

INSPECTION REPORT

DOWNING PRIMARY SCHOOL

Ipswich

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124669

Headteacher: Ms Margo Barker

Reporting inspector: Lynn Adair

21095

Dates of inspection: 29 April - 2 May 2002

Inspection number: 222263

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:	3 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Downing Close Ipswich Suffolk
Postcode:	IP2 9ER
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Mark Fotheringham
Date of previous inspection:	January 2000

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21095	Lynn Adair	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Mathematics; Art and design; Design and technology; Information and communication technology.	The school's results and achievements; How well pupils are taught?
9115	Terry Clarke	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well the school cares for its pupils? How good the school's partnership with parents is?
16773	Raminder Arora	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Religious education; Music; English as an additional language.	How good curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils are?
18466	Kevin Hodge	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Geography; History; Physical education.	How well the school is led and managed.
3055	Clive Tombs	<i>Team Inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Special educational needs; Equal opportunities.	The work of the Area Support Centre.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Downing Primary is a broadly average-sized community school for boys and girls aged from three to 11 years. The school has 175 full-time pupils on roll in the main school, and 45 part-time pupils in the nursery, who attend either the morning or the afternoon sessions from the age of four. The number on roll has fallen significantly over the last five years, and pupil movement in and out of the school is high. Not all children in the nursery transfer to the Reception class at the age of five. Attainment on entry to the Reception class is low compared with children of the same age nationally, and their social circumstances are generally much less favourable. Eighty-seven pupils in the school have special educational needs. These constitute 44 per cent of those on roll in the main school (a well above average proportion), and about one quarter of children in the nursery. A very high number of pupils, (18), have statements of special educational need, which is a very high proportion of pupils on roll, at just over ten per cent. Ten of these pupils, aged eight to ten years have learning difficulties and receive specialist support in an Area Support Centre based in the school. About ten per cent of pupils in the school are from ethnic minority groups, and one pupil receives support for learning English as an additional language. These figures broadly reflect those in most schools nationally. However, almost 46 per cent of pupils have free school meals, which is a well above average figure. The school has recently experienced difficulty in recruiting staff to replace senior co-ordinators; at the time of the inspection, two temporary staff were employed to cover their teaching commitments.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Downing Primary is a sound, improving school. By the time pupils leave the school in Year 6, their standards are below those found nationally. However, they have achieved very well in the early years, and satisfactorily in the rest of the school, to build on their low starting point. The sound quality of educational provision, which is particularly effective in addressing pupils' special educational and emotional needs, contributes to pupils' progress. Leadership and management of the school is satisfactory, an improvement on the previous inspection. Sound use is made of resources to improve provision and standards, thus securing satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Very good provision in the Nursery and Reception classes helps the youngest pupils to make very good progress.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve good standards in design and technology.
- The headteacher has worked effectively, and with determined effort, with governors, to set successfully a clear educational direction for the school's work.
- The school places a strong emphasis on ensuring that individual needs of pupils are recognised, and that those with special educational needs in particular are assured equal access to the full curriculum through good quality provision.
- The school promotes pupils' moral and social skills well so that challenging behaviour among a small minority of pupils is usually moderated successfully, and pupils are learning to get on with each other.
- Very effective procedures ensure that pupils' health, safety and welfare in school are assured.
- Very good links with the community broaden and enrich the curriculum provided for pupils.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The below expected standards in most subjects, but especially in English, mathematics and science.
- Planning in Years 1 to 6 to reduce variability in practice and ensure teachers, particularly those who are temporary, are given better guidance.
- Procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress and personal development in Years 1 to 6, and the use of the information gained.
- The extent to which Information and communication technology meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum in Years 3 to 6.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Downing Primary was a school with serious weaknesses in the previous inspection, conducted at the end of January 2000. As a result of addressing successfully a significant number of the numerous key issues, the school has made improvements to provision. However, standards are still below average in many subjects in spite of sound achievement by most pupils, and there is much work to do in continuing efforts to raise standards. This is particularly crucial where pupils do not achieve as well as they could, in information and communication technology and religious education, which were concerns in the last inspection, and remain so. At a whole school level, leadership and management have improved well, giving a stronger steer to developments. A good action plan was created in response to weaknesses in the last inspection. Good analysis of pupil performance information and rigorous monitoring of teaching practice has directed where improvement is needed, and support is targeted well. The role of co-ordinators has been strengthened. However, the momentum of improvement has been interrupted by recent staffing changes. Temporary staff are employed who display some weaknesses in practice. As a result, not all newly created systems are consistently embedded in practice in the school. This means there is still work to do to fully address some of the issues identified in the last report: for example, there are inconsistencies in the quality of teachers' planning and assessment methods. Taking all these features into consideration, improvement has been satisfactory overall.

STANDARDS

The table below 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	E	E	E*	E
Mathematics	E	E	E	C
Science	E	C	D	C

Key	
<i>well above average</i>	A
<i>above average</i>	B
<i>average</i>	C
<i>below average</i>	D
<i>well below average</i>	E

Children enter the school with low levels of attainment in basic and social skills. They achieve very well during their time in the Nursery and Reception classes, although standards are still below what is expected of Reception age children. The overall trend in pupil performance in national tests until last year was, with some variation, one of improvement. However, last year's seven year olds had significant levels of special need which created a downturn in results. The school has provided good support, which ensures these pupils achieve as well as can be expected. Analysis of prior attainment of 11 year olds shows that these pupils achieved as well as could be expected in science, and far exceeded targets in mathematics, despite the group changing due to pupils leaving and joining the school. However, although results were in line with those in similar schools¹, they were still below those found nationally. The previous year's rapid gains in science were difficult to sustain and there was a slight dip. In English, pupils could have achieved better results in writing, although reading results showed satisfactory achievement. Results in English were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally. The school has focused on improving writing and this is having an impact on current pupils' attainment. More challenging targets have been set for seven and eleven year olds which, based on inspection evidence, are likely to be met. Evidence also shows that although achievement is mainly satisfactory, most standards remain below those expected of similar aged pupils. This is a similar finding to the last inspection, and reflects the high level of special needs in the school. Information and communication technology and religious education are both subjects where pupils could achieve more. Pupils with special educational need, and those with English as an additional language, make good progress in acquiring basic skills from a low base of prior learning.

¹ Comparison with similar schools is based on those having free school meals entitlement of more than 35 per cent and up to 50 per cent.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes develop positive attitudes to learning. Most pupils in other classes enjoy coming to school and are interested in their work. A small minority are not willing to apply themselves so well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. The behaviour of children in the Nursery and Reception classes is very good. Pockets of misbehaviour occur among pupils in the rest of the school which can distract others. Most pupils behave well around the school.
Personal development and relationships	Satisfactory. Pupils carry out minor duties conscientiously. The School Council is an effective way for pupils to share their views. The use of initiative in lessons is sometimes stifled because of some over-direction in their work.
Attendance	Good rates of attendance and punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is very good in the Nursery and Reception classes. Children are helped to learn very well through a stimulating range of activities well matched to children's needs. In the main school, the small number of lessons that were unsatisfactory were mainly centred around temporary teachers. They did not know pupils well and this resulted in work which was not always well matched to pupils' needs or interests, and their rate of learning was slowed. Most teachers employ effective strategies for addressing some challenging behaviour expressed by pupils, so that a productive environment is created on the whole where pupils can concentrate well. Teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory overall, resulting in pupils making satisfactory progress. However, teachers do not give enough thought to the application of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills in other subjects. Main areas for development occur in planning, which should show more clearly expectations for learning of different groups of pupils to give more appropriate challenge, and be based on more consistent use of assessment information. The effective use of teaching assistants for in-class support, the withdrawal of small groups and individuals for additional literacy work, as well as the effective management of pupils in the Area Support Centre, help pupils with special needs and English as an additional language to learn well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Very good provision in Nursery and Reception classes. Variation in planning quality means work is not always matched to pupils' needs in the rest of the school. Strong links with the community enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The school provides effective support within class and on a withdrawal basis. There is also good provision in the Area Support Centre.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. One pupil is helped to acquire English at a satisfactory rate through support in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Good provision is made for promoting pupils' moral and social development. The spiritual and cultural dimensions are developed satisfactorily, although there could be better promotion of non-western culture.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Very good procedures ensure pupils' welfare, and offer support and guidance. Better procedures are needed for monitoring academic and personal progress, and use of assessment information could be improved.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Satisfactory. Parents express diverse views of the school but are not always keen to become involved. The school works hard to encourage this.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The headteacher now provides a clear sense of direction to the school's work that has effected needed change. Staff with management responsibilities make a sound contribution to work in the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body carries out its duties well. Governors have a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Monitoring and evaluation of provision has improved, but there is some work to do in ensuring consistency in practice in all classes.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Sound financial systems underpin considered decisions about use of funds. The principles of best value are applied satisfactorily, but more could be done in terms of the consultation process.
The adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Satisfactory. There are sufficient teaching staff, but some temporary appointments cause variation in practice. A good level of support staff is used well. Learning resources are satisfactory, but the library is under-stocked. Accommodation is good overall, but the computer suite is small.

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 like school and the school expects children to work hard. • Most feel that the teaching is good and that their children are making good progress. • Most feel that they are kept well informed by the school and they feel comfortable about approaching the school with any concerns. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour, which they feel is unsatisfactory, impedes progress and stops them from becoming responsible. • The allocation of homework. • The range of activities outside of lessons. • Some feel that teaching is not good, and neither is the leadership of the school. • Some feel the school does not work closely with them, they are not kept sufficiently informed and a minority feel uncomfortable about expressing concerns.

The above views were based on a very small sample. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views but does not substantiate most of their critical views. Homework is judged to be satisfactory, and satisfactory numbers of activities are planned to increase the range of the curriculum. The school is well led and consistent in its approach to parents. It keeps them well informed and has made good attempts to involve them more closely in its work. However, the response of parents is often disappointing. The behaviour of the pupils is considered satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Children enter the Nursery with significant language and social problems. Baseline assessments undertaken when children enter the Reception classes confirm that most are attaining much lower than expected standards, particularly in their basic skills of language and mathematics, as well as in their social skills. Children make very good progress towards the nationally recommended early learning goals for young children at the end of the Reception year in all areas of learning. However, many are unlikely to achieve the expected standards in communication, language and literacy, mathematical skills, knowledge and understanding of the world, and personal, social and emotional skills. In the other areas of learning - physical and creative skills - most children are on course to achieve the early learning goals. The last inspection report noted that there was very good progress overall and this high achievement has been sustained through highly effective teaching well matched to individual needs.

2. The school's records show that there is a high proportion of pupils who leave or join the school other than at the usual times. Many of those who join late have special educational needs (SEN), their parents being attracted by the specialist provision made by the school in this respect. Analysis of performance data shows that pupils who remain at the school from their Reception year through to the end of Year 6 achieve much better results than those who join later. In addition, some disruption to the learning of pupils has been caused by teacher departure during the year. In spite of this, achievement of most pupils is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. In lessons, it was noted that there were a significant larger number of boys in Year 3, but there was no evidence during the inspection of a significant difference in the progress made by boys and girls. In the best lessons, teachers are careful to challenge all pupils to answer questions, and groups are mixed, with girls and boys working together co-operatively at all levels of attainment. As a result of analysis of its test results, the school has introduced special arrangements for Year 3 pupils to support the large number with SEN. These include additional adult support, the use of the special needs unit's facilities for pupils if necessary, and specific support programmes. This initiative is having a positive impact on the learning of pupils of different abilities in this year group, and is helping them to achieve as well as can be expected.

3. National test results conducted at the end of Year 2 in 2001 were not only in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally in reading and writing, but were also at least well below those found in similar schools. Results were not as good as the previous year and reversed the generally upward trend until that time. This was due to the large number of pupils with special needs, mentioned earlier. The current Year 2 pupils have been set more challenging targets to raise standards, and are on course to achieve them. Standards seen during the inspection were better than those demonstrated by last year's group and in the last inspection, but remain below average overall. National tests for 11 year olds were also in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally, and were well below those in similar schools. Reading results, however, were much better than writing, and achievement in reading was sound. Pupils could have performed much better in writing given appropriate guidance in different writing genre. The school has worked hard in addressing shortcomings in provision, but standards among current Year 6 pupils are still below average, a similar picture to the last inspection. However, pupils are on course to meet higher targets and to reverse the downturn in performance experienced last year.

4. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in reading because of sound teaching of phonic skills on a regular basis as part of the Literacy sessions. Teachers also provide reading experiences outside of this time, although the quality varies in terms of broadening pupils' understanding of different reading material. Achievement in writing is satisfactory overall because of the introduction of an extended writing activity each week. This has helped to develop greater coherence and structure in writing, as well as increasing the range of written work. However, more work is needed to extend this further. More opportunities could be provided to develop and apply pupils' writing and oracy skills in other subjects of the curriculum, such as geography, history and religious education. This would also help to raise standards in these subjects.

5. In end of Year 2 national tests in mathematics, results were similar to those in reading and writing for the same reason – the high number of pupils with special needs. Progress made by these pupils, however, was and continues to be satisfactory, due to the good level of support they receive. Test results for 11 year olds last year were well below the national average, due to a large number of pupils achieving particularly low standards, and in spite of results exceeding last year's target. However, results are broadly in line with those in similar schools, due to a reasonable proportion attaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. Current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils are on course to meet more exacting targets set for them and to continue the generally upward trend of improvement since the last inspection. The school has placed strong emphasis on number and solving number problems in mathematics lessons, which has helped pupils to make sound progress in this aspect of mathematics. Pupils' understanding of shape and measure is developed satisfactorily. However, mathematical reasoning is weak, and pupils do not have enough opportunity to apply their mathematical skills to support work in other subjects, particularly in data handling.

