

INSPECTION REPORT

FAKENHAM JUNIOR SCHOOL

Fakenham

LEA area: Norfolk

Unique reference number: 120805

Headteacher: Ms L Cook

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Skinner
23160

Dates of inspection: 2nd to 5th July 2001

Inspection number: 197659

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	7 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Queens Road Fakenham Norfolk
Postcode:	NR21 8BN
Telephone number:	01328 862188
Fax number:	01328 856678
Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Fakenham Junior School
Name of chair of governors:	Mr I Reynolds
Date of previous inspection:	September 1997

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
23169	Carole Skinner	Registered inspector	Mathematics	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
9977	Fran Luke	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
23434	Marie Gibbon	Team inspector	English, music, special educational needs.	
18083	Judith Howell	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, information and communication technology.	
22745	Rosalind Johns	Team inspector	Geography, history, religious education.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
19142	Audrey Quinnell	Team inspector	Art, physical education, equal opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

Phoenix Educational Consultants
 "Thule"
 60 Joy Lane
 Whitstable
 Kent
 CT5 4LT

01227 273449

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Complaints Manager
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	9
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	22
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	23
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	27

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Fakenham Junior School educates boys and girls aged between seven and 11 years. There are 375 pupils on roll, which is larger than most other schools of its type. The school has grown in size in recent years and its numbers are still increasing. There are similar numbers of boys and girls on roll. Seven pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and all pupils speak English as their first language. There are 123 pupils on the school's register of special educational needs, which is higher than the national average. Two pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below average. Approximately 13 per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is broadly average. During the last school year, 16 pupils joined the school and 15 left it at times other than those of the normal entry to or transfer from the school. This represents an average turnover of pupils. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The leadership and management of the school are good and the quality of teaching is consistently good. Standards are below average in English and mathematics, although those in mathematics are rising as a result of good teaching. The school has plans in place to address weaknesses in writing. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The good leadership and management of the school by the headteacher, other staff with management responsibilities and the governors, and their commitment to self-evaluation, ensure clear direction for the school in raising standards.
- The consistently good quality of teaching throughout the school is helping to raise standards in some areas.
- The good provision for the pupils' moral and social development provides a consistent framework within which pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and develop positive attitudes towards learning.
- The school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the pupils' welfare, which help them to become secure and confident learners.
- The school offers a varied and interesting range of learning opportunities, and the curriculum is enriched by many additional activities.

What could be improved

- The standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics, geography, history, music and religious education, which are below average in Year 6.
- Assessment procedures and the use of assessment information to inform teachers' planning.
- The role of the subject co-ordinators in monitoring the standards achieved by the pupils and the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997, since when its improvement has been satisfactory. Since that time, there has been a very high turnover of staff, including a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and co-ordinator for special educational needs. Twelve teachers were appointed during the past two years and the school has been without a permanent English co-ordinator for two terms. Recruitment difficulties have added to these factors, which have all had a detrimental effect on the pace of progress. However, although standards in English and mathematics are lower in Year 6 than they were four years ago, those in mathematics and reading are improving. Raising standards in writing is the main priority in the school development plan. There have been significant improvements in the school's provision for design and technology and information and communication technology, which have led to rising standards in both subjects. However, standards are now lower in music, as there is insufficient expertise amongst staff, and in geography, history and religious education, largely because pupils' attainment is limited by their weak literacy skills. The quality of teaching has improved, despite the difficulties the school has encountered, and there is

better provision for pupils with statements of special educational need. There is a strong, shared commitment to improvement and the school has a good capacity to succeed.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	C	C	E	E	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
mathematics	C	D	D	E	
science	B	C	B	B	

In 2000, standards in English fell from previously average levels, largely because of weaknesses in writing and underachievement by boys. The proportion of pupils who achieved Level 4 (average) in reading rose from 69 per cent in 1998 to 80 per cent in 2000, and the percentage reaching Level 5 (above average) rose from 23 per cent in 1999 to 37 per cent in 2000. In writing, by contrast, only 60 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 and this has not improved over three years. Only five per cent of pupils reached Level 5 in writing in 2000. In mathematics, the proportion of pupils who reach both Level 4 and Level 5 in the national tests has increased but has not kept pace with the national trend of improvement. Science results are good because there has been a marked emphasis on improving pupils' scientific knowledge and understanding. The school did not meet its targets for 75 per cent of the pupils to reach Level 4 and above in English and 70 per cent in mathematics in 2000. It has set even more challenging targets for 2001, but indications are that these will not be met, although standards are improving.

The findings of the inspection are that the standards achieved by 11 year olds are below average in English and mathematics and average in science. Standards in mathematics are at least average, and rising, in Years 3, 4 and 5 as pupils benefit from the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Standards in information and communication technology and design and technology are average. Those in art and physical education are above average. In geography, history, music and religious education, standards are below average. Many teachers have limited expertise in music, and in the other three subjects, pupils' attainment is affected by their weak literacy skills. Pupils in the current Year 6 entered school with low standards of attainment, especially in English. Their achievement has been satisfactory during their time in school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils show interest in their work and have a positive attitude to learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Most pupils behave appropriately in lessons, but some boys display unacceptable behaviour on occasions, which teachers manage very well. Parents' concerns about some pupils using bad language at break times were found to be justified.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils and staff get on well together and this creates a happy learning environment. Pupils show initiative in a variety of situations and work well with others in lessons.

Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average and there are few unauthorised absences. Lessons start promptly and few pupils are late.
------------	---

Pupils' positive attitudes and their relationships and personal development greatly assist their learning.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	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.

The quality of teaching and learning was at least good in 71 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection. Three per cent of the lessons seen were unsatisfactory and ten per cent were very good. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in English and good in mathematics. Writing skills are not developed well enough, but numeracy skills are taught well. The grouping of pupils by attainment in mathematics is particularly successful in ensuring all pupils' needs are met. In some English lessons, the needs of different groups of pupils are not met well enough. Teachers have good knowledge and expertise in most areas of the curriculum but few have expertise in music. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and ensure that pupils understand the objectives of the lesson by explaining them clearly and referring to them at the end of the lesson to check whether they have been met. This helps pupils to develop a good knowledge of their own learning. Teachers use a good range of methods, which enable pupils to learn effectively. Teachers' skilful questioning challenges pupils to think for themselves and probes their knowledge and understanding. This develops pupils' interest and concentration well and encourages them to be independent thinkers. Teachers manage pupils well and are successful in holding their attention and encouraging their concentration and application in lessons. Lessons generally move at a good pace and this helps to keep pupils motivated and engaged in learning. There are variations in teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work and how well they present it. Teachers' marking of pupils' work also shows inconsistencies.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school offers a varied and interesting range of good quality learning opportunities. The National Numeracy Strategy is being implemented well and is having a positive effect on raising standards. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is helping to raise standards in reading but there are weaknesses in writing which the school has identified as its main priority for improvement. Information and communication technology, art and physical education are strong features of the school's provision. Curricular planning is of good quality.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory. There is effective provision for developing pupils' spelling skills in the 'Attack Spelling' programme and in classes where learning support assistants work with individual pupils or with small groups. However, not all classes have additional support for all literacy lessons, and pupils' progress is more limited in some lessons as a result. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational need are met well and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement.
Provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. Spiritual awareness is fostered by acts of worship when pupils thoughtfully reflect on their actions. The school's high expectations of pupils help them to develop a strong moral code and pupils are taught to respect and value differences. Good social development is promoted through everyday activities and opportunities to show concern for the wider community. The school enables pupils to learn about their own cultural heritage and the traditions of their community. The curriculum is also planned to provide pupils with experiences that reflect positive attitudes towards other cultures and languages but these are insufficiently developed.

How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. It has very good health and safety and child protection procedures. Teachers know pupils well and take great care to ensure their welfare. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and very good procedures for supporting pupils' personal development. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but the information gained from assessment and from analysing data is not used rigorously enough to inform teachers' planning.
--	---

The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory, overall. There are not enough opportunities for parents to meet formally with their child's teacher to discuss progress and targets for improvement. The Wednesday activities afternoon makes a good contribution to the pupils' personal development.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher provides strong leadership and is very well supported by other staff with management responsibilities. There is a strong team spirit amongst the staff and a shared commitment to raising standards. The role of co-ordinators in monitoring and evaluating standards of attainment and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects is underdeveloped. The areas identified for improvement in the school development plan closely match those found by this inspection.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors provide good support for the headteacher and staff and have a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. Their own monitoring of the school's provision through regular visits is limited. Governors make a good contribution to the management of the school because they discuss all issues openly and are prepared to challenge and question the headteacher and staff in a constructive way.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is a very strong commitment to self-evaluation throughout the school, which includes detailed analysis of the pupils' performance in national and internal tests. However, the outcomes of monitoring are not used well enough to have an impact on raising standards. Through her own regular observations of teachers, the headteacher knows her staff well, is aware of their strengths and uses these to influence practice throughout the school.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Resources are used well to promote the pupils' progress and careful thought is given to linking expenditure to the school development plan. This has been particularly successful in raising standards in mathematics. Support staff are not always deployed effectively during the introductions to lessons. Governors ensure that they receive sound value for money when making spending decisions and consider a number of different options before making financial commitments.

The school is well staffed and its accommodation and resources support the teaching of the curriculum well. However, the very high turnover of staff during the past two years has had an adverse effect on the quality of education provided for some pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's high expectations of their children. • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The teaching is good. • Their children make good progress. • The school is well managed and led. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of homework provided. • The information they are given about their children's progress. • The way the school works together with parents. • The range of extracurricular activities offered to the pupils.

The findings of the inspection largely agree with the positive views of the parents. However, in English, especially writing, teachers' expectations are not high enough and pupils do not make good progress. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning, and the range of extracurricular activities provided is satisfactory. However, there are insufficient opportunities for parents to meet formally with teachers to discuss their children's progress. The school is seeking to work more closely with parents but current arrangements are satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. In the end of Key Stage 2 national tests, standards in English were above average in 1997 and close to the national average in 1998 and 1999. They fell to well below average in 2000. In mathematics, they have been below the national average every year except in 1998, when they were average. In science, the pupils' results have fluctuated between average and above average from year to year. When compared with similar schools, the pupils' results in 2000 were well below average in English and mathematics and above average in science. The school did not reach the targets that were set in English and mathematics. However, the school's analysis of individual pupils' results in the 2000 tests showed that 95 per cent of the pupils achieved or exceeded the levels predicted for them given their low attainment on entry to the school. Almost a third of the pupils in the school have special educational needs, which is high and inevitably affects the school's performance in national tests when compared with other schools. Standards in English have fallen mainly due to weaknesses in writing and underachievement by boys. The proportion of pupils who achieved Level 4 (average) in reading has risen from 69 per cent in 1998 to 80 per cent in 2000, and the percentage reaching Level 5 (above average) rose from 23 per cent in 1999 to 37 per cent in 2000. In writing, by contrast, only 60 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 and this did not improve over three years. Only five per cent of pupils reached Level 5 in writing in 2000. Whereas the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has had a positive effect on developing pupils' reading skills, it has not had a similar effect on raising standards in writing because pupils have been given too few opportunities to develop their skills in sufficient depth. In mathematics, standards in the national tests have been below average because pupils have not had enough experience of solving problems by selecting from a range of strategies and operations. Pupils have attained relatively well in the science tests because there has been an increased emphasis on acquiring scientific knowledge and understanding.

2. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, standards are below average in English and mathematics, and average in science. This represents a decline in standards in English and mathematics since the school's previous inspection in 1997. The findings of this inspection differ from the results of the 2000 national tests in English because speaking and listening skills are taken into account by the inspection. Judgements in mathematics reflect the results of the 2000 tests, but in science are lower because fewer pupils are on course to achieve Level 5 than in the previous year. These pupils have had their education disrupted during the past two years as a result of the high numbers of staff leaving the school and appointed to it. The school has set challenging targets for the 2001 tests in English and mathematics, but, although teachers' assessments indicate that some improvement is expected, pupils are not on course to achieve these targets. However, pupils in the current Year 6 entered school with low standards of attainment, especially in English. Their achievement has been satisfactory during their time in school. Standards are similar to those found in most schools in design and technology and information and

communication technology, which represents a good improvement since the last inspection, when they were below average. In art and physical education, pupils achieve well and reach above average standards, as at the time of the previous inspection. In geography, history and music, standards are below average, and in religious education they do not meet the expectations of the locally Agreed Syllabus. These judgements are lower than those made by the last inspection.

3. In English, in Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are below average. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other's contributions during lessons. There is, however, a small minority of pupils, almost always boys, whose lack of attention affects the pace of learning in some lessons. The majority of pupils respond to questions willingly, and contribute ideas and opinions that are relevant to the topic being discussed. Standards in reading are also below average. Most pupils are able to talk about the plot and characters in a book and some more able pupils make simple predictions as to what might happen next. However, few pupils compare and contrast the books they have read in any detail. Most pupils read with understanding and fluency. There is, however, a number of pupils whose lack of fluency and more limited range of vocabulary adversely affects their rate of progress. Pupils' attainment in writing is well below average. More able and average pupils are able to organise their writing in a logical sequence. However, only a few extend their ideas in any depth or detail, or use a varied range of vocabulary and expression. Less able pupils often need support to record their ideas and opinions in an appropriate order. There is a variable level of accuracy in all but the best writing, and standards of basic punctuation and spelling are low in many pupils' work.

