

INSPECTION REPORT

ELY ST JOHN'S COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ely, Cambridgeshire

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110773

Headteacher: Mrs J Allison

Reporting inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 4th – 7th March 2002

Inspection number: 197723

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 4 – 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: St John's Road
Ely
Cambridge

Postcode: CB6 3BW

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Peter Wickham

Date of previous inspection: October 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
20891	Sean O'Toole	Registered inspector	English as an additional language; Equal opportunities; Design and technology; Information and communication technology; Art and design.	The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils taught; How well is the school led and managed; What should the school do to improve further.
9003	Brian Findley	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.
22671	David White	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Science; Geography; History.	
20911	Judith Dawson	Team inspector	Foundation Stage; Mathematics; Physical education.	
18143	Bernice Magson	Team inspector	English; Religious education; Music.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St John's Primary School is located in Ely. It opened in 1992 and became an all-through primary school in 1995. It is now a larger than average primary school and bigger than at the time of the last inspection. Most pupils come from the surrounding area which is above average socio-economically. A total of 317 (170 boys and 147 girls) aged between four and eleven attend the school. The ethnic background of almost all pupils is white. Three pupils have English as an additional language and one is at an early stage of English acquisition having French and Sangay as other languages. Almost eight percent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is below average. There are 39 pupils with special educational needs, which is also below average. Five have a statement of special educational need. Children start in the reception year in the September of the school year in which they are five. At the time of the inspection 55 children were taught in the two reception classes. Attainment on admission varies from year to year but is generally above average. Almost all of the teachers have joined the school in the last four years.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school in which standards are rising because of good teaching. By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in mathematics and physical education and average in the other subjects. Pupils make good progress in most subjects. Leadership and management are good and a very capable governing body supports the headteacher. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are above average in mathematics and physical education.
- Children in reception classes make good progress and exceed the early learning goals in all of the areas of learning.
- Teaching is good throughout the school.
- The school is managed well and the headteacher and governors provide good leadership.
- The pupils' positive attitudes to school and very good behaviour.
- The school cares for pupils and promotes very good moral and social awareness.

What could be improved

- Standards in writing in the juniors.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning could be more systematic.
- The use of computers in several subjects.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the previous inspection in September 1997 and successfully tackled most of the issues raised. In recent years, the school has been through a period of significant growth in pupil numbers and changes of staff and is continuing to expand at a rapid rate. These changes have been managed well and the school is in a good position to build upon what has been achieved so far. Standards in art and design and design and technology have improved in the juniors and in the infants the pupils achieve better in history and geography. There has been some good progress in raising standards in English and mathematics although more remains to be done to raise pupils' attainment in writing at the end of Year 6. Teaching and learning are now good and much better than reported previously. The leadership and management of the school have also improved.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	C	D	E	E
Mathematics	B	B	B	D
Science	B	C	C	E

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

Overall trends in improvement have kept pace with the improving national trend. However, the results of national tests in English taken in Year 6 have fallen in the last two years. The school has reversed this trend through effective teaching and target setting. Inspection evidence shows that standards in Year 6 are now average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Generally girls perform better than boys, although in the 2001 English tests the Year 6 girls under-performed. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for achievement in national tests and is on course to meet them. Many changes of staff, inconsistency in developing skills, knowledge and understanding and the high mobility of pupils have resulted in uneven progress in the past and standards which were too low in English. Standards are now rising and pupils are achieving well although more remains to be done to raise the quality of pupils' writing.

Standards in the national tests taken in Year 2 last year were well above average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. When compared with similar schools standards were average in reading and mathematics and well above average in writing. Standards in science were above average. Standards in English and mathematics in Year 2 have improved since the previous inspection. Children in the reception classes make good progress. By the time they start in Year 1 they have exceeded the expected goals for their age all the six areas and are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Progress is now mostly good for all groups and ages of pupils including those pupils with special educational needs and the more able. Pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils successfully use their literacy and numeracy skills to support their work in other subjects although computers are not used enough in several subjects. Standards in physical education are above average throughout the school. Standards in art and design, geography, history, design and technology, religious education, music and information and communication technology are in line with those expected for pupils in Years 2 and 6.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The pupils have much enthusiasm for school and they eagerly participate in lessons and extra-curricular activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. There are very few incidents of bullying or rough play and no exclusions. Pupils are thoughtful, considerate and show kindness to others.

Personal development and relationships	Good. Relationships are very good. Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and carry out duties with enthusiasm.
Attendance	Good. The pupils enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 - 2	Years 3 - 6
Quality of teaching	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good throughout the school with some very good and occasionally excellent features. Teaching meets the needs of all groups of pupils although there is limited support available for pupils with English as an additional language. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and the contribution made by support staff is very good. The more able pupils are set sufficiently challenging work. Strengths in the teaching include the relationships between staff and pupils, and very good management of behaviour. The teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. Setting the pupils by ability in mathematics works well. Teaching in most of the other subjects is good. Planning of lessons is thorough and teachers are well prepared. Teachers make good use of the school's resources although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers in several subjects. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good with some excellent teaching of communication, language and literacy. The staff achieve a good balance between guiding the children and allowing them opportunities to learn independently. In Years 1 to 6, pupils' learning is good. In most classes the pupils apply their skills very well and work hard. They are attentive and thoughtful listeners who rise to challenges. The teachers are good at sharing the objectives of the lessons with the pupils and this ensures that the pupils are clear about what is expected of them and able to settle to tasks quickly. Lessons often conclude with a useful discussion about what has been learned. There are some areas for further development in teaching which include more sharply focused marking and improving the pace of some lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good curriculum which meets the needs of pupils and promotes learning effectively. The school day is well structured and good use is made of time. All National Curriculum subjects and religious education are taught to sufficient depth.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Support staff contribute very well to the pupils' progress. Individual education plans are well written and used to plan work at the right level. There is very good support for pupils with physical disabilities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. The procedures for supporting pupils with English as an additional language are not sufficiently clear but individual support works effectively.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes very good provision to support pupils' social and moral development, partly through the recent developments in personal, social and health education. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for life in a culturally diverse society. Spiritual development is good. Cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is a very caring school. Health and safety procedures are good and there are strong systems to support pupils' social and academic development, based on good assessment.

The school partnership with parents works well and most parents have positive views of the school. The school provides good information about their children's progress and involves many parents in lessons. Good links are made through the provision of homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has led the school well through a time of significant change. She manages the school very effectively supported by other senior staff. Teamwork is good. The role of subject leaders is not as well developed as it should be.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effectively. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have good strategies to raise standards further.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher and governors use test results and regular assessments to target improvement. The school's plans for the future include useful measures of success. Performance management is used well to set targets for improvements in teaching and to raise standards.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school manages funds well. Best value principles are applied very well.

The accommodation is very good. Most subjects have good resources but there are shortages in geography and religious education and outdoor play equipment for reception children. There are sufficient teaching staff and a good number of support staff whose experience and expertise contribute much to learning.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children enjoy coming to school and make good progress. • Parents are pleased with the standard of teaching. Teachers help the children to work hard. • The staff are approachable. • The school contributes much to their children's personal, social and emotional development. • Behaviour is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school works with parents. • The provision of extra-curricular activities. • More consistency in homework. • Information about their children's progress.

The inspection team agrees with the positive views of parents. The school works well with parents and provides good information about their children's progress. There is an interesting range of extra-curricular activities although most of these are only available to junior pupils. There is good provision for homework.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards are generally higher now than at the time of the previous inspection. Parents expressed satisfaction with the standards their children achieve at the school and commented that they felt that progress was good for children of all abilities. Inspection evidence shows that standards are now at least at the appropriate level for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection particularly in art and design and design and technology at the end of Year 6 and history and geography at the end of the infants. The rate of pupils' progress has also improved as teaching has become more consistent and targets have been set which are sufficiently challenging. The headteacher and governors keep a check on how well targets are being met by making good use of the school's system of performance management. Given these improvements it might be expected that standards should be higher than they are at the end of Year 6. However, frequent changes of staff, the impact of a significant proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school and lack of continuity in developing the subjects have led to uneven progress in the past. The role of the subject leaders is also not sufficiently well developed in monitoring teaching and learning. Another factor influencing overall attainment at the end of Year 6 is the variation in the proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each cohort.
2. Children start at the school in the September of the academic year in which they are five. Attainment on admission to the school is mostly above average although there are variations between cohorts. For example, the current group of reception children had very good personal and social skills and well-advanced skills in language when they started school. Most have benefited from pre-school educational experience. Other groups, such as Years 1 and 2 have an average profile.
3. Inspection evidence shows that children in the reception class achieve well. They make good progress in all of the areas of learning and very good progress in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. By the end of the reception year the children attain standards that exceed expectations for their age and the children are very well prepared for the National Curriculum. The children are confident and competent speakers and listeners. They have already developed good strategies for building words and are beginning to write effectively using some correct spelling and simple punctuation. Part of their success in exceeding the early learning goals in mathematical, creative and physical development and in knowledge and understanding of the world is due to the effective teaching and wide range of experiences and activities provided. Another factor is the way that the staff stimulate the children's good personal, social and emotional development by giving them responsibility, encouraging independent working and providing opportunities for the children to work in different sizes of groups. Children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs and the more able, are given just the right level of challenge and make good progress. The achievement in the reception classes represents significant success for the school.
4. Pupils with special educational needs in Years 1 to 6 make good progress and make good headway in meeting their targets. They are supported well both by the teachers and support staff. This is most successful in English and mathematics but is also noticeable in subjects such as art and design when support staff work alongside

pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils with statements of special educational need also make good progress and benefit from skilful staff who understand their needs and set work which is carefully matched to the pupils' needs. Most individual education plans reflect the needs of pupils and are used well to plan work and to monitor progress over time. The previous inspection report criticised the school for its lack of challenge for the more able and the staff have worked hard to provide more demanding lessons. They have been largely successful and these pupils make good progress. Those working in mixed age classes also achieve well as much thought is given to grouping the pupils by ability in some lessons. A particular success has been the setting of pupils by ability for mathematics. This arrangement, sometimes extended through booster classes, enables teachers to plan work with a good match to ability, and pupils as a result make good progress and achieve above average standards.

