educational needs, shows that standards are average in English and above average in mathematics and science. The school has set very challenging targets for English and mathematics. It is expecting that the booster classes that will run from February to May will help to ensure that these targets are met as they were the previous year. The analysis of pupils' work and observations of lessons indicate that there are no notable differences between the attainment of boys and girls and that pupils who have special educational needs or who are from minority ethnic groups make the same good progress as their peers.
3. Standards in English by the end of the key stage are average overall; the present strengths in reading and in speaking and listening have been maintained since the last inspection. Standards in writing are satisfactory, but have fallen since the last inspection. However, the above average standards reported were not borne out by subsequent National Curriculum test results. Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills through the school. These skills are developed well across the curriculum, such as in class drama lessons, in paired and group work in the classroom and also in class talks, such as those seen in a Year 5 history lesson. The good use of open-ended questioning by teachers has a positive impact on the development of pupils' speaking skills, with pupils also developing good listening skills that are used effectively by teachers in all subjects. Pupils make good gains in their reading skills through the school and achieve above average standards. This progress is due to pupils' enthusiasm for reading and their development of effective strategies for approaching unfamiliar words. However, parents do not receive enough advice in their homework diary to help improve their children's reading. As a result, the progress that some pupils make is not as fast as it should be. Pupils' writing is satisfactory and used adequately across the curriculum, with pupils using vocabulary and punctuation appropriately and spelling common words correctly. The 'spelling advice bureau' of pupils in Year 6 is having a positive impact on the quality of their spelling. Pupils' handwriting and presentation are of a high standard through the school.
4. Standards in mathematics are above national averages and show an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are making good progress in all aspects of their mathematics and particularly in their number work. They have a good knowledge of decimals, adding and subtracting accurately. Pupils have good mental ability and breakdown complex problems into simple steps to help find a solution. Higher achieving pupils use mathematical vocabulary accurately and demonstrate very good mental dexterity, using square numbers and square roots. Pupils use their numeracy skills well across the curriculum, such as when they use stopwatches to investigate wind resistance on falling

objects and when using a computer database to find formulae for different multiplication tables.

5. Standards in science are above national averages and show a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils demonstrate good skills in their experimental and investigative work, clearly evident in their investigation into air resistance during the inspection week. They have a good knowledge of scientific terms and use words such as 'upthrust', 'centrifugal' and 'gravity' accurately in class discussions. They have a good understanding of a fair test and devise ingenious methods for testing hypotheses. They measure accurately using force meters and stopwatches and record data systematically. Teachers encourage pupils to think logically about their investigations and this training in scientific thinking is having a very positive impact on raising standards further.
6. In ICT, standards have remained the same overall since the last inspection and pupils' attainment by the age of 11 is in line with national expectations. Their attainment in communication and data handling is above average. Pupils make good use of the new computer suite and benefit from the weekly sessions in which computer skills are taught in half-class groups that are set by ability. They have good skills in communication, which they use well when designing their own multi-media web pages. Pupils have above average skills in data handling. They are confident in interpreting data through a variety of graphs and understand how spreadsheets can be used to analyse data. Older, higher achieving pupils benefit from an extra-curricular club where high quality work takes place. Pupils' control and modelling skills are satisfactory, but not as well developed as their communication and data handling work.
7. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment in religious education is higher than that described in the locally agreed syllabus and has improved since the last inspection. They have a good knowledge of Christian beliefs and values as well as a good understanding of other world faiths such as Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. Pupils learn to relate what they discuss to their own lives and this makes a strong contribution to their personal development.
8. There have been improvements since the last inspection in music, design and technology, French and history and above average standards have been maintained in art. Good progress in history results in pupils having a good understanding of historical interpretation and enquiry and a good awareness of chronology. This is evident in the way they discuss life in Victorian times, particularly related to that of children. Pupils' enthusiasm for music and the good teaching of the subject lead to pupils having good skills in composing and performing. Their skills are also enhanced by the wide variety of instrumental tuition that the school organises, with some older pupils achieving very high standards in woodwind, strings and brass. Good artwork is evident around the school, with the careful presentation of pupils' work inspiring them to do their best. Pupils' skills in design and technology have improved, resulting in older pupils planning and evaluating their work with a greater depth of understanding. This was clearly evident in their topic on powered vehicles where they paid great attention to the finish of the final product. Pupils are most enthusiastic about French and the high quality teaching results in them making good and often very good progress in their half hour weekly French lessons. Pupils' attainment in geography and physical education is satisfactory. The use of a specialist teacher for dance is resulting in above average standards in this area and both girls' and boys' football teams have experienced recent successes. Pupils make good use of their geography skills when considering the various options to overcome the problems of the A14 - a local, major highway with a poor safety and congestion record.
9. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by pupils of different background, gender or ethnicity. The school monitors results carefully and has clear interventionist strategies when needed. Pupils with special educational needs make good

progress as a result of the well constructed individual plans and support from the special needs co-ordinator, teachers and classroom assistants. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make very good progress. They participate fully in the curriculum. Special educational needs support teachers give firm direction to pupils' learning with structured questioning leading to new understanding. The analysis of data from national tests is being tracked and the information used to highlight groups or individuals underachieving. The special needs co-ordinator uses data very well to monitor the performance of pupils and accurately assess the needs of individuals.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Attitudes to learning are excellent throughout the school. Behaviour is very good. Relationships among pupils and between pupils and adults are excellent. Pupils' personal development is excellent. All these aspects have improved since the last inspection, are important strengths of the school and have a very positive effect on pupils' learning. Attendance is above average and unauthorised absence is very low. Parents are very pleased with the attitudes and values promoted by the school and feel very satisfied with their children's behaviour.
11. Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They are keen to come to school and punctuality is good apart from that of a small minority of families who are persistently late and disrupt the beginning of the school day for their respective classes. Pupils are very well motivated, concentrate very well and show great interest in their lessons. They are enthusiastic and purposeful learners and are keen to undertake independent research. They are very good at evaluating their own and others' work, for example, in Year 4 art lessons where pupils were making their own pictures and collages in the style of Kandinsky. They listen very well to their teachers and to one another. They are highly articulate. They respond very well to challenge and persevere in their work. Participation in extra-curricular activities is high; for example, a third of pupils learn a musical instrument.
12. Behaviour throughout the school is very good and in assemblies it is exemplary. Pupils know the school rules very well. Praise from adults is highly valued. Bullying is rare, but pupils feel confident that if it arises it will be dealt with fairly. Pupils are open, friendly and very courteous to visitors. They move about the school in an orderly and purposeful fashion. They treat resources with respect. There have been no exclusions in recent years.
13. Pupils willingly undertake responsibility and there are many excellent opportunities for them to do so. Within classes all pupils have tasks, which they take seriously. Older pupils help with assemblies, staff the office at lunchtimes and look after younger pupils. The school council has proved very successful in giving pupils from all year groups the chance to discuss a wide range of issues. Pupils put forward very good ideas; for example, during the inspection week one group of pupils ran a storywriting competition and another proposed a non-uniform day in aid of the Indian earthquake appeal.
14. Relationships within the school are excellent, both among pupils and between staff and pupils. Teachers act as excellent role models of courtesy and fairness. Pupils treat one another with thoughtfulness and kindness. When asked to give their views on others' work, they do so positively and tactfully. They are considerate both of one another's feelings and of the feelings of their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs have very positive attitudes to their work. They work well with their peers and are proud of the improvements they have made.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching is good overall and has improved significantly since the last inspection, with a much higher proportion of very good and excellent lessons. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and 89 per cent of all lessons were good or better, with 36 per cent being very good and 4 per cent being excellent. The good quality teaching was spread evenly through the years, but significant strengths were seen in ICT and science.
16. The quality of teaching in literacy is good and has improved since the last inspection. There has been a significant improvement in the proportion of very good and excellent lessons. This improvement is resulting in pupils' greater interest in, and enthusiasm for, the subject for which they work hard, particularly with their handwriting and presentation. Teachers use open-ended questioning well to explore the wide range of texts, to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and to help assess their knowledge and understanding. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly, with a clear indication of what pupils are to learn during lessons. These objectives are then shared with pupils, who gain a clear understanding of the expectations of the lesson. Pupils respond well to the wide range of reading material that teachers select for their texts. Teachers encourage pupils to use appropriate resources to support their work. For example, pupils in Year 3 use dictionaries and thesauruses when editing their writing on rain and the floods.
17. Consistently good teaching in mathematics is enabling pupils to make good progress through the years. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. The grouping of pupils by ability is having a positive impact on the progress of all pupils and enables teachers to challenge the groups of pupils more effectively. This is resulting in some very high standards of work in the top Year 6 set and good achievement in the lower set, even though attainment is below average. The National Numeracy Strategy has been well introduced and the strong emphasis on mental work has improved pupils' manipulation of numbers, particularly in their use of tables. Teachers use a good range of strategies to assess pupils' progress to ensure that the work is suitably matched to their abilities. Teachers use their expertise well to identify misconceptions and steer pupils towards a clearer understanding. The pace of teaching in all lessons is brisk, with pupils working hard and neatly and producing good amounts of work.
18. The quality of teaching of science is good and a third of the lessons observed were very good. High expectations and teachers' good subject knowledge effectively challenge pupils, who work hard, use their scientific knowledge well and achieve good standards, particularly in their investigative work. Teachers make the lessons interesting and pupils are enthusiastic, showing very good and often excellent attitudes to their work. Teachers build well on pupils' very good collaborative skills and this results in pupils learning not only from the teacher, but also from each other.
19. In religious education, the quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and is now good. As a direct result of this teaching, pupils are attaining standards that are higher than those outlined in the locally agreed syllabus. Teachers use resources well to make lessons interesting and informative so that pupils are enthusiastic about their learning. There are some close links between the subject and pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) and this is particularly effective in pupils' willingness to talk about their own feelings as well as empathising with others.
20. The creation of the new ICT suite has dramatically changed the teaching provision for this subject. Until last term, teachers were responsible for the teaching of the subject. It was decided before the ICT suite opened that pupils would be taught by specialist teachers in groups that are based on previous attainment. As a result of this initiative, the ICT co-

ordinator teaches Years 3 and 4 and the deputy head teaches Years 5 and 6. The lessons last for 30 minutes, in which time the pupils receive very high quality teaching in all aspects of the subject. As a result of this input, pupils are making very good progress in lessons, with those in Year 6 having above average skills in communication and data handling. All lessons have very good pace and take full advantage of pupils' very good collaborative skills, which contribute significantly to their learning. However, pupils do not use their newly acquired skills to support their learning across the curriculum; this is because their classroom computers are out of date and not able to run the programs that the pupils use in their ICT skills teaching lessons.