4. In mathematics, standards in Year 6 are below average. Pupils are developing sound mathematical knowledge and skills in number, algebra, space, shape, measures and data handling, but there are not enough opportunities for them to use this knowledge and apply it to a variety of problem-solving situations. However, standards are improving as a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. There is an increased emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to use and apply a wider range of mental and written strategies for problem-solving. As a result, standards in Years 3 and 4 are typical for the age of the pupils and those in Year 5 are good. These pupils are achieving well in relation to their standards when they entered the school. An analysis of pupils' work indicates that they have a sound understanding of all aspects of the science curriculum by the time they leave the school and have deepened their knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas. However, evidence indicates that, throughout the school, many scientific investigations are too directed by teachers and there are few opportunities for pupils to plan and carry out a scientific enquiry for themselves.

5. In art, good teaching of skills and techniques leads to above average standards of attainment. Some of the paintings by pupils in Year 6 are of a very high standard and show great attention to detail. Pupils' very good drawing skills are used well to create a three dimensional effect in high quality still life sketches of everyday objects. Pupils have a good understanding of the styles of various artists, such as Jackson Pollock and Graham Sutherland, which helps to improve their own work. In design and technology, in Year 6, the evaluation of products is a prominent part of the pupils' work. When evaluating the soft toys they have made, pupils' recognise that the quality of the finished product depends on how successful the design is. In geography, in Year 6, pupils have made steady gains in their knowledge and understanding of different mountain environments. They name and locate a number of mountain ranges and compare the climatic features of the Lake District, Scottish Highlands, Welsh Mountains and the Himalayas. Pupils use simple coordinates to locate features on a map but are uncertain about using an Ordnance Survey map to locate settlements of various types. Their skills of interpretation and use of scales, symbols and keys are insecure. In history, pupils in Year 6 show that they have sound insight into the events of World War II and the post war period. They draw sensible conclusions about the

effects of the Blitz and its aftermath on the civilian population as they describe a night in the London underground. Although topics are taught in adequate detail, standards in literacy, which are lower than at the previous inspection, undermine pupils' attainment in history and geography, especially in the researching and recording of their work.

6. One of the main factors contributing to the improvement in standards in information and communication technology is the installation of a computer suite and the provision of the latest teaching aids, which include an interactive whiteboard and an image projector. These innovations have already had a significant impact on the attainment of the pupils. Pupils in Year 6 know how to control events in a predetermined way and present a set of linked multimedia pages, on such topics as 'Dinosaurs' and 'How to keep a cat', which incorporate images and text. Below average standards in music in Year 6 are evident in the pupils' singing and composing. Few pupils were able to use their voices effectively to follow the melody when performing their own compositions. Discussions with Year 6 pupils indicated that, although they had been given an appropriate range of experiences, their recall and understanding of what they had learned in music lessons was not always secure. In physical education, pupils in Year 6 make good progress in developing individual routines in gymnastics, and competently combine five different balances using different parts of the body within a smoothly performed sequence. They show very good control of their movements. The use of the school's own indoor heated swimming pool helps pupils to achieve above average standards in swimming. In religious education, pupils have an appropriate understanding of some major world faiths, such as Christianity, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam and how they relate to their own lives. However, their written work lacks depth and, although there is sound coverage of topics throughout the school, pupils' attainment is undermined by weaknesses in their skills in speaking and writing

7. There were weaknesses in the provision for pupils with special educational needs at the time of the previous inspection, which are now being addressed. Overall, pupils with special educational needs make sound progress and reach appropriate standards relative to their previous attainment in most areas of learning. Those pupils who are on the higher stages of the special educational needs register frequently make good progress towards their individual targets, particularly those that relate to their personal and social development. Pupils make good progress in numeracy because they are taught in small groups by the mathematics co-ordinator and are given work that is both demanding and well matched to their needs. In literacy, provision for pupils with special educational needs is mostly made within the class, and is not as effective as in numeracy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults, and pupils' personal development were strengths of the school. Pupils' attitudes to work and their behaviour were good.

9. The majority of pupils continue to be enthusiastic and keen to come to school and have positive attitudes to their learning. Throughout the school, pupils show interest in activities, and most listen well and contribute to question and answer sessions. However, in some lessons, a minority of pupils find it difficult to sit still and listen during whole class sessions. Pupils generally follow instructions well and are keen to get started on activities; they settle to tasks quickly and concentrate well. This was a strong feature of the 'activity afternoon', when pupils participated in a wide range of activities with others of all age groups. Pupils generally work co-operatively in pairs or in groups and help one another, sometimes without being supervised by adults. They share ideas and take account of others. In a physical education lesson, pupils cheered others on. Pupils also work well independently. They handle resources with care, although some pupils' exercise books are not well looked after.

10. Pupils' behaviour, which was judged to be good at the time of the previous inspection, is satisfactory. Teachers provide good role models for pupils. They treat them with respect and expect pupils to do the same. As a result of this, the majority of pupils behave appropriately. Pupils are aware of the school and class rules and know the difference between right and wrong. They are generally polite and courteous to members of staff, to each other and to other adults in the school. In lessons, pupils usually put up their hands and wait their turn to speak, but sometimes they call out or talk when they should be listening. In the classroom, the pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall. However, in a small number of lessons, some boys show signs of poor behaviour, and this has an adverse effect on learning. Behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes is satisfactory, but the evidence of the inspection shows that some parents' concerns about pupils using unsuitable language are justified.

11. Pupils form constructive relationships with each other and with staff. At times, relationships are very good, for example, during the activities afternoon, when pupils from different year groups work together on a variety of tasks. At other times, as seen in a physical education lesson, there is friction between boys and girls and they do not work well together.

12. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning and there are some opportunities for self-evaluation. However, opportunities for independent research are limited in some lessons. There are other opportunities for children to take responsibility. For example, Year 6 pupils act as monitors for setting out the lunch boxes, working in the library and taking round letters and registers. In addition there are class monitors. Pupils also show considerable initiative in raising money for charities.

13. Attendance continues to exceed the national average, as at the time of the previous inspection. Few pupils are late to school. Registration periods take place before assembly each day, and lessons begin promptly. Overall, the pupils' attitudes to school and good attendance have a positive influence on their learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. The quality of teaching and learning is good, overall, throughout the school. This judgement is broadly the same as that made by the school's previous inspection. However, in 1997, ten per cent of the teaching seen was unsatisfactory and 50 per cent was at least good. In this inspection, 87 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. The quality of teaching was at least good in 71 per cent of these, which is much higher than in the previous inspection. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching was three per cent, which is lower than in 1997. Ten per cent of the teaching was very good, which is the same as in the last inspection. The quality of learning is also good and closely reflects the figures and judgements for the quality of teaching. During the inspection, the teaching seen generally met the needs of boys and girls equally well. As a result of the analysis of the results of the national tests, the school has identified the significant underachievement of boys in English and has begun to develop strategies to address the situation. Teachers have purchased texts and resources that particularly interest and motivate boys, who are being encouraged to explore and use them. The quality of teaching and learning is good in mathematics, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, art and physical education. It is satisfactory in English, geography, history, music and religious education.

15. Across the school, teachers' knowledge and expertise in most areas of the curriculum are good. Music is the exception to this, where few teachers have sufficient confidence or knowledge of music to teach it to a high standard. This is reflected in the standards achieved by the pupils in music, especially at the upper end of the school, where the demands of the curriculum are high. Overall, teachers plan lessons thoroughly and identify clearly what pupils are expected to learn. They modify tasks to meet the needs of

different groups of pupils and ensure that pupils understand the objectives of the lesson by explaining them clearly and referring to them at the end of the lesson to check whether they have been met. This helps pupils to develop a good knowledge of their own learning. For example, towards the end of a Year 5 mathematics lesson for more able pupils, the teacher asked them to "Remind me of the key objective for this lesson" and then asked pupils if they considered they had achieved it. Teachers use a good range of methods, which enable pupils to learn effectively. Explanations are well structured and informative, and teachers' skilful questioning challenges pupils to think for themselves and probes their knowledge and understanding. This develops pupils' interest and concentration well and encourages them to be independent and learn for themselves.

16. Practical activities are purposeful and constructive, and teachers provide a good variety of opportunities for pupils to work individually, in pairs and in small groups. This was evident in a Year 4 science lesson, where pupils worked well in groups to discuss and explore how switches work in an electrical circuit. Teachers manage pupils well and are successful in holding their attention and encouraging their concentration and application to the task in hand. Teachers' insistence on high standards of behaviour, good listening and productive working encourages pupils to make a good effort in most lessons. Homework is used well to support pupils' learning. For example, in mathematics, pupils receive homework each Friday and teachers mark the homework with the pupils on Monday, picking up on misunderstandings and difficulties in discussion with the whole class. Teachers make very good use of a wide range of interesting resources to enliven lessons and enhance learning. Lessons generally move at a good pace and this helps to keep pupils motivated and engaged in learning. However, in a few lessons, the slow pace of questioning leads some pupils to become inattentive and teachers lose time in re-establishing acceptable behaviour.

17. Although the teaching of basic skills was mostly good in the lessons seen during the inspection, the analysis of pupils' work that has been completed throughout the year shows that there are weaknesses in teaching writing and spelling skills. There are also variations between teachers' expectations of the quality of pupils' work and how well they present it, which, for the most part, are not high enough. Teachers' marking of pupils' work also shows inconsistencies. The best practice shows pupils clearly how to improve their work and gives praise appropriately. However, some comments in pupils' books are over-congratulatory and inappropriate, giving no indication of how well pupils have achieved or what they should do to improve.

18. A very good mathematics lesson in Year 4 illustrated some of the most effective features of teaching. The lesson began with a very good 'mental warm-up' session, which involved placing decimal numbers in the correct order. This was fast-paced and well-structured and the teacher pitched the activities well to challenge different groups of pupils. Her lively, energetic explanations and skilful questioning made pupils think and work things out for themselves. This helped pupils to develop and refine their own strategies for working things out mentally. Pupils were asked to explain how they had worked out an answer and then the teacher asked, "How else could you have done this?" which prompted others to offer alternative strategies. The teacher was very successful in managing the class and enabling them to remain focused on the task. Her firm but sensitive management of potentially disruptive behaviour created a positive learning environment and helped pupils to remain engaged in the lesson. Because the teacher knew the pupils well and was aware of their limitations, she was able to ensure that the lesson contained a variety of approaches, including mathematical games, practical activities and paired work. When it became clear that some pupils were becoming restless during the whole class session, the teacher responded immediately by giving pupils activities to do at their desks, which settled them and refocused their attention.

19. Overall the quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory and these pupils develop their skills and learning appropriately. In most but not all lessons, teachers plan and organise appropriate activities and, together with learning support assistants, provide a good level of support for pupils. However, in some lessons, activities do not match pupils' needs closely enough and, as a result, pupils become over dependent on support. Consequently, the rate at which they learn and acquire independence as learners is affected. Learning support assistants are appropriately involved in planning, and work effectively with groups and with individual pupils to support and monitor their progress. However the productive use of learning support assistants in whole class sessions to monitor pupils' responses and their progress towards their targets is limited. Teachers and learning support assistants know their pupils well and they provide a secure atmosphere in which pupils can develop their confidence and social skills. As a result, many pupils who have targets relating to behaviour and personal and social skills, and those on the higher stages of the special educational needs register, often make good progress.

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

20. At the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum was very broad, balanced and relevant and was enhanced by the rich experiences provided, especially in art and in creative writing. The provision of Wednesday afternoon activities enriched curricular breadth and balance and good medium term planning ensured that continuity and progression in learning were secure.

21. The school continues to provide a varied and interesting curriculum, which is relevant to the needs of all pupils. The Wednesday afternoon activities are also well organised and give pupils a rich variety of experiences and life skills. The curriculum promotes the school's aims effectively and fulfils the statutory requirements for National Curriculum subjects and those for religious education and collective worship. Total teaching time is adequate to meet the needs of the curriculum, although time allocations for English, mathematics and science are below the national average and are high for physical education.

22. Good cross-curricular links were reported at the last inspection and the curriculum is planned to develop these links as a focus for the year. Re-planning took place from December 2000 using national guidelines that are being adapted for all subjects. This guidance is being developed very effectively into medium term plans that include clear objectives for lessons and skills to be taught. Planning is carried out by subject leaders and is then reviewed by year group leaders to ensure that it is consistent throughout the school and covers each aspect to be taught in all subjects. Curricular policies and schemes of work are in place in all subjects, although some policies, such as religious education, have not been updated in line with the new planning.

23. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented fully and has resulted in an improvement in pupils' reading skills. However, there has been insufficient emphasis on developing and refining pupils' writing and standards in English have fallen mainly due to weaknesses in writing and under achievement by boys. Opportunities to develop literacy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory. For example, in history, pupils describe experiences in war torn Britain. In geography, they debate different viewpoints about the Boreham by pass and they write the diary of a disciple during Holy Week in religious education. As a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and an increased emphasis on problem solving, there is a general improvement in standards in mathematics. Although pupils in Year 6 obtain below average standards those in Year 3 and 4 are average and, in Year 5, standards are above average. Pupils,

apart from Year 6, are achieving well in relation to their standards when they entered the school.

24. A significant number of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire were not satisfied with the range of activities provided for pupils outside lessons. The findings of the inspection are that the school offers a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities including football, netball, chess, recorders and singing. These clubs, which often take place in the lunch break, are mainly run by teachers and pupils themselves who take part successfully in local events. The curriculum is also enriched by specialist music tuition and the Norfolk Music Workshop. Visitors, such as the local librarian, opera group, fire service, authors, representatives from local churches and entertainers, and visits to How Hill, Cromer, Ely and Grafham Water are important and regular features of the curriculum.

25. The last inspection found that the school's positive approach to personal, social and health education created an impressive school ethos to which pupils responded well. Currently, the provision for this aspect of the curriculum is under review and is satisfactory. The policy has been in place for some time, but has recently been amended to incorporate 'circle time', in which pupils discuss important issues and take turns to express their views. A recent health week throughout the school was very successful, and the use of 'Golden Time' for pupils in Year 6 works well. Health and sex education and the use and misuse of drugs and medicines are taught as part of the school's programme.

26. There are sound links with Fakenham Infant School and High School. Discussions between staff about the pupils take place before transfer. In addition, 'shunt' days are arranged when pupils from the infant school come up to the junior school for a day, at the same time as the Year 6 pupils visit the high school. This gives pupils the opportunity to meet with staff before their transfer. Pupils' records are transferred appropriately, but the school has identified the need to develop more productive links with the infant school in order to build more effectively on pupils' previous learning. The contribution of the local community to pupils' learning is satisfactory. At Christmas, the pupils visit older residents from the community and sing to them. The school has some links with the local church, and visitors from the community sometimes come to speak to the pupils in assembly. The recently conducted health and safety 'Routes to School' campaign proved to be very successful and included links with the infant and secondary schools. In addition, pupils held discussions with representatives from the town council, parents, the Local Education Authority, the police and road transport officers. Pupils have access to the Internet, and one class has made pen pals with pupils from a school in New Jersey.

27. The school provides equal opportunity for the majority of pupils. There is very good inclusion for pupils with special educational needs and very good provision in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 when pupils are taught in groups based on their attainment. There is also extra support in mathematics lessons for lower attaining pupils in Years 3 and 4. However, the school does not have procedures in place for identifying gifted and talented pupils. In some English lessons, work is not always matched well to the needs of individual pupils. There has been consistent underachievement by boys in English, and more appropriate texts have been purchased to try to address this. The school realises that more still needs to be done to raise boys' attainment in English.

28. Curricular provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. There is effective provision for developing pupils' spelling skills in the 'Attack Spelling' programme and in classes where learning support assistants work with individual pupils or with small groups. However, not all classes have additional support for all literacy lessons, and pupils' progress is more limited in some lessons as a result. The recently appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs has begun the process of reviewing and refining targets on pupils' individual education plans to ensure that they are well thought out and regularly reviewed. The plans which have been reviewed are of good quality and provide a clear,

useful format for completing the process. Targets include goals for literacy, numeracy and social skills. The needs of pupils with statements of special educational need are met well and their annual reviews provide a good focus for further improvement. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when the completion of annual reviews for pupils with statements of special educational need was identified as a key issue for improvement.

29. Overall, there is good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In the previous inspection, spiritual development was judged to be good and moral, social and cultural development were very good. The school has a friendly, caring ethos where pupils' achievements are recognised and valued and positive relationships are given a high priority.

30. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. School assemblies are led with sensitivity and openness. They are important occasions when pupils are invited to reflect on the effect that their actions can have on others. In an assembly conducted by a visitor, pupils thoughtfully considered the parable of 'The Lost Son' and which of the three main characters they could most easily identify with. Collective worship has a Christian focus, but other major religious and cultural events like Divali and Chinese New Year are celebrated and are reinforced in religious education lessons. Pupils also have the opportunity to experience silence, reflection and prayer, often linked to a topical theme, and most were reverent and responsible during these times of stillness and contemplation. During the inspection, in a Year 5 art lesson, pupils discussed and reflected on Christo's work and compared it with their own. Year 4 pupils gasped in amazement in an information and communication technology lesson when a beautiful crystal flower appeared on the screen. However, in general, teachers are insufficiently aware of the importance of seizing opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.

31. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. A strong bond of mutual respect and support exists between pupils themselves and all adults, which provides a good base for skills and confidence in the classroom. Pupils have a sound awareness of the school's high expectations of their behaviour and of the need to respect the rights and property of others. Not only class rules but also rewards and consequences are devised annually and are prominently displayed in class. A constructive system of rewards, such as stickers, good work assembly, house points and showing work to another teacher, underpins rules for behaviour. Teachers and support staff are good role models and concentrate on the positive reinforcement of good behaviour and attitudes, thus giving pupils a good base for moral understanding. Pupils learn the importance of telling the truth and of taking responsibility for their actions. In a Year 4 assembly, pupils heard about the trial of Galileo who needed courage to tell the truth and in a very good Year 5 assembly, preceding their visit to Mundesley, pupils were able to understand the serious message underlying a light hearted piece of fun about the importance of behaving sensibly on their trip. Through the support of charities like Action Aid, United Nations Children's Fund, Crisis Sugar Collection, Children in Need and distributing harvest gifts to the elderly and to a night shelter in Norwich, pupils develop an awareness of their responsibility for the poor and disadvantaged. Moral themes are promoted effectively through displays, such as Year 5's 'Hero of the Week', 'What makes a good friend?' and Year 4's 'Are you a Star?'

32. The school makes good provision for pupils' social development. It is a welcoming and secure environment where staff take every opportunity to develop the self worth and confidence of pupils. Of particular note is the Wednesday afternoon activities programme, including 'Crazy Constructions', 'How?' and 'Fun French', where pupils work co-operatively in different year groups, grow in self esteem and take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils are encouraged to consider the impact of their actions, to show kindness and consideration and to accept and value differences. 'Circle time' enables pupils to share

their concerns and experiences and to relate positively to others. Appropriate opportunities are taken in class for pupils to work together, such as investigations and group research, and to share resources and equipment. They are also given responsibilities suitable for their age, such as bell ringers, lunchbox monitors and litter pickers, which they carry out efficiently. However, in some lessons, pupils' work does not always allow them to develop independence in learning. Pupils use their own initiative in devising competitions to aid animal charities and Blue Peter. Residential trips in Years 4 and 6 provide good opportunities for pupils to live, work and learn together in unfamiliar surroundings.

33. The quality of cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils learn about their own cultural heritage and the traditions of their community. Western culture is promoted appropriately through subjects such as art, music, literacy and history. Pupils are made aware of the legacy of ancient civilisations such as Greece and Rome and the impact of World War II on the twentieth century. Opportunities are also provided by visitors to the school and educational visits to places such as Ely. The curriculum is also planned to provide pupils with experiences that reflect positive attitudes towards other cultures and languages but these are insufficiently developed. Pupils are also introduced in religious education to other faiths including Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam, they celebrate festivals like Divali and take part in an Indian activities week. A highlight is the Year 5 pupils' visit to 'Our World Festival' where they watch Bhangra dancers, listen to storytelling from Africa, take opportunities to dress in saris and Punjabi dress, taste food and create Mendhi patterns. Such activities successfully broaden pupils' horizons but there are few opportunities in the curriculum to prepare pupils for life in multicultural Britain.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34. At the time of the last inspection, the school was a happy well-ordered community that provided a secure and caring environment for the pupils. This inspection finds that overall the school continues to make good provision for the care of its pupils.

35. The arrangements for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. The school's policy and procedures follow the guidelines of the local committee for the protection of children. The headteacher is the designated person responsible for child protection matters and other members of staff, particularly the welfare assistant, understand the school's arrangements and procedures well.

36. The environment is very safe and regular checks are made of the grounds, buildings and equipment. Regular health and safety checks are carried out by staff and governors and reported to the governing body. Regular fire drills are held and recorded. Members of staff care for the pupils well. The quality of information kept on each pupil is very detailed and comprehensive and members of staff know pupils and their medical and personal needs very well. The full time support of the welfare assistant and the well-equipped medical room support this provision very well. There are good arrangements for the provision of first aid, and many staff are trained to administer it.

37. The school does well in promoting and monitoring good behaviour and eliminating oppressive behaviour. Pupils confirm that they feel safe in the school, and that staff are always available should they need support. The behaviour policy positively promotes good behaviour through the mainly consistent use of rewards and sanctions. Promotion of good behaviour is less consistent during the lunch time periods when relationships are not as good, and there are times when pupils are unsupervised for short periods.

38. The school continues to be successful in promoting and monitoring attendance and punctuality. The school complies with statutory requirements for the registration, coding and recording of attendance. Procedures for analysing, monitoring and following up absences are good and an analysis of attendance records is regularly carried out in order to identify any noticeable patterns of attendance.

39. There are good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. Teachers have detailed knowledge of pupils' individual needs and these are formally recorded regularly and the information passed on to the relevant staff throughout the pupil's school career. The school's welfare assistant plays an important role in this respect. She gets to know each pupil during their first year in school and is an important point of contact and source of information for both pupils and staff.

40. The care and support of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. Teachers and learning support assistants know the pupils they work with well and pupils with special educational needs develop their confidence well in lessons. They have good opportunities to take part in all school activities and their contributions are valued and recognised. This is particularly true for pupils who have statements of special educational need and helps them to make good progress. Procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are appropriate, as are arrangements for the regular reviews of their progress. The recently appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs is currently reviewing and refining systems and procedures for the support of pupils with special educational needs. This process is not yet complete and some aspects of tracking pupils' progress, particularly in literacy, vary in effectiveness. There is good liaison with outside agencies, particularly with the support services provided by the Local Education Authority.

41. The procedures for assessment are satisfactory, but the use of assessment information to guide curricular planning is unsatisfactory. This judgement differs from the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection, when assessment was judged to be "generally effective".

42. The school reviewed assessment procedures earlier in the year and assessment is a priority in the school's current development plan. It has started to address some aspects of assessment by taking part in the 'Effective Classrooms Project' and establishing a programme of focused assessment tests or tasks in the planning each term for English, mathematics and science. However, these initiatives are relatively new in the school, and it is too early to judge whether they are having a significant impact on the standards of pupils' attainment. The school has an assessment policy, but does not have a marking policy. The school plans to have a marking policy in place by September 2001. At present, marking is inconsistent across the school. It is often too congratulatory and lacking in helpful comments on how pupils can improve their work in order to raise their standard of attainment. The school recognises that the use of assessment is inconsistent across the school and that teachers are not using assessment information sufficiently to inform planning in all subjects. However, assessment information is used well in mathematics and for pupils with special educational needs. In Years 3 and 4, the mathematics co-ordinator teaches the lower attaining group while the class teachers work with the remainder of their classes. Regular mental mathematics tests are used to inform the grouping of pupils in Years 5 and 6.

43. Although the school uses a sound range of standardised assessments for English, it does not make sufficient use of this information to raise standards of attainment in the subject. Data from the statutory end of key stage test results for pupils in Year 6 are analysed, but the information is not used effectively to inform future planning in order to raise pupils' attainment. The school has introduced tracking sheets and yearly targets for individual pupils in English, mathematics and science, which are linked to National Curriculum levels. However, expectations for progress are not always high enough and yearly targets are too far apart for teachers to judge whether pupils are on course to achieve them. The information is recorded in pupils' individual files, which are cumbersome for teachers to refer to and are not consistently used. However, the school has identified significant underachievement by boys in English and has started to address this by introducing new texts, which are more appealing to boys.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

44. The last inspection found that the school's partnership with parents was very good and contributing to the pupils' educational needs in a very positive manner. The partnership with parents is now satisfactory overall.

45. The majority of parents have a positive view of the school, and those spoken to confirm they are made to feel welcome and are able to discuss issues or concerns. However, a small but significant minority expressed concern about the range of activities available to pupils outside lessons and felt that the school did not keep them well informed about their children's progress. They also felt that the school did not work closely with parents. The findings of the inspection are that the school provides an adequate range of activities outside lessons. However, the inspection supports the parents' view that, although the school does provide information about their children's progress, it does not keep them informed well enough.

46. Written annual reports for parents are detailed, describe what children have achieved and include information about how they can improve. They also inform parents where their children are in relation to the standards that they would be expected to be attaining. Teachers are available after school for urgent discussion with parents, and there is a regular Tuesday 'drop-in' session to which all parents are invited. However, parents do not have the opportunity to discuss their children's progress at consultation evenings as the 'drop-in' sessions are expected to replace the formal occasions. The results of the pre-inspection questionnaire, the comments made on the back of the questionnaires and the comments made by parents during the inspection show clearly that some parents are unhappy that the formal consultations no longer take place. The school has stated that other arrangements may be made for parents who are unable to attend the Tuesday evening sessions, but many parents feel that this does not happen.