5. There are some slight variations in the performance of boys and girls in some national tests. In general, the girls achieve slightly better than boys but in the 2001 tests the girls' performance in English tests was well below that of girls nationally and this depressed the overall performance of that cohort. This anomaly was due to the high proportion of girls in the cohort with learning difficulties in language and literacy. There is no consistent pattern in the achievement of boys and girls as there are variations for year to year depending on the make-up of the cohort. The school has few pupils with English as an additional language and their rate of progress varies depending largely on their understanding of English. Younger pupils, new to the school, make satisfactory headway in learning English but due to the lack of formal structures to guide staff and very limited support from outside agencies progress could be better. As pupils acquire basic English they begin to make good progress and by the time they leave the school most have an appropriate grasp of basic reading and writing and are able to hold a conversation.
6. National test results at the end of Year 2 in 2001 showed that pupils attained well above average standards in reading and writing and above average standards in mathematics. When compared with schools with a similar intake, standards were well above average in writing and average in reading and mathematics. Teacher assessments showed that standards in science were above average. Inspection evidence shows that standards in English and mathematics are above average and average in science. The variations between performance in 2001 and the current Year 2 is due to the variation between cohorts, the increased proportion of pupils with special educational needs in the current group and lower attainment on admission. Trends over time show that there has been a steady improvement in standards overall since the previous inspection.
7. National test results at the end of Year 6 have shown overall improvement since 1997 although there was a dip in performance, particularly in English, in 2000 and 2001. In the 2001 tests, pupils attained above average standards in mathematics, average standards in science but standards in English were well below the national average. When compared with schools in similar contexts, standards were below average in mathematics and well below average in English and science. These disappointing results were due to lack of incisive teaching, the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and insufficient progress in writing. Inspection evidence shows that standards in this year's tests are likely to be above average in mathematics and average in English and science, although more still remains to be done to accelerate pupils' progress in writing. Reasons for the improvement in standards are good teaching, improved target setting and effective use of booster classes for

mathematics and English. Standards are now sufficiently high given the pupils' uneven progress in the past and recent improvements.

8. Throughout the school pupils have good speaking and listening skills. Pupils read competently from a range of texts. By the end of Year 6 pupils are able to hold a conversation and take part in reasoned discussion on a variety of issues. They write accurately paying attention to accurate grammar and punctuation but their skills in writing for a wide range of purposes and using joined and fluent handwriting are not as good as they should be. Pupils have good mathematical knowledge and competently solve problems. Their skills and knowledge of data handling, shape, space and measures are above average. By the end of Years 2 and 6, the pupils have secure skills, knowledge and understanding in all aspects of science. Pupils make good use of their literacy skills in several subjects. They write accurate historical accounts, use reading skills well to research information and produce interesting biographies of famous artists in their art lessons. Pupils use their numeracy skills well in design and technology when measuring area and accurately designing plans for models. Data handling skills are used well in science to record the results of experiments using charts and diagrams.
9. Throughout the school pupils have above average skills in physical education. They have good tactical skills when playing games and are agile and creative in dance and gymnastics. Pupils attain appropriate levels for their age in art and design, music, geography, history, music, design and technology, religious education and information and communication technology (ICT). The pupils have secure skills in computing although they are less confident in using ICT in some subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils throughout the school respond well to their schooling. They have good attitudes to work and behave very well. Pupils begin the day with enthusiasm and soon organise themselves and settle ready for work. They pay good attention to their lessons and contribute sensibly to activities so that very little time is wasted. This creates an atmosphere in which the pupils learn well and is a feature of nearly all lessons. The attitudes and behaviour of children in the reception classes are very good and they develop very well during this time. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour have improved since the previous inspection.
11. Behaviour is very good in all areas of the school because pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them and standards are applied consistently by members of staff. This represents an improvement in the standard of behaviour of pupils in the juniors seen at the time of the last inspection and this is acknowledged by parents. Pupils respond very well to positive encouragement by members of staff and the vast majority need little more than a gentle reminder of how to behave. They look after furniture and equipment well and keep areas clean and tidy. A very small number of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties sometimes find it difficult to concentrate for long in lessons and this affects the progress they make.
12. Pupils' relationships with each other and with teachers are very good and pupils develop well during their time at the school. They mix happily in play and cooperate well in class. There are few tensions or incidents of aggressive behaviour and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Pupils also develop well and willingly take on classroom responsibilities to help teachers, such as in Year 5 where pupils set up the computer before school starts. Year 6 pupils work with younger ones in the reception classes and also help organise a 'thank-you' event for parent helpers. In the classroom, pupils show a mature appreciation of the values and feelings of others,

such as seen in Years 3 and 4 religious education lessons where pupils listened carefully and discussed sensibly aspects of Islam.

13. Attendance is good and has been consistently so over the past few years. Attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is low. A single administrative error resulted in too low a figure for average attendance being declared for last year. Pupils also attend school in very good time for the start of the day. The vast majority of pupils have a very good record of attendance but the attendance of pupils from a few families is unsatisfactory and this affects the progress they make.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT

14. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Parents commented positively about the quality of teaching in the school. In the lessons seen teaching ranged from satisfactory to excellent. About a quarter of the lessons seen were satisfactory with the remainder good or better. One in four lessons were very good and there was some excellent teaching of communication, language and literacy in the reception classes, English in Year 5 and physical education in Years 5 and 6. Teachers work hard to meet the needs of pupils of different abilities. The more able pupils are challenged sufficiently and this is an improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good teaching. The few pupils with English as an additional language receive individual support and are taught satisfactorily. Teaching in the reception classes is good.
15. Good teaching for pupils with special educational needs is well supported by individual education plans that are carefully drawn up by the co-ordinator, the teachers and the learning support assistants. A significant factor in the quality of provision for these pupils is the assistance and encouragement they receive from all adults involved in their education. Close teamwork is a key feature that is sustained throughout the school. Teachers and support assistants work hard to ensure pupils make improvements and grow in confidence. Regularly, throughout the inspection, support assistants were observed providing sensitive and purposeful help for pupils.
16. There are several aspects of teaching which are consistently good throughout the school. Lessons are planned well and usually include learning objectives that are shared with the pupils at the start of lessons. This approach sets the scene for learning and the teachers make sure that the pupils are clear about what is expected of them. The pupils are often reminded through the lesson of the objectives and this helps to keep them focused on the tasks. This was seen to good effect in an ICT lesson in Years 3 and 4 when step-by-step instructions were given, the pupils had opportunities to practise and the teacher checked on how well the pupils had understood the objective. Teachers usually review what has been learned at the end of lessons and ask well-focused questions to check the pupils' understanding. This worked very well in several mathematics lessons and enabled the teachers to plan the next lesson taking account of what the pupils had understood and where they needed further guidance. Homework is also used well to extend pupils' learning in English and mathematics.
17. Another strength in the teaching is the consistent way in which teachers and support staff insist on good behaviour. They use much encouragement and praise to motivate the pupils and the pupils respond well. Most lessons benefit from the additional support of classroom assistants and sometimes parents and these adults make a very good contribution to learning by supporting the pupils in reading, on visits and when doing practical work. The support staff are very skilful and are briefed well by

the teachers. Everyone in the classroom is clear about their role and responsibilities and carries them out effectively.

18. There are a few areas for improvement in teaching. Although most lessons have a good pace, the momentum in some lessons is occasionally lost by introductions that go on too long. Many teachers set time limits for the completion of work and give good reminders to the pupils but this good practice is not consistent. All teachers mark the pupils' work and add positive comments but few include specific guidance or targets to guide the pupils on how they might improve. Insufficient emphasis is given to developing pupils' handwriting and encouraging the use of joined and fluent script.
19. The teaching of children in the Foundation Stage (the reception classes) is good overall and has some very good and excellent features particularly in communication, language and literacy and physical development. The teachers are well organised and know the children well so that they plan work which is sufficiently challenging. The support staff also work well alongside the children and provide good advice and direction. All staff have a good understanding of how young children learn and they achieve a good balance between directing activities and giving opportunities for the children to work independently and to gain understanding through practical activities. This was seen in a mathematics lessons when the children walked around the school identifying three-dimensional shapes and with much glee described the properties of cylinders and cuboids. Teachers make learn interesting and are particularly skilful in teaching communication, language and literacy. They make very effective use of a variety of methods and combine the teaching of letter sounds with practical activities such as using playdough to make letters. There are good activities to promote writing such as making shopping lists. The teaching of physical development is very good as the children are set demanding tasks, encouraged to be creative and to practise and refine their movements. The staff keep good records of the children's progress and use the results of assessments to plan further work which is matched to the children's needs. Planning and preparation are thorough and much thought goes into making learning fun. This has a very beneficial impact on the children's enthusiasm for learning and enables them to make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Good use is made of visits and resources to promote the children's knowledge and understanding of the world.
20. The teaching of English, mathematics and science is good. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subjects and a good understanding of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. There are good opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills through discussion, drama and role-play. Teachers ask well-focused questions and expect the pupils to think carefully when answering using speech that is appropriate for the occasion. Reading is taught well as there is a good combination of regular practice and opportunities to read at home. Staff in Years 1 and 2 skilfully promote pupils' understanding of building words from letter sounds. The teaching of writing has improved and is satisfactory overall. There are regular opportunities to learn spellings and good teaching of grammar and punctuation. The school's emphasis on writing has helped to raise standards but more remains to be done to provide a wider range of writing opportunities for the pupils.
21. The staff have enthusiastically adopted the National Numeracy Strategy and lessons are well planned, have good pace and appropriate challenge for pupils of different abilities. The setting of pupils by ability works well and has contributed much to above average standards in the subject. Mathematics lessons begin with activities involving mental arithmetic and the teachers' questions are matched to the relevant ability level of the pupils. There is sufficient time in the lessons for the pupils to practice their skills and the staff often remind the pupils how much time they have to complete an activity

which encourages productive working. Reviews of pupils' work at the end of lessons are useful times when the teachers assess the pupils' understanding. Many of the positive characteristics found in good English and mathematics are used in the teaching of science. Teachers generally have good scientific knowledge and promote scientific understanding well by using correct terminology. The opportunities for pupils to investigate and form hypotheses enhance learning in science. A strong feature of some science lessons is the way the teachers make use of ICT to motivate the pupils to record their work and explore new scientific ideas.

22. The teaching of physical education is very good and promotes above average standards. Staff have a very good subject knowledge and use it well to set challenging and interesting activities which stimulate the pupils to work effectively in teams, plan sequences of movements and develop tactical prowess. Teaching in most of the other subjects is often good. Good use is made of visits in history, design and technology and geography. Skills and techniques in art and design and design and technology are taught well although more opportunities are needed to stimulate the pupils' creative skills. The teaching of basic skills in ICT is good and staff are beginning to make effective use of the school's new computer suite. Although computers are used well in some subjects and classes this is not common throughout the school. There is some good specialist teaching of music and the pupils benefit from their teachers' expertise in a variety of instruments. The teaching of religious education has improved much since the previous inspection and teachers make good use of the syllabus followed by most schools in Cambridgeshire to plan lessons.
23. The pupils enjoy learning and are enthusiastic about school. Pupils work hard and produce good quantities of work, particularly when they are clear about what is required of them. They apply their physical skills very well and work hard to improve in gymnastics and games. In lessons where they have to write answers they generally use their literacy skills effectively paying good attention to spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, the range of opportunities to write extended passages in a variety of subjects is limited. Pupils also make good use of their numeracy skills. In design and technology they carefully plan their work, measure accurately and are careful not to waste resources. The pupils concentrate well aided by well-paced lessons. In almost all lessons the pupils are very co-operative and collaborate effectively when working together, for example in evaluating designs of tents in design and technology lessons.
24. In summary, the good teaching that is now consistent throughout the school is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. The variety of teaching methods used and the thorough planning of lessons enable pupils of all abilities to learn effectively. Pupils and teachers develop a good rapport and respect for one another in an atmosphere of trust and confidence.