21. Planning has improved since the last inspection, with teachers having a clear understanding of what pupils are to learn. In the great majority of lessons, pupils of different ability are successfully challenged and make good progress. The management of pupils is very good. This results in pupils' very good behaviour and great enthusiasm for learning. Very little time is spent in behaviour management and because of this lessons have good pace and the time is used very effectively. Another strength of all the teaching is the good questioning which is used particularly well in the initial teaching session at the beginning of a lesson and in the whole-class discussions at the end of lessons, where teachers consolidate pupils' learning and assess their level of understanding. This was particularly evident in a Year 6 geography lesson about a local trunk road. Relationships between teachers and pupils are excellent. This results in pupils having the confidence to ask for help when they have difficulties. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully through questioning, discussion and marking and use this information well when planning future work. Marking is of a good quality. It is consistent, supportive and also identifies what pupils need to do to improve their work. Whilst homework is used satisfactorily overall to support pupils' learning, its use is inconsistent between classes and this is confusing for both pupils and parents. Homework diaries are also used inconsistently; the best provide opportunities for written dialogue between home and school about a child's progress, but most contain few comments that are useful for parents.
22. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and often better. Teachers use pupils' individual education plans (IEPs) effectively to match tasks appropriately to their needs and, as a result, they make good progress. Class teachers make a strong contribution to the progress pupils make. Clear, precise explanations and carefully targeted questioning ensure that levels of understanding are high and potential learning difficulties are minimised. Classroom assistants are suitably briefed and trained, provide good support and play a significant part in this provision. This is especially apparent in set groups where the classroom assistant is an active supporter for both pupils and teacher, providing positive encouragement for groups. Provision of appropriate resources enables the pupils to concentrate on their tasks without becoming distracted. The teaching of pupils with English as an additional language is very good and benefits from specialist input from a part-time local authority teacher. This arrangement works very effectively and is resulting in these pupils making very good progress in their English acquisition skills. Currently the school is investigating ways in which the needs of gifted and talented pupils can be enhanced. Training is planned for all staff in the identification and support of this group of pupils.

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

23. The school provides a very good curriculum that is enhanced by a good range of popular extra-curricular activities. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection and the weaknesses highlighted in the last report in design and technology have been successfully addressed. The curriculum includes all the subjects required by the National

Curriculum in Key Stage 2 and fulfils the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus in religious education. In addition, all pupils have regular French lessons. Whilst the curriculum for ICT is very good for the teaching of skills, there are too few opportunities for pupils to use their skills to support their learning in other subjects.

24. The planning of the curriculum is thorough and detailed and provides essential guidance for teachers. The use of teaching time is efficiently organised, although the number of hours devoted to lessons in a week is less than in most primary schools. The school has restructured its day to enable priority to be given to English and mathematics in the time allocated to each subject. Also, for subjects such as art and design and technology, the timetable allows sufficiently long periods of time for the completion of tasks within the session. This has a positive impact on the quality of work that pupils achieve in these lessons. Planning generally focuses well on the needs of different attainment groups to enable them to make the best possible progress. This is most marked in English and mathematics and successfully promotes learning for all pupils, including the most able. The school is keen to identify and support gifted and talented pupils, both in and out of the classroom. Strategies including sufficiently challenging class work and an after-school computer club are in place and the school is actively engaged in developing this area of provision further.
25. The school has successfully introduced the National Literacy Strategy. This has supported the drive for improved standards, particularly in writing. There is also good attention given to promoting pupils' speaking and listening skills in all subjects. The National Numeracy Strategy has been effectively introduced. Notably, the focus on oral and mental work has improved pupils' rapid recall of number facts and their ability to explain the reasoning behind their methods of calculation. There are policies and agreed programmes of work for all subjects and an overall curriculum plan ensures a good balance of subjects and coverage of programmes of study. Some subject co-ordinators have recently drawn up revised plans to incorporate national guidance and these changes are currently being evaluated. All co-ordinators actively monitor their subjects and use the information they gain to set regular targets for improvement. This programme of review and development results in a steadily improving curriculum. In science, for example, there is an increased emphasis on pupils' active involvement in organising their own investigations. In all year groups, pupils successfully reinforce and extend their scientific understanding by asking questions, making predictions and drawing conclusions.
26. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to participate in a very broad range of activities which very successfully extend and enrich the curriculum. This enlivens school life and promotes pupils' highly positive attitudes to school and learning. A very high proportion of the boys and girls in the school are involved in these activities, which include sports, dance, music, chess and ICT clubs. From time to time, pupils are involved in competitions and have been successful in chess championships and music festivals as well as football, netball and swimming contests. There are also opportunities for pupils to have instrumental tuition from visiting tutors and this has a very positive impact on the quality of music in school. Visitors, including actors and sculptors, and well planned educational visits, such as to a synagogue, support pupils' learning. Pupils in Year 5 also have the opportunity to participate in a residential visit that principally extends their work in ICT, but also promotes the development of their social and physical skills.
27. The school ensures that all pupils have equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum, irrespective of their ability, gender or background. In all lessons and activities that support the curriculum, teachers make every effort to ensure that the contributions of all pupils are celebrated and valued. For example, pupils with hearing difficulties take a full part in music lessons and a pupil who speaks English as an additional language joins

in class discussions. All pupils learn to respect one another and to support each other's learning. This makes a significant contribution to their academic and personal development.

28. The school very successfully promotes pupils' personal, social and health education in its everyday life and teaching. There is a very well structured programme in place throughout the school. This emphasises the importance of healthy eating and exercise for maintaining a healthy lifestyle and incorporates sex education and awareness of the misuse of drugs. Priority is given to promoting pupils' self-esteem and encouraging them to explore their feelings, reactions and solutions to everyday problems. For example, older pupils consider issues relating to friendships, being 'in charge' and broader topics such as 'stereotyping'. These approaches make an important contribution to promoting pupils' very positive attitudes and values. Pupils are given responsibilities, which increase as they move through the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 staff the school office at lunchtimes and also act as monitors in the hall whilst pupils eat their lunch. Pupils also have opportunities to influence how the school is run by participating in the school council. This helps to develop pupils' sense of responsibility, initiative and understanding of citizenship.
29. The local community makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning. Local businesses supported the refurbishment of the swimming pool, which all pupils use frequently in the course of the summer term. Members of local Christian churches visit school regularly and lead assemblies. The school has links with the local history society, doctors and nurses and the local football club, which support pupils' learning through a range of activities. The local Member of Parliament and a parish councillor have also visited school to discuss their roles with the members of the school council. Constructive links with the local infant school ensure that pupils joining the school have met their new teachers and that pupils transfer smoothly. Similarly, teachers liaise with staff at the local village college and this helps to maintain continuity in pupils' learning. This close link also enables pupils to benefit from regular French lessons from a specialist teacher from the college.
30. The school gives a high priority to pupils with special educational needs and makes very good curricular provision for them. They are well supported by the co-ordinator and classroom assistants, who work closely and effectively with class teachers to plan suitable work, either in class or by withdrawing pupils from lessons. Teachers identify targets for individual education plans, which are usually specific and regularly updated. The co-ordinator monitors these plans very well. Pupils with special educational needs participate fully in lessons, ensuring equality of access to all subjects. Annual reviews for those with statements of special educational needs are carried out appropriately. Provision for these pupils is very good and fully in accordance with the national recommendations.
31. The school makes very good provision for pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and these pupils make very good progress. Good individual support is given to pupils by visiting specialist teachers, class teachers have received training in teaching pupils from other cultures and other pupils are very supportive. In one lesson observed, a higher attaining pupil gave help by writing to her friend's dictation and encouraging the EAL pupil to copy her own writing. Appropriate dual language books are provided to enable pupils to achieve well in literacy and numeracy. A Year 4 pupil, who joined the school at the beginning of the school year with very few words of English, was seen successfully working in the past tense and joining in discussion about a recent class visit to the local church. Parents are closely involved in the support of their children and come in to school regularly to discuss progress and ways of helping.

32. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall. Since the last inspection, the school has made a concerted effort to enhance the provision for pupils' spiritual education and this element is now good. Teachers' plans specify elements of development that will be a specific focus of each lesson. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of the curriculum are permanent elements in the school's improvement plan. Acts of worship now contain an element of personal and shared reflection. Good use has been of the involvement of a Sikh parent and the local parish priest as a stimulus to thinking about the beliefs of different groups and how these guide some people's lives. The school has a strong and positive ethos, which places a high value on human rights and the worth of the individual. Teachers foster the development of spiritual awareness in lessons; for example, pupils in a Year 3 poetry lesson respond well, appreciating the use of language to convey ideas. Other pupils show amazement when a computer data handling program produces a series of different graphs during an ICT lesson.
33. The provision for pupils' moral development is excellent and social development is very good. The excellent relationships between all members of the school community enable pupils to grow into mature individuals. Teachers and assistants make very good role models, successfully promoting the school's values of honesty and fairness. Throughout the school, pupils respond very well to the teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. Codes of conduct are in evidence throughout the school. Pupils work extremely well together. For instance, during a design and technology lesson pupils show high levels of co-operation whilst deciding which material would be suitable for making a purse.
34. Personal and social education is timetabled for all pupils in the school each week and is also taught through short units of study. This ensures that time is regularly set aside for discussion and reflection on issues and provides effective opportunities for social development and for consideration of moral questions at a level appropriate to the age and experiences of the pupils. For instance, pupils discuss relationships with friends and how they breakdown. They learn about compromise, negotiation and 'talking things through'. They understand that sometimes they will be disappointed and learn to accept and meet this challenge. Pupils are taught effectively to listen to and value the ideas, thoughts and feelings of others, whilst not being afraid to express their own.
35. Teachers create very good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and exercise responsibility. Pupils help those less fortunate than themselves through a variety of charitable activities. For instance, they raise money for an orphanage in Botswana, the Samaritans' purse and the Blue Peter Peruvian appeal. The school council has organised fund raising for initiatives such as the school's new water fountains. Its ideas for the school grounds plan have been welcomed. This relatively new council gives both its members and the pupils they represent a greater sense of responsibility and pride in their school.
36. The provision for pupils' cultural development is good. Through the good quality and range of extra-curricular activities, such as chess club, football and dance, pupils learn how to respond to each other in different settings. Additionally the school includes a residential visit to Kingswood for Year 5 pupils. Pupils' experience has been enhanced by the school's Millennium project where pupils worked to produce tiles for the courtyard, based on a multi-cultural theme. Pupils gain a good understanding of the inequalities of human life in different cultures through their geographical studies and their fund raising activities, such as the Botswana orphanage. Religious education lessons introduce pupils to a number of different major religions and discussions in these lessons enhance their understanding of the multicultural world in which they live. A wide programme of

visits, including to the Cambridge mosque, enriches the curriculum. The school also welcomes poets, storytellers and music ensembles to share their work with the pupils.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