47. The information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. Parents receive regular newsletters, which keep them well informed about what is happening in school and provide dates for events. At the beginning of each year, details about the curriculum to be taught are sent out, and parents have attended a curriculum evening on mathematics. The governors' Annual Report for parents and the prospectus do not meet statutory requirements as they have some minor omissions.

48. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. A number of parents support the school by helping in the classroom, on school trips and residential visits. During the inspection, a number of parents were seen helping with the activities afternoon. Many parents contribute to their children's learning at home by listening to them read as well as helping with other homework. The Friends' Association supports the school well by raising funds to purchase resources and materials for the school.

49. The school's previous inspection identified the need to ensure that parents of pupils with special educational needs were informed of the support their child received and were more involved in checking their child's progress. The school has ensured that all parents now receive copies of pupils' individual education plans and have appropriate opportunities to discuss their child's progress with special educational needs staff. The school has made satisfactory progress in this area but has identified the need for the further involvement of parents of pupils with special educational needs.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The leadership and management of the school are good. The school's last inspection report described the leadership of the headteacher as excellent but made no overall judgement. The present headteacher was appointed in January 1999 and the deputy headteacher joined the school in April 2001, along with the new co-ordinator for

special educational needs. The deputy headteacher and the four year group leaders, who form the management team, support the headteacher very well and make a valuable contribution to the leadership and management of the school. There is a strong team spirit amongst all staff and a shared commitment to improvement and raising standards. The areas identified for improvement in the school development plan closely match those found by this inspection. Effective steps are being taken to raise standards in mathematics, and these are already having an impact, which is particularly noticeable in Years 3, 4 and 5. Strategies to raise attainment in English have not had sufficient impact on standards. This is partly because of a lack of continuity in the management of the subject and difficulties in recruiting a suitably experienced co-ordinator.

51. The school's improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory, overall, although in some areas the pace of progress has clearly been affected adversely by the very high turnover of staff during the past two years. Since the headteacher was appointed, she has encountered difficulties in recruiting teachers to replace those who have achieved promotion to other posts and those who have taken maternity leave, many of whom left part way through the school year. Subject responsibilities have been re-allocated in the light of staff changes and some subjects are currently being overseen by senior teachers until the co-ordinator returns or a new one is appointed. This is the case in English, where a new subject leader has been appointed for September 2001. Where co-ordinators have held the post for some time, as in mathematics and information and communication technology, the pace of improvement is good and standards are rising. However, in English, changes in personnel and recruitment difficulties have had a detrimental effect on the continuity and pace of progress in implementing strategies to raise standards. Standards in English have fallen since the previous inspection, and since the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. This is because there has not been enough emphasis on developing and refining pupils' writing skills to a sufficiently high standard. The school has identified this issue as its main priority for improvement. Standards in mathematics have remained below average for three years in Year 6, but, as a result of initiatives the school has introduced, and the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, standards in Years 3, 4 and 5 are now as expected for the pupils' ages. Attainment in information and communication technology and design and technology has improved since the last inspection, when it was below average in both subjects, and is now average expectations in Year 6. This is as a result of improvements in resources, curricular planning and teachers' knowledge and expertise in both subjects. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection, despite the high turnover of teachers, which illustrates how effectively the leadership and management of the school have worked together to minimise disruption and provide a good quality of education for the pupils.

52. The headteacher provides strong leadership and clear direction for the school. She works very closely with the management team, whose commitment to raising standards and leadership within the year groups help to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school. Subject leaders are effective in planning and monitoring the curriculum, ensuring consistency between the classes within each year group and checking on progression in learning from one year to the next. However, their role in checking and comparing standards of attainment and in monitoring and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects is underdeveloped, even for those who have held the post for some time. This is identified as a priority for improvement in the school development plan.

53. Through her own regular monitoring and observation of teachers, the headteacher knows her staff well, is aware of their strengths and uses these to influence practice throughout the school. She is also aware of teachers' training needs and organises appropriate support when necessary. There are very good arrangements for supporting newly qualified teachers and year group teams play an important role in helping them to adjust to the school. The appraisal of teachers makes an effective contribution to the

monitoring of teaching, and clear targets for improvement are set. However, the outcomes of monitoring are not used well enough to have an impact on raising standards. This is particularly the case in English. Similarly, there is a very strong commitment to self-evaluation throughout the school, which includes detailed analysis of the pupils' performance in national and internal tests. This, for instance, highlighted the underachievement of boys, particularly in English. The main weakness is that the information gained from analysing data is not used sufficiently well to improve the quality of provision for the pupils.

54. The co-ordinator for special educational needs has been appointed very recently and is an experienced teacher who has a good understanding of her role. She has worked hard to identify clear and useful priorities for the development of the provision and has already begun to put these priorities into practice. Learning support assistants are well qualified and well motivated. They form an effective partnership with teachers to provide support both in and out of the classroom. The school has made good arrangements for liaising with the partner infant school and with the secondary school which most pupils attend. Staff from both schools meet together to discuss pupils' needs before they transfer and pupils have opportunities to visit and gain confidence in their new surroundings. The school now fully meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. There is a designated governor who has a good understanding of how to support the school well. Funds allocated for pupils with special educational needs are used well to support their learning.

55. The governors provide good support for the headteacher and staff, and have a good understanding of what the school does well and what needs to be improved. They use their individual skills well to support the school and attend appropriate training. They are kept well informed by the headteacher, through detailed, regular written reports, and also receive reports from co-ordinators about developments in their subjects. Governors' own monitoring of the school's provision through regular visits is limited and this is highlighted as an area for improvement in the school development plan. Governors are concerned to ensure that they receive sound value for money when making spending decisions and consider a number of different options before making financial commitments. Overall, governors make a good contribution to school improvement because they discuss all issues openly and from an informed viewpoint, and are prepared to challenge and question the headteacher and staff in a constructive way. The governing body fully meets its statutory obligations in most aspects of the school's provision.

56. The school's finances are monitored rigorously by the experienced administrative officer and the governors' finance committee. Resources are used well to promote the pupils' progress. A particularly good example of this can be seen in mathematics, where the school uses its financial resources very effectively to raise standards. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 are taught in groups on the basis of their previous attainment. This helps less able pupils and those with special educational needs to gain confidence in a smaller group and allows teachers to provide suitably challenging work for average and more able pupils. In Years 3 and 4, less able pupils are taught by the subject leader in a smaller group, while class teachers focus on the average and more able pupils, which also gives them a smaller number of pupils to teach. These arrangements are very effective in ensuring that pupils' needs are met and are having a positive influence on standards throughout the school. In information and communication technology, the school's resources have been used very well to create a computer suite and provide training for teachers, which has also resulted in improving standards. Overall, the school's use of information and communication technology as an administrative tool is good. For example, the co-ordinator has created a website for staff, through which they can gain access to whole school curricular planning in every subject. This greatly enhances the school's provision and helps to make the planning process more efficient.

57. The school's strong commitment to self-evaluation and improvement is a strength of its leadership and management. All staff are involved in implementing the Local Education Authority's self-review process, which, in turn, feeds in to the school development plan. The school's participation in the Local Education Authority's 'Effective Classrooms Project' provides another indication of its commitment to raising standards. Although these initiatives are in the early stages of development, they make a good contribution to the leadership and management of the school. There is a strong, shared commitment to improvement and the school has a good capacity to succeed.

58. The match of teachers and support staff to the needs of the curriculum is good. The teachers are well motivated and work together as a strong team. The support staff, although relatively few in number, work well with teaching staff and this contributes significantly to the quality of teaching and learning. However, during the teachers' introduction to lessons, particularly in literacy and numeracy, they are not always used to their full potential. The school has a good number of teachers who are well qualified and also benefits from having a swimming instructor, and a full-time welfare assistant who provides very good personal support for pupils. Subject co-ordinators are well qualified for their roles. As in the previous report, the training programme is good and is closely linked to the school's development plan. There has, however, been a very high turnover of teaching staff in the past two years and this has, in some ways, slowed down the pace of improvement. The school's arrangements for appraisal and performance management are good. New members of staff are supported well by established members of the team and are monitored appropriately. The school provides a very useful staff handbook that provides all staff with the necessary information on the school's organisation and policies.

59. The school's accommodation is good. In general, most classrooms are of adequate size and provide appropriate space for most activities of the curriculum. However, in the classes where the number of pupils is well over thirty, the rooms are cramped when it comes to teaching the more practical subjects, such as design and technology. The school hall, used for physical education, assemblies and dining is small for the number of pupils on roll. The school library area is centrally based, easily accessible and provides a pleasant space for pupils to work. A large central area of the school has been converted into a spacious information and communication technology suite with an adjacent room that is equipped with the latest applications for teaching the subject. However, because the suite is not completely enclosed, at times, the noise from the enthusiastic teaching and learning that occurs can impinge on the classes nearby. The school has an indoor swimming pool, a large playing field and an appropriate hard surfaced space. A wildlife area provides good opportunities for pupils' work in science. The school also has a music room that is apart from the main school buildings and a mobile classroom that is used for teaching groups of pupils for mathematics. The school is clean and well maintained by the caretaker and cleaning staff. The whole school building provides a welcoming and stimulating environment for pupils to work in and is enhanced by the attractive displays of their work.

60. Overall, resources are good. In English, physical education, geography, music and religious education they are satisfactory. However, in history, the range of artefacts to support the new curriculum is limited and the books are outdated. Most resources are in good condition, easily accessible and well organised. Overall, the quality and quantity of the school's resources make a good contribution to pupils' learning, particularly in information and communication technology. The school also makes constructive use of the local environment as a resource and a suitable range of visits to places of interest enriches the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

61. In order to improve the quality of education provided by the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

1. Raise the standards of the pupils' work in English, mathematics, geography, history, music and religious education by:

- developing the extent and effective use of the pupils' spoken vocabulary;
- improving basic accuracy in spelling and punctuation;
- improving the pupils' ability to draft and redraft their work in order to make it better;
- making sure that all teachers expect the pupils to produce written work of high quality;
- being certain that the pupils' work is marked in ways which help them to improve;
- checking that sufficient time is devoted to extending pupils' competence and skills in written work;
- increasing the rigour with which the pupils' written work is monitored;
- developing pupils' research and enquiry skills;
- giving pupils more opportunities to use their mathematical knowledge and understanding in a variety of problem-solving situations;
- improving teachers' expertise in music.

(Paragraphs 1-7, 15, 17, 19, 27, 28, 62-72, 74, 95, 96, 97, 100-102, 111, 112, 114-116, 121-123)

2. Continue to improve and refine the procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress and make better use of the information gained to plan pupils' learning experiences.

(Paragraphs 40, 41, 42, 43, 53, 72, 99, 104, 116, 124)

3. Develop the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards, pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning in their subjects.

(Paragraphs 52, 53, 72, 79, 99, 104, 116, 124)

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- improving the arrangements for parents to meet with teachers to discuss their children's progress

(Paragraphs 45, 46)

- being certain that support staff are deployed to the best advantage at all times.
(Paragraph 19)

- raising the pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural society

(Paragraph 32)

- making sure that the minor omissions in the statutory information to parents are rectified.

(Paragraphs 47, 55)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	87
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	42

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	10	71	17	3	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	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	375
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	47

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y3 – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	123

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	50	51	101

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	22	27	47
	Girls	40	37	49
	Total	62	64	96
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	61 (68)	63 (66)	95 (83)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	29	41
	Girls	40	37	46
	Total	64	66	87
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	63 (68)	65 (66)	86 (84)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	368
Any other minority ethnic group	3

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y3 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	31

Education support staff: Y3 – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
---	----

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.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/00
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	716041
Total expenditure	715332
Expenditure per pupil	1878

Total aggregate hours worked per week	197
---------------------------------------	-----

Balance brought forward from previous year	57187
Balance carried forward to next year	57896

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	375
Number of questionnaires returned	152

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	46	8	4	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	53	7	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	24	59	13	1	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	16	64	13	6	1
The teaching is good.	35	55	6	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	18	53	21	7	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	52	4	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	42	5	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	18	56	18	5	3
The school is well led and managed.	33	50	8	2	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	34	55	9	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	17	41	21	7	14

activities outside lessons.

--	--	--	--	--

Other issues raised by parents

Seven parents expressed concern about the large size of some classes.
Five parents were worried about the high turnover of staff.