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

25. The curriculum offered by the school is good, with a suitable balance and breadth in activities. It has improved since the previous inspection. Particular attention is given to providing a good range of additional learning opportunities to enhance and enrich curriculum provision. All subjects match the requirements of the National Curriculum and of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school is well resourced for the delivery of the curriculum for ICT. Curriculum issues from the last inspection have all been addressed. As the school has expanded the curriculum plan has been

changed to accommodate new class groupings and to cope with varied mixed aged groupings. A good check is made by the senior management team to ensure that a good balance is maintained in the curriculum. The literacy and numeracy strategies are now firmly embedded in the school and additional resources have been provided to support teaching in these areas. Some policies and schemes of work are in need of review. A good number of additional activities are arranged to support the curriculum, for instance "A Play for the Day" gave fun and excitement to the learning about theatrical production to the pupils in Year 5. An "Arts Week" is also planned for the whole school before the end of this term to promote interest in the creative arts.

26. The school makes good provision for equal opportunities and works hard to include all of its pupils in its work. This is done very well with the pupils from American service families. The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs. Staff take a variety of approaches in supporting these pupils. There is good support in class lessons and on appropriate occasions pupils are withdrawn for additional support. Individual education plans are well focused and are used well by support staff to guide them in planning work with the pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language receive satisfactory support. The school has limited expertise on the staff and outside agencies offer very little support. Nevertheless, the staff work well alongside these pupils to encourage their English skills and by the time they leave the school almost all of these pupils attain standards appropriate for their age.
27. The planning of the curriculum is good. The school has considered the National Curriculum and other nationally recommended programmes of work when preparing the long and medium term planning for all year groups. Teachers plan in teams within each year group and are also assisted in their planning by the subject leaders. Work is effectively matched to the ability levels of the pupils and additional help is provided for pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language, so that equality of access and opportunity are achieved. Booster classes and additional support in literacy and numeracy are provided as necessary to pupils in Years 3 to 6. Extra Literacy Support is given to pupils in Year 1. The provision in lessons for the development of personal, social, citizenship and health education is good. It is further enhanced in residential and day visits out of school and in extra-curricular activities. The science curriculum is also used to teach about health, sex and drugs education.
28. The school has developed good links with the local high school and pupils are prepared effectively for transfer to secondary education. They join in a three-day induction programme prior to transfer and visit the high school on other occasions to enrich their learning. Links with the nearby nursery and playgroups are good so that transition arrangements between schools are smooth and pupils remain happy and confident. Links with other schools and colleges are also good; for example, there are sporting links in many areas, including netball coaching at King's School. Pupils from three secondary schools attend the school for work experience.
29. The school works to promote links with other local organisations and for pupils to have an understanding of wider world issues. The choir has sung carols at the local church as part of a Housing Association initiative. Pupils support local Christian Aid week initiatives and for last year's UNICEF "Day of Change" pupils undertook activities to support the people of Uganda. Collections are made for local charities and other world organizations. The school joins in musical and sporting fixtures with local schools and also participates in cultural events in Ely and Cambridge. There are satisfactory and productive links with the community, which support the academic and personal development of pupils, such as visits to the Cathedral and local churches and the loan of religious artefacts for religious education. Other

organisations, such as Cares Animal Rescue and the Wildlife Trust contribute to lessons and assemblies. Local sports clubs also provide coaching in football and hockey. Community groups make only limited use of the premises.

30. The provision for promoting pupils' personal, spiritual, social, moral, and cultural development is good overall with very good provision for moral and social development. This provision reflects the aims of the school well and maintains the good practice observed in the previous inspection.
31. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies are used to develop appreciation of life. Periods of reflection in assemblies and class discussions allow pupils to consider their response to topical issues. Although spiritual development is not always planned in lessons the teachers informally seek out opportunities to explore the complexities of life with pupils and provide them with the opportunity to consider their response. For example, in literacy they contemplated on the empathetic poetry of John Donne and in class discussions talked about the choice and the moral dilemmas of good and evil.
32. The school makes very good provision for moral development. Teachers set very good examples and have high expectations of pupils. For example, pupils choose freely to take drinks from the drinks machine and are expected to tidy away and use the machine responsibly. All pupils are taught right from wrong and to respect others. Pupils are expected to be honest and well mannered to each other and their teachers. There is an expectation that the older pupils will set a good example to the younger children. They can be found frequently at break times and lunchtimes in the reception classes helping the younger children. A good system of rewards effectively reinforces the benefits of good effort in behaviour academic work and good deeds. For instance pupils are expected automatically to tidy away efficiently at the end of lessons. Class discussion periods are used to develop concepts of citizenship. A consultation process is currently taking place in Years 3 and 4 to consider the benefits of a school council and in the extra-curricular Philosophers' Club pupils consider, for example, issues about acceptable and responsible behaviour.
33. Provision for social development is very good. The very good relationships within the school and strong sense of community, which is developing, provide a very firm basis for the pupils' social development. Class discussions, and assemblies make a positive contribution to the supportive and inclusive nature of the school. The extra-curricular clubs and day and residential visits allow pupils opportunities to mix with others and establish a different relationship with the staff. Opportunities for pupils to work together in lessons effectively develops an understanding of the importance of learning to work together and through discussion to appreciate the values and opinions of others and learn skills of compromise and respect.
34. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. Teachers ensure that opportunities to explore and appreciate their own local cultural heritage are developed by visits out into the community. Ely Cathedral is frequently used as a source of inspiration for work in art, literature and history. The lives of Tudors and Victorians and aspects of life in the Second World War are developed by looking at their own local cultural heritage. From the start of the National Curriculum in Year 1 pupils are taken into the neighbourhood on history walks so that they will appreciate better local places such as the Almshouses. Opportunities are provided less frequently to learn about life styles in different parts of the world or to learn about artist and musicians from different cultures. Some good work has taken place on Aboriginal art but it is European artists who are mostly celebrated in school. African music has been

introduced to the pupils, although in general the school has very few resources for pupils to learn about different musical styles.

35. The programme for personal, social and health education is good, and includes provision for sex and drugs education. This area of the curriculum is very well managed. The programme follows guidelines provided by the local education authority and is supported by good quality teaching resources. Time is allocated in the school timetable and lessons are planned on topics relevant to pupils' ages and stages of development, such as a Year 3 and 4 sessions on citizenship, in which drama is used to illustrate the work of school councils. Good use is made of outside speakers, for example from the police and the Life Education Centre.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS

36. The school continues to take good care of its pupils and provides a safe place for pupils to learn. This aspect of the school's provision has been maintained well since the previous inspection. Health and safety procedures are followed rigorously with termly inspections that are recorded and reported to the governing body. There are adequate levels of first aid expertise and welfare arrangements are also good. Child protection arrangements are good and closely follow the local Area Child Protection Committee's recommended procedures. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language are supported well in their personal, social and emotional development.
37. The school promotes good behaviour very well and successfully eliminates any problems of bullying or other forms of oppressive behaviour. All members of staff apply a system of assertive discipline consistently and this has improved levels of behaviour since the last inspection, especially among older pupils. Pupils are also given good levels of personal support and guidance and their development is monitored well by the teachers through the records they keep. Procedures for monitoring and promoting high levels of attendance are good and successful for the vast majority of pupils. The school uses computerised records to monitor and analyse attendance effectively and follow up on any concerns. Enquiries are made on the first day of any absence for which the reason is not known and parents generally keep the school well informed.
38. Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection to the assessment and recording of pupils' attainment. Through regular assessment and tests the school is collecting valuable data and information on every pupil. Teachers maintain good ongoing records for all pupils in all subjects, with English and mathematics being the most detailed. This information is used to record pupils' attainment in relation to the levels of the National Curriculum, and to set realistic targets for improvements. Group and individual targets are agreed for reading and writing. These are displayed in all classrooms, and individual target sheets are glued inside pupils' exercise books. Challenges are high but realistic and regular monitoring for achievement maintains their high profile. As a result pupils have a good knowledge about their own learning and participate in measurement of their own achievements. Whole school monitoring of progress is identifying strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum, for example the need for pupils to undertake more writing tasks has been identified and acted upon within the English curriculum. Teachers are making greater use of assessment information to plan lessons, but further ongoing assessment of learning in lessons is planned to make teaching more meaningful.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

39. The school promotes an effective partnership with parents, which has a positive impact on learning. Parents indicated positive support for the work of the school in pre-inspection consultations. The vast majority of parents consider their children like school, behave well and make good progress. They think that staff are approachable and that teaching is good and challenging for pupils, who are helped to mature well. The inspection findings support these positive views. Some parents have concerns about the information they receive about progress and the way the school works with parents. Some would like more consistency with homework and better provision for extra-curricular activities. These concerns are not justified. The quality of information about progress is good and the school provides many opportunities for parents to be involved with the school. Homework is good and there is a satisfactory range of activities outside the classroom.
40. The school makes every effort to ensure that parents have the opportunity to take part in the identification and provision for the special educational needs of their children. There are good systems to inform parents of their children's progress within the special educational needs procedures of the school.
41. The quality of information provided to parents is good. Curriculum meetings indicate how parents can support their children at home, for example when introducing the literacy and numeracy projects. Annual reports on pupils' progress are good and give a clear indication of progress, especially in English and mathematics. Arrangements to discuss pupils' progress with parents are also good, both through meetings and the opportunity to speak with teachers at the start and end of the day. Information about the school through weekly newsletters is good but the prospectus and annual report of the governing body does not contain all the information it should about attendance, facilities and arrangements to support disability and impairment and other areas of minor detail.
42. Parental involvement contributes significantly to pupils' learning because of the support and encouragement parents receive from the school and an effective home-school agreement. A valuable core of regular helpers in the classroom provides valuable support and enables teachers to plan for a wider range of activities. Parents also support school events well, such as award and class assemblies. A very active parent group is well supported and arranges social events for pupils and parents through which it raises valuable funds for school improvement. The group also produces its own newsletter for parents. Parents of pupils with special educational need are involved in all stages of reviews of their individual education plans.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED

43. There have been several improvements to the leadership and management of the school since the previous inspection and this has resulted in better and more consistent progress by the pupils, higher standards in several subjects and a strong commitment by all staff to raise standards further. The headteacher has led the school very well through a time of significant change and development, providing a firm steer to school improvement and supporting new staff well. Overall leadership at the school is good, although the role of subject leaders is insufficiently developed in monitoring teaching and learning. The school is managed very well and there are very effective systems to support the school's work.
44. Leadership and management have a much sharper edge since the previous inspection and this has been reflected in the improved standards. The school also now has robust systems to assess pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science and this has improved consistency in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and

understanding in these subjects. Leadership has also been successful in improving teaching. These successes have been achieved against a background of high staff turnover and rapid growth in the number of pupils attending the school.