37. The school is a caring community with very effective procedures to ensure the welfare, health and safety of its pupils. The local authority's guidelines on child protection have been adopted and the school's own procedures are thorough and clear. Links with outside agencies are very good. The special needs co-ordinator, who is the designated person, has shared her training with all staff. Health and safety practices are very good. The responsible governor and the very conscientious caretaker undertake regular risk assessments. Arrangements for dealing with pupils' medical conditions are very good, as are the arrangements for pupils who become ill during the school day. There is a good number of staff with first aid qualifications. The level of supervision at playtimes is good. Older pupils help supervisors with games. However, the playground is at present rather bleak and there is no sheltered area. Security is excellent.
38. Pupils' personal development is monitored very well. Teachers know their pupils very well and are concerned for their welfare. Pupils are given personal targets in both work and behaviour and these are monitored very thoroughly through classroom records and log sheets at half-termly review meetings. Behaviour targets are shared with pupils. Personal achievement is celebrated through merit points, which contribute to the house team points. The headteacher writes to parents when certificates are gained for hard work or particular achievement.
39. The school has very good arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic performance. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are very thorough and the information gained is very effectively used to guide annual and termly planning throughout the school. These findings show a marked improvement since the last inspection, when assessment systems were found to be satisfactory.
40. The assessment programme is very carefully planned and priority is given to ensuring that teachers are clear about the purpose of each of its elements. In addition to the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the school makes very effective use of optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5. All year groups also have regular mathematics, reading and spelling tests. Results are carefully analysed and used to set individual pupil targets, keep track of pupils' progress, highlight weaker areas of learning and identify higher attaining pupils. These results, along with teachers' own ongoing assessments of pupils' performance, are used to direct additional learning support, to modify planning and to motivate pupils to achieve their individual targets. They are also used in deciding which ability groups pupils will be taught in for mathematics.
41. Good, and sometimes very good, assessment procedures have been developed by co-ordinators in the other subjects. Assessments are set by the co-ordinators and carried out at the end of each unit of work. The results are discussed by the year group teachers and shared with the co-ordinators. This is a very effective process that ensures that co-ordinators positively influence standards in their subjects. Teachers also use the information from the assessments to make specific plans for what individuals or groups within the class need to learn next. Consequently, tasks are planned which match pupils' immediate learning needs and promote their good progress. Findings from all assessments are widely shared. They form the basis of staff discussions and presentations to the governors' education committee.
42. The school recognises and celebrates pupils' academic progress, alongside other areas of their development. For example, the headteacher writes to parents when their children

complete a particularly noteworthy home studies project. Also, at the summer term Open Evening, pupils demonstrate what they are good at and exhibit their work to their parents and the local community.

43. The school follows a staged approach for the assessment of pupils with special educational needs and fully meets the Code of Practice. Close liaison between the school and outside agencies is maintained and the educational psychologist, language therapist and educational welfare officer make regular visits to the school. The school takes full advantage of the consultations with the Traveller and primary support team for staff training, targeted child consultations and referral service. The special needs co-ordinator maintains very detailed and thorough records.
44. Teachers make effective use of pupils' individual education plans and this has a good impact on the progress of pupils with special educational needs. The special educational needs co-ordinator monitors these plans regularly. Pupils with statements of special need generally receive additional support in the form of teaching and learning support staff. The co-ordinator, the experienced primary support teacher and classroom assistants all work together closely and very effectively to support class teachers in their work with these pupils. All staff know the pupils well and are always encouraging and supportive. Pupils with English as an additional language are assessed very carefully and given very good support in terms of specialist teaching from the local education authority and individually planned classroom work. As a result, these pupils make very good progress in acquiring basic language skills.
45. Procedures to monitor attendance are very effective. Registers are checked weekly by the headteacher to monitor patterns of lateness and absence and there are good links with the Educational Welfare Officer. The great majority of pupils arrive promptly for the start of the school day. However, a small minority of families do not consistently arrive on time and this disrupts the start of the day for the classes concerned. Registration is very efficient and ensures a calm and orderly start to sessions.
46. Throughout the school, behaviour is very good and the school functions very well as an orderly community. The school's positive behaviour management and bullying policies have proved very successful, providing very good strategies that are very consistently applied. Adults consistently promote courtesy, tolerance and consideration for others. The 'bird sanctuary' was recently introduced as a supervised quiet area at lunchtime. Pupils who find the playground noisy can sit or read quietly and some pupils who have misbehaved can also be sent there. The school has very effective procedures to eliminate bullying. Good use is made of assemblies to promote behaviour. Parents are very pleased with the behaviour of children in the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. Parents are generally very satisfied with the school's achievements. They are particularly pleased with the way their children are taught and with their children's progress. Nearly all feel that the school is well led and managed and that staff are approachable. Parents are particularly pleased with the way the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Some parents feel that their children do not get the right amount of homework and that they are not well informed about their children's progress. A small number of parents are not satisfied with the activities provided by the school outside lessons.
48. The findings of the inspection support the parents' positive views of the school. The information provided for parents on their children's progress was found to be good. The number and range of extra-curricular activities are very good and accessible to all pupils.

However, the inspection supports the parents' concerns about homework. Although a homework policy exists, homework is not always consistently given and it does not increase in quantity as pupils progress through the school. Homework diaries are not used consistently and there is little advice to parents on how they can help their children at home, particularly in reading.

49. The information provided for parents is generally good. The combined prospectus and handbook complies with requirements. However, it is at present too unwieldy. The school has recognised this and revision is in progress. The governors' report to parents also complies with requirements. Home/school agreements have been issued and signed by nearly all parents. Homework diaries are often a useful means of dialogue between home and school, but they are not used consistently. Inspectors occasionally found inappropriate comments from parents about teachers' professional competence in some diaries. Advance information on the curriculum is given each year and parents find this a useful aid to help their children's learning. There is a good range of consultation meetings. Parents find teachers always willing to talk about their concerns. Reports are clear and informative and include targets for pupils in English, mathematics and science. However, they do not allow for comments by parents or pupils. Newsletters are sent weekly to parents. These are attractively presented and include contributions by pupils. Parents are kept well informed of forthcoming events through weekly newsletters. The school works very well with the parents of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are informed as soon as concerns are identified. Frequent review meetings keep them well informed of the individual targets set for these pupils. Parents are encouraged to participate in their children's development and are well informed about their progress. Full records of contacts with parents are kept.
50. A good number of parents help in the school on a regular basis, in a variety of ways, as well as on trips and visits. Parents feel that their efforts are appreciated. The Parent-Teacher Association is very active and raises substantial sums of money for equipment to help children's learning. The recent refurbishment of the swimming pool was carried out through the efforts of parents and local businesses. This is now a valuable community resource. Plans are displayed in the school for the improvement of the school grounds in collaboration with parents. The relationships between school and home have improved since the last inspection and there is now a real sense of partnership between the two parties.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school and is very well supported in all her work by her deputy head. The headteacher provides a breadth of understanding and a wealth of ideas that have helped to build on the good standards that were described in the last inspection report. She is keenly aware of her own strengths and responsibilities and uses the skills of others to very good effect. The governing body, members of staff and parents give her the credit for enabling the improvements to be made in the school. The staff in school represent a formidable team that has an excellent capacity to succeed in its main goals of constant evaluation of the effectiveness of its work and improving the standards and quality of education it provides. The governors provide very good leadership. Collectively they have a very good combination of skills and experience, although too little use is made of these in helping the school to evaluate the quality of its improvements. Governors hold the headteacher to account for the school's work. The roles of governor committees are well defined, ensuring effective delegation. For example, the education committee discusses comparative figures for the school's National Curriculum results with some of the senior teachers and feeds back its findings to a full governing body meeting. As a result, all governors are well informed about the strengths and weaknesses in the school's results. Subject managers'

leadership skills are very good overall and are having a positive influence on the raising of standards. The headteacher has judged aptitudes very well and gives very positive encouragement to all those with subject co-ordinator responsibility. There is very effective delegation and there are good systems in place to maintain a watching brief over their work. Overall the quality of leadership and management by the headteacher, governors and subject co-ordinators has improved since the last inspection and is now very good overall.

52. The senior management team and the governing body support the positive and knowledgeable leadership provided by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) by ensuring that this very important aspect of the work of the school is well organised and effectively monitored. The SENCO is part of the senior management team and this reflects the importance that the school places on this aspect of the school's work. Regular meetings are held between the co-ordinator and senior management team to discuss developments and update the special educational needs register. The co-ordinator frequently reviews procedures to clarify issues and expedite the transfer of information. Pupils' special educational needs are recognised as early as possible and strategies are tried and reviewed. Pupils who are below average in English are given Additional Literacy Support (ALS) in Years 4 and 5. The special needs co-ordinator provides support and advice whenever required. Regular liaison between feeder schools is effective in ensuring continuity and progression for these pupils at the age of transfer. Resources are good, easily accessible and effectively support pupils on the special educational needs register.
53. The school is fully staffed with well qualified, committed and dedicated teachers. There are very good procedures in place for appraisal and the performance management of staff. All staff attend regular in-service training and are encouraged to attend specific courses as a result of professional development interviews and appraisal. A full programme of staff development is linked well to the school improvement plan, where the needs of the school and individual staff are effectively considered. These opportunities further enhance the good range of expertise and qualifications amongst the staff. Clear targets and time scales are set and achieved for all staff. Staff with management responsibilities have clear, documented roles and responsibilities, attend regular training to increase their expertise, feel valued and work very effectively as a team. They meet weekly. Core subject co-ordinators, the special educational needs co-ordinator and other senior staff have been given sufficient time to monitor teaching and learning through the efficient use of part-time staff. The comprehensive programme of monitoring has enhanced teachers' skills and subject knowledge. Learning support staff have received extensive training to help in their work supporting pupils with special educational needs. They are valued and valuable members of staff. Information on continuing staff training is effectively shared with the governing body. Procedures for the induction of new staff, although informal, are supportive of newly appointed staff. There are very strong relationships between all staff and the headteacher's very good level of understanding of teachers' capabilities allows interesting and very effective empowerment.
54. The school's aims are highly appropriate and are very well incorporated into the school's daily life. The aims highlight the importance of good relationships and a commitment to equality of opportunities for all pupils. Developments consistently reflect these aims and help to create a very civilised atmosphere in the school where all pupils are valued and yet challenged daily.
55. The school development plan is of very good quality and is carefully drawn up to ensure that relevant school and national needs are addressed and met. School needs generally arise from the evaluations made by subject co-ordinators. Each term co-ordinators fix a developmental focus for their subject. Strategies are implemented to make

improvements in the area identified and the success of the strategies are evaluated at the end of term, when they are fed back to the headteacher and senior members of staff. Subject developments which need a whole-school focus are discussed by the senior management team and then incorporated into the school's improvement plan. This very thorough development planning process ensures that priorities are the most appropriate for the school. Past developments have been instrumental in the raising of standards in English, mathematics and science, the creation of a computer suite and library and the improvement of the internal decoration of the school.