6. Teachers' assessments of Year 2 pupils' attainment in science last year were well below average, and below those of similar schools for reasons explained earlier. In national tests for 11 year olds, standards were below average, but in line with those in similar schools. The overall trend in performance is up, although there was a slight fall last year after a significant rise the year before which was difficult to sustain. This attainment is a similar finding to the last inspection. Most pupils observed during the inspection made satisfactory gains in building on their prior attainment in knowledge and understanding of key scientific concepts, such as living things, but investigative skills were not so effectively developed. A greater level of challenge could be provided, especially for higher attainers, through better adaptation of activities.

7. By the end of Year 2, standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly in line with those expected of most seven year olds, but pupils could achieve more in both Key Stage 1² and Key Stage 2, where standards are below expectations for 11 year olds. Pupils do not develop skills consistently or systematically, because they do not have enough planned opportunities to use computers in the classroom to support their learning in other subjects. In religious education, standards are below those expected in the locally Agreed Syllabus for seven and eleven year olds. Achievement is unsatisfactory, mainly as a result of the low profile the subject receives in the planned curriculum, and weak literacy skills.

8. The good standards observed in design and technology in the last inspection have been sustained, although those in art have not, due to inconsistencies in practice affecting development of skills. Pupils in both key stages achieve satisfactorily in all other subjects of the curriculum. In physical education, pupils attain satisfactory standards, but standards in history and geography are below those expected of pupils of similar ages, mainly as a result of pupils' weak literacy skills.

² Key Stage 1 refers to those pupils in Years 1 and 2, Key Stage 2 refers to those in Years 3 to 6

9. Pupils with SEN in the main school make good progress, especially in their basic skills. This is mainly because they receive effective support in lessons, and specific support from specialist staff when withdrawn from lessons. This involves careful monitoring of their progress and regular adjustments to learning targets. Pupils in the Area Support Centre also make at least satisfactory, and often good, progress in spite of their significant level of need. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in acquiring competence in English, also due to good adult support.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to the school, and their behaviour, personal development and relationships are satisfactory overall. Their attendance is good. This makes a sound contribution to the progress pupils make.

11. Pupils' attitudes to the school are, overall, satisfactory. The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school, go straight to the classroom on arrival, show enthusiasm in their work and quickly settle down for registration. In Year 1 and 3 art lessons, some good examples of pupils' enthusiasm and interest in their work was displayed when they were keen to explore different materials and techniques. In the Foundation Stage³, children are making very good progress in establishing positive attitudes which are sustained during the school day; they will work for considerable lengths of time on exploration of particular activities. There is, however, a significant minority in the main school which shows less enthusiasm at times, and are slow to settle. The attitude of this minority sometimes impacts on the learning of the majority. However, pupils with SEN generally display positive attitudes to work in lessons where they are given the opportunity to succeed, and where their achievements are recognised and celebrated. For example, they confidently take part in role-play in a Year 6 religious education lesson, and in science activities. Pupils' attitudes around the school are mostly good. Many pupils interviewed are proud of their school, and enjoy the many activities that the school provides.

12. Behaviour is satisfactory overall despite some of the significant social and emotional needs among a significant minority. There were 14 fixed term exclusions and one permanent one in the previous reporting year. This rate was high for a primary school of this size. The fixed term exclusions involved seven pupils, all boys, and were for periods of one or two days. They were usually for acts of aggression or excessive rudeness to staff, and were often after a culmination of a number of such events. The permanent exclusion was for similar repeated events. The school received little co-operation from the pupils' parents in aiming to curb such disruption. As the other exclusions were only for a short time, there is no specific reintegration programme and the school regards the excluded pupils as starting with a clean sheet. Children's behaviour in the Foundation Stage is very good, due to positive and consistent reminders about established rules, which they then follow well. Most pupils in the main school are courteous and polite. Whilst the majority behave well in the classroom, the minority with problems can be disruptive and, if not managed well, can prevent others learning. This happened in only a very small minority of lessons due to effective support and strategies being provided by most staff in other lessons. Around the school and in the playground pupils behave well, and they line up in an orderly manner when coming in after break times. There was no evidence during the inspection of oppressive behaviour around the school, and pupils knew what to do if it did happen.

³ *Foundation Stage refers to those children in the Nursery and Reception classes*

13. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, children demonstrate a sense of trust and belonging. In the rest of the school, pupils generally understand the impact of their actions on others, and respect each other's values and beliefs. A minority of pupils do not, and they fail to understand that their actions in the classroom can stop other pupils learning. However, in assemblies pupils listen well and appear to understand the moral messages that some of the stories they hear send. In one assembly, two pupils announced that they would be running a sale during break time in aid of charity, suggesting that they do understand the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. Pupils mostly take opportunities to reflect and they respect the rules, which are prominently displayed around the school.

14. In the Foundation Stage, independence is encouraged from the start. Children learn to take responsibility, for example returning the registers to the office in pairs and helping to tidy up at the end of lessons. This increases as they move up through the school. At the upper end, pupils set up the hall for assembly and some of the Year 6 pupils act as 'supervisors' during wet play. The school council is made up of pupils from both key stages, including those from the special needs unit. They discuss a number of school issues, ranging from the need for more playground resources to the height of the sinks for Year 6 pupils and the state of the toilets. However, in some instances pupils' ability to take responsibility for aspects of their own learning is limited, because of an over-large number of adults helping in the classroom at times. Relationships across the school are satisfactory. Between pupils and adults in the classroom and around the school, in most instances, relationships are positive and teachers and other adults in the school act as good role models. Pupils on occasion work together well in the classroom in groups and in pairs. However, after breaking up into groups, they often continue to work as individuals rather than interacting with the group.

15. The level of attendance, at above the national average, is good. Unauthorised absence is in line with the national average and few parents take their children away on holiday during term time. Very few late arrivals were observed during the inspection, and this was confirmed to be the case upon scrutiny of the school registers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning in the school is satisfactory, a finding similar to that in the last inspection. However, there was more unsatisfactory teaching in this inspection, mainly centred around temporary staff in Key Stage 1 and 2, who have only been in the school a very short time and do not know the pupils well. The amount of good or better teaching also reduced slightly for the same reason. Almost all the very good teaching was observed, as in the last inspection, in the Foundation Stage. Here, teaching was never less than good and very good in almost two-thirds of lessons seen. This is a strength of the school and makes a significant contribution to the rate at which children learn in the early years. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teaching was at least satisfactory in almost nine out of 10 lessons. In Key Stage 1, a small proportion, 18 per cent, was good, and in Key Stage 2, which includes the special unit, a slightly higher proportion, about one-third, was good, with one very good lesson. Some of the effective features identified in the last inspection have been maintained, such as the management of pupils, and the teaching of pupils with special needs in withdrawal groups. Practice has been monitored rigorously, and support provided to overcome some of the weaknesses which were identified last time, for example in marking. However, the turnover of staff, which meant temporary teachers were employed during the inspection, produced inconsistencies in teaching quality, and some less effective practice remains.

17. Teachers in the Foundation Stage have very good knowledge of the needs of children of this age. For example, they are aware of children's lack of imaginative skills on entry, and very effectively develop their creative skills through role-play and exploratory opportunities in practical situations. In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers' subject knowledge is generally sound, with some good features in design and technology in teaching technical skills which are employed by pupils to produce good quality outcomes. However, teachers are not so effective in planning and organising the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons to develop pupils' skills, and to support learning effectively in other curriculum subjects. One temporary teacher from overseas does not have a secure understanding of the National Curriculum requirements, which leads to inappropriate challenge at times and fewer gains in learning by pupils. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good overall, an improvement on the last inspection. It is always at least satisfactory and occasionally very good. The school operates withdrawal groups for literacy support in the main school. The teaching of small groups and individuals is often good, but on a narrow aspect of literacy. Targets in pupils' individual education plans (IEPs), although precise, are sometimes less useful in informing planning in all subjects of the curriculum. Teaching in the Area Support Centre is particularly effective in terms of managing pupils' challenging behaviour.

18. Teaching of basic skills in literacy and numeracy is sound overall. Most teachers have adapted the national frameworks and guidance to organise well structured lessons, with a range of activities to teach literacy and numeracy skills in English and mathematics lessons. However, the temporary teacher from overseas is not familiar with the frameworks, and lessons in this Year 5 class sometimes lack an effective structure to develop learning successfully. In most classes, phonic skills are well taught. From the time they are in the Nursery, children have daily practice in letter and sound recognition. Teachers in the Foundation Stage are particularly adept at using as many opportunities as possible to develop children's language. Older pupils use their knowledge of sounds to help them to read with greater accuracy and at a satisfactory rate as they move through the school. Most mathematical concepts are taught satisfactorily in lessons, the exception being in data handling. In the Foundation Stage, a range of well thought out practical experiences is used very effectively to develop children's learning in numeracy at a very good rate. However, pupils in the main school need more imaginative support in applying both their literacy and numeracy skills across other subjects of the curriculum.

19. Planning is satisfactory overall with some sound features in English and mathematics work planned using national frameworks. Planning is particularly effective in the Foundation Stage, where learning is clearly defined. Sessions are well structured, giving teachers and support staff opportunities constantly to reinforce children's understanding, and to develop their skills through a well-planned and stimulating range of activities. Most lessons in the main school, with the exception of some of those led by temporary staff, are carefully planned. Objectives for learning are clearly stated, but intentions are not always clearly defined in terms of expected outcomes for learning for different groups of pupils. Expectations are reduced as a result. In science, for example, most pupils are given the same work, rather than adapting work to different levels of ability and giving more appropriate challenge to higher and lower attainers. This would give these pupils more incentive to work harder.

20. Precision in Foundation Stage planning, as well as in literacy for those with special needs, is brought about by a good understanding of what different pupils need to do next, which, in turn, is based on some good assessment. All staff are skilled and practised in noting and recording children's responses at formal and informal times during the day, and this informs what they need to do next. However, practice in day-to-day assessment is still variable across the main school. Some good practice is evident in Year 6, where the teacher's comments respond well to pupils' achievement in a range of subjects. The

assessment gives key pointers to pupils, and they respond by either completing or correcting work, thus improving their understanding. Most teachers respond to pupils' efforts, but effective evaluation of pupils' learning has yet to become an integral feature of teaching across the school, to helping pupils to gain knowledge, skills and understanding in a more systematic way.

21. Good teamwork between teachers and support staff is a strength of teaching across the school. This allows teaching assistants to play an effective role in supporting pupils, and helps them to learn well. On occasion, the presence of too many adults in the room stifles pupils' creativity and use of initiative. Effective teamwork is especially evident in the Foundation Stage, where assistants take a lead role in working with small groups. They are diligent in their preparation, and in their assessment of children's achievements, which ensures a close match of work to children's needs and very good progress in early skills. Pupils with special needs, and with English as an additional language, receive one-to-one and group support from well-trained assistants in class, and in specific sessions outside of class. This helps them to make effective gains towards targets in their IEPs, especially in language acquisition. Well-targeted support from learning support assistants enables class teachers to engage all pupils in planned class work.

22. Teachers' methods are satisfactory overall in aiding learning throughout the school. The best teaching in the Foundation Stage is characterised by very good, focused questioning which targets specific children, so as to check their understanding and to help them think more deeply. This was seen in a lesson where the teacher used such strategies to help children gain an understanding of the difference between upper and lower case letters. She used a child's knowledge of his own name to spot the difference, and then tested other children's understanding. The best lessons in the school have a lively pace, and are thoughtfully organised to gain and maintain pupils' attention. For example, in Year 2, the teacher used real snails to inspire writing; this motivated pupils well. On occasion, time is not well used, as in a Year 4 mathematics lesson. In this, there were significant delays to the start of the lesson as the teacher waited for pupils to return from a withdrawal session. The time was not spent productively and pupils became disinterested and bored.

23. Good management is evident overall in most lessons. It is particularly good in the Foundation Stage, good in Key Stage 1 and in the Area Support Centre. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, and employ effective strategies to address challenging behaviour which arises from pupils' difficult emotional needs. This sets a positive tone for most lessons, and for learning, enabling most pupils to concentrate, and ensuring little time is wasted on dealing with distractions. Effective strategies ensure that pupils are involved in their learning. However, on occasion where pupils are not so well known, or where strategies are not so effective, high noise levels arise and time is wasted dealing with misbehaviour. Occasionally, where sessions have inadequate tasks, and when activities have no clear purpose, this leads to reduced interest by children, and affects the pace as well. An overuse of worksheets not only reduces expectations for independent recording, but also fails to inspire and motivate pupils sufficiently.

24. Homework makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' learning overall, which does not support parents' views on this matter. All pupils are provided with homework from an early age, such as reading tasks which support their learning, and the range is extended in Key Stage 1 and 2. The best practice employs a variety of activities across different subjects, and is regularly allocated. However, practice is variable due to changes to staff, and the lack of a clear policy means that not all pupils are able to extend their skills outside of school so effectively.

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

25. The quality and range of learning opportunities are satisfactory overall. This is a view also expressed at the time of the last inspection. However, there has been some good improvement in terms of provision for pupils with special needs, and the provision of an inclusive curriculum. Emerging weaknesses in adapting national guidance consistently across the school have occurred since the last inspection. This means, crucially, that temporary staff do not always have sufficient guidance to plan their lessons effectively.

26. The curriculum provision for the Foundation Stage is good, and ensures a smooth transition from home to the Reception class. It is planned in accordance with the nationally recommended early learning goals, successfully incorporated into six areas of learning. Curricular provision assures that there is a clear focus on what children are expected to learn in each area of learning. Children receive a broad and well-balanced curriculum in a structured learning environment comprising free-choice and focused activities; this effectively develops their academic and social skills. All children have regular access to good quality outdoor facilities.