45. The governors play a key role in supporting the work of the school. They have been involved effectively in monitoring of both teaching and learning in many subjects and are well informed and knowledgeable about the school's strategic development. Governors rigorously call the school to account for the standards it achieves and take decisive action. For example, following disappointing results in national tests in English in 2001 the governors discussed the problem with key staff, set challenging targets and supported the school's initiatives through providing additional financial and staffing resources. They have carefully tracked the pupils' performance and the cost effectiveness of employing additional staff. Inspection evidence shows that they have made good use of funds to raise standards in English. The governors also fulfil their statutory responsibilities well although there are a few minor omissions in the annual governors' report to parents. The governors have a very good understanding of best value. They purchase supplies and services at competitive costs. They also analyse spending to ensure that funds have been used well.
46. The structure of governors' committees works effectively and the involvement of key staff and subject leaders in discussion with governors has enabled them to make well-informed decisions about spending. The school's finances are in good order and financial control is robust. The administrative staff make a very good contribution to this aspect of the school's work. A particular success of the governors and headteacher has been the management of the building programme at the school. Their intervention and expertise has enabled the school to expand to meet the needs of the pupils. The accommodation is very good and it is used effectively.
47. A key management tool has been the introduction of performance related targets. Governors and the headteacher have worked together well to ensure that the system is manageable and effective. Targets are challenging and reviewed regularly and have already begun to have an impact on raising standards. Individual targets are linked to the school's overall performance and this has helped to bring about a common purpose. The headteacher is determined to ensure that all those who work in the school are provided with appropriate training and support to enable them to develop professionally, and the school has achieved Investors in People status.
48. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is managed well. Procedures for monitoring the provision for special educational needs are good. A nominated governor takes a particular interest in the provision and the progress of the pupils involved. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership that is driven by an appropriate action plan. There is an up-to-date register of pupils with special educational needs and regular reviews of progress involving parents. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is satisfactory but relies too heavily on the individual intervention of teaching and support staff rather than on more formal structures. There is no help from outside agencies for these pupils but the school works hard to support the pupils.
49. The school has clear aims and a positive ethos in which all are valued. All staff share a common purpose and have a strong commitment to further improvement. The systems to manage behaviour are consistently applied throughout the school and help to create an orderly community. Administrative systems for monitoring attendance are managed well.

50. The staff are hardworking and committed and make a good team. There is a good balance between experience and relatively new staff and they complement one another well. The teachers have enthusiastically taken on the roles of subject leadership, although due to staff changes many of these responsibilities are new and in need of further development. Other staff make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. The school has a good number of support staff and the governors have committed additional funds to maintain this good level of staffing to the benefit of pupils' progress. This is most marked in the support given to pupils with special educational needs. There is a useful staff handbook and new staff are given much support so that they understand and follow the school's procedures. Staff regularly attend training courses and use what they have learned to improve standards. This has been particularly successful in ICT.
51. The school has good resources to support teaching in all subjects with the exception of geography and religious education where there are shortages. There is also a lack of suitable outdoor play equipment for children in the reception classes. The school has a good number of computers and a wide range of equipment to support the teaching of English, mathematics and science. There is a good number of library books and the new library is in the course of construction. Meanwhile, the present library is used well to promote pupils' research skills. The cost of educating the pupils is a little below the national average. Pupils start school with at least average skills and now make good progress in most aspects of their work and achieve average standards overall. Standards are rising and have improved since the previous inspection. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER

52. In order to build upon the improvements made since the previous inspection the headteacher, staff and governors should:

***Raise standards in writing by the end of Year 6 by;**

- Providing more opportunities for pupils to write in a variety of styles;
- Teaching handwriting more consistently and effectively;
- Extending opportunities for pupils to learn and use a wider range of vocabulary in their writing in other subjects.

(Paragraphs 7, 8, 20, 38, 60, 71, 76, 79, 92)

***Develop a systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning across the school.**

(Paragraphs 1, 43, 50, 85, 93, 99, 106, 111, 116, 123, 128)

***Improve the use of computers in several subjects.**

(Paragraphs 9, 22, 81, 95, 99, 105, 107, 111, 128)

Less important issues that should be considered by governors for inclusion in the action plan.

- *Improve marking. (Paragraphs 18, 82, 84, 92)
- *Improve resources for geography. (Paragraphs 51, 106)
- *Improve resources for outdoor play for children in the reception class. (Paragraphs 51, 66)
- Include more opportunities in the curriculum for pupils to learn about a wider variety of cultural traditions. (Paragraph 34)
- Have formal procedures to support and guide pupils with English as an additional language. (Paragraphs 5, 14, 48, 71, 77, 79)
- Ensure that the governors include all relevant information in their annual report. (Paragraph 41)

*** The school has identified these issues in its development plan.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	65
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	17	29	15	0	0	0
Percentage	6	26	45	23	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	0	317
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	39

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	26

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.4
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	19	22	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	16	18	17
	Girls	22	22	21
	Total	38	40	38
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (87)	98 (89)	93 (91)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	17	17
	Girls	22	21	22
	Total	39	38	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95 (89)	93 (91)	95 (91)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	18	15	33

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	13	15
	Girls	9	11	14
	Total	21	24	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	64 (66)	73 (72)	88 (83)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	16	16	15
	Girls	12	13	13
	Total	28	29	28
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	85 (66)	88 (72)	85 (79)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	2
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	247
Any other minority ethnic group	12

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.2
Average class size	28.8

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	274

FTE means full-time equivalent

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.0
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		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	2000/2001
	£
Total income	481,462
Total expenditure	489,193
Expenditure per pupil	1,682
Balance brought forward from previous year	21,432
Balance carried forward to next year	13,701

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	317
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	44	2	1	2
My child is making good progress in school.	52	45	2	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	53	6	1	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	47	16	5	1
The teaching is good.	53	41	3	1	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	40	21	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	58	33	8	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	40	5	2	3
The school works closely with parents.	35	41	16	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	49	36	7	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	45	7	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	25	34	21	5	15

Other issues raised by parents

In the main parents were satisfied with the work of the school. A few parents felt that the school was not sufficiently involved with the community. Parents were undecided about homework.

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

53. Children join the reception class at the beginning of the academic year of their fifth birthday. Their experiences and abilities on entry to the school vary from year to year but are generally above average for four-year-olds. Almost all have attended a nursery school or a playgroup. Both reception class teachers provide a caring, stimulating and challenging environment. Their teaching is never less than good and often very good or excellent. The quality of the curriculum planning and their understanding of the children's achievements are both very good, especially in the areas of personal and social development and communication, language and literacy. As a result, by the time they join Year 1, the children have exceeded the early learning goals in communication, language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development. Their personal, social and emotional development is well above average. Standards have improved in all aspects of early learning apart from physical development, which remains good.
54. Children of all abilities make good and sometimes very good progress in the reception classes. Teachers are sensitive to the different cultures and experiences of the American children and differences in, for example, vocabulary, are celebrated and used to enrich the language of all children. Children with special educational needs are identified swiftly. Teachers analyse the results of the baseline assessments completed in the first few weeks in the reception class. They identify any particular strengths or areas for concern in reading, writing, mathematics and personal and social development and set targets for individual children. These are used to plan work and social skills' training for individuals. In this way, the most able children are challenged and all children are set work that extends their learning.
55. A significant strength of the teaching is the focused deployment of all adults who support the children. The nursery nurse and learning support assistants are active members of the team, assisting in planning, teaching and the day-to-day assessments of children's achievements and difficulties. Several parents provide very good support. They are fully informed about the support they give and what is expected of the children they work with. For example, a parent governor took a group of children to a quiet room to create and record stories based on shoebox scenes they had created. She encouraged the children to comment on the setting, characters, action and ending of their stories. They evaluated each other's performance, including the clarity as well as the other attributes of their story frames. Children made rapid progress.

Personal, social and emotional development

56. When children start school almost all have well developed social skills. From their first days in the reception classes, children are encouraged to work and play amicably together. They are expected to share equipment and adult time. All adults set high standards in the way they speak to each other and the children. They listen with attention and interest to what the children have to say and make requests politely. The children follow their example. Skilful teaching and careful planning guides the children to more independence and personal responsibility in their activities. Most lessons contain a mix of class teaching, adult supported groups and independent work. In all three types of activity, children listen attentively to each other and their teachers, take turns to speak and act and show great maturity in their understanding of the needs of others. For example, in one lesson, 20 children had cards with a number on to sort in

the correct order. The teacher asked who did not mind not having a turn this time, so that another child could. There were several volunteers. When working and playing in groups, children cooperate with each other, often delegating responsibilities. A pair of boys playing with Noah's Ark organised themselves into "narrator" and "performer" as the animals walked up the gangplank. With this level of maturity, the children could now be more involved in planning their non-adult supported activities to make them even more purposeful and relevant to individual interests and learning targets.

57. Children are very enthusiastic about their learning. Teachers make sure that children know what they are going to learn and most lessons end with a discussion about the progress towards the lesson objectives. They know how much they have learnt since they have been in school and achievements, including completed stamp cards, are shared with parents. Children strive to do their best. They are confident when speaking to the class and to adults. They show empathy with the people they hear about and the characters in their books. They know how to take care of themselves and make sure they use equipment safely and change for physical education lessons independently. They put aprons on without prompting when using the water. All sustain concentration for long periods and rarely give up before completing their task. The children's personal, social and emotional development is well above the level of most four-year-olds. Both class teachers use the children's enthusiasm as a catalyst to channel learning in the lesson. In the only lesson that was no more than satisfactory, the part-time teacher did not allow the children to express their interest or excitement in what was an interesting activity. Although the children listened attentively they were not actively involved in the learning.

Communication, language and literacy

58. The children in both reception classes are confident and articulate speakers. They use a wide vocabulary when speaking, using complete and often extended sentences. They are aware of tense and the conventions of grammar as they speak. One or two children have difficulty in forming their words correctly but are confident and have little trouble communicating. Teachers set exemplary standards in both speaking and listening and model language, including technical vocabulary relating to the children's work, consistently throughout the day. Drama and role-play are an important part of the curriculum and children respond with imaginative and thoughtful comments, some adopting the voices and styles of the characters. Different language conventions are accepted as cultural differences and enhance the vocabulary of all children.
59. Each reception class teacher taught an excellent literacy lesson during the inspection. As a result of their clear teaching, excellent relationships and high expectations of what the children are capable of, children learn very well and strive to do the best they can. In one lesson children used a range of interesting adjectives to extend a simple word or phrase. For example, from "The mouse is in the box" the children produced "The silly mouse was curious and fell into the box..." Realising how the children were achieving, the teacher adapted her planning, leaving out the simpler work so that they could extend their learning to a higher level. In this class, a child with special needs was supported extremely well. He answered a question at the end, supported by the learning support assistant, glowing with pride at his achievement. Children have a higher than average understanding of the sounds that letters make. They read letter combinations like "sh" "ch" "ck" "oo" as well as the single letter sounds. Timed games generate concentration and application as children strive to beat the clock changing a sound in a chain of simple words to achieve "full circle". Many already read simple text and all children enjoy sharing books daily, talking about the characters and events and

often predicting the endings. Older pupils often give up their playtime to share books with the children, deepening the children's enjoyment of reading.