56. The school has made very good improvements since the previous inspection. It has developed schemes of work for all subjects and this has led to improvements, particularly in the design element of design and technology. The school has improved the quality of assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress so that work is even better focused and more challenging than before. The planning of work by teachers ensures challenge and engages pupils' interest and enthusiasm. The new organisation of the school day, with three hours of teaching before lunch, is proving to be a very effective initiative, with teachers making very good use of the three one-hour teaching times. School and class assemblies now successfully promote pupils' spiritual development and pupils have built in time to reflect purposefully on their own and others' experiences. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, particularly in the proportion of very good and excellent lessons, and is having a positive impact on standards. The new computer suite is being used effectively to drive up standards, with after-school clubs providing good opportunities for the higher attaining pupils and those who do not have computers at home to develop their expertise. The new library is attractive, well furnished and now large enough for whole-class library lessons. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language is now very good. All pupils now have excellent attitudes to school and the excellent provision for pupils' moral behaviour has resulted in an improvement in their behaviour, which is now very good. Detailed, purposeful records of progress are maintained, reviewed and monitored on a regular basis.
57. The school's finances have been very carefully managed since the last inspection. Below average funding per pupil resulted in large class sizes and a strain on available teaching spaces. Extra funding for the present financial year has enabled the school to cut class sizes and to introduce single year classes, with the exception of one Years 3/4 class. The present school finances are in good order. There are very secure financial systems and effective control, with the headteacher and governors having a clear picture of the impact spending is having on the standards that the pupils achieve. Very good support is provided by the financial assistant who is responsible for the day-to-day management of the budget and who also keeps clear records of curriculum spending as well as records of other funds, such as for school visits. The general school administration is very efficient, with routines very well established. The recommendations of the recent audit have been successfully addressed. Subject managers bid for funding and senior managers make appropriate decisions that take account of subject needs that also match the identified school priorities.
58. The school gives very good consideration to the principles of best value through the work of the headteacher and the finance committee. It very carefully considers its comparisons with local schools, consults very well with parents and receives very good support from them, particularly in the way that the school is organised and in the high standards of behaviour expected of all pupils. The school shows very good regard to competition by ensuring that it gets the best possible deal when buying resources. This was clearly evident in the design and equipping of the new computer suite. The school has a below average income per pupil, with a significant proportion of this allocated to the support of pupils who have statements of special educational needs. As the school has a high

proportion of statemented pupils, these are affecting the overall income per pupil. If the special educational needs spending was at an average level when compared with that of all schools, the income per pupil for the school would be in the very low category. The school uses its budget very effectively and provides very good value for money.

59. The caretaker is never too busy to give assistance and works tirelessly to ensure that the school building is very well cleaned and maintained. The accommodation is used well to deliver the curriculum. Attractive wall displays enliven the corridors and classrooms. They reflect the life of the school, celebrate pupils' achievements and have a positive impact on learning. Mobile classrooms are kept in good repair. The swimming pool has recently undergone refurbishment as a result of community involvement and augments the physical education curriculum. The outside environment is used effectively for recreation and physical education. There is little evidence of litter. The school is currently raising funds to support the development of the school grounds. Two courtyards have provided opportunities for projects to enhance the surroundings. A recent Millennium Project inspired the pupils, with the aid of a sculptress in residence, to design tiles for one courtyard. Pupils designed some very effective tessellation for paving stones in the other. The new school library and ICT suite make a positive impact on the pupils' learning.
60. Learning resources are generally good in all areas of the curriculum. However, the computers that are in the classrooms are out of date and are not capable of running the newer programs that are based on the recent developments in the curriculum. This results in computers not being used effectively to support pupils' learning in other subjects. Good use is made of information technology to manage finances and the pupils' records. All resources are readily accessible and well organised throughout the school. The resources manager keeps full records of resources. She has responsibility for all stock and classroom equipment, ensuring that there is an efficient rolling programme for replacement and maintenance.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to improve the standards of attainment and the quality of education, the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- (1) develop the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum by:
- continuing to develop teacher expertise in the subject;
 - ensuring that use of the present computer programs is incorporated into teachers' long-term and medium-term planning;
 - finding more opportunities to use cross-curricular programs in pupils' weekly computer lessons.
- (paragraphs 6, 20, 23, 26, 76, 83, 89, 96, 99, 106, 110-116, 122 and 131)

The above key issue has been recognised by the school and is a focus of this year's school improvement plan.

In addition to the key issue above the following minor issues should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

- the more consistent use of homework across years and across the school (para 21);
- making greater use of governor expertise in helping the school to evaluate its developments (para 51);
- the greater use of homework diaries to inform parents how they can help to improve their children's reading (paras 21 and 49);
- rationalise the school prospectus to make it more user friendly (para 49).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	31

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
4	36	49	11	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		324
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		16

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		14
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		116

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	19

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	4.5
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	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 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	50	43	93

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	40	40	47
	Girls	34	32	40
	Total	74	72	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	80 (82)	77 (69)	94 (86)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	40	40	45
	Girls	33	32	39
	Total	73	72	84
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (79)	77 (75)	90 (87)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	80 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	319
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23.5
Average class size	29.6

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	264

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

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

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	566,618
Total expenditure	572,817
Expenditure per pupil	1,587
Balance brought forward from previous year	15,733
Balance carried forward to next year	9,534

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 37%

Number of questionnaires sent out	324
Number of questionnaires returned	120

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	50	43	5	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	55	6	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	71	4	3	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	14	61	19	4	2
The teaching is good.	40	56	0	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	61	11	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	37	3	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	45	2	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	29	55	10	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	49	43	2	2	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	44	2	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	43	44	11	0	2

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

62. The developments made in English since the last inspection show a continuing improvement in all aspects of this subject, with the average point score improving by 1.6 points since the last inspection. This means that standards have improved by the equivalent of over a term and a half since the last inspection at a time when the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the school is increasing. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy has established a more consistent approach to planning across the school and has strengthened the curriculum. It is having a beneficial effect on standards and ensures that all aspects of the English curriculum are being taught. There is a good range of opportunities for learning and the different elements of the subject are appropriately balanced.
63. The attainment of 11 year olds in English in the 2000 National Curriculum tests was average when compared with that in all schools nationally and when compared with schools in a similar context. Although the proportion of pupils achieving the expected Level 4 was slightly above average, the proportion achieving the higher Level 5 was slightly below average. Inspection evidence shows that the pupils currently in Year 6 have made satisfactory progress through the school and their attainment is average overall; pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are above average and their writing skills are average. However, the present Year 6 cohort does have a higher than average proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register and a very high proportion of pupils with statements of special needs.
64. Pupils at Histon and Impington make satisfactory progress from the time they enter school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with statements of special educational need make good progress through the school and are given very good support both in and out of classrooms. The one pupil for whom English is an additional language makes very good progress. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well and there is effective development of pupils' literacy skills in other subjects.
65. The speaking and listening skills of most pupils are good. They fluently and precisely communicate their ideas and opinions when they are encouraged to do so. Pupils with special educational needs are constantly challenged to use their speaking and listening skills. Higher attaining pupils respond clearly and audibly to challenging questions on a range of texts. Pupils throughout the school listen carefully and respond accurately to instructions. They contribute to lessons confidently and show a good awareness of the needs of the listener. Pupils in Year 3 compare the layout of their acrostic poems with another familiar poem and give opinions about which they prefer and reasons why: 'It's exciting', 'It's like a witch'. In Year 4, a pupil was observed giving an extended talk on the planets. He spoke confidently, showing photographs to support his presentation and answering questions at the end. Other pupils demonstrated their interest and listening skills by asking relevant questions, for instance 'What's the difference between a star and a planet?' Pupils in Year 6, including those with special educational needs, take on the persona of members of the public affected by traffic problems on the A14. They successfully identify those who would be most affected and speak with understanding from the viewpoint of a variety of road users. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special needs, show increased confidence in reading texts and talk confidently with visitors.
66. Pupils actively use skills in speaking and listening and in reading across the curriculum to support learning in all subjects. For example, in a Year 5 personal, social and health

education lesson, pupils successfully explored feelings of disappointment. Pupils listened well to each other and clearly articulated their disappointing experiences and how they overcame the problem. A pupil with English as an additional language used language accurately to express herself. School council members have good opportunities to express their ideas at meetings. When interviewed, pupils representing all year groups expressed their views with maturity, citing examples of the work they had done and what had happened as a result. Drama games in a Year 3 class are used skilfully to build confidence, encourage interaction and enable pupils, including those with special educational needs, to speak with expression. During the inspection, all pupils in a Year 4 class were involved in a performance of a play based on the story of 'Boudicca'. The play was accompanied by appropriate music and pupils performed well. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are confident orally, use their broad vocabularies well to articulate their ideas and listen well to complex instructions.

67. Overall standards in reading are good and sometimes very good. Pupils throughout the school read both fiction and non-fiction fluently and with enjoyment. When reading aloud, they display knowledge of punctuation and the need for appropriate pausing, emphasis and inflection. They know about the structure of books, talk about characters and plot and express preferences. Most pupils are familiar with and able to use indexes, contents pages and skimming and scanning to find information. Pupils are familiar with the Internet and are able to locate information using the CD-ROMs in the school's new library area. Many of the pupils interviewed belong to the local library. Higher attaining readers in Year 6 read a wide variety of texts and refer to text when explaining the story. The best readers predict outcomes in their stories and discuss genre with good understanding. For instance, most pupils in Year 6 who were interviewed could differentiate between science fiction, fantasy and adventure stories. Pupils use a variety of skills to read unknown words, including phonics and initial letter and context clues.
68. Younger pupils make good progress in reading through shared and guided reading, although a small minority have below average standards. Pupils in Year 3 discuss books during class shared reading sessions, expressing preferences and recommending books to other pupils. Lower attaining pupils use phonic and context clues to read new words and are developing a range of reading strategies. They express preferences for different authors. They make good progress, showing a growing knowledge of high frequency words and developing reading strategies. They respond well to a range of fiction and non-fiction and this is developing their competence in reading. The school's homework diary is used as a record of books read, but there are no helpful comments to give parents a specific focus to help improve their children's reading. A collection of book reviews in the library outlines books pupils have read and indicates that they are developing a satisfactory critical awareness of literature. Pupils with special educational needs explored the 'Lord Rama' story during shared reading work with the special needs teacher and responded very well to the text and the teacher's questioning. As a result, they recognise differences between characters in stories.
69. From inspection findings, the pupils' attainment in writing is average and they make satisfactory progress. They write for a good range of purposes; for example, after particularly heavy rainfall pupils in Year 3 describe rain and floods. They show an increasing awareness of sequencing and use more complex vocabulary. Handwriting is well formed, clearly shaped and well orientated. Pupils transfer these skills to other written work. Pupils in Year 4 develop their use of punctuation and improved spelling and handwriting skills enhance the fluency and clarity of their work. They understand what verbs and adverbs are and use this knowledge to identify them in sentences. For instance, they alter verbs in sentences to make them more powerful: 'Beckham vanishes off the pitch', 'Beckham plods off the pitch'. Using headlines as a stimulus, pupils in Year 4 write in a journalistic style about real or imaginary events. Year 5 pupils write the beginning of a

myth and use imaginative, appropriate language for the genre. For instance, a pupil with special educational needs writes, 'Some time ago near the sea, the land was a dry place'. During the course of their work pupils are encouraged to try out spellings for themselves and to identify common spelling patterns, recognising 'words within words' and learning spelling rules. Year 6 pupils give advice to other pupils on a display labelled 'Spelling Advice Bureau'. They highlight the use of mnemonics as an aid to memory. All pupils have a spelling book to 'look, cover, write and check' their words and to use as a spelling journal. Teachers test spelling twice a year to assess pupils' progress.

70. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' writing is average, with a great majority of them writing imaginatively and clearly. Their range of writing is wide and they have a good understanding of purpose and audience. Most pupils punctuate their work accurately using speech and question marks and spell common words correctly. Higher attaining pupils use paragraphing in writing and their use of tenses and language structure is more secure. They learn to present balanced arguments for and against foxhunting and consider whether fruit machines are a waste of money. Writing skills are adequately employed within other areas of the curriculum. For instance, in a Year 4 history lesson pupils write historical accounts from the point of view of the Spanish and English when studying the events surrounding the Spanish Armada and write postcards and diary accounts from the point of view of sailors. They write reports, newspaper articles, poetry, letters and chronological accounts in history and take notes using correct format with increasing expertise. Pupils choose words for their effect when writing stories and poems. All pupils learn to redraft their work, improving both content and style, in addition to correcting spellings and improving presentation. Handwriting and presentation are of a high standard throughout the school. The use of homework to support pupils' learning is, however, inconsistent.
71. Pupils' attitude to work and their behaviour is very good overall and frequently excellent. Pupils with special educational needs show very good attitudes to work, including those who have emotional and behavioural difficulties. The majority of pupils enjoy sharing texts and join in reading with sustained interest. Pupils with special educational needs show improving levels of concentration and take pride in emerging reading skills. Pupils respond to questions with enthusiasm. They have very good relationships with each other and are respectful and polite towards adults. Pupils work hard and sustain concentration for long periods. They know what to do when they meet a problem and when they have completed their work.
72. The quality of teaching is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Over three quarters of the lessons seen were good, very good or excellent. During the course of the inspection, pupils made consistently good and sometimes very good progress because of the good quality teaching. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and has been greatly enhanced by literacy training, which has enabled them to plan appropriately for the literacy hour. In the best lessons, such as in Year 5, teaching is lively, challenging and fast paced with good use of visual aids. Good use is made of support staff during lessons to support pupils with special needs; assistants carefully monitor these pupils' progress. Teachers plan their work carefully for all pupils, have high expectations and manage their pupils very well. As a result, teachers rarely raise their voices and pupils work very hard, producing a good amount of work in lessons. Teachers use praise appropriately to motivate all pupils. Good use is made of structured, open questioning to motivate and as a check to understanding and pupils are encouraged to give extended reasoned answers where appropriate. The best teachers have a very good balance between teacher talk and pupil talk and pupils know exactly what they have to learn. In all classes, excellent use is made of learning points to reinforce targets for lessons. Pupils are encouraged to use a dictionary or thesaurus. Plenary sessions are used well to celebrate work and to consolidate learning.

73. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. All pupils participate fully in the literacy programme. A suitably trained learning support assistant (LSA) takes small groups of lower attaining and special needs pupils in Years 4 and 5 for Additional Literacy Strategy. This gives well targeted provision that challenges pupils and successfully addresses their weaknesses. Booster classes for Year 6 pupils have also been successfully used to improve attainment. Pupils' with special educational needs benefit from the close, consistent support they receive each day. Pupils' appreciation of literature is enhanced through visiting authors and storytellers such as Jeremy Strong and Polly Howat and groups such as the theatre of Widdershens. Pupils also organise competitions, such as the 'Harry Potter' writing competition organised by a group of Year 6 pupils to encourage writing in others.
74. The assessment of pupils' English attainment is very good. The school uses national test results extensively to track the attainment of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. As a result of this, writing has been targeted as an area for improvement. This data is used not only for target setting, but also to guide extra training for teachers and the purchase of resources. As a result, the work of support staff has been focused more effectively on identified groups and individuals. Training exercises and the moderation of pupils' work have had a positive impact on assessment. The school uses non-statutory end of year tests to confirm teachers' assessment and to change future planning when appropriate. Teacher assessment is consistent, identifies strengths and weaknesses and gives a clear picture of progression to the next stage of learning. The co-ordinator collects samples of work, which are evaluated and used as a school benchmark enabling teachers to assess pupils' work more accurately. Pupils have their own personal targets, which they understand and actively work towards. Marking of pupils' work is consistent; it is constructive, indicates areas for improvement and informs day-to-day planning.
75. The English co-ordinator makes a very good contribution to the development of this subject, provides excellent leadership and supports the teachers very well. She is highly committed and has a clear vision for the development of English. The senior management team and governing body ensure that this aspect of the school's work is organised effectively. She has recently reviewed the policy and scheme of work to meet the requirements of the National Literacy Strategy. Staff have received appropriate literacy training and regular meetings are held to disseminate information and discuss developmental issues. Effective monitoring of the literacy hour by the headteacher and co-ordinator has had a positive impact on teaching and learning. Good liaison between the school and feeder schools ensures a smooth transition from the infant school at the end of Year 2 and to the secondary school at the end of Year 6.
76. Resources have been reviewed and enhanced by the addition of books to support literacy. Project book boxes from the school library service also support the curriculum. The recently relocated library area with its collection of non-fiction books and Internet access will be a valuable resource for research and independent learning. Fiction collections, group reading resources, audiotapes and textbooks are available in each classroom or in accessible areas around the school. The use of ICT within the classroom is limited, however, although there are plans to address this shortfall. Staff are very well deployed and trained to support the large number of pupils with special educational needs.

MATHEMATICS

77. In the National Curriculum tests in 2000, pupils' attainments in mathematics were above the national average for 11 year olds. These results were well above those of similar schools. Moreover, a very high proportion of pupils (43 per cent) attained the higher Level 5. There has been an overall trend of improvement in results in mathematics in recent years. Evidence gained during the inspection indicates strongly that high standards are being maintained. The current pupils in Year 6 are making good, and often very good, progress in their learning. Overall, their standards are above the national average, as they were at the time of the last inspection. A very high proportion is on course to attain above average standards. However, because of the increased number of pupils with special educational needs in the year group, more are working below the nationally expected level than in the previous Year 6. Despite this, the school has set challenging targets for the national tests, which it is on course to meet. There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.
78. At the beginning of Key Stage 2, almost all younger pupils quickly and accurately add and subtract two numbers mentally and three digit numbers using written methods. They extend and link their knowledge of number patterns to count forward and backwards, often using numbers over 100. By Year 4 they recognise that a number below zero is negative. They steadily increase their speed of mental recall when using multiplication tables. Their understanding of fractions increases and by Year 5 they recognise equivalent decimals. Pupils demonstrate a good range of strategies for carrying out mental and written calculations. Higher attaining pupils in the year group explain their use of alternative methods for calculating equivalent percentages and fractions of numbers and quantities. They also express their answers as decimals and check them with a calculator. By Year 6, most pupils add and subtract decimals to two places. In a quick-fire warm-up session, high attaining pupils demonstrated their ability to square numbers, calculate the square root of numbers and explain their thinking clearly in mathematical vocabulary. They also confidently break down complex problems into simpler steps before attempting a solution, for example, when calculating 45 per cent of a given quantity.
79. Most pupils have a good understanding of shape, space and measure. Year 3 pupils name and identify properties of two- and three-dimensional shapes. They recognise angles that are more or less than a right angle and high attaining pupils are beginning to understand that angles can be measured in degrees. By Year 4, pupils calculate the perimeter and area of regular shapes. As they move through the school, pupils reinforce and extend their data handling skills. They use them in other subjects, such as geography, and this successfully reinforces their learning. As part of their study of weather, for example, Year 4 pupils measured rainfall, temperature and the incidence of different cloud formations. They presented their findings very clearly in the form of line and bar graphs, Venn and Carroll diagrams and pictograms.
80. The quality of the teaching and learning of mathematics is good. During the inspection, examples of very good and excellent teaching were seen in Year 5, leading to pupils' outstanding progress in the course of lessons. Throughout the school, teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy very well and are confident with the framework. The quality of their planning is very good and contributes significantly to the good progress pupils make in developing their mathematical skills. The specific focus for oral and mental work is clearly identified in lesson plans, pupils' tasks very successfully promote the aims of the lesson and plenary sessions are used purposefully to consolidate and share learning. An examination of completed work shows clear evidence of pupils using different ways to record their work. There are well planned opportunities for them to make decisions, to solve problems and to use and apply their mathematical skills in

practical situations. For example, younger pupils were keen to use their developing skills to calculate the amount of carpet needed to carpet the home of 'Posh and Becks'.

81. Teachers usually plan tasks at different levels in order to meet the needs of pupils of differing levels of attainment within the class. During lessons they use a good range of strategies to assess pupils' progress. They look at pupils' work, ask questions, listen to pupils and respond to them thoughtfully. Consequently, teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses. They recognise and readily praise gains in learning and are quick to identify misconceptions and steer pupils towards a clearer understanding. Teachers also use the information gained from these interactions to modify plans to match forthcoming tasks more closely to the pupils' identified needs. As a result, pupils find their tasks demanding as well as achievable. They are highly motivated, work hard and make good progress. In the most successful lessons, teachers motivate pupils' very successfully by presenting their activities as exciting challenges. Pupils' respond very positively to their teachers' dynamic presentations, which grab their interest from the outset. Lessons proceed at a lively pace. Pupils' co-operate well, exchanging ideas with their teacher and with each other. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress in learning as they work on tasks which are set at levels requiring their full concentration.
82. Teachers work closely with support assistants to ensure that all pupils with particular needs receive well targeted support and ample encouragement. This is a strong feature of teaching throughout the school. In consequence, pupils with special educational needs or with English as an additional language are able to be fully involved in mathematics lessons and make good progress. At the beginning of lessons, teachers share with pupils what they want them to learn in the course of the session. They make clear their expectations of pupils' active involvement, insist on high standards of behaviour and consistently praise their co-operation and effort. These are features of the good teaching throughout the school and strongly contribute to pupils' very purposeful approach to their work and their very good behaviour. In all classes, teachers promote pupils' numeracy skills well. Pupils eagerly participate in mental agility work at the beginning of lessons. Teachers use carefully directed questions to prompt individual pupils' thinking and assess their understanding. As they move through the school, pupils display increasingly speedy recall, for example, of multiplication and corresponding division facts. They develop a structured approach to calculation and most can confidently explain their methods of working in writing or orally, using correct mathematical terminology.
83. Pupils have opportunities to reinforce and extend their numeracy skills in other subjects. For example, pupils throughout the school use time lines in history to reinforce their understanding of chronology and Year 6 pupils, investigating forces in science, calculated differences in times recorded on a stop watch. Data handling skills are reinforced through pupils' work in ICT lessons. However, there is currently very limited scope for pupils to develop this work on computers in their classrooms.
84. The subject co-ordinators give excellent leadership and guide the development of mathematics very effectively. Subject monitoring is rigorous and always has a very clear purpose. Information gained is used to highlight areas for whole-school development. For example, a recent focus has been on incorporating key elements, such as specific vocabulary, into lesson planning. The high quality of curriculum management is contributing powerfully to the school's shared commitment to raising standards in mathematics.