27. In Key Stage 1 and 2, the planned curriculum is broad in its coverage and balanced sufficiently to meet the requirements of most of the subjects in the National Curriculum. Currently the provision for aspects of information and community technology (ICT) in Key Stage 2, such as control and monitoring external events, is unsatisfactory and does not meet the statutory requirements. The overall planning of the whole school curriculum provides a sound framework for a broad curriculum. A curriculum map for each class shows an overview of the topics covered in all subjects. There are policies and programmes of work for most subjects, and national guidance is used to help teachers' planning. Some of the policies, such as in mathematics, religious education and geography, are of good quality and provide good models for other policies, such as art, which are in need of review and updating to take account of latest requirements. However, the half-termly plans are variable in quality, and not all teachers are adapting the national guidance used as schemes of work, to ensure work is matched to the needs of the range of pupils in each year group. Not all teachers use the school-devised format, for example, to structure planning. This creates lack of consistency and leads to variance in practice. Religious education is provided in accordance with the local authority's Agreed Syllabus, but the approach to planning has weaknesses that limit pupils' achievement in the subject. More planned opportunities, for example, could be incorporated into religious education, as well as other subjects of the curriculum, such as geography and history, to apply and practise pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

28. The school provides sound opportunities for developing pupils' personal and social skills. The statutory requirements to provide sex education and raise awareness of drug misuse are incorporated into the science programme. Opportunities for pupils to learn about other health issues form part of the personal and social curriculum, and teachers use informal opportunities to discuss concerns as they arise. However, the school has yet to form a cohesive programme for planning all aspects of personal, social and health education (PSHE) in order to ensure consistency of approach across the school and ensure that skills are acquired at a satisfactory rate from year to year.

29. Teachers have implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies satisfactorily. They plan the literacy lessons using locally devised recommendations in line with the national framework, and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Standards have improved in terms of pupils' reading skills, particularly as a result of better teaching of phonics and spellings. Some aspects of the strategy operate outside of literacy

lessons. Specific writing sessions are providing more focus to developing pupils' skills. Guided reading is more variable in quality, the best providing a broad range of reading experiences for extending pupils' understanding of different reading material. However, at times sessions are not so well planned, and do not enthuse pupils sufficiently. The use of the intentions in the National Numeracy Strategy is improving pupils' mental arithmetic skills, although pupils still have problems with explaining the strategies they employ.

30. The curriculum is inclusive and provides equality of access and opportunity for pupils. All children have full access to the curriculum. Additional sessions have been organised to provide intensive support in basic skills for particular groups of pupils, based on their needs. This is helping pupils to achieve at least as well as can be expected and, more often, better than expected in these sessions. For example, pupils in Year 3 have been targeted for additional adult support due to the group's low attainment. Booster classes have been organised for some potentially higher attainers. Individual support for a pupil with English as an additional language is helping this pupil to achieve well. Curriculum provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good. Pupils who have SEN are identified on entry, and a range of organisational approaches – setting, withdrawal groups and individual work – address their particular needs. Appropriate targets for learning and for personal and social development are incorporated into individual education plans (IEPs). Emphasis is given to improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills within discreet lessons and also across the curriculum. With appropriate support, pupils with special educational needs in the Area Support Centre are integrated for some sessions with their peer group, and also at break times. This enables them to experience equality of access to the full range of learning activities that promote achievement and personal development.

31. Inspection evidence shows the range of extra-curricular activities to be satisfactory, contrary to parents' views. Pupils have opportunities to take part in the football and netball clubs, and the choir. These clubs are well attended. There are good opportunities to play competitive sport against other local schools. The extra-curricular provision consolidates pupils' learning well, and makes a good contribution to their social development.

32. The school makes very good use of its community links to enhance the curriculum for its pupils. Good use is made of visits to the local environment and other places of interest to stimulate pupils' interest. In the Nursery, for example, children have visited the local Chinese restaurant. Other pupils in the school have visited local museums and places of interest as part of their history work. A good range of visitors, such as theatre groups, concert groups and local workers, helps to broaden pupils' awareness of the world, and enriches the curriculum. The school building provides a good community resource and is well used. Family learning initiatives in ICT help to forge links between home and school. Links with local businesses have been developed, for example with a local newspaper and the local football club, which have been used as a stimulus for learning.

33. The school has satisfactory links with other schools and these have a positive impact on children's learning and progress. There is sound liaison with the local secondary schools to which pupils' transfer at the end of Year 6, although more curricular links could be established at other times. Arrangements take place for pupils and children to visit beforehand, and information about their special needs and certain curriculum areas are discussed to ensure a smooth transition. Since the last inspection, links have been developed with a local beacon school. This has led to the introduction of assertive discipline techniques, and new ways of tracking pupils' progress. The local high school also runs a basic skills summer school, which is well attended by pupils from Downing.

34. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, a similar picture to the last inspection. The provision for developing pupils' spirituality is satisfactory, and has shown some improvement since the last inspection, mainly through whole school, infant and junior assemblies. These are well-planned occasions, with suitable stories, and provide good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own and other peoples' lives. Pupils sing hymns, with an awareness of togetherness as the school community. The introduction of a simple symbol, such as a lighted candle, is used well to promote personal reflection and evoke feelings of wonder. Collective worship now meets statutory requirements. However, across the curriculum there are too few planned opportunities for pupils to develop a sense of spirituality; for example, in art and music, through more carefully planned opportunities for evaluating each other's work, as well as famous works.

35. The provision the school makes for pupils' moral development is good. Pupils are helped to gain an understanding of right and wrong. Rules and expectations are explained by reference to the effect that behaviour has on the feelings of others. Good behaviour is celebrated. There are many examples in and out of lessons of adults promoting friendship, respect and concern for others. As pupils grow older, they are encouraged to accept greater responsibility for their own behaviour, learning, and the school environment, which is challenging for some pupils with significant emotional problems. Staff in the Area Support Centre are particularly adept at this. Pupils are encouraged to take pride in their environment. Every year the school holds a 'Grounds Day' where pupils put in extra effort to make the grounds look attractive. Collections and donations to a number of charities demonstrate how pupils are encouraged to think about others.

36. The provision the school makes for pupils' social development is also good. Good efforts are made to maintain positive relationships throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to relate to each other, to work co-operatively on projects or in games involving competition, discipline and fair play, and to take responsibility for their own actions. In this way they develop an understanding and expectation of living in a community. Most staff present good role models in the kind and considerate way they work with each other, and with pupils. Through the schools council, with representatives from each year group, pupils have the opportunity to influence decisions and to contribute to the life of the school. Older pupils are given responsibility to act as monitors, such as in assemblies and at lunchtimes.

37. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall. Pupils learn about their own culture through local history studies, and through visits to museums and the theatre. Visiting artists from the world of ballet, theatre and music also broaden pupils' experiences, whilst a visit from pupils from a school in Lanzarote gives pupils a particular insight into culture and values of the Canary Islands. However, although there are some opportunities in art, history, geography, science and music for pupils to learn about other western cultures, the curriculum does not promote awareness of non-western cultures well enough to prepare the pupils to live in a multi-cultural society. In addition, the library is short of sufficient or appropriate books to promote pupils' cultural and multi-cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The care the school provides for its pupils is good overall. Pupils receive their education in a secure and caring environment. This is a similar picture to the previous inspection, maintaining the effective features observed at that time, and improving support for pupils with special needs. However, work is still needed to make sure that assessment information is used to adapt teachers' planning for the full range of ability.

39. The school has very good child protection procedures, including a policy that is in line

with local authority requirements, a designated adult and regular staff training. The school has a very good relationship with the County's Social Services department, whose advice has been helpful. The support for pupils with special educational needs, including those in the Area Support Centre, is good. The school is successful in providing specific or additional support for these pupils. All staff are aware of the procedures for identifying, assessing and providing for such pupils, and the school fully complies with the requirements set out in the Code of Practice. The school calls on the advice and support of a range of external agencies to improve its care and provision. In addition, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) provides individual counselling to pupils, with their parents' permission.

40. Other procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare are also very good. The school promotes healthy and safe living, but has no cohesive personal and social education programme, as described earlier. The school has conducted a thorough audit of health and safety issues, using the local authority's advisor. The recommendations within the school's own area of responsibility have been put in place. Arrangements for managing injuries and sickness are very good, with trained first-aiders and the necessary documentation in place. The school is prepared to 'go the extra mile' to support pupils with medical problems. For example, one pupil requires physiotherapy during the day. Some of the support staff have been trained to carry out the necessary physiotherapy at school.

41. The school has good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. Registration takes place promptly, and registers are marked properly and clearly. Parents are reminded regularly of the need for good attendance and for pupils arriving on time. Attendance data is regularly analysed, and the school receives very good support from the education welfare officer who pursues non-attendance rigorously.

42. The procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are good. The school rules are widely displayed around the school and in the classroom. The school has introduced an assertive discipline policy with support from the local Beacon School. It has an appropriate range of rewards and sanctions, which are well promoted, and about which staff have been well trained. Rewards are prominently displayed on classroom walls, and 'postcards' are sent home to tell parents about their achievements. The awards for good behaviour, and report cards for inappropriate behaviour, are monitored closely by the headteacher. Bullying episodes, should they occur, are recorded in an incident book, but the alertness of staff keep these to a minimum.

43. The school has satisfactory procedures in place overall for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development. There are good systems for tracking each child's personal development in the Foundation Stage against specific criteria, but this is not the case in the rest of the school. The headteacher and many other staff know the families on the local estate well. They are usually aware of any problems arising at home, and play a key part in the monitoring process for some pupils' personal development. However, there are few means for tracking the remaining pupils' personal and social skills beyond end of year reports. This relates to the lack of a cohesive programme for teaching these skills.

44. Arrangements to monitor and record pupils' academic progress are satisfactory overall, but not enough use is being made of assessment information at present. The school gathers a lot of assessment information in a constructive way, but there is some variance across the school.

45. In the Foundation Stage, assessment procedures are very good. Children's work is beautifully presented in folders, and is dated, marked and annotated to show changes in attainment, behaviour and personal development. Initial and ongoing assessment informs teachers in planning the next stage of children's education, and the degree of support required. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the individual plans and statements of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are regularly reviewed, and parents are fully involved and kept informed. Both the SENCO and head of the Area Support Centre are aware of the contents of all statements. The SENCO arranges, attends and invites key people to all reviews, and ensures that the provision in a pupils' statement is re-examined in the light of any progress or regression that has been made.

46. There has been some improvement in the development of clear procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress in core subjects in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. At school level, a range of assessment information has been collated to track progress made by pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. All standardised test data, such as baseline assessment and pupils' attainment in the national tests, is carefully evaluated and analysed to mark the performance of different groups and individuals. This system helps to set statistical targets for different groups and also helps in identifying pupils requiring extra help. However, the use of assessment information by teachers is not yet used consistently to inform their planning. There are few effective ongoing means of checking pupils' progress. Whilst the school has assessment information available in the core subjects, assessment in other subjects is not yet formalised. The result is that teachers have insufficient information to provide a useful basis for planning future work at a suitable level.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school's partnership with parents is satisfactory overall. Although a small number of parents have opposing views, evidence gathered during the inspection shows that most parents have satisfactory views of the school. Only a very small number of parents attended the parents' meeting and returned the questionnaires, and opinions were diverse. Inspection evidence confirmed parents' positive views in that most children stated that they liked school, and the school is helping pupils to achieve as well as can be expected. While concerns were expressed at certain aspects of the school's work, many were not substantiated by inspection findings. For example, only 57 per cent of parents answering the questionnaires thought that the school worked closely with parents, and 20 per cent felt that they would not feel comfortable about approaching the school with problems or concerns. Evidence did not suggest that this was the case. After school, teachers were always available to talk to the parents who came to collect their children, and spoke readily with teachers. Parents arriving with their children at the start of the day also demonstrated sound relationships with the school. The headteacher's door is always open, and during the inspection she was seen to be counselling distressed parents. The quality of leadership was also rated as a concern, but this was found to be sound. Another concern raised from the questionnaire was the poor behaviour of pupils. Although a small minority of pupils with emotional problems at times exhibit poor behaviour, this is effectively moderated by staff, which is helping them to become mature and responsible, another concern expressed by some parents. The majority of pupils behave well. Parents were not happy with the range of activities provided outside of lessons, but these were found to be satisfactory. More consultation with parents would help to test their perceptions and enable the school to address any concerns raised.

48. The links between the school and its parents are, overall, sound with some good features. There are good strategies in place for inducting children new to the school. These include visits to the Nursery prior to admission, home visits by staff and meetings for

parents. The school's prospectus is satisfactory and contains all the statutory information, but it is a bit sparse on information about the curriculum. The annual report of the governing body contains all the required information, but is rather dull. The school sends out regular newsletters about events and other school activities. Parents are kept up to date with pupils' progress through termly parent meetings. Written annual reports are satisfactory overall, but the quality, content and detail are variable in terms of evaluation and targets set. Those in the Foundation Stage are disappointing, considering the other effective features of its partnership with parents. Parents would be more clearly informed about their children's progress if reports were set out under the headings of the areas of learning. The partnership with parents of pupils with special educational needs (SEN), including those pupils in the Area Support Centre, is good. Parents are kept well informed by regular contact and by relevant information provided by the school. Annual reviews are well attended.

49. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to children's learning at school and at home. The Friends of Downing School support the school well and have raised money for the library and the computer room, and have provided white boards for the classrooms. They manage to raise about £1000 per year, which is a good amount for the area which the school serves. A small number of parents come into the school to help in the classroom and to listen to pupils reading. A few of these were observed during the inspection. They respond well to requests for support on school trips. Parents support pupils with homework in the Nursery and Reception. In the rest of the school, some parents are good at filling in reading diaries, but a significant number are not. Some pupils say that parents listen to them reading, but the picture is variable. Of the small number of parents answering the questionnaires, 20 per cent thought that pupils did not receive the right amount of homework. Inspection evidence suggests that homework is satisfactory overall, although the quality and amount of homework shows inconsistencies. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to involve parents more, for example in the establishment of Family Learning in information and communication technology (ICT). Parents are encouraged to attend 'Open Days' when they can see the school in action. However, take-up on such initiatives can be disappointing.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

50. The last inspection reported that management required some improvement and was lacking in strategies for how to raise standards. Since the school's last inspection, the improved leadership of the headteacher and key staff has been instrumental in providing a clearer and more purposeful sense of direction to the school's work. The headteacher has worked with determined effort. All staff are supported well by governors, and this clearer vision for the school is beginning to lead to a quicker response to issues and more secure knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The management of change and the implementation of the action to address issues raised in the last inspection report has been satisfactory overall. However, there has been some interruption to the process due to changes in key staff, and recruitment difficulties leading to temporary staff being employed. The school recognises the need to maintain and quicken still further the pace of improvement in order to build upon the pupils' rise in attainment expected this year. Good teamwork is evident among all staff – teaching and non-teaching - at all levels. Together with the support of governors, this ensures a shared commitment to improvement and a sound capacity to succeed in spite of staff turnover.

51. The school has a clear set of aims. These include involving pupils in their own learning, developing links with the community, and early identification of pupils' special educational needs (SEN). The school has been successful in achieving many of its aims. However, the staff in temporary positions are not so clear about the aims of the school, and this is causing some instability and difficulty in meeting them in terms of teaching quality.

Most staff, however, make a satisfactory contribution to developments in the school, an improvement on the previous inspection. The special needs provision, for example, is well managed and co-ordinated. Professional leadership is provided for colleagues, and improvements to provision have resulted. Roles are clearly understood by staff with management responsibilities. They display a sound understanding of strengths and weaknesses in their areas of responsibility. Action plans have been developed by individual coordinators, and have been partly successful in guiding change and development, but now need to be implemented with greater determination.

52. Underpinning the improvement has been the governing body, which fulfils its responsibilities effectively. Governors provide a good level of support in decision-making. The chair of governor's liases well with the headteacher, and visits the school regularly. Governors have maintained their good level of involvement with the school since the last inspection, and have a clear view of its strengths and areas to develop. They are well informed about the different aspects of the school's work through their committee structure, which includes an 'Ofsted action group' which monitors how issues are being addressed. There are regular governors' meetings, and reviews of the curriculum. The subject co-ordinators prepare reports about progress and the governors make regular visits to the school to assess progress for themselves. Matters are reported fully to the governing body. Governors have a well-developed knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and are well poised to take a stronger role in shaping the long-term direction of the school.

53. The school improvement plan and the school's post-Ofsted action plan have been usefully combined to give a coherent set of actions. These have now been largely addressed, and a plan for the next two years has been drafted in outline. The previous plan had detailed areas to address, along with clear ways of measuring progress. The focus upon improving the attainment of pupils and ways of achieving improvement were outlined effectively. The new draft guidance gives broad areas to focus upon, and now needs to include the outcomes of this inspection along with the school's long-term plans for development.

54. The headteacher's own regular system of review has improved significantly since the last inspection, and she now has a much clearer view of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching. Effective use has been made of support from the local education authority (LEA), with regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching, assessing pupils' attainment and forming the actions needed to be taken to improve. This is leading to a raised awareness of how to improve aspects of the school's work. The school has not been reticent in addressing under performance, and has put in place structures to overcome weaknesses, which has had some positive effect. The support provided by subject coordinators has been satisfactory overall, although the focus has been primarily on the core areas. This means that some practice in some subjects, such as art, has been inconsistent and high standards have not been fully maintained. The recent appointment of the deputy headteacher has strengthened the management structure of the school. This has helped the speed of development, particularly in monitoring the quality of the teaching. The performance management arrangements in the school are secure. All staff in the school have had their targets set, and the governing body has set the headteacher's targets following agreed national guidance.

55. Financial planning is satisfactory. The school's financial decisions relate to the chosen priorities identified within the school's improvement planning. As the school has experienced a decline in its pupil numbers, the governors have kept a clear view of financial priorities, and with the support of the headteacher and staff have decided to maintain high staffing levels. This has improved the provision for pupils with SEN and general support within classrooms as the classroom assistants generally provide good support to teachers and the pupils. The governors apply the principles of best value in terms of comparing the schools results with others, and when considering the merits of the financial decisions that

are made to assure best price. The school has had its own inbuilt challenges in terms of addressing serious weaknesses, and in coping with the high level of special needs in the school. The school's consultation procedures do not yet systematically seek or use the views of others, particularly in gaining the views of parents or keeping them informed of what the school has done well. The financial systems are effectively organised. A very recent auditor's report praised the arrangements in the school and raised no issues. The school uses computers effectively to administer the budget, which the headteacher and chair of the finance committee monitor regularly. The day-to-day finance is administered carefully. The school has a comparatively high income due to the special needs unit based within it, but taking into account the school's rising trend in pupils' attainment and the achievement of pupils, the school now gives satisfactory value for money, an improvement since the last inspection.

56. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. There is a satisfactory match of teachers to the different phases. At the moment, however, the school employs two temporary staff to cover recent departures, because the school is having recruitment difficulties. One of these teachers, on only a short-term contract, does not have a good awareness of the National Curriculum and this is creating some shortcomings to practice. All regular teachers are appropriately qualified, and have access to LEA and national courses to develop their expertise to match their additional responsibilities. The school made a positive decision to employ a large number of teacher assistants and these are generally well trained. This reflects the high range of support needed for pupils with statements, both in the special unit and in the main classes. The school values their contribution, and some are encouraged to go on to become teachers.

57. The school's accommodation is good. The classrooms are spacious for the size of the classes and the outside accommodation is very extensive, providing many different areas for pupils to play, with both grassed and hard areas. Both the Nursery and Reception classes have their own dedicated and secure play areas. There are some good specialist areas such as the special needs teaching areas and the food technology area. Outdoors, there is also a domed structure that is used for games when it is raining. The library is bright and welcoming, but pupils usually have to access it through the information and communication technology (ICT) suite. The latter is small in size considering the amount of space in the school, and only accommodates half a class comfortably. Access to most classrooms is through heavy sliding doors, which are difficult at times to open. Part of the flat roof leaks when it rains heavily and is on the local education authority's list of priorities for repair. However, the accommodation is very well maintained by hard working staff. Good use is made of the accommodation out of school time for community activities.

58. The quality and quantity of learning resources are satisfactory overall. There is a good range of resources for physical education, design and technology and mathematics, the latter being an improvement on the previous inspection where it was a key issue. The Foundation Stage has a good level of resources, which are used very well. However, although there are sufficient resources in religious education and ICT, they are not always used effectively enough to support learning in the classroom.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to improve further, the governing body, headteacher and staff need to:

- Raise standards across the school by:
(Paragraphs: 3,4,5,6,7,17,18,27,58,78,83,88,89,90,97,98,101,108,111,116,118)
 - * maintaining the focus on improvement in the core subjects of: English, principally in writing; mathematics, especially in reasoning and data handling skills; and science, in developing pupils' investigative skills;
 - * improving the achievement of pupils in information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, ensuring at the same time that statutory requirements are met in ICT in Key Stage 2;
 - * providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects of the curriculum to impact positively on standards in non-core subjects.
- Improve curriculum planning in Key Stage 1 and 2, so that:
(Paragraphs: 19,25,27,84,88,92,97,111,115,119,120)
 - * intentions for pupils' learning are precisely defined in each level of planning to ensure work is well-matched to the needs of pupils of different levels of attainment in each class;
 - * better guidance is available for staff who are new to the school to assure appropriate challenge is provided for pupils in their work.
- Improve assessment by:
(Paragraphs: 20, 38, 44, 45, 46, 84, 93, 94, 99, 100, 111, 115, 120, 124)
 - * developing more effective whole school systems for gathering information on all aspects of pupils' academic achievement and personal development;
 - * using the information from these and existing assessments to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils, to record pupils' progress, and to provide suitable information for planning future work.

60. In addition, the school should consider including the following minor issues in their action plan:

- Draw together existing effective practice in promoting pupils' personal development into a coherent programme for teaching pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2.
(Paragraphs: 28, 43)
- Promote pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural nature of society today through more carefully planned opportunities.
(Paragraphs: 37, 103, 122)

It is recognised that the intentions to address some of the above have already been identified in the school improvement plan.

THE WORK OF THE AREA SUPPORT CENTRE

61. The Area Support Centre caters for ten full time pupils and four part-time pupils, aged eight to ten years, who have statements of special educational need (SEN) for moderate learning difficulties. The main aims of the Centre are to help pupils acquire literacy and numeracy skills, become independent learners and move towards greater inclusion into the mainstream school. The Centre's good provision makes it successful in meeting these aims. It places a strong focus on providing an inclusive curriculum balanced with ensuring the individual's needs are appropriately catered for. Currently, all pupils join their year groups for physical education and music, and selected pupils also integrate for mathematics and science. Over the three years the Centre has been open, three pupils have successfully integrated back into main school education. At the end of their primary education, pupils move either into the mainstream classes of local secondary schools or into similar support centres attached to schools. Two teachers, including the head of centre, job share, and together with a full-time learning support assistant, make up the staffing of the Centre. The Centre is based in a classroom within the main school building but pupils have access to other areas and resources in the school. Partnership with parents is a strong feature. Daily contact is maintained through home/school diaries; parents help on trips when necessary; and there is an annual picnic to which all family members are invited. Parents are invited to attend the annual review of the statements and are kept informed about pupils' targets on their individual education plan.

62. Standards of attainment are poor and are well below those of similar aged pupils in each year group. However, the progress that pupils make in relation to their prior attainment is always satisfactory and occasionally good. In addition, pupils are developing more positive attitudes about themselves and work routines. This is because teaching is always satisfactory and sometimes good, especially in terms of managing pupils' challenging behaviour, and because teachers plan effectively and have a good knowledge of pupils' special educational needs. Scrutiny of pupils' work confirms that satisfactory progress is continued over time. This maintains the standards noted in the previous inspection.

63. In English, pupils make good progress in a lesson in which they read and then perform the story of 'Rumpelstiltskin'. The lesson is well planned and clearly introduced so pupils know what to expect. In spite of a range of reading skills, pupils read aloud and with confidence, because they are made to feel comfortable within the group. Their performance improves, as a result of 'coaching' by the teacher, who emphasises strongly the need for clarity and expression. Group work is well organised and well supported by the learning support assistant. This includes making props for the 'production', making and writing up suitable chants, using the computer to type out promises and rehearsing the play using finger puppets. Pupils are well motivated because the group work challenges them at an appropriate level. However, pupils have short attention spans and behaviour deteriorates as one group finishes before another. A good plenary, however, draws the lesson together and gives pupils the opportunity to perform for one another, which sustains their interest and concentration to a better effect. Overall, higher attaining pupils of the group read simple unfamiliar text independently, and use appropriate strategies so that most reading is accurate, even if at a simple level. The lower attaining pupils recognise familiar words in simple context, but overall their reading skills are limited. Scrutiny of pupils' work, show that teachers are heavily reliant on worksheets to reinforce pupils' learning. This strategy creates some constraints to developing pupils' writing skills to best effect.

64. In mathematics, pupils make satisfactory progress overall. Scrutiny of pupils' work, however, shows that teachers again rely too much on gap filling exercises using work sheets. Pupils' recording skills are not developed effectively as a result. Good learning was observed in a practical lesson on measurement. There was a lively introduction with the good use of humour by the teacher, which reflected the good relationships between staff and

pupils. This gave pupils the confidence to respond and take an active part. The left footwear of all pupils and adults were collected and laid in a row. Good questioning by the teacher, for example, '*Which is the biggest?*' and '*Who can estimate the difference?*' focused pupils' attention. The main teaching activity was well planned and organised for group work. The higher attaining pupils used the hall for measuring each other's standing long jumps in metres and centimetres and recorded the results on a chart. Lower attaining pupils drew round their shoes, cut them out and measured the shape. They showed satisfactory fine motor skills in completing this task. The learning support assistant made a valuable and consistent contribution throughout, providing group and individual support, with prompts and encouragement. There was good use of mathematical vocabulary, with terms like 'shorter than' and 'longer than'. The use of a 'timeout' table for pupils who were not fully co-operating was an effective strategy and the good management of pupils' behaviour maintained a pleasant, purposeful ethos. At the end of this successful lesson, pupils left with raised self-esteem.

65. In other subjects observed pupils made satisfactory progress. In science, pupils learnt about the five senses, and what part of body they relate to. Progress was less than it should have been because behaviour was erratic and disturbed the learning of others. In art, pupils satisfactorily developed their painting techniques, using stipple effect and stencil to create repeat patterns. In spite of a clear demonstration by the teacher, pupils' finished products were disappointing because of a tendency to rush their work. In history, pupils are studying Tudor history and following up a visit to Orford Castle using pictures downloaded from the Internet. Good use was made of a digital camera to record pupils' achievement. Whilst activities were relevant and interesting, the lesson lacked clear learning objectives and as such it was difficult for staff to evaluate pupils' achievement. The lack of a plenary at the end of the lesson prevented pupils from sharing the experience of their group work with one another as a means of consolidating their learning and reviewing progress overall.