60. Writing is a favourite occupation for many of the children in both classes. As well as the teacher directed writing, including sentences, lists, labels and computer work, children opt to write in their activity time. Most form letters accurately and almost all write their names correctly. Many children, who started the school year writing over the teacher's writing, now write sentences independently, often with correct capital letters and full stops. Teachers encourage children to apply their good vocabulary to their writing and few take the easy option of only using words they feel confident about. The bank of reading material is enhanced by the children's own "books". A bear and a monkey go home with a child at weekends and [with a little help from the parents] write a diary of their activities and feelings. These children are in an environment where the written word is integrated into their everyday lives. As a result, they all like to write and strive to do well. They make very good progress.

Mathematical development

61. The children apply their good vocabulary to their mathematics lessons. They use the language of position and quantity accurately, identifying the tallest tower and the heaviest box. Almost all the children name simple flat and solid shapes accurately and use terms like "face" and "edge" when describing the attributes. The most able pupils accurately draw up to 20 objects, labelling them accurately. Many count to 100 and beyond. Some add 1 more to numbers within 20 and subtract 1 or more accurately. Children are encouraged to seek patterns in shapes and sequences of numbers. This gives them confidence to solve problems both orally and in written form. Daily routines involving counting, subtracting and discussing shape and comparing size and quantity are establishing secure mathematical concepts. This exposure helps children of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, to use numbers confidently.
62. The range of activities available in the classroom are planned to reinforce the learning in the lessons. Effective teaching techniques like varying the pace and volume of the counting, keep the children on their toes as well as making the lesson fun. Teachers encourage the children to find solutions to difficulties. For example, in one lesson the children sorted boxes with square or rectangular sides. There was a lively discussion about where boxes with both square and rectangular sides should go. The teacher wisely let the discussion progress just long enough to be interesting without allowing it to confuse the class with concepts beyond the level of understanding. Her simple statement that boxes with square and rectangular faces are cuboids and that only those with every face a square are cubes satisfied everyone!

Knowledge and understanding of the world

63. The children come to school with a good general knowledge. The teachers plan the curriculum so that there are appropriate links between different aspects of their learning. For example, children are studying containers and boxes. This links with their work about solid shapes in mathematics, their "shoebox" scenes, the playhouse, Noah's Ark and their observations as they watched ice cubes melt. Teachers ensure that they match the learning to the Foundation Stage curriculum and if there are no natural cross-curricular links, children are taught in a series of lessons. Children of all abilities talk knowledgeably about the seasons, the city of Ely and the way they travel on holiday or to visit grandparents. They know some of the differences between life today and life in "the olden days". They discuss the needs of babies and young animals and how to keep healthy.

64. Children use computers daily and they control the mouse very well. All achieve some success when drawing regular shapes using a graphics program. They “drag” and “drop” objects, then turn them and alter the size. They use simple programs to support mathematics and are beginning to use the keyboard to write. In all activities, children use tools safely. They are encouraged to plan their construction or design before beginning. All pack away their work sensibly and take care of their equipment. They are encouraged to evaluate their work and make sensible suggestions about the way it could be improved.

Physical development

65. In both classes children move with confidence and skill. In the classroom they organise themselves very well, sitting on the carpet, arranging themselves in a circle or moving to work in groups with equal ease. In a physical education lesson in the hall they found a space automatically and joined in with the warm up to the lesson sensibly. Because their behaviour and concentration was very good throughout the lesson, they made very good progress as the teacher swiftly developed their skills. They changed directions swiftly, accurately and with an awareness of others. The teacher was very focused on the objectives for the lesson and provided a high level of challenge. A learning support assistant supported a child with special educational needs well, giving advice when appropriate.
66. In the classrooms children demonstrate good control over writing and other tools. They hold pencils correctly and take great care when colouring. Things that are glued together generally remain secure. Small apparatus and even tiny pieces of paper are handled with equal ease. There is a good range of equipment in school to support the development of the children’s fine movements but there is little large equipment such as wheeled toys for the outside area. The school is aware of this and there are plans to improve the range of outdoor equipment.

Creative development

67. As with the other areas of learning, children’s creative development exceeds the early learning goals. Their art work shows a good understanding of colour and some experiments with mixing colours. They name colours accurately, often refining the name with adjectives to describe them more accurately. For example, when selecting paper to cover boxes a child described foil as “shiny, silvery paper that looks like water or a mirror”. Their observational drawings are accurate and perceptive. Children use their imagination to the full. One boy, drawing a picture of his smiling “Marmie” drew a second face above her. “She is smiling”, he explained, “because she is dreaming about me and is happy.”
68. In a music lesson the children explored sound sources using everyday objects from the classroom. This lesson was planned well so that the children could experiment with objects as diverse as sand paper and hole punches as well as home made instruments. They listen very accurately and copy quite complex rhythms such as “Hickory Dickory Dock”, tapping a beat for each syllable. They sing with confidence and gusto.
69. Throughout the school day the children are encouraged to develop story lines through role-play as well as their literacy lessons. When telling stories they use the conventions of “Once upon a time” and “happily ever after”. They adopt different voices for the characters they are playing. Mr. Noah, for example, spoke with the deep voice of authority while the silly mouse had an appropriately high and squeaky voice.

They all believe in the monkey and the bear and the children voice their feelings for them.

ENGLISH

70. Standards in English have improved since the last inspection. Standards achieved by pupils are now above the national averages in reading and writing for pupils in Year 2, and in line with national averages in English for pupils in Year 6. In the 2001 national tests in reading and writing for seven-year-olds the school achieved results well above the national average. In writing they were also well above the average of similar schools though in reading they were in line with similar schools. However, in the 2001 tests for eleven-year-olds the results were well below other schools nationally and well below similar schools. The school has analysed these results carefully and as a result now gives good attention to providing a more appropriate English curriculum with better breadth and balance in reading and writing activities, and more opportunities for pupils to improve their skills in speaking and listening. This detailed analysis also showed that in 2001 the movement of pupils in and out of school limited the progress of Year 6 pupils overall and adversely affected standards in English.
71. Pupils make good progress in English lessons throughout school and achieve well over time. They are eager to learn, have a very good understanding of their own present standards and work hard to improve. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in reading, writing, speaking and listening is good. For pupils in Years 1 and 2 teachers' records show that pupils are making good progress in learning basic skills in reading, and that gradually they write at greater length giving increasingly better attention to handwriting, punctuation and spelling. Good progress is made also in speaking and listening. For pupils in Years 3 to 6 the good progress is maintained, as they become increasingly more independent in their learning. They are skilled at self-review. Most recognize weaknesses in their learning, suggest sensible ways of improvement, and work with good levels of concentrated effort to overcome any difficulties. Pupils with special educational needs also make good progress. Teachers and classroom assistants have a good understanding of their needs, providing sensitive support and intervention when necessary and encouraging their full integration in all English activities. The small number of pupils in school with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2, and currently good progress in Years 3 to 6 as they increase their understanding of a new additional language. Teachers are sensitive to these pupils' needs and provide appropriately, but there is a lack of formal arrangements to assist with identification and learning in the early stages of language acquisition.
72. Pupils have good speaking skills above expected levels for their age. The quality of teaching is good with the teachers providing good role modelling of the spoken word and giving good explanations and practical use of technical vocabulary. The curriculum is carefully planned to include many speaking and listening opportunities. Pupils enter Year 1 already able to express their ideas in small group situations and enjoying opportunities to share their experiences with others. During Year 1 and 2 pupils learn new vocabulary appropriate to different subjects of the curriculum and start to choose vocabulary with more care to give greater detailed information in their explanations. In Year 1 they enjoy acting favourite stories, such as "Goldilocks and the Three Bears," especially if they also have the opportunity to dress as the characters. They are beginning to use different voices to represent these characters.
73. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to extend this characterisation into their reading using good expression to represent various storybook characters. Pupils in Year 3 and 4 are participating regularly in good classroom discussions, which are

important as part of their social and personal development. The teachers plan many good opportunities for them to improve their speaking skills in discussions on a variety of interesting issues. In drama and circle time they discuss issues relevant to themselves and others, and are gaining in confidence as they express their achievements and problems. For example, a discussion about the benefits of a school council led to an open and honest debate on problems, which pupils may experience in school and led to some empathetic explanations about how these difficulties can be eased by the introduction of a school council. A very good extended drama activity for the pupils in Year 5 took place during the inspection when very good progress was observed as pupils participated in an activity entitled "A Play in a Day." During this workshop the pupils prepared a dramatization of the life of Henry VIII, and learnt many important elements of good speech and theatrical production. They learnt the value of a confident delivery and clear diction, showing very good improvement in their final presentation to pupils, staff and parents at the end of the school day.

74. By the end of Year 6 pupils, express their opinions and ideas in mature detailed discussions. For example, after listening to a taped extract from "The War of the World" by H.G.Wells, the pupils took part in a detailed discussion about the differences between scientific terminology and identified examples of Olde English. Clearly and concisely they described word differences and elaborated on the meaning of some complex scientific vocabulary. Throughout school pupils with special educational needs are included in all activities. For example, a pupil with hearing difficulties very effectively described to the class the sequence of events in the poem the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," and a younger pupil took part in class musical activities, joining in the percussion accompaniment. Listening skills are satisfactory overall. In classrooms and individually pupils listen carefully to instructions and to stories, but on more formal occasions, some pupils listen only briefly. In the Year 5 theatrical production, for example, although many pupils could listen and repeat the words and sentences in the play accurately as directed, a small minority found this task difficult.
75. Standards in reading are above expected levels for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. The literacy hour is embedded effectively in the school and as a result pupils have regular opportunities to improve their reading skills. The school has invested in a good supply of Big Book class material and guided readers for group teaching. All pupils have reading and writing targets. These are encouraging pupils to become actively involved in improving their reading standards and raising levels of attainment more quickly. Pupils read each week to teachers and to other adults in school. Parents are also involved in promoting an interest in reading and they work in a good partnership with the school to improve standards. All pupils enjoy a wide selection of reading material. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 have a good knowledge of traditional tales and can describe their favourite fairy stories. Older pupils choose material appropriate to their age, also with good general knowledge of children's classics and famous authors. For instance, they can describe the story of Macbeth in gruesome detail or explain about the poetry of John Donne or Longfellow. Library skills are at least satisfactory in all year groups. Small groups of pupils visit the library to research on class topics, or for personal interest, but most pupils are awaiting the opening of the new school library with excitement, eager to read the additional library books that have been purchased for them.
76. Standards in writing are improving. During the inspection the teaching of writing was good in each year group with good progress achieved by pupils. However, the evidence in pupils' books shows that progress in writing in Years 3 to 6 has been only satisfactory over time. As a result of recent training the understanding and expectations of teachers about the qualities of good writing have been improved and

increased. Regularly pupils now have opportunities to write at length and teachers are working creatively to provide fun in the learning to interest pupils in this element of the English curriculum, as well ensuring that in these lessons pupils practise and consolidate previously learnt skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils write at length. Already higher attaining pupils show a vivid imagination through their story writing, for example, writing stories about scorpions and beetles, while others retell the story of Noah's Ark, sequencing events appropriately. They are gradually developing their ability to join their letters in their writing, use full stops and capital letters appropriately, and spell with increasing accuracy. In Years 3 to 6 good links are made to other subjects of the curriculum to provide additional opportunities for pupils to write for different audiences. Year 6 pupils write a balanced argument about advantages and disadvantages of school uniform, a biography of Alan Shearer, a description of the picture "Homage to Bleriot" painted by Robert Delauney and a modern day version of Oliver Twist. Although the content and organisation of pupils' writing is improving, and for many Year 6 pupils there is good evidence of them using a more mature vocabulary, overall in relation to previous attainment, age and ability, standards could be improved further. Handwriting is taught through the use of an appropriate scheme of work but pupils' standards are inconsistent in quality and overall presentation is variable with some examples of untidy work. Currently there are some inconsistencies in the teachers' understanding of the criteria of a good handwriting style, although the co-ordinator is seeking to address this issue. Spelling is taught weekly using the literacy strategy as a basic programme. The quality of teaching of basic spelling rules is varied and for some pupils errors in the spelling of familiar words still remain. The recent introduction of group and individual writing targets are helping pupils to focus on methods to improve their writing.