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

ENGLISH

62. Overall, standards in English are below those which are typical for eleven year olds, and those in writing are well below average. This represents a decline in standards since the last inspection in 1997, when all aspects of English were judged to be average. The findings of this inspection differ from the results of the 2000 national tests at Key Stage 2, which showed that standards overall were well below average, because speaking and listening skills are taken into account by the inspection. Over the past four years, standards have remained close to the national average, except for the year 2000. Standards in English have fallen mainly due to weaknesses in writing and underachievement by boys. When compared with similar schools, pupils' results in the national tests in 2000 were well below average. However, the school's analysis of pupils' progress shows that 95 per cent of these pupils achieved the standards expected of them, given their low attainment on entry to the school four years earlier. The school had set a challenging target for 75 per cent of its pupils to achieve Level 4 and above which it did not achieve. A similar target has been set for the year 2001. Pupils in Year 6 in both 2000 and 2001 experienced some disruption due to staff changes. There has been an above average proportion of pupils with special educational needs in both years and more than three quarters of these pupils have been boys. The school has already identified the underachievement of boys and has made the improvement of standards in writing one of its main priorities. The school's targets for improvement are appropriate.

63. Pupils enter the school with generally below average standards in reading and writing and the current Year 6 entered the school with significant weaknesses in writing. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs, achieve soundly as they move through the school, although standards in English are not high enough. Pupils with special educational needs reach appropriate standards compared with their previous attainment. When they are given well targeted activities and support, these pupils frequently make good progress. Support programmes such as 'Attack Spelling' are used effectively to help pupils develop the accuracy of their spelling. Underachievement in writing, and in the standard of boys' work in English generally, were observed during the inspection.

64. By the end of Year 6, standards in speaking and listening are below average. Most pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to each other's contributions during lessons. There is however, a small minority of pupils, almost always boys, who do not pay good attention and whose lack of attention affects the pace of learning in some lessons. The majority of pupils respond to questions willingly and contribute ideas and opinions which are relevant to the topic being discussed. In some classes and groups, a small proportion of pupils are reluctant to respond and to offer their ideas and opinions. More able pupils express their opinions and ideas confidently, responding clearly and sometimes in some

detail. However, only a few pupils have a range of vocabulary appropriate to their age, which they are then able to use in discussions and responses. The school provides some good opportunities for pupils to develop more formal language in cross curricular projects such as the 'bypass debate', where pupils made formal presentations in the roles of local residents. However, these opportunities have not been sufficient to have a significant impact on pupils' general range and understanding of more formal structures and vocabulary.

65. Standards in reading are below average in Year 6. The school makes good provision for pupils to use the library and to talk about their individual reading. As a result, pupils have regular and well organised experiences for reading, and their individual reading is generally well matched to their ability. Most pupils are able to talk about the plot and characters in a book in varying detail and some more able pupils make simple predictions as to what might happen next. However, few pupils are able to consider wider themes in their reading or to compare and contrast the books they have read in any detail. Most pupils read their books and the texts in the class with understanding and fluency. There are, however, a number of pupils whose lack of fluency and more limited range of known vocabulary adversely affects the rate at which they progress with their work. There were limited opportunities for pupils to have expressive reading modelled for them during the week of the inspection or to participate in joint reading of a shared text. As a result, pupils do not always vary their tone or emphasise meaning clearly when they read aloud. Research and referencing skills are developed appropriately through other subjects in the curriculum, particularly in the use of information and communication technology.

66. In Year 6, standards in writing are well below average. Pupils have experience of an appropriate range of writing forms including newspaper reports, diaries, instructional writing, playscripts, persuasive writing in the form of posters and advertisements, and formal letter writing and presentations. A few more able pupils write with a confident fluency, using an appropriate range of vocabulary and a clear awareness of how and when to use more formal language. Most average and more able pupils are able to organise their writing in a logical sequence. However, only a few extend their ideas in any depth or detail or use a varied range of vocabulary and expression. Less able pupils often need support to record their ideas and opinions in an effective order. There is a variable level of accuracy in all but the best writing and standards of basic punctuation and spelling are insecure in many pupils' work. Older pupils do not make sufficient use of dictionaries and word banks to support the development of their vocabulary or to help them with their spelling. This variable level of accuracy was seen clearly in the analysis of pupils' work across the key stage.

67. Although pupils plan their work, there are not enough opportunities to edit, redraft and refine their writing. This undermines the development of pupils' skills in writing. In some classes, pupils have good opportunities to discuss and evaluate their own and each other's work, but this is not consistent across all classes, nor are these opportunities developed sufficiently across the key stage. Some pupils do not have a clear understanding of the sound and spelling system. Although the programme to support pupils with special educational needs is effective, the good practice and consistent approaches used in this programme do not carry over to all classes. Handwriting follows a clear joined style and many pupils understand how to use it, but in the analysis of pupils' work it was evident there was inconsistency between classes about what constitutes acceptable standards of presentation.

68. Throughout the school, standards of literacy are below average. However, the opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory, and in subjects such as history, geography and religious education, there are varied and interesting writing opportunities. The limited range of pupils' vocabulary and the variable

accuracy of spelling and punctuation has an adverse effect on pupils' achievement in these areas of the curriculum.

69. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Although good standards of teaching and learning were seen during the week of the inspection, the analysis of pupils' work indicates that, over time, pupils' learning does not develop consistently and expectations of pupils' work vary both within and across the year groups. There was one unsatisfactory lesson. In the school's previous inspection, the standard of teaching was good and pupils made satisfactory progress. There are good relationships in classrooms which create a positive atmosphere for learning and give pupils the confidence to contribute to lessons and to be purposefully involved in their work. Lessons are well organised and carefully planned to meet the requirements of the literacy framework. Activities and resources are varied and interesting, but are not always well matched to the needs of pupils of all abilities and, as a result, some pupils do not develop their skills as well as they might. In the best lessons, there is an energetic pace, which effectively captures pupils' interest and attention.

70. Strengths in the teaching and learning of English across the school were illustrated in a very good Year 4 lesson, in which the pupils were analysing how language is used in advertising. The lesson had been carefully planned, and resources well organised, to meet the needs of all pupils in the class. From the outset, there was a productive pace which provided good challenge for all pupils. Pupils responded well to their teacher's energetic and lively questioning, which helped them to reconsider the purposes for which advertisements are written. Through well focused questions, they were able to identify the use of devices such as alliteration and suggest reasons about why these devices were used. The teacher set a demanding pace with his questioning and consistently expected pupils' complete attention. Pupils' concentration was, therefore, very good and their understanding was very secure. They were, as a result, able to undertake their group tasks effectively, even when not directly supervised. The teacher gave very good support to one group to help them appreciate the negative and positive use of language. The learning support assistant was usefully deployed throughout the lesson and gave good support for lower attaining pupils. By the end of the lesson, pupils had written their own headlines for advertisements and have made very good gains in their understanding of how the language of advertising is developed and the effects achieved.

71. Where teaching has weaknesses, these are related to an undemanding pace in the lesson and lack of sufficient challenge for all pupils in the class. In these lessons, the rate at which some pupils learn is unsatisfactory and concentration and attention are weak. This was seen in a Year 5 lesson, where, as a result of a slow pace of questioning, some pupils (mainly boys) became inattentive and time was lost while the teacher ensured that good attention was restored. Neither the class teacher nor the learning support assistant was fully aware of the pupils on the register of special educational needs and, therefore, the support for these pupils was not sufficiently directed towards their individual targets. Teachers mark pupils' work supportively, but the quality of marking to support pupils in the next stages of their learning varies considerably, and too often praise is given indiscriminately. The focus on developing pupils' vocabulary is not given enough emphasis, and, as a result, pupils do not readily use, in either their speech or their writing, an appropriate and growing range of words to enrich their work.

72. The curriculum in English is planned to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum. The National Literacy Strategy has been fully implemented and literacy is taught daily. However, the time allocated to the developing of pupils' writing skills is currently being reviewed to support the priority the school is giving to this aspect of learning. The analysis of the results of the national tests has identified the significant underachievement of boys and the school has begun to develop strategies to address the situation. Texts and resources that particularly interest and motivate boys have been

purchased and boys are being encouraged to explore and use them. The co-ordination of the subject has been disjointed over the past year as a result of staff changes. The subject has been satisfactorily supervised by another senior member of staff but the school recognises that development in the subject has been affected. A new subject leader has been appointed for September 2001, whose brief is to produce a literacy policy that reflects the school's current priorities for the subject. There has been some monitoring of teachers' planning, but there has been no recent monitoring of teaching or pupils' work. A sound range of standardised tests is in place to monitor pupils' progress, and teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress linked to National Curriculum levels, but these records are unwieldy and too time consuming and are currently being reviewed. There is insufficient use of the information from assessments in the subject. The school is introducing individual target setting for pupils but this has not yet been consistently developed in all classes.

73. Resources in the subject are generally satisfactory. There have been some useful recent purchases for teaching literacy and the library is well stocked with a good range of good quality texts. The school and the pupils benefit from the support of the enthusiastic librarian, who manages pupils' regular visits to the library and develops their reading experiences well. The subject is enhanced by visitors to the school, such as the writer Brian Ogden, who has worked with pupils to develop their writing, and local author Stuart Medland. Pupils participate in story writing competitions, book fairs and school productions, in which they develop their drama and speaking skills. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

74. Pupils in Year 6 attain lower standards than those expected of 11 year olds in numeracy and all areas of mathematics. The 2000 national test results paint a similar picture and show that standards were below the national average, and well below the average for similar schools. The school's previous inspection found standards to be average. Since that time, the proportion of pupils who reach both Level 4 (average) and Level 5 (above average) in the national tests has increased but has not kept pace with the national trend of improvement. An analysis of pupils' work shows that, although there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills in number, algebra, space, shape, measures and data handling, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to use this knowledge and apply it to a variety of problem-solving situations. This limits pupils' ability to achieve well in the national tests, which require them to select and use appropriate mathematical operations in order to solve a range of problems. This aspect was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection. Given the pupils' below average attainment on entry to the school and the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs, achievement in mathematics for the pupils in Year 6 is satisfactory. However, standards are improving as a result of the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and an increased emphasis on developing the pupils' ability to use and apply a wider range of mental and written strategies for problem-solving. As a result, standards in Years 3 and 4 are typical for the age of the pupils and those in Year 5 are good. These pupils are achieving well in relation to their standards when they entered the school.

75. The quality of teaching and learning is good and this promotes good progress. All of the lessons that were observed during this inspection were at least satisfactory and just under 90 per cent of them were good or better. Three very good lessons (18 per cent) were seen. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Teachers have adapted very well to the three-part numeracy lesson and implement the National Numeracy Strategy consistently well. As a result, pupils acquire basic skills and knowledge at a good rate and have a good range of opportunities

to practise them in group activities. Teachers make good use of the whole class session towards the end of the lesson to reinforce what pupils have learned, and pupils learn from each other as they listen to the different methods used to make calculations. In Years 5 and 6, pupils are taught in groups formed on the basis of their previous attainment. This works well and allows teachers to match work closely to the pupils' needs and stage of development. For example, in Year 6, where all of the teaching observed was good, the most able group demonstrated a sound understanding of the concept of ratio when the teacher discussed their homework with them and they explained the composition of a pack of cards in terms of the ratio of different types of cards to the whole pack. The subsequent lesson on networks was very demanding and challenged the pupils well to investigate patterns and relationships in networks and predict the next stages in the pattern. Teachers recognise and plan well for the range of attainment within each group. For example, in this lesson, the teacher challenged the most able pupils to "see if you can express the pattern using algebra". In the lesson for the less able group, the teacher set the pupils a demanding task that involved starting with a target number and finding different ways of reaching it by using many different mathematical operations, including fractions, percentages and square numbers. In this lesson, pupils clearly benefited from being taught in a small group and were confident in offering answers and tackling a new challenge.

76. During the year, pupils in Year 6 have covered a good range of work that has been planned according to the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy. They have a sound grasp of number sequences and patterns and understand the equivalence between different fractions, decimal numbers and percentages. More able pupils know how to multiply and divide whole and decimal numbers by 1000 and work out problems involving percentages. In the lessons observed, it was clear that pupils' skills in carrying out mental calculations vary considerably. Some are very quick to see connections and find ways to work things out while others find this difficult. In a Year 6 lesson for the average attaining group, pupils participated in a 'loop game' which involved matching their answer card to the correct question that was read out. This was an effective way of consolidating pupils' knowledge and skill in carrying out number operations quickly, as there was a time limit for each question, and, whereas most pupils were able to respond in the given time, some were slow to make the necessary calculation. In their work on shape, space and measures, pupils show a sound understanding of the properties of different two and three-dimensional shapes. They recognise and draw acute and obtuse angles and calculate the area and perimeter of a rectangle. More able pupils use this knowledge to work out the amount of carpet that is needed for a room and how much wallpaper it takes to cover a wall. Pupils change millilitres to litres and know the relationship between different units of time. They represent and interpret data using a variety of tables, charts and graphs, both in mathematics lessons and in their work in other areas of the curriculum. Although pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills are sound in many areas, many lack the ability to approach problems that are presented in a variety of forms, identify what they need to do and make decisions about what strategies to use. Pupils in Year 6 have not had enough opportunity to develop confidence in this aspect of mathematics as they have progressed through the school.