66. The Centre is well led and managed by the teacher in charge. However, job share arrangements between teaching staff do create some inconsistency and lack of continuity in practice at times. A broad and balanced curriculum is provided. Long, medium and short term planning is satisfactory overall in ensuring that those pupils who stay permanently at the Centre steadily develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in each subject as they move through the school. However, learning intentions could be more sharply focused on the needs of pupils of different ages/attainment within the group. Targets in pupils' individual education plans are well written and quite precise. They are concerned mainly with developing pupils' skills in learning lists of high frequency words and specific phonic blends. As such they do not have much relevance to other subjects of the curriculum or to teachers taking Centre pupils in mainstream classes.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	62
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	6	17	33	5	1	0
Percentage	0	10	27	53	8	2	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)	23	175
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	80

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR–Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	18
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	10	77

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	18
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.5
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	24	10	34

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	20	19	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	59(61)	56 (75)	74 (68)
	National	84(83)	86(84)	91(90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	21	25	25
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	62(75)	74 (68)	74(79)
	National	85(84)	89(88)	89(88)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year. As the number of girls is ten, then only the total number of pupils is given in accordance with reporting requirements.

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	23	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	5	13	17
	Girls	10	13	19
	Total	15	26	36
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	37(53)	63(45)	88(80)
	National	75(75)	71(72)	87(85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	4	13	10
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	15	26	23
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	37(41)	63(46)	56(54)
	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	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	14
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	146
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	14	1
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR–Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.5
Average class size	21.9

Education support staff: YR–Y6

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	186

Qualified teachers and support staff: Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	23
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	572190.00
Total expenditure	576240.00
Expenditure per pupil	2637.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	14005.00
Balance carried forward to next year	9955.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3.7

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

198
30

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	23	3	7	0
My child is making good progress in school.	57	23	10	7	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	20	30	23	23	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	30	43	13	7	7
The teaching is good.	53	23	13	10	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	20	10	17	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	20	10	10	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	37	0	3	10
The school works closely with parents.	37	20	30	10	3
The school is well led and managed.	37	20	10	27	7
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	23	13	13	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	20	23	20	27	10

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

67. The provision the school makes for children in the Foundation Stage is very good. This maintains the very high achievement noted in the previous inspection, although a direct comparison with actual standards attained is difficult as national requirements for the school's youngest children have changed. Children make very good progress as a result of consistently very good teaching and because all teachers have good knowledge of the national guidance for young children, and high expectations that promote effective learning. Those children with special educational needs (SEN) make very good progress against learning targets set out in their individual education plans (IEPs). The Foundation Stage is totally inclusive in its curriculum offer and organisation. Teaching assistants make a consistent and valuable contribution to children's progress and achievement. They are clear about their role and are well briefed. They work collaboratively with teachers to support individuals and small groups, and ensure that children's different needs are met across a range of activities.

68. A small number of children attain at the expected levels on entry to the school, but for the majority, attainment is generally well below that expected of children of similar ages. Many children have poorly developed language skills and find it difficult to articulate their feelings, needs and ideas because of a limited vocabulary. Effective teaching and well-planned, focused and free choice activities support children in making very good progress across the six areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum, in relation to their starting points. However, most are unlikely to reach the standards that are expected for their age by the end of the Reception Year in most areas, the exceptions being in their physical and creative skills which are broadly in line with similar aged children.

Personal, social and emotional development

69. Many children enter the Nursery with a low level of personal, social and emotional skills. Most are unlikely to reach the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. However, from a low base they make very good progress in developing confidence and independence, learn to concentrate and enjoy sharing as part of a group. This is because teaching is very good. Teachers provide and structure a range of challenging activities, which give children opportunities to learn how to work alongside others, to share and take turns and to work with concentration. Three and four years old respond well and will work for considerable lengths of time exploring activities. Classroom organisation and preparation is excellent, so that individual needs are catered for well. For example, in a Nursery class, a child with autistic spectrum disorder has one-to-one support and a visual timetable, so that he knows what to expect. Independence is encouraged from the start. Children are expected to help each other put on painting aprons, and two children take the register back to the office, some distance away. Children respond well to these high expectations. A supportive and caring ethos helps children settle quickly into well-established routines. They demonstrate a sense of trust and belonging. They hang up their coats, find their chair, and separate confidently from their parents/carers. Older children provide good role models and set an example for the younger ones to follow. Children's behaviour is very good because teachers' expectations are high and behaviour is managed in a positive way. All teachers use praise effectively to encourage children to work hard, and this helps to raise self-esteem. The self-care skills of older children in the Reception class are good. Most dress themselves independently, tidy up and put equipment away.

Communication, language and literacy

70. Standards are below those of similar aged children in this area of learning. All staff involved with children in the Nursery and Reception classes work hard to develop children's language skills and, although children make very good progress, few are likely to attain the expected goals by the end of the Reception Year. The teaching in this area is very good. Teachers consistently develop language skills across all areas of the curriculum, so that children's access to language is broad. Teachers and their assistants engage children effectively both in planned and spontaneous conversations, which helps them to listen and respond appropriately as they work. Children increase their vocabulary well as a result. On occasion, assistants intrude somewhat on children's imaginative situations and this prevents children from developing their own scenarios. All children enjoy sharing stories, poems and rhymes with their teachers. They act out stories, track certain words and join in refrains. They all listen to stories attentively and some recall the main events. Children are taught to recognise their names in the Nursery, and four year olds in the Reception class have started to recognise key words from the reading scheme. Higher attaining children in the Reception class read familiar text with meaning. The school places a great deal of importance on reading. Books are browsed before registration, and sent home and shared with parents. A 'book club' operates and is well supported. Teachers provide good opportunities to extend children's writing through guided and independent writing linked to a range of different activities; for example, using speech bubbles, matching pictures to initial sounds and working with a computer program to make up sentences. Children's ability to control a pencil develops steadily. Children progress from making marks on paper in the Nursery class at three, and by the age of four many can apply colour accurately within lines. Some older children in the Reception class are able to form letters with reasonable control and precision.

Mathematical development

71. In spite of making very good progress from a low starting point, most children are unlikely to reach the expected goals for mathematical learning by the end of the Foundation Stage. Nevertheless, children make very good progress in acquiring early number skills as a result of very good teaching. This is of a high quality, and develops children's skills, knowledge and understanding through practical situations, work and play. Numeracy skills are reinforced across all areas of the curriculum and at informal times during the day. From the time they enter the Nursery, children are introduced to counting rhymes and to regular experience of counting everyday objects, which develops their skills well. For example, at registration the number present is always counted and the day of the week identified. In this way children become aware of the passage of time and the pattern of the school day. By the age of four, children can answer questions relating to number such as '*How many are there?*' with accuracy and confidence. They join readily in number action rhymes and songs. At four, some children count to ten and identify numerals from one to nine. Some older children in the Reception class can add on numbers and count back. Many can identify simple two dimensional shapes, and use the language of position as a result of their work using constructional toys, in the course of following instructions in physical education and on the computer. They create simple patterns in art and design or when threading beads on a lace. When making large models out of cartons and boxes, children begin to develop their understanding of three dimensional shapes, how they fit together and the language by which to describe them.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. When they enter the Nursery, most children lack the curiosity to explore and investigate. Nevertheless, they make very good progress in acquiring knowledge and understanding of the world. In some aspects, those of cultures and beliefs and information and communication technology (ICT), their attainment is likely to be in line with that expected at the end of Reception. This is because of very good teaching delivered through a range of well-planned and challenging activities. However, children have difficulty in articulating their ideas and explaining what they see due to their weak literacy skills. This means that overall children are unlikely to attain expected standards in this area of learning. In contrast to the main school, teachers prepare the children well to live in a multi-cultural society, with celebrations of the Chinese New Year, Chinese food and names, Diwali, and a detailed study of life, values and beliefs of a family in Jamaica. Children develop a sense of time through the celebrations of birthdays and sharing of holidays. They observe changes of appearance in themselves and family members through photographs and by recalling events that happened in the past or are going to occur in the future. They become aware of a sense of place with trips into the community. In an ICT lesson in the suite, Reception age children make very good progress because the teacher clearly explains and demonstrates the task. Children are able to operate the equipment independently, and this gives them a great sense of achievement. They show good control of the mouse in order to choose options on the screen to dress a teddy and to form sentences about well-known characters from a reading scheme. A child with significant needs was helped to access the same curriculum through effective adult support. In a topic with a geography focus, children look at a world map to discover what the different colours stand for. Good questioning by the teacher, *'Who can remember the name of that special book, which tells you about places in the world?'* enables children to build on prior learning. Children learn that areas marked blue on the globe and atlas are large water masses, and this links in with their work on the water cycle and daily weather chart. Very good long, medium and short term planning ensures a balanced coverage of all aspects in this area, including exploration and investigating and designing and making.

Physical development

73. Most children are on course to reach the expected goals in physical development by the end of the Foundation Stage. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make very good progress in developing their manipulative skills when using small construction toys, and when painting, sculpting, drawing and cutting. They develop an appropriate degree of dexterity for their age because of the very good teaching they receive and the range of challenging activities. For example, a child with special educational needs (SEN) is given an appropriate task of threading a needle and wool through holes in a cardboard base. Timely interventions and encouragement from the teaching assistant maintain her concentration and ensure very good effort. Children have regular access to an outdoor play area, which is appropriately supervised by staff. This gives them regular opportunities to develop the co-ordination of their limbs to control the speed and direction of wheeled toys. Appropriate use is made of the hall for more formal physical education in preparation for the curriculum in Year 1. Children show a natural enjoyment and excitement about physical activities. They turn out smartly in kit, reflecting the high standards expected by teachers. They move fluently around the hall creating movement in response to music. They make very good progress because the teacher demonstrates effectively and gives clear unambiguous instructions. Children listen closely to instructions. They work hard, use space well and show good balance and posture.

Creative development

74. In most aspects of creative development children's attainment is appropriate for their age, although some of their imaginative play is constrained by lack of an extensive and expressive vocabulary. Teaching is very good. Teachers in the Nursery and Reception class recognise that creative development is an area in which many children lack experience on entry to the school, and consequently they provide many well-planned and free choice opportunities for dramatic role-play, exploring materials, and music. One group make a boat out of chairs and a blanket, and dramatically play out the story of Noah's Ark. The teaching assistant provides the sound of a storm using a 'cabassa' and rainmaker. Children improvise, with little prompting, pretending that a clock is a compass and that magnets on the end of a line will serve as fishing rods. In music, children sing together Nursery rhymes, old and new, and songs from other cultures. They do so without inhibition, because the classroom ethos is one of sharing and belonging. They clap patterns, such as a name or a colour, and represent the water cycle through clapping - softly falling rain, thunder and lightening. Teachers effectively link sound to music, and encourage children to move to different styles and types of music; for example, big movements to loud music and small movements to soft music. Children respond well. In art, children work with a variety of media. They paint in the style of the Impressionists, mixing colours and adding oil and food colouring. In doing so they learn the vocabulary of painting, colour names, and terms like 'dark', 'bright' and 'shade'. They make very good progress in creative development because teachers balance direct teaching and intervention, for example, how much paint to put on a brush, with allowing children freedom to find out for themselves. Both classrooms are significantly enhanced with displays of children's work, showing them how much their efforts are valued. This encourages children to be even more creative.

ENGLISH

75. The conclusions of the last report were that attainment in English was well below average at the end of Key Stage 1, and below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Progress was considered satisfactory. The evidence from this inspection shows that pupils' achievement is satisfactory and that they continue to make sound progress overall during their time in the infant and junior classes to build on their below average attainment at the end of the Foundation Stage. Standards among both seven and eleven year olds show an improvement on last year's national test results. In addition attainment in Key Stage 1 has improved on findings at the time of the last inspection. In both cases, however, a significant proportion of pupils are still on course to attain standards which are below average.

76. In the national tests for seven year olds in 2001, reading and writing results were in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally, and had fallen after a general rising trend over the previous two years. Results did not compare with similar types of schools, although the group had achieved as well as could be expected based on its prior attainment as described earlier. National test results for 11 year olds in 2001 were also in the lowest five per cent of schools nationally, and also did not compare well with similar schools. The school identified that, whilst reading results showed sound progress by pupils in spite of a high number of pupils leaving and joining the school, the writing results were poor and pupils could have done better. Last year's targets for English were therefore not achieved, and there was a downturn in results after improvement in the previous years. This year's targets in both key stages are more challenging, and look set to reverse the downward trend.

77. Although the improvement of standards in all aspects of English has been a major focus of the school in recent years, writing is still the weakest element. The school recognises this and has put into place some effective measures to improve standards. Teachers have worked hard to address weaknesses in the subject. Effective use is being made of new initiatives such as the Additional Literacy Support for Year 3 pupils, where there is significant need, and more recently the Early Literacy Support in Year 1. This extra support is targeted, particularly to pupils identified as in need of more intensive help to boost their progress in the acquisition of basic skills in literacy. Pupils are organised in small groups where specific language skills are practised and reinforced. The recently introduced individual target setting in English is also used well by teachers to focus on what needs to be improved.

78. Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) are identified early and embark on well-structured literacy programmes with realistic short-term targets. Most pupils make good progress through skilfully organised and focused support by the designated staff. This good quality support boosts their self-esteem as well as enhancing their skills. One pupil with English as an additional language also receives targeted support, which has helped in the acquisition of English in spoken and written form.