SCIENCE

85. In the 2000 tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 was above the national average. The number attaining the higher Level 5 was well above the national average. These results are well above average when compared with other schools with pupils from similar backgrounds. Inspection evidence shows that the present cohort of Year 6 pupils makes good progress and is achieving standards above the national average, although there is a high percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Despite this, the school has set challenging targets. Evidence from the inspection indicates that these will be met. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls or among pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language, with all making good progress. The previous inspection report identified insufficient opportunities for pupils to make predictions or to plan their own investigations. Both areas of weakness have been successfully addressed through improved teaching and planning and, due to the good and often very good teaching, levels of attainment in science have risen each year since the previous report and have improved faster than the national average.
86. By the age of 11, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding across all aspects of the science curriculum. During the inspection they demonstrated through their own investigations a good understanding of physical processes, showing how friction can affect the movement of forces, and used appropriate scientific vocabulary to describe their work, for example 'upthrust', 'gravity', 'centrifugal' and 'magnetic'. They have a good understanding of what is meant by a fair test and devised some ingenious methods for testing, such as dragging an object through a variety of liquids, including soap, oil and detergent. They measure accurately using force meters and stopwatches and record data systematically. It is a feature of teachers' planning across the school to direct pupils to think logically in their investigations, pose questions, make predictions, measure, record and evaluate. This training in scientific thinking is having a very positive effect on raising standards.
87. Pupils make good progress in all areas of the subject as they move through the school. Year 3 pupils were observed devising fair tests for the elasticity of tights and for the absorbency of paper. They posed good questions such as, 'How stretchy are the tights?', 'What are we changing?' and 'What are we wanting to find out?'. Year 4 pupils, in their work on electrical circuits, showed good understanding of why circuits might not work and responded very well when the teacher pretended to know nothing about electricity and they had to correct and inform him. Teachers' imaginative and well planned approach to lessons and the enthusiasm and very good attitude and behaviour of the pupils enable good and often very good learning to take place. In Year 5, pupils were made aware of the importance of repeated measurements to ensure confidence in results. The very clear planning and delivery of the lesson, the very good rapport between teacher and pupils and the excellent attitudes and behaviour of the pupils contributed positively to their very good learning. In another lesson in the same year on air resistance, pupils worked hard to complete their written work before commencing their practical task of constructing a parachute. Throughout the school pupils achieve well, although the quality of provision made for higher and lower attaining pupils in teachers' planning is inconsistent.
88. The teaching of science is good and there is a high percentage (33 per cent) of very good teaching. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils. They plan well, making last minute changes where necessary to provide for pupils returning to school after illness. They make good use of assessment to develop pupils' learning and knowledge. They set good open-ended questions to develop pupils' thinking, such as 'What do we mean by a scientific investigation?' Where teachers adopt a quiet, calm manner, pupils respond accordingly. Pupils respond positively to imaginative topics such

as 'The Great Ice Cube Challenge'. Lessons are generally well prepared, resources are provided at the start of the lesson and there is little wastage of time. All teachers make good use of plenary sessions at the end of the lesson to reinforce pupils' learning and learning objectives. Marking is constructive and prompt. Teachers insist on high standards of presentation, resulting in pupils setting out work and results very clearly. Teachers plan in year groups, sharing their expertise, though the quality of lessons may vary. Teachers manage pupils very well and pupils are very keen to learn. They are enthusiastic towards the subject and show very good and occasionally excellent attitudes and behaviour. In many of the lessons observed no word of censure was used. Pupils work very well together when required, taking their turn in articulate discussion, in classes where they feel confident and relaxed. In many of the lessons observed a good working 'buzz' was noticeable. The only weakness seen was where teachers occasionally allowed pupils to chat too much, reducing their powers of concentration. The use of homework is underdeveloped and inconsistent.

89. Leadership of the subject is excellent and is a major factor in contributing to the high levels of attainment. The co-ordinator has an excellent grasp of all aspects of the subject and is leading it forward very positively. Targets are set in each class, though not as yet for individual pupils. A new draft policy and scheme of work based on the recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority have recently been introduced. Emphasis is on teaching through investigative means. All key elements of the subject are covered. Time allowance is generous and this, together with the quality of teaching and pupils' attitudes, are key factors responsible for pupils' successes. The use of ICT has been identified as an area of weakness and there are plans to address this. Resources are good, very well organised and accessible. Assessment procedures and the use made of them have been especially well developed since the last inspection and are very good. Each half term, on completion of a study unit, assessment tasks are set by the co-ordinator, marked and levelled according to National Curriculum criteria, with the information gained used to identify weaknesses, set targets and improve future planning. The school has moved forward considerably since the previous inspection and its capacity for further improvement is very good.
90. There is good monitoring of the subject and detailed analysis of the standardised test results to identify areas of concern. For example, it was decided to provide more opportunities for pupils to interpret published data and to increase links with work in mathematics. The subject contributes positively to literacy through targeting specific vocabulary, to numeracy through recording of data and measurement skills and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, opportunities for which are specifically identified in teachers' planning. Pupils are well taught to record in bullet points and to make notes, but fewer opportunities are provided for lengthier writing. Governors are closely involved with the subject and the governor for science has observed lessons. There is a strong focus on science around the school, with high quality displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors, from all year groups and covering all of the attainment targets. Improvement since the previous inspection is good. The school is rightly proud of its achievements in science.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Standards in art are above national expectations, as they were at the time of the last inspection. Around the school, pupils' carefully mounted displays show a good range of two- and three-dimensional work. By Year 6, pupils are familiar with a wide range of materials, tools and techniques used in art, craft and design. They also experience well planned opportunities to learn about and appreciate the work of other artists.

92. Younger pupils use paint confidently when creating patterns and printing with shapes. They show a good awareness of shading in their pencil drawings of pottery. When looking at 'Animals in Art', they use felt and simple stitch work in collage, as well as making pencil sketches. In a lesson focusing on composition, pupils used technical terms such as 'foreground', 'background' and 'landscape' accurately. They also demonstrated a good knowledge of Paul Klee's painting style when discussing the contribution of colour and shape to their work. Older pupils show an increasing awareness of detail and perspective in their pen and ink drawings of buildings. By Year 6, pupils confidently select the techniques and materials to use in their own portrayal of 'People in Action'. They express a wealth of ideas and interpretations, using an imaginative range of media, including magazine and newspaper photographs, tissue paper, card and photocopied images.
93. The quality of teaching is good. During the inspection, very good teaching was seen in two of the four lessons observed. Teaching is most successful when teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the subject. Their planning is clear and they know what they want pupils to achieve in the course of a series of lessons. They share this with pupils at the outset and as a result pupils approach their work purposefully. Teachers take time to introduce topics thoroughly and in a lively way. This successfully engages pupils' interest and promotes their understanding. For example, as preparation for their work on movement, Year 6 pupils observed how parts of their bodies behaved during stretching movements in gymnastics. They also studied the work of a wide range of traditional and contemporary artists and photographic journalists.
94. Teachers respond very positively to all pupils' ideas and efforts. This successfully promotes pupils' confidence. They enjoy art and are very keen to discuss their current and previous work. Teachers work well with support assistants. They ensure that all pupils with special educational needs or English as an additional language are fully involved and subsequently make good progress. There are no significant differences in the learning of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.
95. Pupils' learning in art makes a valuable contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. For example, their growing appreciation of the beauty around them supports their spiritual development. Similarly, their interpretation of the work of artists and craftspeople promotes their cultural development.
96. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and this contributes to the quality of work produced throughout the school. National guidelines have been introduced. These form a good basis for planning topics and regularly assessing pupils' learning. There are some satisfactory links with ICT when Years 4 and 5 pupils explore shape, colour and pattern as part of their computer skills lessons. Initiatives, such as Year 5 pupils' sculpture workshops, soundly promote pupils' interest and learning. The very successful Millennium Sculpture Project involved the whole school in designing and producing concrete tiles representing different countries of the world. This scheme very successfully captured pupils' imagination, excited their interest in large scale work and will culminate in a permanent, high quality art display in the courtyard.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. No lessons were observed in Year 6. However, discussions with pupils and an analysis of their work completed the previous term, enabled judgements to be made. By the end of the key stage, pupils have made satisfactory progress through the school and are attaining in line with national expectations in designing and making. This shows an improvement since the last inspection, when the design element of the subject was unsatisfactory.

98. By the age of 11, pupils understand the importance of designing and planning as part of the making process. Labelling clearly identifies appropriate materials. Pupils use their knowledge of focused tasks well in the choice of materials for their powered vehicles. They measure and cut accurately, reinforcing corners to ensure rigidity and show good skills in overcoming problems of assembling a drive mechanism linked to a battery powered motor. Pupils show a good understanding of the importance of evaluation of the finished product and how this evaluation informs future work. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the importance of the appearance of the finished products and there are good links with art and design, particularly in the accurate painting of the vehicles. Pupils have underdeveloped skills in textiles and food technology because of the changeover from the previous curriculum. However, these weaknesses are being addressed by the new curriculum during the next two terms.
99. Pupils are very enthusiastic about the subject and interviews with pupils clearly indicate that they enjoy its challenge because 'It's fun and we learn how to make different things'. The disassembly of different types of boxes in Year 3 gives pupils a good insight into how materials are joined and the importance of using the correct material for its planned purpose. Pupils use this information appropriately when designing their own nets to make a package. There are good links with art and ICT for the labelling of these boxes. Year 3 pupils make good progress in their food technology skills because the planning of the recent topic caught their imagination. Carefully planned testing and tasting of different types of bread and fillings preceded the making of sandwiches. The results of these investigations are clearly displayed by the good use of a computer data handling program.
100. The newly introduced curriculum is leading directly to some good work in using textiles in Years 4 and 5, where both years are making purses as a result of the changeover from the old to the new curriculum. Well illustrated books in Year 4 about their purse making topic give clear evidence of pupils' good knowledge of the design process and the properties of different materials. Focused tasks are appropriately planned by teachers and this helps pupils to improve their knowledge in specific skills. For example, pupils tried a variety of stitches before deciding which was the most effective and strongest for joining materials. The finished purses show good individuality, a very good understanding of the importance of secure fastening and an effective evaluation which clearly illustrated pupils' understanding of the difficulties they had encountered and how they were overcome.
101. Teaching observed during the inspection was good and during these lessons the pupils made good progress in the acquisition and development of their skills. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, mainly as a result of well focused in-service training that has improved teachers' skills and knowledge. This was particularly evident in a Year 5 lesson, which resulted in a very thorough investigation into the properties of a range of fabrics that pupils will use in a later topic. Teachers use questioning very well; for example, well focused questioning enabled pupils to understand how fabrics for a money container could be combined to have a pleasing external appearance, whilst also being hard wearing. They plan carefully for pupils of all abilities and, as a result of this and the careful grouping of pupils, pupils, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress. The new curriculum has strengthened links with other subjects. For example, Year 4 pupils show a good understanding of electrical circuits when deciding which of three different types of switches they will use to protect a valuable vase. The tracking of the development of pupils' skills is now good, with the co-ordinator's assessments being used at the end of each year's topic. This assessment has only recently been introduced, but it is rightly seen by the school as a way of accurately monitoring pupils' progress so

that the future curriculum can be adjusted to build on their strengths and address perceived weaknesses.

102. The new co-ordinator gives good quality leadership to the subject. In her brief time in school, she has monitored standards by interviewing pupils and has been instrumental in reorganising resources to meet the needs of year topics. This is a very good initiative as it ensures that a range of relevant materials is easily available and the checking and replacement of stock is quickly carried out.