77. The school has introduced some good strategies to improve standards in English and the headteacher and English subject leader are carefully monitoring the effectiveness of these arrangements. The very good assessment arrangements and monitoring of pupils' work enables the school to track the progress of pupils efficiently and set realistic targets for year groups and individual pupils. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are reflected in broad targets for improvement while their more precise short-term targets are included effectively in the general target setting arrangements. Informal arrangements ensure that pupils with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress although there is a lack of support from outside agencies. Policies for all aspects of the English curriculum are in need of review and do not match current provision.

MATHEMATICS

78. Standards in mathematics have risen since the last inspection and are now above the national average in Year 2 and Year 6. The national tests in 2001 paint a similar picture. Standards were comparable to similar schools at the end of Year 2 but below those of similar schools at the end of Year 6. The pupils make good progress in their mathematics lessons because of the predominantly good teaching, pupils' good attitudes to their work and the greater emphasis on the use and applications of mathematics. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy has been good, resulting in pupils making good progress over time. Pupils are arranged in ability groups for their numeracy lessons and this has enabled the teachers to plan work that is closely matched to the pupils' abilities. Teachers set challenging work, often reinforced through problem solving and applying skills to other areas of mathematics. However, there is not enough use made of ICT.

79. There are no consistent differences between the performance of girls and boys, although boys generally achieve better than other boys nationally. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. A small minority of pupils with English as an additional language do not make the progress they are capable of because there is a lack of specialist support. In one lesson, for example, a pupil's mathematical skills were greater than those of the rest of the group he was working with. With additional support to develop his general and mathematical vocabulary he would have achieved more. As it was his attention waned.
80. By the end of Year 2, pupils of above average and average abilities have a good understanding of place value. More able pupils round three figure numbers to the nearest ten and use all four processes [$+$ - \times \div] to create different totals from three digit numbers. They use standard units to weigh and measure and halve and quarter shapes and numbers that are multiples of two or four. All pupils know the properties of common flat and solid shapes. Most pupils add and subtract within 99 and find patterns in numbers, for example, odd and even numbers and arrays leading to multiplication. All pupils calculate using addition and subtraction within 20. Since September, when the lower-attaining pupils were adding 1 to single digits they have progressed to an understanding of place value and multiplication and division by 2, 3 and 5. An analysis of the work covered since September shows that the six and seven-year olds of all abilities have made good progress.
81. By the end of Year 6, pupils use their skills to, for example, find the area of the oceans to the nearest square centimetre. They convert currency, know how to find the average, range, frequency and median from statistics, understand the principles of probability and draw accurate shapes, investigating, for example, angles created when bisecting parallel lines. Less able pupils calculate confidently using all four operations. They understand the effect of brackets when calculating and convert standard metric measures to larger or smaller units. Some convert metric to imperial measures. A feature of the work in Years 3 to 6 is the emphasis put on applying skills to solve practical problems. This makes the work relevant and gives the pupils an incentive to succeed. Throughout the school standards in mental arithmetic are above average. Pupils remember facts well and calculate swiftly, finding the most efficient methods. Achievements in the use and applications of mathematics, number, shape, space and measures are above average overall. Achievements in data handling are above average for the more able pupils in Year 6, but no more than average overall. This aspect is not as well developed as the other areas of mathematics because of insufficient use of computers.
82. The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school are good overall and very good in Years 5 and 6. None of the teaching observed during the inspection was less than satisfactory and four-fifths was at least good. All teachers teach numeracy well and plan work that challenges pupils of all abilities. Where the teaching is good the lessons progress at a good pace throughout and the teachers expect their pupils to work hard. The pace of the lessons and the productivity of the pupils in Years 3 and 4 are only satisfactory overall, because the teachers do not expect so much of their pupils. This was apparent from observing lessons and scrutinising pupils' books. These teachers do not give enough support in their marking to help the pupils improve. The untidy and unfinished quality of much of pupils' work rarely attracts comment. Relationships between the teachers and their pupils are good throughout the school and pupils respond with enjoyment and commitment to their work. Marking is generally informative and sometimes very good, encouraging and challenging the pupils as well as supporting their learning.

83. In the very good lessons teachers combine careful explanations and direct teaching with challenging objectives for the lesson. They are skilful in providing their pupils with skills that are swiftly consolidated by using them to solve problems. For example, in one lesson, the mental arithmetic session consisted of finding fractions of 240. Pupils took up the challenge and produced, for example $\frac{1}{64}$ th [3.75] or $\frac{5}{8}$ as 150 or 62.5%. Pupils discussed ways to predict totals in a range of number or shape sequences and the lesson ended with many pupils creating a formula to explain a generalised statement. There was a buzz of activity throughout as pupils experimented with patterns and hypotheses. This challenging lesson succeeded because of the teacher's high expectations and clear explanations and the pupils' enthusiasm.
84. A feature of all lessons is the way pupils are told what they will learn. Pupils understand how successful they have been in achieving these objectives and teachers are adept at asking relevant questions to test understanding. The end of each lesson is used effectively, not only to consolidate learning but also to introduce new work, giving pupils a taste of things to come. Almost all teachers adjust their planning during the lesson if they feel pupils are capable of moving on or need more consolidation. Teachers use mathematical vocabulary well and pupils are expected to do likewise. Mental arithmetic sessions are brisk and well-directed questions ensure that pupils of all abilities contribute and succeed. Pupils show good mental agility and take pride in their achievements. Where there are parents of learning support assistants supporting the work in the classes they have a very good understanding of the lesson objectives and their role in the classroom. They provide very good support and are an integral part of the pupils' learning. However, the inconsistencies in the quality of the marking throughout the school prevent some pupils knowing what they need to do to improve. Pupils' achievements in tests are analysed and targets are set but individual targets are rarely referred to.
85. The teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to use ICT within mathematics throughout the school. The subject leader is aware of this and the school already has plans to improve its use. Mathematics is used in other subjects, especially geography, design and technology and science where accurate measurements and careful drawing is needed or pupils organise data and decode information supplied on charts and graphs.
86. Teachers make good use of both formal and informal assessments to assess pupils' attainment and to track their progress. These are used to sort the pupils into ability groups and to set targets for each year group and for groups of pupils. The school tracks differences in the achievements of boys and girls although they have not analysed the performance of, for example, the American pupils or those with English as an additional language. As part of the evaluation of the National Numeracy Strategy, the school has used a nationally recognised test to track progress. Teachers have started to analyse these to identify strengths and areas for development in the different areas of mathematics. Useful informal assessments enable teachers to fine-tune their lessons to meet the needs of individual pupils or to identify where more work is needed on a particular aspect.

SCIENCE

87. In the 2001 national tests at the end of Year 6 pupils attained standards that were in line with the national average but were well below average when compared with similar schools. Boys performed better than girls. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was in line with that achieved nationally. The current Year 6 pupils' attainment is in line with expectation and is similar to the standards at the time of the last inspection. Teacher assessments of seven-year-olds in 2001 showed that

standards were above average but in line with similar schools. The current pupils in Year 2 achieve average standards and these are similar to those reported at the time of the previous inspection. The variation is due to a higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs and lower attainment on admission of the current Year 2.

88. A strength of teaching and the science curriculum is the good quality practical work that takes place around the school. This has improved since the last inspection. The pupils in Year 1 are able to classify a group of materials by properties such as bending, stretching, squashing and twisting, recording their answers by grouping the materials. By the end of Year 2, the pupils compare the properties of materials, for example baking foil and wool, as shiny and dull and give reasons for materials being suitable or unsuitable for a particular purpose, such as a plastic saucepan. The more able pupils in these classes make good progress because of the appropriately challenging extension activities provided by their teachers. All younger pupils know the basic conditions required for seeds to grow and have observed and recorded the growth of their tomato and sunflower seeds and a hyacinth bulb. They understand how sound travels and can compare the sounds they like and dislike which they recorded in tables.
89. In Years 3 and 4, the pupils scientifically consider the properties of rocks and, in one class they use their study of rock's permeability and strength to report on the best location for a company to drill for water supplies, a link with their geographical studies. They carry out a series of tests meticulously, taking care to be fair in each operation to determine an order of permeability and resistance. Their studies of electricity have included building circuits with bulbs and switches and investigating the effect of more than one bulb in a circuit. In Year 5, the pupils continue to develop and improve their investigative skills to a high standard. In a very good lesson on forces they made predictions and interpreted their results when measuring the effect of floatation on an object. At the end of the lesson the pupils gave good explanations of balanced and unbalanced forces, taking care to express their ideas in scientific terms. The use of the correct technical and scientific language is further developed and improved in Year 6.
90. By the end of Year 6, the pupils explain concisely the reactions that take place in a beaker containing yeast, sugar and water and the conditions needed for micro-organisms to thrive. They have a good understanding of the process of fermentation and how some materials change. The pupils use their numeracy skills well to measure and record the changes accurately. The teachers made good use of the Internet to show pupils enhanced microscopic photographs of organisms and this helped the pupils' understanding. Pupils understand the relationship between plants and animals in a habitat, with the more able pupils showing an appreciation of the variety of living things by devising their own modes of classification. They understand the different properties of materials and accurately classify the differences between gases, liquids and solids. They understand changing states of materials and the separation of mixtures of salt and water. In Years 3 to 6 the pupils record their results of investigative work in a number of ways, including good written interpretations. They also use techniques such as bullet pointing to present their work.
91. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress, assisted by the teachers' sensible provision and the effective support of learning support assistants. They enjoy the practical aspects of science and participate fully in lessons. Pupils' attitudes to science are good. They work hard and safely. They work well together and have a very positive approach to their work. In Year 5 their attitudes and behaviour were very good and contributed significantly to their very effective learning in their study of balanced and unbalanced forces. Pupils in Year 6 are particularly keen to ensure that

their responses to their teacher's enquiries are accurately formed in scientific language.