79. Bearing in mind pupils' limited starting points, their progress in speaking and listening is satisfactory. Most pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other, follow instructions without fuss and contribute positively in discussions. In a few lessons, speaking skills are well promoted, but there are missed opportunities by most teachers to engage pupils in extended conversations. For younger pupils, small group work provides opportunities for adults to act as good language models and to encourage pupils to express themselves clearly. However, a restricted vocabulary means that many six and seven year olds are imprecise and hesitant in producing answers, which keeps the overall level of attainment below average. This was noted in a Year 1 lesson, where none of the pupils was able to name an elephant's facial features correctly. In another lesson, Year 2 pupils looking at real snails made attempts at describing how they move. Most pupils made suggestions that were literal rather than descriptive, for example, 'moving' rather than 'moving slowly'. In Years 3 to 6, pupils' vocabulary is extended. Pupils listen well to the teachers' advice and some demonstrate growing confidence to interact and make active contributions to class discussions, opinions and ideas about stories and poems. Some worthwhile opportunities are planned to encourage the application of spoken English in other subjects. For example, sound use of 'role-play' was noted in a Year 6 lesson where pupils were given different scenarios of 'family situations', and asked to portray 'acceptable behaviour' as part of their religious education. Some pupils in this lesson demonstrated developing confidence and self-esteem to speak in front of a familiar audience. However, most pupils are hesitant when speaking to the class or when required to engage the interest of the audience particularly in a formal situation. There are too few regularly planned opportunities, such as drama, 'hot-seat' or debate, to enable pupils to speak at length and to use a variety of expression and vocabulary.

80. Standards in reading are below the expected levels across the school. In Years 1 and 2, a few pupils have progressed beyond simple reading scheme books with very basic vocabulary and sentence structures. Pupils acquire adequate knowledge of letters and sounds to read words accurately. A few higher attaining pupils predict what might happen next. They understand the structure of the books and know about the content page or the index. The lower attaining pupils are beginning to recognise some words in familiar texts but wait for help rather than try and sound out unknown words for themselves. Many pupils do not have a good understanding of what they read, for example, to relate the storyline or talk about their favourite characters. The range of reading material is extended as the children move into the juniors. Pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy where teachers make regular checks and keep track of pupils' progress in reading. However, a few older

pupils choose reading books that do not match their reading ability. As a result they struggle and lose interest, and this affects their progress. Pupils do not readily name or talk about any favourite authors. A general lack of well-planned opportunities, particularly for the higher attaining pupils, to read a challenging range of books in lessons, limits their critical appreciation. Whilst lower-attaining pupils still interpret their reading literally, a few 'average' pupils show a growing understanding of more complex language. Most pupils find it difficult to identify underlying meanings or to appreciate the subtleties of humour. They are able to explain the difference between fiction and non-fiction, and how 'contents' and 'indices' can point the way to specific information, but rarely study non-fiction text. Pupils' ability to skim and scan and make meaningful notes is limited by insufficient use of reading skills to find information in subjects such as history, geography and religious education. Nor is information and communication technology (ICT) used as an alternative resource for extending research skills. The school library lacks non-fiction books of good range and quality. It is not visited by all classes regularly enough with a clear focus on developing information skills.

81. The process of home school reading is well established and has a positive effect on pupils' interest and progress, particularly in the infant classes. Pupils are encouraged to take reading books home and the reading record books serve as a useful home-school link. However, this system is not consistently used in the juniors, and many pupils lose the habit of regular reading at home. The degree to which this is encouraged varies from class to class. The school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy satisfactorily, which has helped to raise standards in reading. Where guided reading sessions are skilfully structured, pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. They show growing understanding of what they read, and are fast developing a range of strategies to decipher words they find difficult in reading. Careful monitoring records kept by most teachers include clear and relevant information about pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and these are used effectively to improve standards in reading.

82. The combination of a tightly structured Literacy Hour, together with the whole school focus on improving skills has had a beneficial effect on pupils writing. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are taught the skills of letter formation well, and a few are learning to join up some words. Letter combinations and common spelling patterns are stressed. Pupils are well supported to think about the overall structure of their writing. More able seven year olds write simple sentences and link their ideas well. They use capital letters and full stops with reasonable consistency. At the start of Year 3, only a few pupils write more than a few simple sentences. Able pupils are beginning to use more ambitious vocabulary and sentence structures, whilst the least able find it difficult to develop a sequence of sentences. By the age of 11, the scope of writing increases satisfactorily to include narrative, descriptions, letters, poetry and story writing. Competence in spelling and punctuation is well emphasised. Pupils in Year 5 make good attempts at writing choral and performance poetry, for example, 'No Word of a Lie' or 'The Dragon Who Ate Ipswich'. This work is much enjoyed by pupils, and is well presented. Some good use is made of adventurous vocabulary in poetry by pupils in Year 6, such as, '*gleaming of razors*', or '*the keenest black*' when describing a snake. Pupils are introduced to the main features of specific genres, for example writing reviews, but this work is limited and not extended sufficiently to also include reports, newsletters and autobiographies. There are not enough examples of sustained story writing with good attention to developing characters and plot. Pupils' range of spelling strategies, proof reading skills and vocabulary choice in writing are insufficiently developed. The amount and quality of recorded work in subjects such as science, history, geography and religious education is limited. Pupils make some use of ICT to word-process, re-draft and edit, but these skills could be developed further. Whilst presentation is broadly satisfactory, most pupils do not consistently use a joined script. A few higher attaining pupils write neatly and develop their own personal style.

83. The teaching of English is satisfactory overall and this promotes satisfactory learning in lessons. It was good in six of the 11 lessons seen but was unsatisfactory in two of the lessons taught by temporary staff. In the best lessons, work is planned to ensure pupils' differing needs are met. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 make good use of the 'big' books, both fiction and non-fiction, in the whole-class part of the lesson. This is generally lively and stimulating. In a Year 2 lesson, for example, the use of real creatures to show their movement captured pupils' imagination well. Teachers are very encouraging and use praise positively, so that pupils respond well and try hard in lessons. Their questioning is skilful and includes all pupils at an appropriate level, as seen in a Year 3 lesson about writing a letter of enquiry. Questions were targeted at specific pupils at their level of understanding, which enabled them to think carefully and respond. The final part of lessons is used well to reinforce learning or to give the pupils the chance to perform to an audience. In most lessons, this enhanced pupils' learning and also gave teacher the chance to check that pupils of all abilities had understood. Most teachers across the school make sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn, and how this links with what they have learnt previously. Lessons are well planned and organised, with a good mix of whole-class, group and individual work, although teachers do not always make the best use of assessment information to ensure a good match of work and appropriate challenge for the range of ability. Teachers achieve a good balance between offering support and expecting independence. Most pupils are attentive, eager to answer questions and behave well. The management of pupils' behaviour is good in most lessons. However, in the unsatisfactory lessons, the expectations of work and behaviour are not made clear, and pupils are not prepared appropriately for the task. This results in pupils learning very little in the lessons. In one such lesson, the pupils became restless and lost concentration because they had been sitting for too long. In this lesson, the task was not matched accurately to different levels of abilities, and this affected pupils' learning in the lesson. Teachers' marking varies considerably. It is satisfactory overall but the best marking was noted in Year 6, which indicated effectively how the writing could be improved. This is good practice and helps pupils focus on mistakes.

84. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The literacy co-ordinator is very new to the post. Prior to the appointment a rigorous and systematic programme of monitoring of teaching and learning had been developed since the last inspection. As a result, the school has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject, and there has been effective action taken to improve provision. There is effective forward planning for future development. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress over time are good, and the results of all tests are effectively analysed in order to set targets for different groups. Useful additions have been made to resources in classes to support the implementation of the literacy strategy. Overall improvement to provision has been good and the school is well placed to secure further improvements in standards.

MATHEMATICS

85. Pupils enter the school with well below average levels of attainment in mathematics. They make satisfactory progress during their time in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, but standards of work seen during the inspection in Year 2, and when pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, are still below those expected for their ages. However, this suggests better standards than those in last year's results in national tests for seven year olds. They reflect standards closer to those in the previous inspection, and broadly reflect last year's results and the previous inspection's findings for 11 year olds. Achievement is satisfactory.

86. The results of the 2001 national tests at the end of Key Stage 1 show that pupils achieved standards that were in the lowest five per cent of all schools nationally. They were also well below results of schools with a similar percentage of pupils known to be eligible for

free school meals. The proportion of pupils reaching standards above those expected for pupils aged seven was well below the national average, but in line with similar schools. Last year's cohort had a significantly large number of pupils with special educational needs (SEN). This led to a much lower than average proportion of pupils attaining the expected level for seven year olds, Level 2, which reduced the overall performance of pupils. Trends in performance showed a slight fall as a result, following a generally upward trend in the previous few years. Current Year 2 pupils' performance looks set to reverse the downturn, and to continue the upward trend of improvement by meeting more challenging targets set for them. In national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the significant proportion attaining well below the expected Level 4 for 11 year olds reduced the overall performance to well below average when compared with most schools nationally. However, compared with similar types of schools, results were broadly average due to a relatively good proportion attaining the expected Level 4, and above expected standards of Level 5. Results continue the varied but generally upward trend in standards. Last year's target was exceeded well, and more challenging targets have been set by the school for current pupils in Year 6 which, based on standards seen during the inspection, are likely to be achieved.

87. All aspects of mathematics, except for data representation and handling, are given sufficient emphasis in curriculum planning. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented satisfactorily and most lessons follow the prescribed format. The exception is in Year 5 where a very recently appointed temporary teacher does not have a good awareness of the strategy, and the expectations for pupils are sometimes inappropriately too high or too low. In other classes, an appropriate emphasis is placed on mental agility and numeracy, ensuring progress is satisfactory overall. However, many pupils still do not have a confident understanding of the number system to become proficient in mental computation. In Key Stage 1, for example, many pupils do not have quick and accurate recall of simple number bonds. In Key Stage 2, many pupils still rely heavily on materials to aid their calculations, or require visual representation of number problems. Pupils benefit from regular practice at the start of lessons, but are not secure at explaining their work, particularly in those lessons where they are challenged to discuss different strategies. A small number of pupils by the end of Year 2 have a sound understanding of place value to 100, and choose appropriate methods for addition and subtraction problems using two digits. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 use sound mental recall of addition and subtraction facts to 20 in money problems with larger numbers. Lower attainers, on the other hand, need considerable support from an adult to achieve accurate results with smaller numbers. In Key Stage 2, pupils develop their understanding of the four rules of number satisfactorily with more difficult calculations and larger numbers. However, their mathematical reasoning is still weak, and this is particularly evident when they are asked to solve problems or explore patterns and relationships between numbers.

88. Most pupils by the end of Year 2 name and describe features of familiar two-dimensional shapes accurately. This is built on successfully in Key Stage 2 so that by the end of Year 6, most pupils understand the basic properties of three-dimensional shapes, are able to draw and measure different angles and have a basic understanding of reflective symmetry in common shapes. However, many pupils in Year 5 confuse position with shape when exploring and making different irregular shapes. Analysis of work shows that pupils make satisfactory progress in measures. They build successfully on their early skills in using non-standard units to using standard metric units covering length, weight, capacity and time. By Year 6, they are able to convert imperial and metric units. However, pupils show limited evidence of sorting and organising data in Key Stage 1 beyond simple class graphs. In Key Stage 2, evidence in communicating findings of collected information in tables and block graphs is too variable from year to year to show sufficient evidence of enough progress in this area of the curriculum. In Year 3, pupils make a sound start in

gathering data using tally charts and presenting information in bar chart form. However, these early skills are not built on effectively in later years, so that by Year 6 pupils have only a limited understanding of the different and most appropriate ways of representing different data.

89. Although pupils in both key stages have enough opportunities to use and apply their knowledge within the subject itself, for example to solve mathematical problems, teachers do not grasp opportunities offered in other areas of the curriculum to extend pupils' understanding through more practical application of their mathematical skills. For example, in design and technology, opportunities are missed to use measures to make designs more accurate. In mathematics lessons, some satisfactory use was made of the information and communication technology (ICT) suite in Years 4 and 6 for data handling work, but these were the exception. From scrutiny of pupils' work and discussion with pupils, it is clear that teachers make too little use of ICT to extend pupils' learning.

90. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, when taking into account the broader aspects of teaching and learning, such as marking and homework. In lessons seen, however, two of the six lessons were of unsatisfactory quality, both in Key Stage 2, the remainder being satisfactory. One was due to a temporary teacher's lack of understanding of the Numeracy Strategy, which reduced expectations. The other was due to poor time management, where much time was wasted waiting for a small number of pupils to arrive from another session; the lesson was also not well organised. This is not as good as at the last inspection where one third of lessons were good, but reflects the recent change of staff and difficulties in recruiting permanent staff. The best features of teaching and learning include most teachers making good use of subject-specific vocabulary, which increases pupils' understanding of mathematical terms. In Year 6, for example, the teacher explains the term 'mode' in relation to data handling, and the pupils then use this appropriately in their own explanations. Good use is made of resources in most lessons, such as in Year 2 with large examples of coinage to help pupils understand the differences in value. In Year 6, the teacher used an overhead projector to demonstrate a concept, and then enabled the pupils to use the equipment to explain their interpretations of a graph to the rest of the class. This not only involved them effectively, but also helped the teacher to check their understanding through sound questioning. Most teachers are effective in checking pupils' understanding through questioning. They use positive praise and encouragement in discussion, which gives pupils the confidence to attempt answers, even if they are not always correct.