77. A very good feature of the teaching throughout the school is the emphasis on showing pupils that there are different ways to work things out, both mentally and in written form. A good lesson for the less able group in Year 5 showed how well this is done. The teacher's explanation and discussion of different written methods for calculating addition and subtraction of numbers less than 10000 was thorough and involved pupils in explaining their own strategies and listening to others' ideas. The teacher encouraged pupils use the method with which they felt most comfortable, whilst pointing out the possible pitfalls and advantages of each one. Her very good questioning helped pupils to work things out for themselves and remedied misconceptions and misunderstandings. Another very good

feature is the brisk pace of lessons, which motivates pupils and holds their attention. Teachers move from whole class mental warm-up sessions into the main activity smoothly and without wasting time. On all but one or two occasions, sufficient time was allowed to consolidate learning in the whole class session at the end of the lesson, during which teachers check on whether pupils have achieved what the lesson intended. For example, in a very good Year 5 lesson, the teacher asked pupils to "remind me of the key objective for this lesson" and then asked pupils to indicate if they felt they had achieved it. This lesson also illustrated very well the high expectations that all teachers have of pupils to think mathematically and use the correct vocabulary. The teacher encouraged pupils to "be inventive" when using three digits to make different calculations using any mathematical operation and reminded them of the need to use brackets in some instances.

78. In Years 3 and 4, the mathematics co-ordinator teaches the less able pupils, including those with special educational needs, leaving class teachers with a smaller group and a narrower range of attainment to cover. This works well and helps the less able pupils and those with special educational needs to grow in confidence and make good progress. Average and more able pupils receive suitably demanding work that enables them to progress at a good pace. The teachers work closely together to plan work that is well matched to the needs of each group, but provides a consistent approach across each year group. A measure of the success of the mathematics teaching throughout the school was seen in a very good Year 4 lesson, in a class that has experienced considerable disruption as a result of difficulties with replacing a teacher who left part way through the year. The teacher had only taught the class for a few weeks before the inspection, but clearly knew them very well and was very aware of their particular needs. She held their attention throughout, changing direction when she knew they were becoming restless and varying her approach appropriately. The lesson moved at a breathless pace, giving no time for disruptive behaviour, and the activities were interesting and enjoyable but very demanding for the pupils, who responded with enthusiasm and applied themselves well. As a result of this very good teaching, there was clear evidence that pupils had refined the methods they use to add and subtract three digit numbers in columns, and were competent in ordering decimal numbers.

79. The mathematics co-ordinator provides very good leadership in the subject. As a leading mathematics teacher, she has taught demonstration lessons for other staff and has monitored closely the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Her involvement in planning with teachers and teaching one of the groups in each year gives her a very good overview of the subject, particularly in checking that there is progression in learning from one year to the next. The co-ordinator has carried out some observations in classes but this was interrupted as a result of staffing difficulties in the spring term and is to be resumed in the new school year. Assessment procedures are simple but effective and are closely linked to the key objectives in the National Numeracy Strategy, although not overtly to the National Curriculum levels. A particularly good feature, which has been introduced recently, is the setting of targets for individual pupils to achieve throughout the year. These are presented in a booklet for parents, which also explains how parents can help their children at home. Teachers' marking is less effective and varies considerably in quality. Few teachers show pupils clearly what is needed to improve their work and some offer praise indiscriminately and, sometimes, for inappropriate reasons, such as giving house points for colouring in diagrams neatly. Overall, insufficient attention is given to how pupils present their work, which is often untidy and not laid out well on the page. During the inspection, very little use of information and communication technology was seen in mathematics lessons, though there was evidence in the pupils' work that they use data handling programs competently to present information they have gathered in the form of graphs and pie charts.

SCIENCE

80. The findings of the inspection are that standards attained by the pupils in Year 6 are average. This is similar to the standards reported in the school's previous OFSTED inspection. The findings of the inspection differ from the results of the 2000 national tests, which showed that standards were above average. This is because fewer pupils in the present Year 6 are attaining higher than average standards in the subject. Over the past four years, standards show a variation year on year from average to above average. Given their below average attainment on entry to the school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well for their abilities. This inspection finds no significant difference in the performance of boys and girls.

81. The quality of teaching is consistently good with a number of strengths that have a positive impact on the pupils' learning in lessons. This judgement is similar to that made by the school's previous inspection, when teaching was reported to be good. Planning is done jointly by the teachers in each year group to ensure that all pupils have similar coverage of the curriculum. This also means that teachers share their ideas, knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the pupils. Teachers have a good subject knowledge, which enables them to make useful teaching points that help pupils to learn new concepts securely. The standard of questioning is high, and the teachers' clear explanations and good use of time spent in discussion motivate all pupils and result in good scientific learning. This was well illustrated in the lessons about plants that were observed in Year 6. The successful feature of the teaching in these lessons was the opportunity given to pupils to apply their knowledge of how plants grow to devising an investigation on how a plant such as the Hawkbit has adapted to growing in both long and short grass. Questions such as, "What advantage does it have by growing tall?" - "How are you going to collect your data?" and "How can we make the test fair?" enabled pupils to think as scientists. The level of interest was high and pupils put forward ideas of what they would test and measure, such as the height of the plants, the size of the leaves and the length of the roots. They suggested that, to make the test fair, they would use similarly sized hoops to measure out the same area of the long and short grass where the plants grew and that it might be necessary to repeat the tests to check the differences. However, in general, an analysis of pupils' work indicates that, throughout the school, many of the investigations are too directed by teachers and few opportunities are provided for pupils to plan and carry out a scientific enquiry for themselves.

82. Teachers manage pupils well and create a purposeful working atmosphere that helps pupils concentrate on their work without interruption. In some classes, where the very high turnover of staff has created some considerable disruption to the pupils' education during the past year, a minority of pupils finds it very difficult to work independently for any long periods of time. Through the very good management and hard work of the recently appointed teachers who work in these classes, the few pupils who find it difficult to conform are kept well on task and, as a result, they make sound progress in science lessons.

83. A particularly effective aspect of science teaching is the good range of methods used that capture and retain the pupils' interest. A good example of this was observed in a Year 3 lesson on shadows. The teacher introduced the lesson by revisiting previous work carried out by pupils by asking, "What have we learnt about shadows?" and "What causes a shadow?" that enabled him to gauge the pupils' understanding before moving on to demonstrate with a torch and shadow stick how the higher the light source is, the shorter the shadow. By changing the relative position of the torch and stick, he effectively demonstrated how the length and position of the shadow changes. The teacher's clear explanations and good use of time spent in discussion ensured that the pupils recognised that a shadow from the sun changes over the course of a day. The content of the lesson was pitched at an appropriately challenging level and the teacher maintained the interest of all pupils by continuing to make good use of resources to demonstrate that the apparent

movement of the Sun is due to the movement of the Earth. This made pupils very receptive to learning and successfully helped to clear up any misconceptions that they might have had. In all lessons, pupils are well supported and secure in their understanding of what they are going to learn.

84. A detailed analysis of the work completed throughout the year in each year group indicates that pupils have been thoroughly taught all aspects of the science curriculum by the time they leave the school and have deepened their knowledge and understanding of key scientific ideas. Science makes a good contribution to improving numeracy, as pupils produce tables and graphs to display the results of experiments. Literacy skills are also developed through pupils writing reports, although at times they are not always well thought out. The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in science is under developed.

85. Science is well supported by a school policy and detailed medium term plans that provide very good coverage of all aspects of the subject and clear guidance for teachers. Pupils are not assessed formally in science and it is an area identified for development. The co-ordinator provides sound leadership in the subject. He has not had the opportunity to observe the subject being taught and at present, the monitoring of pupils' work is done informally. Learning resources for science are good. In addition, the school has extensive grounds and a wildlife area to support the teaching of environmental science. The pond unfortunately is, at present, out of use. Environmental studies are further enhanced for pupils in Year 4 and Year 6 by residential visits to How Hill and Grafham Water.

ART AND DESIGN

86. Pupils' work in art and design, including that of pupils with special educational needs, is above average throughout the school. This is similar to the standards reported in the school's previous OFSTED inspection.

87. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes good progress. All teaching and learning is at least satisfactory and some is very good. Teachers are confident in their knowledge of art and design and this ensures that pupils learn the basic skills of drawing, designing and painting well. Teachers' high expectations mean that pupils move on quickly from basic art techniques. Teachers provide stimulating materials, with which pupils enjoy experimenting with, such as in the Year 3 lessons observed, where pupils used wire, tinfoil and other materials for their 'statues to improve the school environment'. Pupils refine their skills well as they progress through the school and show increasing confidence in using various media and more demanding techniques, as when Year 4 pupils use a viewfinder or a digital camera to choose interesting views in and around the school for their paintings. Pupils in Year 5 use pastels and metallic crayons well for their innovative designs for their 'thought containers', such as for 'dream thoughts' and 'gone forever thoughts'. Year 5 pupils also produce high quality, representational paintings of still life objects, such as shells, jugs and trophies. They develop their skills well in observational drawing and many produce high quality sketches with suitable attention to line, detail, proportion and expression. Some of the Year 6 paintings, such as those of the school bell tower, the local church scene and the top of a nearby house are of a very high standard. The 'green gate' painting shows great attention to detail of the knots and textures in the wood. Pupils' very good drawing skills are used well to create a three dimensional effect in the high quality still life sketches of everyday objects. Year 6 pupils are developing the skill of perspective drawing very well. Sketchbooks are used well to record observations and to develop ideas. Pupils have a good understanding of the styles of various artists, for example, Jackson Pollock and Graham Sutherland, which helps to improve their own work. They have a secure understanding of how a work of art reflects its time, such as 'Pop Art' in the 1960's and propaganda art during World War Two.

88. A Year 5 lesson illustrated well the strengths of the teaching and learning in the school. The teacher aroused pupils' curiosity by displaying two geographic globes in the class, one of which was completely covered in black plastic and tied with string. At the start of the lesson, he showed pupils a variety of still life paintings and they discussed the similarities and differences between them. He then introduced them to Christo's contemporary wrapped sculptures by looking at a wide range of photographs of the artist's work. Pupils quickly gave their opinions as to why wrapping and tying materials around buildings can have any value and realised the connection with the two globes. They responded well to the teacher's clear explanation of the quality of Christo's work and their positive attitudes made them receptive to this new learning experience. Pupils chose which objects they would like to draw, such as a watering can, headphones and animal horns, before redrawing them as if wrapped and tied similar to Christo's sculptures. The very good plenary session became a spiritual moment when pupils quietly reflected on the objectives for the lesson, which was to explore different forms of contemporary art and to investigate and plan a novel piece of sculpture. The teacher's innovative approach, very good subject knowledge and lively teaching engaged pupils' interest at all times. He enabled them to extend their learning well and achieve a high level of attainment in their artwork. In satisfactory lessons, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to explore and choose their own materials and they make satisfactory progress. However, these lessons lack the brisk pace and vibrancy of the higher quality lessons.

89. The co-ordinator for art is relatively new to the post and provides an enthusiastic and imaginative approach to the subject. He has produced an action plan for art and design, which involves revising the policy and modifying the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines for art to the needs of these pupils and staff. This works well, and provides a good structure to the teaching and pupils' learning. He gives informal advice to colleagues and monitors displays, but not classroom practice. Teachers create relevant links with other subjects, for example, the 'blitz' pictures and Ancient Egyptian gods in history. Specialists, such as an illustrator, come into school to show different techniques, which is very good practice. Resources are good, including a kiln for clay work. Throughout the school, colourful displays are used effectively to enliven classrooms and enhance communal areas. At present, assessment in art and design is limited, although all teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own and others' work. An exhibition to celebrate Years 5 and 6 pupils' artwork is to be held in school at the end this term. The art activities afternoons, which operate for part of the year, are well supported and provide pupils with an interesting range of stimulating activities. Information and communication technology is used well to research the work of famous artists and pupils use digital cameras as part of their own art work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed very well when they study the work of famous artists and learn about art from other cultures.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

90. In the last inspection, pupils' attainment was judged to be below the expected level for a significant proportion of pupils. Since 1997, standards have been raised to average because of the school's effective response to the key issue for action from the last inspection. The issues raised then of the pupils' lack of care and accuracy and the use of an inappropriately narrow range of tools have all been addressed and improved. All pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve well.

91. The quality of teaching and learning is good. In each year group, the teaching promotes and encourages the pupils to design. This was evident in a lesson observed in Year 4, when the pupils talked about their designs, while making a product to protect a precious elephant from harm. The teacher capitalised on the pupils' working knowledge of electricity to incorporate an alarm system into their final product and, by the end of the

lesson, the pupils had not only created some innovative models but had developed their skills in joining and assembling materials. There was a good balance in the lesson between teaching and independent work. Clear explanations of techniques and regular intervention by the teacher encouraged the pupils to be creative and motivated them to achieve well. The pace encouraged all pupils to complete the task in the time allowed. Pupils collaborated well, sharing ideas and paying attention to how their design could have been improved. An examination of the pupils' work in Year 4 showed that they have also designed and made pencil cases to certain specifications, using skills of measuring and sewing.