92. The teaching ranges from satisfactory to very good and is good overall. Lessons are well planned and have clear learning objectives. In the very best of teaching the teachers' subject knowledge is good, expectations are high and questioning is both skilful and challenging in probing and extending the pupils' learning. Not all teachers emphasise scientific vocabulary sufficiently although this is done very well in some lessons in Year 5. In Year 5, the teacher's well-focused questions on the effect on objects by forces in air and water helped the pupils to improve and consolidate their knowledge and understanding of the effect of forces on objects. In Year 6 pupils were well supported by their teacher in expressing their ideas about providing favourable conditions for encouraging and maintaining the growth of yeast for bread making. Pupils were also encouraged to continue their research at home to further their knowledge and understanding of micro-organisms. In all lessons pupils are well managed. The pace of lessons is often stimulating, particularly at the beginning when the whole class is being addressed. On a few occasions the challenges provided by the teachers lacked rigour and their expectations of pupils were too low. Pupils' work is marked regularly but the quality of marking is inconsistent. The best of marking not only praises pupils for their efforts but also suggests how they might improve but this is not consistent practice. Teachers' planning is well supported by effective assessment procedures.
93. The new subject leader has very good scientific expertise and has a good overview of the future direction of the subject. The opportunities for monitoring and evaluating the subject are limited and fail to provide an adequate overview of the school's work. More thorough monitoring of teaching and learning is needed to help raise standards further. Resources for the subject are adequate and include two digital microscopes that are used appropriately by the pupils. The school is developing an environmental area that will enhance opportunities for scientific study.

ART AND DESIGN and DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

94. Standards in art and design and design and technology have improved since the previous inspection and are now in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils, including those with pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, make good progress in developing skills and techniques in both subjects. Progress in exploring ideas and processes in art and design is satisfactory. This variation is due to the schools' strong emphasis on techniques and limited, although satisfactory, opportunities for the pupils to work creatively using a range of media. The school uses an arts' week to extend the range of opportunities available for pupils to combine skills in dance, art and design and music. The teaching of both subjects is mostly good, although the aspect of developing creative expression is taught satisfactorily.
95. By the end of Year 2 the pupils have appropriate skills in designing and making models. These skills are developed consistently through the use of sketchbooks where pupils experiment with designs and basic drawing techniques. They improve their awareness of colour, shape and form by using a variety of media and materials. There are often good links made between art and design and other subjects. In geography, pupils make an attractive collage of the imaginary island of Struay adding detail using fabrics, sketches, printing techniques. The variety of techniques used enhances the pupils' work and brings the picture to life through adding a three-dimensional perspective. The teachers make good use of visits to develop pupils' observational skills and to enhance their understanding of how local artists and

craftsmen have been involved for many generations in using their skills in buildings such as the Cathedral. Follow up work from these visits involved pupils in producing interesting three-dimensional tiles using clay to illustrate patterns and precious objects found in the Cathedral. Pupils worked hard on these tiles and applied good techniques, using a variety of tools to create a good effect.

96. This work was extended well in design and technology as the pupils made observational drawings of a variety of buildings, adding good detail. They went on to label diagrams as they drew plans for their own models. The pupils enjoyed this activity and made good progress in using a variety of recyclable materials to produce suitably detailed models. The teachers also introduce a good range of vocabulary to support the pupils' understanding in the subjects. There are suitable links with literacy and numeracy as pupils measure accurately when planning their models. They make appropriate use of their knowledge of symmetry and pattern when painting. In Years 1 and 2 the pupils made good use of techniques learned in literacy to present their work. For example, they made lists using bullet points and sequenced instructions carefully. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to use computers to enhance their work in the subjects.
97. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain appropriate standards for their age in art and design and design and technology. Progress is satisfactory in art and design and often good in design and technology. Teaching is most successful in promoting pupils' skills and techniques. The teachers have a good understanding of the processes involved in design and technology and communicate them well to the pupils through providing a wide range of opportunities to experiment with a variety of tools and techniques and to learn through careful observation. By making effective use of the scheme of work, pupils' skills are developed consistently from year to year and they build up a bank of ideas when designing and making. This was seen in the way pupils took account of the needs of the characters when designing masks. Pupils used a variety of materials to create detail and texture and followed and amended their designs effectively. In their topic about shelters the pupils carefully considered the function of a variety of shelters, researched information on the Internet and evaluated a range of products such as tents, making judgements about their reliability and purpose.
98. Pupils' artwork is satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. They have a secure understanding of a variety of skills and techniques. In their work on famous artists the pupils use their literacy skills well to research information about Delauney and Picasso. They produce good biographies, including details of the artists' personal and professional lives. The teachers encourage the pupils to observe closely and teach basic skills about colour mixing, tints and blends well. Pupils apply these skills effectively and show a secure understanding of techniques used by artists, which they then apply to their own work, for example, in painting in the style of Picasso's blue period. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to express their own ideas imaginatively.
99. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with some good features particularly in design and technology. Pupils enjoy the subjects and work hard. They concentrate for extended periods and are keen to improve and refine their work. The teachers have secure subject knowledge and lessons are planned thoroughly. Good use is made of resources. A strength in the teaching is the use of visits and visitors to support the teaching. These local visits stimulate the pupils' imagination. Another strength is the use of sketchbooks to practise and refine skills. The teachers question the pupils thoroughly and this helps to promote pupils' thinking about the process and purpose of design. Teachers manage behaviour well and the pupils respond by listening carefully and co-operating well. The teachers give good guidance by working alongside the pupils and making suggestions for improvement. Pupils with special

educational needs are supported very well. The support staff work alongside the pupils and offer much encouragement which gives the pupils confidence to try out their ideas.

100. The school has good resources to support the teaching of the subjects, although insufficient use is made of computers in most classes. The subject leader is new to her role and has suitable plans to extend the creative experiences for the pupils. The schemes of work are satisfactory. Assessment is underdeveloped and there is little monitoring of teaching and learning to ensure consistency in developing skills, knowledge and understanding.

GEOGRAPHY and HISTORY

101. Standards in geography and history are in line with those expected at the end of Year 2 and are an improvement since the previous inspection. Standards are in line with those expected at the end of Year 6 in both subjects, maintaining the standards of the previous inspection. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. They acquire a broad knowledge and understanding of a range of places and compare their own location with others further afield.
102. By the end of Year 2 pupils study the imaginary Isle of Struay and compare it with locations in and around Ely. They gain mapping skills and, as they progress, they are making direct comparisons between life in Ely and Struay. Barnaby Bear introduces them to a wide range of locations around the world. In Years 3 and 4 pupils make satisfactory progress in surveying the positive and negative features in the area immediately around the school and make reasoned suggestions as to how that environment can be improved. In a very good lesson in Year 5, the pupils found out and discussed the different uses of watercourses in Ely and Egypt, a direct link with their historical studies. By the end of Year 6 the pupils have linked their geographical skills with those of ICT by producing a PowerPoint presentation of the results of their study of the local River Ouse, discussing environmental and economic issues such as the recent developments, the effects of vandalism, source and flow rate and river usage.
103. The pupils are appropriately aware of different periods in history such as Ancient Egypt, Anglo-Saxon and Tudor times, the Great Fire of London, the Victorians and the Second World War. By the end of Year 2 the pupils know about the history of Ely. Through good visits and walks they trace the similarities and differences in homes from different periods from the fifteenth century. They successfully compare the architecture of Oliver Cromwell's house with Victorian and modern homes.
104. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress in their enquiries about Anglo-Saxon times. They research facts about everyday life in those times, including the village at West Stowe and the burial site at Sutton Hoo, and compare them with the present day. Pupils in Year 5 develop their research skills further when finding out about Tudor times, especially when making comparisons between room inventories from Tudor and modern times. By the end of Year 6, the pupils draw on a range of enquiries to discuss aspects of life in Ancient Egypt, particularly the relationship between Pharaoh and the gods and the Egyptian's belief in the protective powers of the scarab. There was much discussion between the teacher and pupils about the Egyptian's beliefs and traditions and the teacher asked probing questions to challenge the pupils' thinking and bias.
105. Pupils' attitudes to geography and history are good and they help to promote successful learning. The pupils are willing learners, hardworking and keen to do well.

Relationships and behaviour are good. They think carefully about their work and how they present it and this shows improvement since the previous inspection.

106. The quality of teaching is good overall with two very good lessons being observed. Good planning that identifies clear learning objectives and outcomes supports teaching. Teachers consolidate the pupils' previous learning well and show skill in questioning the pupils' knowledge and understanding. The teachers plan lessons that include activities for pupils of different abilities. Support staff are used well and parents are involved extensively on visits. The very effective use of the historic locality around the school adds much to the pupils' understanding of how things change over time and gives the pupils a sense of awe and wonder as they study buildings of social and religious importance. Pupils have satisfactory opportunities to use their literacy skills in recording their work in geography and history. However, computers are not used widely enough to support learning. The staff make good links with several subjects and this helps pupils to deepen their geographical and historical understanding by establishing connections between subjects. In art the pupils in Years 3 and 4 made good use of their knowledge of timelines to present mini-biographies of famous artists. They combined a variety of literacy skills with timelines to illustrate key events in the artists' lives.
107. The newly appointed subject leader has a clear idea of the future direction of the two subjects and has identified the need for an improvement in resources to support the teaching of geography that are, at present, unsatisfactory. However, there is not a systematic approach to monitoring teaching and learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

108. Standards in ICT are in line with those expected of pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6 and the rate of pupils' progress has improved since the previous inspection. Other aspects of the schools' work in ICT have improved. The teaching of basic skills is good and staff are well-equipped through good training, the school has good resources and a recently installed computer suite is already being used to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. The subject leader has successfully enthused and supported the staff and provided good guidance about teaching. Staff are experimenting with methods of assessing pupils' progress but as yet this process is not consistent throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in most aspects of their work although progress in using computers to support their work in several subjects is inconsistent between classes.
109. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a suitable knowledge of ICT and how computers are used in a variety of contexts such as supermarkets, storing information and controlling actions. They make good progress in controlling programmable toys and have a secure understanding of sequencing instructions carefully and accurately. This work links well with mathematics and helps the pupils to learn about estimation and measurement. They are enthusiastic in their response to opportunities to use computers and when being instructed by the teacher listen carefully and show they have understood by carrying out tasks correctly. Pupils have an appropriate knowledge of basic keyboard skills and are able to load, save and print their work. They know several technical terms and understand that the computer has useful tools to help them with their writing. Special educational needs make good use of a program to create a street scene; they drag and drop pictures onto the screen and discuss their work thoughtfully. They are supported well by classroom helpers.
110. By the end of Year 6, the pupils have a secure understanding of how to use computers to record information on a database and to use computers to generate

graphs and charts to illustrate their work in science. They successfully frame questions and build up a database of information about rocks which they use to extend their knowledge in geography and science. This aspect of the subject is taught very well and pupils make very good progress. Pupils make appropriate use of desktop publishing to create effective designs for book covers. They are also beginning to create graphical presentations of their river studies and make good use of variety of sources and techniques to enhance their work. Pupils successfully combine text and graphics. Pupils with special educational needs have a good grasp of how to cut and paste text and pictures. The pupils are keen to use the Internet to find information about topics. In design and technology they used book marking to access a variety of suppliers of tents and then analysed the suitability of the products for mountaineers. Pupils have satisfactory skills in word processing. They use a variety of fonts, colours and sizes of text to present their work, for example in their writing about The Highwayman.