91. Most teachers plan their lessons carefully in terms of what different groups of pupils will do. They make good use of teaching assistants to support pupils, particularly those of lower attainment, which helps these pupils to make good gains in many lessons as they concentrate and work hard. However, a weakness in teaching is the lack of identification of what different groups of pupils are expected to learn, with often little reference to levels of attainment to ensure that mathematical concepts are well matched to pupils' different abilities. This means that sometimes work is too hard for some, or too easy. Teachers and their assistants in the best lessons were observed actively challenging pupils as they worked on group or individual tasks. The absence of this is a feature in less satisfactory lessons. This resulted in pupils losing interest and engaging in idle chatter or disruptive behaviour. The unsatisfactory teaching seen was the direct result of inappropriate expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, which resulted in too little progress in pupils' learning. Teachers do not expect enough from pupils in the presentation of their work. An over-dependence on worksheets in many classes results in gap-filling exercises. This does not allow pupils to set out and record their work independently or to see the progress they

are making. Some teachers' marking is effective in showing pupils how they can improve, and they respond well. The setting of homework to consolidate learning is satisfactorily used in some classes to extend pupils' interest and learning outside of the classroom, although this is not systematically developed year-on-year.

92. Withdrawal and in-class support arrangements mean that the special needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and teaching assistants give specific support to pupils with special educational needs (SEN), and these pupils make some good progress overall in their mathematical learning. Those pupils with English as an additional language are also supported well to enable full access to the curriculum and acquisition of a secure mathematical language.

93. Pupils' knowledge and understanding is assessed at specific points in each year through standardised and national tests. The knowledge gained from these assessments is used to provide additional support for individuals and groups and to check pupils' overall progress from year to year. However, there is too little use made of assessment information in planning work for pupils of different attainment within classes. The co-ordination of the subject has recently changed. The previous co-ordinator was successful in implementing the National Numeracy Strategy, and was effectively involved in monitoring teaching and learning in the subject and securing improvement. The current temporary co-ordinator is continuing development of the subject, and has been involved in some monitoring activity. However, with recent changes of staffing, inconsistencies in the quality of teaching have emerged which require urgent attention so the rate of progress is consistent among all pupils. The level of resources to support learning is satisfactory and the range is good, an improvement on the last inspection.

SCIENCE

94. Pupils attain standards that are below the national expectation by the time they are seven and eleven, but their achievement, given their lower than average starting point, is broadly satisfactory. This is a similar picture to those standards achieved at the last inspection. In national tests for pupils aged seven in 2001, the teachers' assessments of pupils indicate that pupils do not compare well with national expectations, and results were well below average. They were slightly better when compared to pupils in similar schools, although still below average. Last year's group had significant needs, which accounts for their low results. Inspection evidence suggests that this year's group looks set to improve on last year's results. The results of last year's national tests for 11 year olds were below the national average, mainly due to few pupils attaining the higher than expected Level 5. When compared to similar schools, results are broadly similar, in spite of some significant mobility of pupils during the key stage.

95. By the time pupils reach the age of seven, they achieve satisfactorily in their work, but many do not reach the expected levels of understanding and knowledge due to their low starting point when they enter the school. Both lessons seen in Key Stage 1 were satisfactory. From these, and from scrutiny of planning and pupils' work, teaching and learning is judged to be satisfactory overall. The pupils have a basic knowledge and understanding of how plants grow and the conditions needed for them to thrive. Pupils in Year 1 correctly identify the different parts of a plant such as the petal, stem and leaf in a diagram, but are unable to give any examples of different plants. Their observation and investigative skills are not well developed. In the lesson seen in Year 1, the teaching soundly promoted the pupils' attitudes in observing the teacher's visual aids used to explain different parts of a plant. The teacher managed the pupils well, and they quickly settled down to work. Although this encouraged the pupils to complete their work, the use of a real plant only towards the end of the lesson meant that pupils were not able to explore the different parts of

plants in more detail during the lesson. The session did not capitalise fully on the resources available to interest and motivate the pupils, and give them first hand experiences of real plants. In Year 2, pupils develop their understanding of living things by looking at pictures of different animals, but their understanding of life cycles is limited. The teaching is not well matched to pupils' level of understanding, nor does it take account of their lack of ability to extract information readily from books. Past work completed indicates that the pupils have some knowledge of how exercise affects heart rate, and what foods make a healthy diet. The pupils have some basic knowledge of how to construct simple electrical circuits, knowing that wires can conduct electricity, but the work shows little extended knowledge or understanding. Their work is generally presented with some care, although varies in quality and is not helped by some over-use of worksheets. Whilst these provide a helpful structure at times for investigations, their over-use restricts pupils' recording skills.

96. By the time the pupils are aged 11, they achieve satisfactorily in their work given their satisfactory rate of progress, but this is insufficient for most of them to reach expected standards by the time they leave the school. Teaching was always at least satisfactory in the four lessons seen, and in one of them it was good; it therefore has a sound impact on pupils' learning in this key stage. In Year 3, pupils build upon their knowledge in previous classes by learning about conditions needed for the growth of plants, although they are rarely challenged by the teaching to extend their knowledge further as all pupils are given the same task. A common weakness in teaching across the key stage is the lack of adaptation in the activities provided to take account of the full range of ability in each class, particularly in ensuring that pupils' investigative skills are developed to the best effect. In Year 4, the pupils develop some understanding of how the body is supported by a skeleton, and the differences between human and animal skeletons. Although the lesson was made interesting by the use of real life artefacts, few pupils showed the motivation to find out more through systematic exploration, which reduced the speed of their learning.

97. When pupils reach the end of Year 6, they have understanding of topics such as magnetism, dissolving, and the properties of different materials. The work varies in quality however, and the presentation of work is often untidy. There were few examples seen where the pupils were strongly encouraged to form more detailed conclusions or to raise further questions to ask. In lessons, the pupils behave well, those with special educational needs (SEN) in particular being supported well by a high number of teaching assistants as they work. In a Year 6 lesson, this enabled the pupils to investigate the properties of a circuit and to vary the brightness of a bulb. The pupils with SEN made good progress, benefiting from the high level of adult support. In discussion with pupils, many know the properties of a circuit, but few can explain why the bulb changes in brightness or think up alternate ways of testing. The class teacher managed the activities satisfactorily and made good use of adult support, although the investigative aspects were not promoted enthusiastically.

98. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory, and the policy and scheme of work give sufficient guidance for staff to follow, having adapted national guidance well. The co-ordinator has monitored the way in which the subject is taught, and the planning of teachers. This is providing a clear picture of the different strengths and weaknesses of the subject. However, actions needed to raise standards are not implemented consistently well to increase the pace of general improvement across each key stage. The assessment arrangements are satisfactory overall and the tracking of pupils is providing some guidance on the progress they make. Assessment data is not well used by teachers to guide future planning or to provide an effective match of work for the full ability range. The resources in the subject are satisfactory in terms of the range, quality and the quantity needed.

ART AND DESIGN

99. By the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards in art that are in line with those of most pupils of similar ages nationally. Inspectors in the last report suggested higher standards but these have not been maintained consistently across the school. Changes of teaching staff have resulted in more variance in the development of skills and techniques as pupils move from year to year, as new staff are not so aware of pupils' prior attainment and level of skill. This links with the fact that there are no procedures for assessing or recording pupils' achievement in art beyond end of year reports to parents, which are very brief. In addition, art has not had the prominence in the curriculum which was evidenced in the last inspection. Evidence in this inspection shows that most pupils are achieving as expected and they make satisfactory progress overall in their creative skills, working with a range of media, materials and techniques in two and three dimensions, and producing sound quality outcomes.

100. Pupils are developing satisfactory techniques in observational drawing. In some years there are examples of good quality outcomes, and effective experimentation in sketchbooks to develop drawing skills. In Year 2, sound skills are demonstrated as pupils explore shape and the effect of different grades of pencils. This is built on in Year 3, where pupils effectively investigate different shading techniques and apply these skills well in observational drawings of themselves. In Year 6, good portraiture incorporates good use of techniques in line and tone which add effective expression to finished pieces. However, sketchbooks are not used with equal effect in each year so that some drawing lacks creativity, and outcomes are not of such high quality. For example, in Year 5, pupils have opportunities to draw dragons to support their poetry work, but most simply trace or copy drawings supplied by the teacher. Although outcomes are satisfactory overall, the activity does not develop imaginative skills sufficiently. Pupils use different media and materials as they move through the school, sometimes using them to good effect. In Year 1, pupils try weaving with different materials and some are beginning to produce creative pieces. However, the amount of time they are allowed at each table with different materials means that they do not work for long enough to develop the technique as effectively as they could given more time. In Year 3, pupils experiment more successfully with potatoes, wet sand and papier-mâché to form permanent and temporary sculptures. There is evidence of sound three dimensional work. In addition to the sculpture in Year 3, pupils in Year 2 have created sound quality vessels using papier-mâché. Pupils demonstrate some understanding of the work of different artists, such as in Year 2 where they use this knowledge to decorate their vessels using the colours and style of the artist Frost. However, this is not systematically developed from year to year. In both Year 4 and Year 6, for example, both classes have work displayed which is based on the work of Aubrey Beardsley, but with sometimes little discernible difference in outcome. Some use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) as an alternative medium, with some sound finishing such as in Year 4 repeat patterns but again practice is not consistent.

101. Teaching and learning was at least satisfactory in all four lessons seen, and in one lesson in Year 3 it was good. It is difficult to make a clear comparison with the last inspection, as very little teaching in art was seen at that time. An effective feature of the best teaching is good pace combined with effective management and organisation. This was illustrated in Year 3 where time was used very effectively to allow pupils to develop their skills sufficiently, whilst at the same time offering them the opportunity to experiment with a range of media and materials. Resources were thoughtfully and well-prepared and teaching assistants well-briefed and well-deployed to support each group as they worked. Pupils worked with a real sense of urgency, enthusiasm and application and made good gains in their learning of different types of sculpture. Little time was wasted with off-task activity and pupils behaved well. Pupils also learnt well subject specific vocabulary associated with sculpture. They used words such as 'abstract' and 'representational' in explanations of their

type of sculptures, modelling the teacher's effective use during explanations. A Year 1 lesson was equally well prepared and organised, although inadequate time overall for the lesson meant that pupils did not have enough time to practise their weaving skills. Art is often taught in isolation, and opportunities are missed to underpin learning in other subjects. Pupils are usually interested in what they are doing, and work with a good level of concentration. This is especially so where lessons are well managed. In one Year 2 lesson, for example, pupils carefully applied themselves to achieving the correct hue and were engrossed in their work. On occasion, pupils are not so enthused by the activity as it offers little enough challenge; they are not inspired to apply themselves to their work.

102. The policy for art is in need of updating to ensure all staff are clear about the expectations for teaching and learning. The quality of planning varies in interpreting national guidance, and few teachers adapt the intentions in their own planning to link with overall themes. The co-ordinator is aware of the inconsistency in practice, and has a clear plan of action for raising the profile of art in the school once again. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' cultural development in terms of western cultures. However, more emphasis could be given to raising awareness of art in other cultures. Pupils do not have enough chance to consider and reflect on their own work in classes, creating missed opportunities for promoting pupils' spiritual development. Resources to support learning are satisfactory, and art is well represented in displays around the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

103. At the time of the last inspection, the standards in design and technology at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 were above average. Only one lesson was observed during this inspection, and this was in Key Stage 2. Based on this evidence as well as a study of pupils' work in books and displays, discussion with pupils and teachers and scrutiny of plans, it is evident that these high standards have been sustained. Current standards among seven and eleven year olds are above similar aged pupils nationally, and pupils make good progress in their understanding of the design and make process.

104. There are good examples of pupils evaluating real-life products to consider design and fitness for purpose, and to inform their own designs: in Year 2 with different types of sandwiches; Year 3 examine packaging; Year 4 look at torches; and Year 5 consider different types of bread. The design element is satisfactorily developed. Pupils draw simple designs of their proposals for their models and identify the sorts of materials they will use. However, more could be done to create greater precision in designs among older Key Stage 2 pupils. Opportunities are missed to apply pupils' mathematical skills to add greater precision to their work, particularly among higher attainers. Pupils use tools, and assemble, join and combine materials and components well to complete a range of different and often good quality products. Good making skills are reflected in the simple mechanisms to create movement, such as in Year 2 in pop-up books, and in Year 6 when pupils use pneumatics well to make dragon heads open. In Year 4 some effective work is seen using textiles to make calculator bags; torches, incorporating electrical components for light; and themed cards involving sound. There is also good progressive development of skills in food technology, supported by specialist facilities in a kitchen area. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work from an early age. In Year 1 they use a simplified format appropriate to these pupils' ages, and pupils make good attempts to consider their work thoughtfully. This is a consistent feature in all work with increasingly detailed evaluations as pupils move through the school. By Year 6, pupils are able to suggest ways in which they could improve their products, although there are some limitations due to limited literacy skills.

105. Whilst it was only possible to observe one lesson, (which was satisfactory), an analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning shows that the overall quality of teaching and learning of design and technology is at least satisfactory, and has some good features. Teachers' confidence and subject knowledge are evident in the way that the whole of the design and make process is considered in a well-structured series of experiences. Pupils gain well from the range of opportunities provided, particularly in considering real-life products. In the lesson observed, clear instructions and explanations from the teacher ensured that pupils understood well the functionality of a lever mechanism. The introduction of electrical components using sound also enthused the pupils, and drew out their creativity in adapting the basic design of a card to be used for different purposes. Pupils' keen interest and motivation led to a productive, if sometimes noisy, learning environment. Pupils were inspired to begin work quickly. Adult helpers were clear on their role in the lesson, and guided pupils when they experienced difficulty. They also helped to moderate some off-task behaviour by a small minority of pupils.

106. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has a great deal of enthusiasm for the subject, and is keen to develop it further. Some concrete ways have been recorded about how to improve the planned curriculum to create a more cohesive programme over each key stage, and incorporate assessment arrangements. Resources are sufficient and accessible, and a good range of materials is available offering pupils choice in their learning.