GEOGRAPHY

103. Only two lessons were observed during the week of the inspection, both in Year 6, so evidence for overall judgements is taken from scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and teachers' planning documents and from talking to pupils and teachers. Standards of attainment are broadly in line with national expectations, but in the lessons seen Year 6 pupils attained levels above this. In their local study within the topic 'In the News' pupils showed a high level of understanding of the problems posed by their local main road – the A14. They studied detailed maps prepared by the local authority and considered carefully the various options, together with all the difficulties raised for the local environment. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of environmental change and sustainable development. They are aware of the importance of the road for commuters and for the transport of exports and imports, largely from docks at Harwich and Felixstowe to the Midlands. They discuss maturely the options of park and ride, the possible creation of a new road for buses only along a former railway track and the implications for themselves and others. Pupils of all abilities are appropriately challenged by the teacher's clever use of the four separate strategies proposed, giving the least complicated to the lower attaining pupils. All pupils made equally good progress in this lesson.
104. Analysis of pupils' work shows that across the school they make good progress, improving their skills of geographical enquiry. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make similarly good progress. Year 3 pupils have studied settlements, linked to their history work on 'Invaders'. In Year 4, pupils study the weather, recording patterns over two weeks, identifying cloud patterns, recording rain statistics and writing good definitions of a microclimate. They are familiar with the Beaufort scale. Year 5 pupils make a thorough study of rivers, both local and from across the world, acquiring appropriate vocabulary such as 'meander', 'source' and 'estuary' and learning of the importance of such rivers as the Nile, Rhine and Mississippi.
105. No overall judgement can be made about teaching, but the teaching observed in Year 6 was good and very good. Teachers have a good subject knowledge and set a high level of challenge for their pupils. Plenary sessions are well used to reinforce learning objectives and share work completed. In one lesson, preparatory homework was effective in enabling pupils to improve their standard of work, but the use made of homework is inconsistent. Teachers' lesson planning is good and, in the better of the two lessons seen, appropriate tasks were set for pupils of all different abilities. Pupils bring good and very good attitudes to their lessons, which results in a very positive work atmosphere.
106. The subject is well led. The co-ordinator has recently drawn up a new draft policy and scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines. Additional curriculum time has been given to the subject, which is now more broadly based, and this provides greater continuity of learning through the school and better progression in the teaching of skills. The curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Assessment procedures are good and the co-ordinator sets tasks after each

half term study unit. Samples of work are compared and levelled using National Curriculum criteria to show pupils' attainment and the progress they have made. Pupils are encouraged to improve their literacy skills; for example, they are asked to write in full sentences, 'It is important because...'. Good cross-curricular links are made with history and science and pupils' cultural development is enhanced through the study of other countries such as India and St. Lucia. The subject has a low focus round the school, with few displays of pupils' work. Insufficient use is made of field study trips and of ICT to support the subject. Resources are generally good, but the need for more up-to-date videos is recognised. The co-ordinator monitors the subject through assessment tasks and viewing teachers' planning, but, as at the time of the last inspection, does not see teaching and learning within the classroom. This is acknowledged by the school and has been incorporated into this year's school improvement plan. However, overall, there has been a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.

HISTORY

107. During the inspection history was being taught in Years 4 and 5 only. Further evidence for judgements is taken from a scrutiny of pupils' books and displays and from talking to pupils and teachers. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is above national expectations. They show a good grasp of historical interpretation and enquiry and have a good understanding of a number of periods of history, including the Invaders, Tudors and Victorians. They show a good awareness of the chronology of these periods. They talk confidently about life for children in the Victorian era, referring to mangles, washtubs and penny farthing bicycles, and have good recall of the social history of the time.
108. Pupils make good progress across the school. Both Years 3 and 4 have been studying the Invaders, prior to a reorganisation of topics. This follows the adoption of a new policy and scheme of work based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority's guidelines for Curriculum 2000. Pupils have visited Verulamium and West Stow as part of their studies and during the inspection a Year 4 class presented a play to parents, recounting the story of Queen Boudicca. Other classes have benefited from Tudor and Greek days and a visit from a 'Roman Centurion'. These additions to the curriculum greatly enhance the quality of the pupils' learning and hasten their progress. Year 5 pupils studying the Tudors showed a good understanding of the reasons for the Spanish Armada, the sequence of events and the main personalities involved. The teacher fired their imagination and enthusiasm by asking for eyewitness accounts for a newspaper of the time. Very good planning by the teacher ensured that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and higher attaining pupils, made good progress. All pupils show a good understanding of chronology, helped by the use of timelines to be found in all classrooms where history is being taught. Older pupils can look at events from two different points of view and offer reasons for varying accounts of events. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, sometimes through good planning for their level of attainment, sometimes with additional adult support and sometimes through working alongside higher attaining pupils.
109. Teaching is good and in two out of five lessons it is very good. Teachers are confident with the subject, plan well, employ a variety of methods, including the effective use of videos, and move lessons forward in clear progressive stages at a good pace, thereby maintaining pupils' interest at all times. Pupils show enthusiasm for the subject and excellent attitudes. Standards of presentation are high and behaviour is very good. Pupils want to learn. In a Year 5 lesson, they applauded two pupils who had delivered presentations about Katharine of Aragon and Sir Walter Raleigh, before going on to learn about differences between Tudor and modern day medicines, using appropriate herbs and flowers to make pomanders. The teacher used pupils very effectively as nurses from the past and present to get the learning objectives across to the class. The targeting of specific vocabulary across all planning is a strength.

110. Management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has recently produced a new draft policy and a revised scheme of work. Additional time has been made available, enabling the subject to become more broadly based and develop historical skills more progressively. Good links are made with literacy, for example, through notetaking and an exercise in the changing of tenses and person when writing an eye-witness account of the Armada, and in numeracy through the reference to time lines. Examples of good cross-curricular links were observed with geography, art and design and technology. The subject provides well for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, opportunities for which are a regular feature of teachers' planning. Resources are generally good, though a need for further artefacts is recognised. Provision for the assessment of pupils' work is good. The co-ordinator sets tasks after each study unit is completed. This enables him to monitor progress across the school although, as at the time of the last inspection, he is not enabled to monitor teaching and learning in the classrooms. This is being addressed in this year's school improvement plan. Monitoring by governors is similarly underdeveloped. Around the school there are some very good quality displays of pupils' work, enhanced by the use of colourful fabrics and artefacts. In some lessons an over-reliance on worksheets is inhibiting pupils' writing at length and planning appropriate tasks for pupils of all levels of attainment is inconsistent. Marking is sometimes cursory and the school has identified the need to develop the use of ICT to enhance the curriculum. Little use is made of homework. There has been considerable improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

111. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils by the age of 11 have made good progress and their attainment is in line with national expectations; in some areas of the curriculum, attainment is above. However, the use of ICT to support pupils' learning across the curriculum has not continued the development mentioned in the last inspection and is now unsatisfactory.
112. The teaching of ICT throughout the school has changed considerably since the beginning of the academic year. An excellent initiative involving the school, parents, governors and the local community has resulted in the building of an up-to-date computer suite with a large interactive teaching screen. Pupils are set according to their mathematical ability and taught by two very knowledgeable teachers for a half hour session per week. As a result of the very good quality teaching, the excellent resources and the grouping of pupils by ability, the rate of pupils' learning is consistently high. As a result, they are making very quick progress in developing new skills. They have a tremendous enthusiasm for the subject and work incredibly hard during lessons, with many of them trying out their newly learnt skills on their computers at home.
113. By the age of 11, pupils have good confidence in using various programs. They open a file, amend work, print and save. They have good skills in the communications aspect of the subject. They have designed their own multi-media web pages with hyperlink on such subjects as animals and football, with one pupil organising a holiday competition. Pupils are confident in importing pictures, which they use to good effect. They are developing good evaluative skills and these are being used well by the school to create its own web site with the help of an extra-curricular club for higher attaining pupils. Pupils have above average skills in data handling and use the information to create graphs in both two and three dimensions. In control and modelling, pupils have satisfactory skills.
114. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in all aspects of the subject. This is due to a well organised curriculum that was drawn up by the co-ordinator and the good use of teachers' expertise. Lessons are very carefully planned and make very good use of pupils' well developed collaborative skills. This results in pupils learning well from each

other as well as from the teaching input. Teachers use open-ended questioning very effectively. For example, pupils in Year 3 were asked 'What do you notice about the bar chart'. Answers ranged from the use of colour to the importance of clear labelling and the appropriateness of different types of graph to show information. As a result, pupils were able to represent data in a relevant way. Plenaries at the end of lessons have a very strong impact on pupils' learning. Not only do they summarise what pupils have learnt in the lesson, but also outline how this new knowledge is going to be built on in the future. As a result, pupils await the next ICT lesson with enthusiasm and excitement. The co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject and has designed good assessment procedures. The results of these clearly indicate pupils' attainment and progress and also inform the teachers' future planning.

115. Teachers successfully adjust the pace and challenge of the lesson to the ability of the pupils and this is helped by the organisation of the small teaching groups by ability. As a result, pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and those from minority ethnic groups, make good and often better progress in lessons. For example, lower attaining Year 5 pupils made excellent progress in using a control program to design a classroom of the future because of the very high quality teaching, the excellent individual support they received and the very good balance of teaching and practice times.
116. The school is aware that the current organisation of ICT is not at present leading to the use of the subject to support pupils' learning across the curriculum. There are fundamental difficulties that the school is addressing in the present school improvement plan. Most of the computers in the classroom are out of date and do not have the correct cross-curricular programs to support the curriculum. Teachers have also not yet benefited from the government initiated National Opportunities Fund training, which is designed to improve teachers' subject knowledge. The training is planned for later this year, but present budget restrictions do not allow the replacement of the old computers. Recent communications from the government suggest that grants will be available for the replacement within the next academic year. Until that time, the school is following the correct option in ensuring that that pupils' ICT skills are being appropriately developed and, wherever possible, linked with other areas of the curriculum in ICT lessons. However, this will mean that the use of ICT in pupils' learning will remain under-developed until teachers have received their training and the school has been able to purchase new personal computers to support pupils' learning in the classrooms.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

117. The local village college to which pupils transfer at the end of Year 6 has been designated a specialist school for the teaching of modern languages. As part of this initiative, all schools whose pupils move on to the college at the end of Year 6 receive specialist French teaching. All pupils at the junior school receive one half hour of French teaching each week from a language teacher from the college. Teaching is very effective. The teacher speaks French fluently and lessons are conducted with enthusiasm and energy. Lessons are delivered almost entirely in French, with very occasional use of English to ensure that pupils have understood a particular point. A very good variety of strategies are used, including flashcards, role-play and music. Pupils learn eagerly. They enjoy their lessons. Pupils' understanding is very good. They make good progress and confidently use a good variety of sentences and phrases. Their accents are generally good.