92. Pupils undertake a broad range of designing and making activities as they move through the school, which provide the opportunity to develop a number of different skills and techniques. The analysis of work in Year 3 indicated that the pupils have been successful in designing and making packaging for a specific purpose and have designed and made sandwiches, using different types of bread and interesting fillings. Pupils become increasingly knowledgeable about how simple mechanisms can be used to provide different types of movement. For example, in Year 3, pupils assemble syringes and plastic tubing to create a pneumatic system to make the eyes of a monster move whilst in Year 4, they use pieces of card and split pins to incorporate lever and pivot movements into pop-up story books. A very good lesson in Year 5 illustrated the effective methods used to teach the skills that enable pupils to design and make models with moving parts. The teacher's clear instructions and demonstration of how a cam mechanism works enabled many pupils to construct their own mechanism unaided in readiness to make a toy that would move up and down. The pupils measured, marked out and used saws accurately to cut pieces of dowelling and joined pieces of wood using a glue gun. The teacher's high expectations of pupils meant that they had already learned how to make a box that incorporated the use of card triangles to make the structure strong enough to contain the mechanism for their toy.

93. The analysis of work shows that Year 6 pupils have completed a topic on shelters in which they successfully investigated a range of structures through designing and building tents and 'Anderson' shelters. Throughout the school, pupils evaluate their designs and products and suggest ways in which they could be improved. Consequently, by the time they are in Year 6, the evaluation of products is a prominent part of the pupils' work. For example, when evaluating the soft toys they had made, pupils recognised that the quality of the finished product depended on how successful the design was and whether the seam allowance and stitching could have been improved. The management of pupils and working relationships are very good and many pupils engage in animated discussion and take a great pride in their personal achievements.

94. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator, who has produced detailed medium term plans for each year group. Each topic outlines the investigative, disassembly and evaluative activities, focused practical tasks and the design and make assignments that develop pupils' skills appropriately as they move through the school. There is a good range of resources, suitable tools and a central store of materials for pupils to use when making products. Assessment procedures are satisfactory at present but the school is planning to develop them further. Design and technology features strongly in the Wednesday afternoon activities, for example, when designing and making catapults and kites. This not only contributes to the development of pupils' design and technology skills, but also strongly promotes their personal and social development, as they have to work as a team and set a target for what they expect to achieve during the session.

GEOGRAPHY

95. During the inspection, there were no observations of the teaching of geography, so judgements are based on an analysis of pupils' work, a review of documentation, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays and discussions with teachers and pupils. Indications

are that attainment in geography in Year 6 is below average, which represents a decline since the 1997 inspection when standards were reported as being level with national expectations. Topics are covered in sufficient depth, but weaknesses in pupils' literacy skills undermine their ability to record their work well. As they move through the key stage, pupils, including those with special educational needs achieve satisfactorily. There were no differences between the attainment of boys and girls.

96. The analysis of pupils' work and planning and discussions with pupils indicate that, throughout the school, the quality of teaching and learning in geography is satisfactory. This is the same judgement as that made by the previous inspection, although there was no evidence of the 'element of insecurity' in teachers' subject knowledge noted in the last report. In Year 6, pupils have made steady gains in their knowledge and understanding of different mountain environments. They name and locate a number of mountain ranges and compare the climatic features of the Lake District, Scottish Highlands, Welsh Mountains and the Himalayas. They have written about weather events that get in the news and are aware of the importance of safety in planning a mountain trip in their posters 'Always be safe!' Pupils use simple co-ordinates to locate map features but, in discussion, they are uncertain about using an Ordnance Survey map to locate settlements of various types, and their skills of interpretation and use of scales, symbols and keys are insecure. They have a basic understanding of the water cycle and the development of river systems, but specific geographical vocabulary is insufficiently developed and few have reached the stage where they can ask searching questions about their findings.

97. Pupils in Year 5 have carried out a traffic survey in Fakenham town centre to investigate whether the market place should be pedestrianised and have undertaken some useful fieldwork in Cromer as part of a study of a contrasting locality. Pupils have also gained a good understanding of the value of water and the importance of conservation, but the work set does not allow more able pupils to reach above average levels of attainment. Year 4 pupils have studied India on a world map and have developed a sufficient knowledge of the country to recognise it as a land of contrasts. They compare climate and homes in Chembakolli with their own, and their school day with Kallichal school. Year 3 pupils have made sound gains in their knowledge of land use around the school, have identified attractive and unattractive features in Fakenham and have discovered how climate can affect tourism as they match the contents of a holiday suitcase to their destination.

98. Throughout the school, pupils' use of geographical vocabulary and their research and enquiry skills are insufficiently developed to enable them to prepare specific geographical questions for study and investigation. Frequently, the same work is set for all pupils so that it is too hard for pupils with special educational needs and more able pupils mark time. Fieldwork is used effectively to extend pupils' geographical knowledge and skills. Good use is made of the local environment, and Year 4 pupils visit How Hill, Year 5 follow the Cromer Trail and Year 6 pupils carry out environmental work at Grafham Water. There was also a strong emphasis on fieldwork at the time of the previous inspection.

99. The subject leader provides sound management and has devised a comprehensive subject policy. Planning is based on national guidelines, which are being adapted to the school's needs. Targets for development are appropriate including a systematic method of assessment and recording which is currently unsatisfactory. This was also a finding of the previous inspection. The monitoring of classroom teaching is insufficiently developed and work sampling takes place only when geography is a focus. Resources are satisfactory, although Year 6 pupils are unfamiliar with aerial photographs and compasses. Information and communication technology is used soundly to support teaching and learning. Numeracy skills are satisfactorily developed for pupils to record their findings and, in good cross-curricular links, Year 6 pupils debated whether the Boreham Bypass, which would pass through a Roman villa and farmland, should be allowed. The subject makes a good

contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by raising their awareness of environmental concerns and the need for the conservation of resources and by their study of life in an Indian rural village. Well-mounted displays such as 'Where in the world are we?' 'Come to Cromer' and 'Improving the school environment' provide a good focus for pupils' learning.

HISTORY

100. Standards in history are below average in Year 6. This judgement, which represents a decline in the standards reported in the 1997 inspection, when they met national expectations, takes into account the lessons observed, an analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays and discussions with teachers and pupils. Although topics are taught in adequate detail, standards in literacy, which are lower than at the time of the previous inspection, undermine pupils' attainment in the subject, especially in the researching and recording of their work. As they move through the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactorily. There were no differences in attainment between boys and girls.

101. The quality of teaching and learning in history is satisfactory. In the previous inspection, teaching was judged to be good overall. The analysis of work and discussion with pupils in Year 6 show that they have sound insight into the events of World War II and the post war period. They draw sensible conclusions about the effects of the Blitz and its aftermath on the civilian population as they describe a night in the London underground and empathise with the plight of evacuees when they write about their feelings of insecurity and pack an evacuation suitcase. Their 'Make do and Mend' posters enable them to understand the privations of wartime living, such as food and clothes rationing. Pupils have also learned about the contribution of women to the war effort and how that period influenced the role of women in society. Teachers have developed pupils' ability to analyse change effectively in the comparison between home life, popular culture and technology in 1948 and the present day. This is the result of direct, structured and well-planned teaching, but pupils do not do enough independent or sustained research and they are not sufficiently encouraged to learn through enquiry and interpretation. There are no artefacts from the era to develop careful observational and analytical skills.

102. In their study of Tudor times, Year 5 pupils know about Henry VIII as a young man and a king and can effectively contrast the lifestyles of the rich and poor and follow the route of explorers like Raleigh, Frobisher, Cabot and Drake. However, historical language is insufficiently developed and, for more able pupils, the range and depth of recorded work are limited. Teachers place good emphasis on respect for historical evidence and pupils have a good understanding of the importance of primary and secondary sources. In a Year 4 lesson about aspects of Anglo-Saxon life, pupils had to think about their historical questions before they were allowed to embark upon research. In this lively and fast paced lesson, the classroom became a hive of activity – "We want loads and loads of ideas!" challenged the teacher. As a result, pupils became active and confident learners although some less able pupils were unsure how the topic would progress.

103. As they move through the school, pupils have a growing sense of chronology and the concept of a timeline and use appropriate vocabulary to refer to the passage of time. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson about the Battle of Marathon, when the teacher made good links between the event and why the London Marathon is run over 26 miles. This particular lesson illustrated the strengths and weaknesses of the teaching of history across the school. Resources were used imaginatively to enliven the story of the battle but the reading was flat and monotonous so that pupils' interest began to wane and opportunities for developing historical language were lost. The teacher led a lively discussion about how the Athenians felt when the Spartans refused to help and quickly drew pupils' attention to their qualities of endurance when one pupil described the Spartans as 'wimpish'. Pupils

made sound progress as a result of the teacher's good organisation and her calm, efficient approach but the lesson lacked vitality so that pupils relaxed into a gentle pace of working and questioning was not skilful enough to develop pupils' responses and thinking about the context in which these people lived.

104. A good policy now supports teaching and learning in the subject. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines are being developed as a scheme of work with a clear focus on developing cross-curricular links. The subject is satisfactorily led and targets are appropriate, including the increasing use of information and communication technology which does not support teaching and learning enough. The subject leader monitors books and planning but classroom observation is underdeveloped. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory and marking usually consists of ticks and praise – 'a lovely story', 'a nice account' - and does not show pupils how to improve their work. This was also a finding of the previous inspection. Resources are inadequate to raise pupils' historical awareness. Colourful displays, such as Year 6's propaganda posters 'Hitler will send no warning', Year 4's Roman soldier Aemilius Macedonia and Year 3's 'Would you have liked to be a boy or girl living in Sparta?' raise the profile of the subject and instil pupils with a sense of pride. History makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as they examine the gulf between the rich and poor in different periods, enjoy group work when researching information and study the legacy of ancient civilisations. Visits and visitors like West Stow Anglo-Saxon village, Norwich castle and 'Racketts, Rumbles and Rasps', a Tudor Living History event, effectively bring the subject to life for pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

105. Standards in information and communication technology are average in Year 6. This judgement shows an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection, when attainment overall was below the expected standard. Other evidence indicates that many pupils in Year 5 and some younger pupils produce a good standard of work and achieve well. One of the main factors contributing to the improvement in standards is the opening of an information and communication technology suite and the provision of the latest teaching aids, that includes an interactive whiteboard and image projector. These improvements have already had a significant impact on the attainment of pupils. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.

106. The quality of teaching and learning is good and shows an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to be satisfactory. Teachers are confident users of information and communication technology and impart their skills well to the pupils. Pupils in Year 6 order sentences correctly and use a word processing program successfully to support other areas of the curriculum. They learn how to use spreadsheets to help them save time and effort, for example, by calculating the total cost of a children's party. Although no teaching was observed in Year 6, pupils' previous work shows sufficient breadth in their use of information and communication technology. Pupils control events in a predetermined way, learn how to write a procedure to check two inputs and an output event and present a set of linked multimedia pages, on such topics as 'Dinosaurs' and 'How to keep a cat', which incorporate images and text. The pupils have a wide knowledge of computers in general as many have access to them at home. Within school, access to the Internet is recent but pupils understand the power of the 'Net' and talk about the advantages and possible dangers of using it, such as the chat lines.

107. Through the very skilful teaching in Year 5, the pupils are becoming highly competent. The teacher had planned a unit of work for graphical modelling which the pupils tackled confidently. Very good use was made of the interactive white board and image projector to show the class how to create a set of graphic elements, which could be used to produce a different layout for their classroom. The teacher's very good subject

knowledge was used effectively to help pupils learn to use the graphics package confidently and his clear instructions enabled all pupils to commence work without delay and learn a range of new skills. Previous work by the pupils show that they understand how to write a procedure to operate a moveable model that incorporates lights and touch sensors.

108. In a good Year 4 lesson on modelling effects on screen, the teacher extended the learning of pupils of all levels of attainment with her competent demonstration and energetic approach that captured the enthusiasm of all. In this lesson, many pupils learned how to write a number of procedures, such as 'square' and by using the repeat instruction, 36 [square, right 10], duplicated the shape to create a flower design. The pupils worked with genuine enthusiasm and expressed real wonder when they achieved the required result. A particular strength in this lesson was the effective support given by the more competent pupils to those pupils who found this task difficult.

109. The analysis of pupils' work in Year 3 shows that they can combine text and graphics to communicate information and change the look of the text for emphasis and effect by changing font type, size and colour. In a lesson on manipulating sounds, the teacher introduced pupils to the technique of composing music on the computer and organising it to sound like an animal. Once in the computer suite, the pupils set about the task with enthusiasm and worked on their compositions with a good level of interest.

110. The subject co-ordinator provides very good leadership through his knowledge and enthusiasm. He provides very clear direction for the development of the subject and has been instrumental in setting up a wide range of very useful support systems, including the creation of a web site for teachers that provides them with access to the whole school curricular planning documentation. All aspects of the National Curriculum programme of study are addressed and there are detailed medium term plans in place that provide very good support to teachers. All major weaknesses reported by the previous inspection have been addressed. Generally, teachers plan well to use information and communication technology as a tool for learning across the curriculum, although little evidence was seen in their work in science. There is a planned programme of access to the computer suite and those in the classrooms are generally used appropriately to support pupils' learning. However, the basic keyboard skills of many pupils are relatively weak and, consequently, time is wasted as they look for the letter keys when entering text. The commitment by the school and expenditure on information and communication technology has been well targeted. The improvement in standards is a clear indication, not only of the good quality of the teaching but also of money well spent. Information and communication technology is developing well.