111. The teachers have benefited much from recent training and the support of the subject leader. As a result the teaching is good and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Staff are beginning to use the recently installed computer suite for some lessons and teach skills very well in these lessons as pupils have good opportunities to practise and improve their skills. Teachers place a good emphasis on encouraging the pupils to use correct vocabulary. The pupils are very well behaved in lessons and listen carefully. They respond enthusiastically to opportunities to try out new programs and persevere with tasks. The more able often work alongside the less confident and offer good support. Teachers plan lessons well and follow national guidelines for the subject to ensure consistency in developing skills, knowledge and understanding. Lessons are often short and well paced so that pupils grasp new skills and have opportunities to practise them before moving on to another technique. The staff offer much encouragement and this works very well with special educational needs and the less confident. The good use of praise and reward combined with pupils' own enthusiasm contribute much to effective learning. Teachers give clear explanations. In some lessons there are good links with literacy; in Year 2 the pupils correctly sequenced instructions on how to use a tape recorder.
112. Improvements in standards since the previous inspection have been due to much improved resources, training for the teachers and the good work done by the subject leader in supporting his colleagues. Funds have been spent wisely to provide good resources and the subject leader has a clear understanding of how to improve standards further. The school has correctly identified the need to use computers more widely to support learning in other subjects and to extend the monitoring teaching and learning.

MUSIC

113. Standards have been maintained in this subject since the last inspection and are in line with nationally expected levels for pupils at the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils are enthusiastic about this subject and in lessons make satisfactory progress. As at the time of the last inspection, there is little evidence of written or recorded work but observations and discussions with pupils shows that they are introduced to a satisfactory range of opportunities to appraise and perform music in line with recommendations of the nationally approved scheme.
114. Throughout school pupils sing tunefully and with good diction. Most pupils have a good understanding about the importance of good posture to achieve good breath control. Listening skills are satisfactory overall, but there is a reluctance to listen to classical and popular music in assemblies. Pupils enjoy performance in concerts and

at festivals and are eager to participate in school events and at locally organized activities. Pupils behave well in lessons and treat instruments with respect.

115. By the end of Year 2, pupils make an accurate appraisal of their own performance and suggest methods of improvement. In some good work during the inspection they evaluated their performance of a musical accompaniment to poetry, which had been previously written in class. They discussed the improvements that could be achieved in rhythm, pitch and pace and identified the best methods to achieve differences in tone and sound quality when using the tuned percussion instruments.
116. By the end of Year 6, pupils name and play tuned and untuned percussion instruments appropriately with good knowledge of their musical range. Less secure is their knowledge of composers and their music. Although many recognise the instruments played in an orchestral work and name a musical piece correctly, very few can name other works by the same composer or identify the type of music they have composed. Many of the pupils in Year 6 have a basic knowledge of notation and can recognize the notes of the pentatonic scale; however, few pupils can write notation or know of the time values these notes represent. Those pupils who learn musical instruments in school have a better understanding of notation.
117. Younger pupils in Years 1 and 2 enjoy singing together and have favourite songs and action rhymes. They rely on the teacher to support and advise them and few have yet developed any independence in this subject. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are gaining in confidence and will participate in class music. They maintain a steady beat as they accompany class singing. Others are more inhibited in performance but enjoy the opportunity to explore with sounds. They enjoy playing the percussion instruments and can name many of them accurately. Most pupils competently repeat a simple pattern if clapped or banged on a drum but they have difficulty when the rhythm becomes more complex. The higher attaining pupils recognize high and low sounds.
118. Teaching of this subject is satisfactory. Teachers have satisfactory knowledge and provide a good range of experiences for pupils. There is a good range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments, well labelled and stored in the identified music room and available for all lessons. As the school increases in size, further instruments are to be purchased to ensure that there are sufficient instruments for whole class music lessons. Through involvement in peripatetic music lessons there are good opportunities for older pupils to learn a range of brass, string and woodwind instruments. Younger pupils in Year 2 all learn to play the recorder and make music together in lessons. A lunchtime school choir provides an alternative opportunity for pupils to make music together and is open to all older pupils. They perform at festivals alongside other pupils locally and also for other members of the community at specially arranged events. This is a good opportunity for social development and popular in school with pupils.
119. The subject leader is enthusiastic and has good knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses in the subject. There has been little opportunity for monitoring in lessons but good support is provided to teachers to assist in the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Further good initiatives are planned to increase the focused attention given to this subject in school.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

120. Standards in physical education have risen since the last inspection and are now above those expected throughout the school in all areas of the curriculum except swimming where they are average. The teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic

and concentrate on the development of skills in all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils are keen to improve and are committed to their work. The teaching of the oldest pupils is excellent. There is no difference in the performance of boys and girls. Pupils with special educational needs are supported appropriately in lessons. A few pupils with special needs have difficulty in managing their behaviour but both teachers and learning support assistants are effective in encouraging them to contribute to the lessons and to work cooperatively.

121. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 work enthusiastically and sensibly in their lessons. By the end of Year 2 pupils control the ball well when dribbling as passing in small groups. They use space very well, changing direction and pace with agility and an awareness of others. The teacher extends their skills well, using pupils to demonstrate best practice as well as showing the class herself. Pupils know the purpose of the game and enjoy working in groups as attackers and defenders. All understand the importance of safety, warming up and cooling down. These skills are established in Year 1 as pupils learn how to balance, roll and jump safely as well as handling the apparatus with care.
122. Older pupils have consistently good attitudes in their physical education lessons and by the end of Year 6 standards are above average. The pupils work cooperatively and plan constructively. They tackle almost all that is expected of them with commitment and enthusiasm. In a Year 3 and 4 lesson pupils worked hard to improve the quality of different types of jumps. They discussed the quality of the performance and refined their work. The teacher encouraged them to experiment and to work together to form a sequence of movements. In another lesson pupils demonstrated good control over the ball when practicing hockey skills. They strive to follow the safety rules. The teacher has good subject knowledge, teaching pupils how to change their grip as they dribble or pass the ball. In an excellent orienteering lesson for Years 5 and 6 pupils demonstrated a good understanding of the effect of physical activity. Pupils understand that exercise is necessary to maintain fitness. They interpret maps and apply themselves to a variety of challenges relating to fitness measuring and problem solving...and fun! At the end of the lesson pupils went through their cooling down routines unprompted and evaluated their performance. This lesson was extremely well planned, the pace was excellent throughout and the three teachers' high expectations of their pupils were rewarded with their total commitment to their learning. The teaching and learning are good throughout the school but in this lesson they were excellent.
123. Pupils learn to swim from Year 2. They have a six-week session each year. No swimming was observed during the inspection. The present Year 6 has not yet been swimming this year but at the end of Year 5 only six pupils could not swim. Pupils are instructed about water safety and remember safety rules well. The physical education curriculum is enhanced with after school activities, including sports and netball run by teachers and learning support assistants who have had training to coach. Years 5 and 6 attend a residential orienteering activity. There are some matches with other schools and players from Cambridge United Football Club coach pupils in school.
124. The subject leader has not held the post for long and has not yet had the opportunity to observe teaching or learning throughout the school. She does monitor the teachers' plans and knows what is being taught throughout the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

125. By the end of Years 2 and 6, standards are in line with the expectations of the syllabus followed by most schools in Cambridgeshire. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in the standards achieved by all pupils. The school

curriculum now fully complies with the locally agreed syllabus. All pupils study Christianity and other major world faiths and make satisfactory progress in their understanding of various beliefs and customs. Satisfactory progress is also achieved by pupils with special educational needs and by pupils with English as an additional language. Good adult support is provided for these pupils when necessary.

126. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 learn about the Christian calendar and festivals. In school they celebrate Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. In Year 1 pupils make a satisfactory start to learning about special people, at home, in school, and in the church. They look at special books and give reason for their choices. Some pupils bring their own special books to school to share with others. Gradually they learn that there are special books, which relate to different religions. Pupils share together their knowledge and experiences about christenings and weddings. In some good work in Year 2 the pupils took part in a mock wedding role-playing the part of the bride, groom, vicar and guests in their celebration, and learning the importance of this ceremony within the Christian church. Good links are developed in lessons to practise skills learnt in other subjects of the curriculum, for example some good work on sequencing the Christmas story provides suitable practice in story-writing. Pupils have visited Ely Cathedral and looked at the building as a place of worship. Then back in school they have made clay tiles to represent the architecture of various parts of the building. Pupils enjoy drama, for example they act out the story of "The Good Samaritan" and consider the moral of the story comparing if there are any similarities to their own lives.
127. In Years 3 to 6 pupils learn in more depth about major world faiths. Through discussion and also through research in books, videos and the Internet they learn about worship and prayer in these faiths. Pupils describe their own experiences to others and they show good respect and appreciation for the views and opinions of other class members. They are introduced to religious festivals of the major faiths and compare similarities and differences. They learn to value personal beliefs and appreciate the acts of faith demonstrated by individuals. Pupils particularly enjoy looking at the artefacts of the various religions and by Year 6 they have satisfactory knowledge of the importance, for example of the Puja tray, diva lamps, the five K's of Sikhism or the five Pillars of Islam. Through the use of video they learn about the importance of the Aum to members of the Hindu faith, and listen to the call to prayer by Islamic leaders.
128. To further increase their knowledge older pupils are encouraged to compare and contrast differences in religions. They look at places of worship, methods of prayer, the importance of special books and the customs of home life. Comparative lists are made of similarities and differences. Pupils are encouraged to learn appropriate terminology, such as in learning about home life they learn about Kosher food or Halal meat. They learn about prophets from four major world faiths as well as from the Old and New Testament. Pupils have good knowledge about events in the life of Christ. In Year 6 pupils have undertaken some good map work comparing the state and town names in Palestine and Israel through the use of a historical map and the modern day geographical equivalent. By the age of 11 most pupils have some knowledge of the Old Testament. They know about Moses and of some Old Testament kings such as David, but they have limited detailed knowledge about events reported in the Old Testament or about the composition of the Bible.
129. The newly appointed subject leader is working hard to improve her specialist knowledge and to gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in this area of the curriculum. All teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and the teaching is at least satisfactory. Good efforts are made to enable the pupils to have

first-hand experiences visiting places of worship or through the use of videos. In Years 3 to 6 there is very little independent research work, although there are some examples of pupils making lists, and charts collated from their own specialist knowledge. Computers are seldom used to support learning. Often written work is recorded through the use of worksheets. There are sufficient books about Christianity and major world faiths in most classrooms. The subject leader has identified that there is a need to increase the school's supply of artefacts and is addressing this issue.