MUSIC

118. Standards in music are above national expectations. This marks an improvement since the last inspection, when standards were in line with national expectations. Pupils make good progress in learning. They have regular opportunities to sing, play musical instruments, compose, listen to and appraise music. Teachers and support staff are committed to ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language are fully involved in musical activities. This enables them to make as much progress as other pupils. There are no notable differences in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.
119. By Year 6, pupils sing enthusiastically from memory in music lessons and 'singing assemblies'. They know a good range of songs and hymns and are eager to learn new ones. They listen attentively, think about the words and sing with expression. As they move through the school, pupils develop control and a good awareness of phrasing. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 sing confidently and evidently enjoy singing in rounds as a 'warm up'. They recognise and respond to changes of tempo and sing their final assembly hymn joyfully. The older pupils rehearse and improve their lively rendition of, 'Who put the colours in the rainbow?' They take particular delight in singing 'jauntily' in response to the directions on the music.
120. Pupils have opportunities to create and develop their musical ideas using a range of good quality percussion instruments. For example, younger pupils created a simple composition to create the effect of a building site. Pupils make good progress and by Year 5 their compositions demonstrate an increasing awareness of musical elements, including dynamics and texture. In a lesson focusing on beat and rhythm, pupils worked very co-operatively in small groups, clapping and playing short phrases on tuned and untuned percussion instruments. By the end of the lesson they could recognise and begin to play a syncopated rhythm. Pupils listened with interest to each other's work and offered very constructive ideas about how it could be improved. In the course of the inspection, no lessons were observed in which pupils responded to pieces of music. However, they enjoy these activities and readily talk about them. Although most are not familiar with particular composers, pupils are able to identify the sounds made by orchestral instruments in pieces of work. They also have experience of responding to ways in which sounds convey a picture or a mood.
121. The quality of teaching is good overall. During the inspection, very good teaching was observed consistently at the upper end of the school. Teachers plan their lessons to include varied and interesting activities. Where teaching was most successful, lesson planning was meticulous. The purpose of the lesson was shared with pupils and reinforced effectively throughout the lesson. All lessons focused on pupils' active involvement and led to their enjoyment of music and progress in their learning. Procedures are now in place to assess pupils' progress regularly. However, this is not yet resulting in the planning of skills that closely match pupils' abilities. For example, in the lessons observed, all pupils were given similar tasks when using instruments, with no reference to their individual skills and experience. This limited the progress of the higher attaining pupils. In singing lessons, teaching is consistently good and often very good. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, confidence and high expectations of pupils' performance. A notable feature of teaching is the good relationships teachers maintain with their pupils. Their ready praise and patience promote pupils' confidence and willingness to participate in musical activities.
122. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable, provides good quality leadership and is committed to promoting and encouraging pupils' interest in music. There are also several musicians on the staff. Their enthusiasm and expertise are successfully used, mainly in 'singing assemblies', and make a positive contribution to pupils' motivation and learning.

Music lessons and instrumental tuition take place in a well equipped music room. This provides pupils with ready access to instruments and space in which to practise and perform. However, pupils have very few planned opportunities to use their ICT skills to help in composition work or to capture, change and combine sounds. Apart from in lessons, the school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to extend their knowledge, understanding and musical skills. Participation in musical productions and performances in school by musical groups strongly contributes to pupils' musical development. Their interest is also heightened by opportunities for whole families to attend classical musical concerts. Pupils have opportunities to learn a range of instruments including the guitar, recorder, violin and cello, which promote the learning of those involved. Extra-curricular guitar lessons are very popular and almost 30 pupils regularly attend weekly lessons. As a result of the club, the 'Histon Hammers' rock group was founded and has since played at the village Millennium street party and other village functions. Teachers have noted that the club has had a particularly positive impact on older boys' attitudes to school. The achievements of the instrumentalists are celebrated when they perform for the school and present evening concerts. Unfortunately, during the inspection, it was not possible for the music ensemble to perform. However, a video was available which demonstrated their high standards, skills and versatility. Music makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in lessons and after-school activities. Pupils listen to recorded music as they enter and leave assemblies and teachers seize these opportunities to successfully extend pupils' knowledge of a wide range of musical instruments and music from different cultures.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

123. Pupils reach nationally expected standards in the aspects of the physical education curriculum that were seen during the inspection. This reflects the findings of the previous inspection. Teachers' planning for physical education indicates that all elements of the National Curriculum programmes of study receive appropriate attention. By the time they leave the school, pupils learn the skills associated with particular games and many extend their skill by taking part in competitive sports. The current whole school focus is on fitness, which links with learning about the body in science and also the Health Promoting School initiative which the school is pursuing. In the second half of the summer term all pupils swim several times each week in the school swimming pool. They receive certificates for their achievements, which often exceed the nationally expected standard for their age. Pupils also have the opportunity to take part in a programme of outdoor and adventurous activities. They do this through activities that take place on or around the school site and also as part of a residential school visit in Year 5.
124. Pupils of all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress overall. Teachers work well with support assistants to ensure that pupils with particular needs are well supported and encouraged. Pupils develop skills and perform with increasing control as they move through the school. During the inspection, pupils often made good or very good progress in the course of lessons observed. This was because of the high quality of teaching which motivated pupils and promoted good levels of effort and achievement. There is no significant difference in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.
125. Year 5 pupils made very good progress in learning about the short-term effects of exercise on their bodies in an energetic fitness lesson. Following their warm-up activities, pupils measured their heart rate. Later, following their cool down at the end of the lesson, they compared their resting heart rate. Working in small groups pupils devised short routines with skipping ropes, incorporating a sequence of different types of jumps. They worked hard, practising and improving their skills in the course of the lesson. Other Year 5 pupils also made very good progress in a dance session based on football. Working

very co-operatively in groups, pupils created and performed movement patterns which suggested the actions and reactions of players and supporters at a football match. By Year 6, pupils moved confidently in a lesson focusing on promoting pupils' overall fitness. They followed their teachers' instructions readily and performed initial stretching and floor exercises competently. Pupils sustained energetic activity throughout the lesson. They demonstrated sound levels of fluency and skill when controlling balls with their feet and hands, using dribbling, bouncing and throwing movements.

126. The teaching of physical education is satisfactory overall and examples of very effective teaching were seen during the inspection. Lessons are well planned to provide pupils with opportunities to move energetically and safely. There is good attention to warm-up and cool-down activities and opportunities for vigorous exercise specific to each lesson. Teachers pay great attention to health and safety. Pupils are aware of the need to change for physical education lessons and know that they must move safely around the hall. In all lessons, teachers manage their pupils very well. They have established very positive relationships with pupils and readily use both praise and challenge to motivate them. Teachers use pupils' demonstrations to successfully highlight good work. Pupils make particularly marked progress in their own learning when teachers encourage them to evaluate and comment on others' performance. The teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and some teachers have particular expertise, such as in dance, and this has a positive effect on pupils' enthusiasm for the subject. In the most successful lessons, teachers are very clear about what they want pupils to achieve. They share this with pupils in lively introductions and lessons proceed at a brisk pace. They give consistently clear instructions and good demonstrations and are explicit in their expectations of pupils' involvement and effort. As a result, pupils are highly motivated, participate very actively in the lesson and make very good progress in developing their skills.
127. The subject is very well led by an enthusiastic co-ordinator who has worked hard and successfully to build a very good range of extra-curricular clubs that promote a high level of both boys' and girls' interest and involvement throughout the year. The school also takes part in a range of sporting fixtures that include girls' and boys' football, netball and swimming galas. At present the girls' football team are county champions. The co-ordinator has revised the format of annual sports day to ensure that all pupils are able to actively participate. Currently priority is being given to drawing up a new policy and scheme of work to incorporate both local and national guidelines. There is very good monitoring of teaching and learning by the co-ordinator. As a result of a teacher questionnaire this term, weaknesses in the teaching of gymnastics were highlighted. The school addressed this issue by providing in-service training led by a specialist teacher. Since then the co-ordinator has monitored gymnastics lessons taught by some teachers. The results of these observations have resulted in more training for the teachers to develop pupils' skills further. The school has good resources for physical education, including a swimming pool, school grounds and a large hall equipped with suitable gymnastic apparatus. The availability and appropriate use of such facilities add to the quality of pupils' learning.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. During the inspection only three lessons were observed, all from Years 4 and 5. Further evidence for judgements is taken from a scrutiny of pupils' work, displays and teachers' planning and from talking to teachers and pupils. Attainment overall is above the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. There are no significant differences between the achievement of boys and girls, and pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make good progress and are achieving well. No pupils are withdrawn from religious education lessons.

129. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have a good knowledge of Christian beliefs and values, as well as a wide number of other world faiths, such as Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. Their work reveals a good understanding of Divali and they write empathetically on subjects such as 'If I were a Hindu.....'. Year 4 pupils showed a good understanding of their local church, following a recent visit. They were familiar with Christian beliefs and symbols and understood the purpose and significance of the font, pews, altar, pulpit, lectern and crucifix. The teachers had fired their imagination by asking them to write a guidebook for the church for use by a non-Christian. Year 5 pupils show a good understanding of Buddhism, being able to name and discuss the Four Noble Truths and the Five Precepts of Buddha's teachings, relating his ideas to their own contributions for making the world a better place, for example 'Be grateful for what you've got', 'Don't laugh at people' and 'Don't hurt living things'.
130. Teaching has improved since the last inspection. In the three lessons observed, teaching was consistently good and in one case very good. What pupils are going to learn in the lesson is clearly displayed and emphasised. In the very good lesson the teacher had planned to a high level, with work set for three separate ability groups. She was very well prepared, with resources all ready on desks and lesson learning objectives and important pointers written up in advance. She used a variety of methods, including a video, to ensure that no time was wasted and that the lesson developed at a good pace through progressive stages, keeping pupils' interest at all times. She questioned very effectively, using open-ended questions and challenging pupils to think deeply, drawing on their own experiences - 'Have you ever made a promise?', 'Why do you think people make promises?' - and had high expectations of pupils' tasks and conduct. Very effective use was made of the plenary session, with a spokesperson from each group reporting back to the whole class. In all three lessons seen pupils' attitudes and behaviour, their relationships with teachers and each other and their manners were very good. For example, in a Year 4 lesson a pupil was heard to say to his neighbour, 'Excuse me, could you shuffle down a bit?' These attitudes enable pupils to learn at a good pace and teachers to teach very effectively with few words of censure or concerns about class management. Where it is available, teachers make good use of the support of other adults.
131. Leadership of the subject is good. A new policy and draft scheme of work based on the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus are in place. One of the improvements arising from this is that pupils now study six different religions. Procedures for assessment have been improved and needs identified, for example, to give more time to the teaching of Buddhism. Assessment tasks are set by the co-ordinator on completion of each study unit and results judged against agreed syllabus criteria. Greater provision has been made for developing pupils' understanding of meaning and purpose, values and beliefs and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Visits to the local church and synagogue and visitors to assembly such as a Sikh parent enhance the quality of the pupils' learning. Good use is made of specialist teaching in Year 4, where the co-ordinator teaches two classes. Opportunities are taken in assemblies to present different religions, but there is now less teaching of religious education in assemblies. This is a further improvement. The subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which appears regularly in teachers' planning, with pupils discussing, for example, human dilemmas and the importance of keeping promises. Year 3 pupils wrote sensitively about their feelings on entering a church. Literacy skills are developed through pupils' writing and in one lesson observed reference to an octagonal font helped to improve their numeracy skills. There is a strong awareness of religions around the school through the number of high quality displays. Teachers' planning is good overall, but there are inconsistencies in the way that teachers plan for different groups of pupils. The school is aware that insufficient use is made of ICT to support

learning in the subject. The use made of visits from governors to see work going on in classrooms is underdeveloped. Resources are good, but there is need of more artefacts for the many different religions studied. However, there has been a good overall improvement in the subject since the previous inspection.