MUSIC

111. Standards in music are below average in Year 6. In the school's previous inspection, attainment was judged to be average. Evidence from this inspection includes observations of lessons in Years 3 and 6, scrutiny of teachers' planning, assemblies, displays and discussions with teachers and pupils. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve soundly across the school.

112. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Similar standards were reported by the school's previous inspection, since when there have been a significant number of staff changes. Several teachers do not feel confident in teaching the subject and effective use is made of more confident colleagues to teach some lessons. Lessons cover the required areas of learning and experiences but there are some weaknesses in the development of older pupils' skills. Lessons are carefully planned and prepared with an interesting range of musical activities that involve pupils effectively. As a result, pupils sing a range of songs in singing assemblies with a sense of enjoyment and an appropriate sense of tune, particularly in Years 3 and 4. The musical accompaniment on

both the piano and guitar help to create a feeling of community and give encouragement for pupils to participate fully. Older pupils sometimes need additional encouragement to participate effectively in singing. This is particularly true of some older boys. Pupils sing two part melodies and rounds and sustain an effective counter rhythm as was seen in their singing of hymns such as 'Let me thank and praise you' and 'Build your house on sandy land'.

113. In the satisfactory Year 3 lesson seen, pupils explored how musical sounds could be used to represent different animals, following a lesson in which they had listened to Saint-Saens' 'Carnival of the Animals'. In a good link with their work in information and communication technology, pupils had previously combined high and low, and short and long sounds to represent animals. During the lesson, they built on this foundation by singing animal nursery rhymes with different sounds and using simple percussion instruments to accompany their movement as animals. They used the instruments with appropriate understanding and one pair of boys demonstrated how they had created a sequence with a precise beat by the end of the lesson. Pupils' abilities to use precise language to talk about the sounds they hear were sometimes limited and they required support to use an appropriate range of vocabulary. By the end of the lesson, most pupils had created, and could perform, a sequence of sounds to accompany their movements and a few pupils had achieved a coherent planned effect.

114. In Year 6, pupils learned how to develop their writing of lyrics to accompany their own selected backing track. The songs were being written to perform at the final leaving concert at the end of the year. This background, and the teachers' effective involvement of pupils in the lesson's activities, gave pupils a sense of being real musicians and performers and they were interested and well motivated as a result. They had previously considered appropriate elements of a variety of modern lyrics and identified some important features before developing and adapting them to fit their own compositions. Pupils were able to talk about the process of composition in some detail and some were confident in the use of electronic keyboards to produce their own backing rhythm. Others used a range of tuned and untuned percussion to explore backing sounds and rhythms. The teacher gave them good opportunities in the lesson to discuss their work and evaluated their achievements appropriately at the end. There were some missed opportunities for pupils to assess their own and each other's work. By the end of the lesson, pupils had developed their understanding of the process of composition well and understood the need to refine and develop their work further. However, pupils' abilities to match the rhythm of their lyrics to the rhythm of their chosen tracks were variable and only a few pupils were able to use their voices effectively to follow the melody in performing their own compositions.

115. Discussions with Year 6 pupils indicate that, although they had been given an appropriate range of experiences, their recall and understanding of what they had learned were not always secure. Those pupils who receive tuition from the peripatetic teachers or have lesson outside school were able to discuss elements of notation and musical terms at an appropriate level, whilst other pupils, although generally familiar with terms, were not able to discuss their knowledge in any detail.

116. The subject is led by the headteacher, who has good specialist understanding of the subject and the needs of the pupils. New units of work have been developed and used this year, which meet the requirements of the revised National Curriculum. The school is aware of the need to increase teachers' confidence and subject knowledge and plans to address this as finances become available. There has been no monitoring of teaching or pupils' learning in the subject. The school ensures that all pupils who wish to have tuition with peripatetic teachers are able to do so and, currently, approximately twenty five pupils benefit from the good range of instrumental teaching offered. Pupils are also given the opportunity to listen to concerts provided by peripatetic teachers each term. Pupils have an additional opportunity to learn to play the guitar or recorder in a lunchtime club.

Assessment in the subject is linked to statements of attainment outlined in the National Curriculum for Years 4 and 6. There is no provision for assessing how effectively pupils are developing musical skills. Resources in the subject are generally satisfactory. There is a good range of instruments, both untuned and tuned, as was observed in the school's previous inspection. However, the school does not have sufficient recorded music to meet the requirements of the new units of work. The school relies currently on teachers supplementing from their own resources. The school has a good sized classroom which is used as a music room and where all resources are stored. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

117. Overall, standards of attainment are above average by the end of Year 6. However, no dance lessons were observed during the inspection due to the school's timetabling arrangements. From teachers' planning, photographic evidence and observation of a short modern dance routine during a drama session in the activities afternoon, it is judged that standards in dance are at least satisfactory. Pupils achieve above average attainment in swimming. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls. These judgements show similar standards to the findings of the previous inspection.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is good. This judgement is similar to that made by the school's previous inspection. Teaching and learning were good in a well-organised and well-managed Year 6 gymnastics lesson. Pupils changed into appropriate clothing for gymnastics in the adjacent changing rooms before walking quietly into the school hall. The lesson was well structured for pupils to develop their own gymnastic sequences by understanding, choosing and applying certain principles to their compositions. The lesson started with an aerobic warm-up session and pupils clearly understood the health and safety reasons for this before undertaking more energetic exercise. The teacher gave clear instructions for what pupils were expected to learn during the lesson. Pupils chose and put out a good range of apparatus before composing their own gymnastic sequences. They made good progress in developing individual routines, which combined five balances using different parts of the body within a smoothly performed sequence. They showed very good control of their movements. Pupils willingly demonstrated their sequences, and were encouraged to evaluate their own and others' performances through the teacher's effective questioning, such as "Can you tell us if he moved in an interesting way and how you think the sequence could be improved?" As a result of effective evaluation, all pupils refined their movements well. In a good Year 3 gymnastics lesson, pupils made good progress due to the teacher skilfully increasing the level of challenge as the lesson progressed. During a Year 3 games lesson, pupils made good progress developing their throwing and catching skills, as well as learning strategies in preparation for net games, such as tennis. The teacher gave clear instructions, which pupils followed well, and related their work to tennis played at Wimbledon. Year 4 pupils refined and improved their balancing skills well after evaluating the demonstrations of other pupils.

119. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 improved their athletics skills well, when they took part in well-organised events on the school field. They recorded, evaluated and then tried to improve their performances for running 20, 100 and 200 metres, throwing a ball, discus and a javelin, and taking part in the high jump, standing jump and long jump events. Teachers encouraged and motivated their pupils well. Good teaching was exemplified by a teacher's clear instructions, "Aim higher, arm back and use more power in your throw", which enabled pupils to improve their throwing skills well. Swimming is taught in the school's heated pool by a qualified swimming teacher. Almost all pupils learn to swim at least 25 metres safely and confidently before they leave the school. Many exceed this level and learn deep-water skills and safety aspects. In the two observed swimming lessons, the teaching and learning were good. There was a marked contrast between the Year 3 pupils, who are at the early

stages of learning to swim, and the competent, very good swimming skills of the Year 6 pupils. The swimming teacher enabled even the most nervous of the Year 3 pupils to feel confident and that they are 'swimmers'. She enabled every pupil in each group to develop their skills well during the lessons. Year 6 pupils made good progress refining their front and back crawl technique before starting to learn how to do a tumble turn. Every pupil made good progress due to good teaching.

120. The leadership and management of physical education are good, as at the time of the school's last inspection. The physical education policy is appropriate. The co-ordinator took on the role at the beginning of the current academic year and has planned a good scheme of work, which ensures that all aspects of the curriculum are systematically covered. The twice-yearly, six-week 'activities afternoons' enable pupils to take part in a good range of sports activities, which they enjoy, whilst improving their skills, such as for cricket and hockey. The school provides a good range of extracurricular activities for sport. There are clubs and teams for football, netball, cricket, athletics and swimming. The football and netball teams are very successful in competitions. The school has a very good field, a large hard surface and an adequately sized hall, which support learning well. Learning resources adequately support curricular provision. The school is fortunate to have its own heated indoor swimming pool, which is used well throughout the year. Pupils take part in a 'fun swimming gala', as well as the Norfolk Schools Swimming Gala, where they improved their performance from seventh last year to fifth this year. A group of twelve Year 6 pupils are creating a 'water show', which they are to perform to the school. Adventurous activities take place on the annual residential visit for older pupils. Assessment procedures are unsatisfactory, but the co-ordinator plans to have these in place for September 2001. The subject contributes well to pupils' personal development. It gives pupils opportunities to develop team spirit and compete fairly within the understood rules of the games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

121. By the age of 11, pupils attain standards in religious education that are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. This judgement differs from the 1997 inspection when standards were reported to be satisfactory. Although there is sound coverage of topics throughout the school, pupils' attainment in religious education is undermined by weaknesses in their skills in speaking and writing, which were not noted by the last inspection. Judgements in this inspection are based on classroom observations, analysis of pupils' work, scrutiny of teachers' planning and displays and discussions with teachers and pupils. The warm, caring ethos of the school, where pupils are strongly encouraged to develop a sense of self worth, supports teaching and learning well in religious education. All pupils achieve satisfactorily as they move through the key stage. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in all activities and discussions and, with sensitive support, make sound progress. There were no differences in attainment between boys and girls.

122. As in the 1997 inspection, the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school is satisfactory. Teaching in the subject soundly reflects the school's aim to provide children with an understanding of religion and the part it can play in their own and others' lives. The analysis of work shows that pupils have an appropriate understanding of some major world faiths, such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam and how they relate to their own lives. In a Year 6 lesson, in which pupils explored Christianity through art, the teacher involved pupils in their work thoughtfully and used challenging questions to develop their responses and thinking – "How is colour used effectively?" "Why does this picture look so modern?" A few pupils replied clearly and concisely but most were unable to sustain their ideas because of weak skills in spoken language and in their range of vocabulary. Although the teacher explained the importance of capturing the essence of the picture, pupils concentrated on their artwork and missed the wealth of symbolism in the

pictures and its profound significance to believers. Similarly, in another Year 6 lesson about how art helps Muslims to worship, the teacher, by perceptive questioning, skilfully drew out pupils' responses to a range of Islamic patterns. "Why are there no pictures of Allah?" – "He's so great it's wrong to make an image of him", "it's impossible to know what he looks like". Some pupils offered mature suggestions about the detailed drawings but others found it difficult to articulate their ideas. Their written work lacked depth and the leisurely pace of the lesson meant that pupils did not have the motivation and confidence to rise to the challenge set by the teacher.

123. By their calm and sensitive approach, most teachers create an atmosphere of reflection and mutual trust where pupils feel confident in developing their responses to important questions. This was evident in a Year 5 lesson on why and how Christians help others through agencies like Christian Aid and the Tear Fund. The scene was set by the teacher's expressive reading of the gospel of St Matthew and a modern version of the Good Samaritan. Her thought-provoking questions enabled pupils to identify problems of the Third World, such as war, hunger, disease and homelessness, and the solutions offered by the Christian agencies. The teacher's imaginative use of resources, when 'tears' representing problems became 'hearts' when resolved, stimulated pupils' ideas and ensured that they worked in happy co-operation with each other while learning about a Christian response to human need in practical and long term ways. However, there were too many visual aids for pupils to assimilate, and no time was given for consolidation and reflection. In another Year 5 lesson on the same theme, the teacher's weak management skills resulted in deteriorating relationships with pupils, which undermined the spirit of the teaching of religious education in the school. Pupils in Year 4 have explored aspects of Hinduism and Judaism and the significance of pilgrimages to believers. In Year 3, pupils could identify the qualities of Guru Nanak which made Sikhs admire him as a result of the teacher's well-pitched questions and clear presentation of ideas. Throughout the school, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness through observation and reflection on the beauty, order and mystery of the natural world. Also pupils' ability to see how different religions influence each other and how they affect personal behaviour and responsibility towards others has not been adequately developed.

124. The subject is satisfactorily led and resourced. Targets are appropriate, including the development of resources. The subject leader monitors planning, but there is no classroom observation or sampling of pupils' work. Assessment is unsatisfactory as there are no formal procedures and marking is too variable across the school to be helpful to pupils. Information and communication technology is used soundly to support teaching and learning. Literacy skills are developed satisfactorily as some pupils keep a disciple's diary during the events leading up to Easter, write modern versions of parables and describe 'My special place'. The subject makes a sound contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, when they compare the mool mantra with the Lord's Prayer, discuss how artefacts can be sacred and spiritual for believers and gain a deeper understanding of the world's great faiths. Pupils in Year 6 make thoughtful comparisons between the local parish church and the Baptist church following their visit, and visitors such as storytellers and representatives from local churches and the Salvation Army provide pupils with a rich source of information about how others live and worship.