GEOGRAPHY

107. The pupils do not reach the expected standards of attainment in geography by the time they are seven and eleven. Their achievement in gaining geographical skills is satisfactory compared to their low levels of attainment when they begin school. This is a broadly similar picture to the last inspection, but the focus on English and mathematics in the whole curriculum, without enough thought being given to application of these skills in geography, has caused some decline in attainment in this subject. Due to the high level of adult support, the pupils with special educational needs (SEN) make sound progress during the lessons seen.

108. Only one lesson was seen in Year 2, where teaching and learning was satisfactory, but past work and discussion was taken into account when assessing the progress pupils make. In the lesson seen, the pupils made satisfactory gains in their learning when studying the local resort of Felixstowe. They recognised some of the man-made features such as buildings and the promenade, as well as natural features such as the beach. They can point out the important aspects they note, but they have little idea of what features attract people and find it difficult to compare their own local area to the area they are studying. The teaching makes good use of colour maps and photographs to help the pupils to study different features of the area, and this acts as a motivator for pupils to look closely. The pupils respond properly by settling down quickly to their work, although their standard of presentation in their work is low. Scrutiny of past work and discussion with pupils indicate that they gain knowledge of their local area, can draw simple maps showing their way to school and can name local roads. Their knowledge of the area beyond where they live is limited, although their study of an imaginary island helps to broaden their awareness.

109. The junior pupils build upon their work in the infant classes. The pupils make satisfactory progress overall, but this is not sufficient for them to reach the expected national standards by the time they are 11. Only two lessons were seen, and one of these, taken by a temporary teacher in Year 5, was unsatisfactory which led to pupils making unsatisfactory progress. The resources did not promote interest, and did not extend the pupils' thinking about the seashore. The teacher did, however, relate well to the pupils, and attempted to

cover the planned work with the few resources available, but was not successful. The pupils showed limited knowledge of coastal features, and they generally lacked enthusiasm. In Year 6, the pupils know the basic features of the Nile delta, and the way in which this affects the people of the area because of flooding. They have some knowledge of the wider area, but few give extended information about the people or customs of the area. The teaching was satisfactory in this lesson, and the activities well matched to the abilities of the pupils. The resources used, and the structured nature of the activities, rarely extended the pupils. The pupils behaved correctly and many settled to their work quickly, but a significant minority did not fully settle down and work consistently well. Scrutiny of past work and plans, and discussion with pupils and staff indicates that pupils cover a satisfactory range of work and that teaching is generally satisfactory. In Year 3, work showed that the pupils built upon their knowledge of the local area, making and labeling maps. In Year 4, the pupils studied the similarities and differences of the island of St. Lucia, and in Year 5 they compared their own area with Sedbergh. The pupils' standards of presentation are low. Too few take the care needed to produce work of high quality, sometimes being stifled by the over-use of worksheets. These become simple gap-filling exercises, which neither inspire nor encourage pupils to think deeply enough. The teaching, whilst satisfactory overall, rarely challenges the pupils to aspire to higher standards, and many of the pupils are content to produce work of low quality.

110. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall, and the policy and scheme of work are satisfactory in providing enough guidance for staff. However, medium term planning is more variable in quality in defining what pupils will actually learn. The arrangements for assessment are satisfactory in terms of assessing pupils' coverage of topics, but little information is kept about what pupils have achieved to guide future planning. The range and quantity of resources is satisfactory, but few resources of good quality were seen to help enhance pupils' learning. For example, little use was seen to be made of information and communication technology (ICT) to make learning more interesting for pupils and to deepen their understanding through research.

HISTORY

111. The pupils make satisfactory gains in their learning, but do not reach the standards expected nationally by the time they are seven and eleven. This is partly due to their low starting point when they enter the school and, as with geography, the school's focus upon English and mathematics since the last inspection. Again, more thought could be given to how pupils' literacy skills in particular could be used to underpin recording in history.

112. In all the lessons seen in history, teaching and learning were of satisfactory quality. In Year 1, teaching encourages pupils to study old photographs, and the pupils correctly identify the clues that indicate the time when they were taken. They notice that they are black and white and that the style of clothes worn is different to that seen today. Many of them identify the type of celebrations taking place and the differences from today. The pupils enjoy the activity and the teaching is effective in bringing out the differences. However, in spite of sound questioning, few recall the ideas they generated from the previous week's lesson. Evidence from past work, and discussion with the pupils indicates that they study other important events and characters from the past such as the Great Fire of London and Florence Nightingale. Much of the work, however, indicates that the pupils only have a superficial knowledge of these events, and cannot recall much detail about the time and the events.

113. Pupils build upon their knowledge as they progress to Year 6, and achievement is satisfactory, but they do not make sufficiently good progress to reach the nationally expected standard. In Year 3, the pupils develop their knowledge and skills by studying the treasures of Sutton Hoo, and by seeing how they were excavated. The pupils enjoy the activities, and settle quickly to their work, promoted by secure teaching and management of the pupils. In Year 4, the pupils develop a good interest in the ancient Greeks and the myths and legends surrounding the period. The use of a good quality video by the class teacher to promote interest of pupils was effective, but the use of prescriptive worksheet to follow up constrained the learning of the pupils. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they know about the events of World War II, and about ancient Egypt. Much of the work, however, is limited in terms of depth and coverage and the pupils make only slow gains in their development of historical enquiry skills. In discussion with them, the pupils recall significant events in the periods they are studying, but they do not have the depth of understanding and skills expected. The teaching is satisfactory overall, and pupils with special educational needs make secure progress. The high level of adult support, particularly in Year 6, is a significant factor in supporting these pupils, but the challenge and expectation set by the teachers is only moderate, and does not readily enthuse the pupils to want to know more.

114. The co-ordination of the subject is satisfactory overall, with the policy and scheme of work providing sufficient guidance for teachers. The co-ordinator is aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and the recently drafted action plan has sound priorities. Assessment arrangements give a satisfactory overview of coverage, but not of pupils' progress. Information from assessments is not used effectively enough to influence future planning. There is some variation in the quality of planning to ensure sufficient adaptation in work and appropriate challenge for the full range of ability. The resources in the subject are satisfactory overall, although few high quality resources were seen in use or available to support teaching activities. As with geography, little use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to support learning and to encourage a higher level of interest in the subject.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

115. The previous inspection found that attainment in ICT was in line with expectations for seven and 11 year olds. The requirements of the National Curriculum have changed a good deal since that time, which has necessitated an increased level of teacher expertise in both planning and teaching the subject, especially in Key Stage 2. Standards have been broadly maintained in Key Stage 1, so that pupils' attainment is generally in line with that expected of most seven year olds. However, in Key Stage 2, although pupils have improved some of their ICT skills, the range of work and the depth of their understanding are limited mainly as a result of a lack of teacher expertise in some of the more advanced skills now required in Key Stage 2. This means that standards are below what is expected of most 11 year olds nationally. In both key stages, pupils do not achieve enough overall in developing their ICT skills. The school makes satisfactory use of its ICT suite, but the fact that only half a class can be accommodated at a time does create some constraints to learning. In addition, not enough use is made of computers in lessons in classrooms to support learning in other subjects. This was a similar picture to that in the last inspection in terms of provision, and there has not been enough improvement to affect standards since that time. In Key Stage 2, the lack of planned access means that the requirements of the National Curriculum are not being met in the control, monitoring and modelling aspects of ICT.

116. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to use equipment competently to word process and create satisfactory pictures using simple edit features. In Year 1, pupils write their names and experiment with changing fonts. In Year 2, pupils have created seaside scenes and written stories to accompany them. In this year they also know how to conduct

simple searches of information, for example when looking at animals, although there is little evidence that they explore and represent data on a more regular basis to develop their skills as much as they could. Discussion with pupils shows that they have sound understanding of how to control the movements of a floor robot to move around objects. In Key Stage 2, most pupils know how to log on, open and close down software packages and print out their work, but most pupils are still working at early stages in most ICT skills. For example, they know the basic edit features of graphics and word processing packages. They present their English work in different ways, changing font size, position and colour. In Year 3, pupils have written Nursery rhymes and used a programme to create a tune to accompany the rhyme. In Year 4, pupils have incorporated digital images into their written work. In Year 6, pupils have created multimedia presentations. However, pupils do not have enough systematically planned practice to reach higher standards in this area and have little experience in the use of e-mail as a means of communication. Pupils have some experience in the use of databases and simulation packages, but not enough to build skills effectively. Year 6 pupils have represented data in different forms, for example when examining the contents of a newspaper, which they represented in pie chart form. However, work is still at a lower than expected level. The Internet has been used for simple searches, but there is little evidence of more advanced features being used to refine searches.

117. Information and communication technology (ICT) is being used to some extent to support learning in other subjects such as English, mathematics, history and geography, but there is little evidence in either key stage of pupils regularly accessing computers in the classroom to support learning on a more regular basis. In most lessons, although each class has a computer station, these were rarely seen used as part of their routine work as a resource to support learning. This also applied to withdrawal sessions for pupils with special educational needs in the main school. Computers were very rarely used to motivate pupils, or to reinforce and practise their basic skills.

118. Teaching and learning were satisfactory in all three of the lessons seen where ICT was taught directly in the computer suite, but the lack of planned use in most lessons is a significantly weak feature of ICT teaching which affects the learning and progress of pupils. Teachers identify links with other subjects when using the ICT suite, which gives pupils an understanding of the relevance and purpose of ICT, although some links are tenuous. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the intention was to link with the scientific theme of life cycles of creatures, but the actual work was merely a simple look at different animals with little information about life cycles at all. Most teachers identify what the pupils will do in these lessons, but miss opportunities to use ICT in other lessons to enable pupils to apply and practise their ICT skills. Support staff are used well in ICT lessons to share the support role, keeping pupils attentive and on task. In other lessons, they are not well used for working with groups of pupils as part of a range of activities to support learning. Plans do not show clearly what ICT skills the pupils will learn and how learning develops during a lesson. This is demonstrated where not enough guidance is given to pupils to make the best use of some of the program features, for example, when creating spreadsheets in Year 6. This limits the skills of higher attainers, especially those who have their own systems at home. Management of pupils is usually sound, as pupils are interested in using computers and usually remain on task. Pupils apply themselves well, and some good co-operation was seen in Year 6 as pupils shared the outcomes of their work. Younger pupils are sometimes frustrated when things go wrong, and are quite demanding of the teacher.

119. The subject is supported by a policy which identifies some aspects of provision, but is not so clear about the key skills being taught. Work is not always adapted sufficiently from national guidance in teachers' planning to show how learning is structured and develops over each half term. Procedures for tracking pupils' acquisition of skills have yet to be established. The co-ordinator has a sound awareness of some of the strengths and weaknesses in provision, and has worked alongside colleagues to increase their level of

confidence and expertise. Some informal monitoring takes place, but this does not ensure evaluation of teaching and learning is rigorous enough, especially in checking whether plans are implemented with consistent effectiveness. This is needed in order to have a more positive impact on raising standards in the subject. Some positive features of provision which help to extend learning outside lessons include a lunchtime club, where pupils who are interested are able to use the facilities. The school also houses an Adult Basic ICT Skills class, which a number of parents take advantage of and to which their children are invited for some of the time. This contributes to the partnership in learning between home and school.

MUSIC

120. The standards reported at the previous inspection were satisfactory by age seven and unsatisfactory by age 11. It was not possible to observe any music lessons during this inspection, and little recorded evidence was available to make secure judgements on standards overall. Neither can judgements on improvement in pupils' standards of attainment or the quality of teaching in the subject be made.

121. There is a satisfactory range and quality of resources, both tuned and untuned; but these are kept in locked cupboards and are not easily accessible. The need to purchase a greater variety of instruments, particularly to promote multicultural understanding, has been recognised by the school. There has been an improvement in the music curriculum since the last inspection. The school has adopted the national guidance for sequential planning in Years 3 to 6 and a commercial scheme for Years 1 and 2. However, this is largely recent and has not had enough time to be adapted to show a significant impact on raising standards.

122. Pupils experience singing in the classrooms and assemblies. In one such assembly, pupils were heard singing tunefully and with appropriate expression and enthusiasm. Pupils also sang successfully in a round. However, they do not sing well from memory, or work consistently on improving the musical elements such as phrasing and breathing. The examination of teachers' planning indicates that most pupils gain an experience of a wide variety of tuned and untuned instruments and opportunities to compose and communicate ideas. Pupils are given some opportunities to appraise and evaluate each other's work to develop their skills in this area. There are suitable opportunities to listen carefully, to evaluate music from other times and places, and to understand the use of rhythm and other musical qualities in defining mood.

123. The teachers' planning focuses well on the needs of pupils to develop basic skills in music. There are no formal systems in use for assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do to inform their planning. Most pupils show positive attitudes to music. They are enthusiastic and responsive in the singing assemblies. Lessons in singing are well supported by a part-time visiting piano specialist. Most teachers are fairly confident in teaching music. A good example of a project followed by the Year 3 pupils earlier this year noted pupils' use of information and communication technology (ICT) skills in producing a song booklet for the Nursery class. Pupils were suitably supported in this project to write and compose songs, such as, '*You Can Do It Too*'. They successfully taught these songs to children in the Nursery.

124. A small number of pupils receive regular music tuition, and learn advanced music skills and talents in playing a guitar or a violin. This sometimes means that pupils miss parts of lessons, and organisation of teaching time for these pupils needs to be considered more carefully. There is satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities in music, such as the lunchtime choir. Pupils in the choir were led very effectively by the teacher. They sang

expressively in unison and with clear diction. Pupils enjoy music and many have the potential to achieve well. Pupils also participate each year in the end of year musical productions and the Christmas concert. The recently appointed co-ordinator for music has good expertise in the subject and is very clear about the future direction of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

125. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection - one each in Year 1 and Year 6. In addition, discussions with pupils were also taken into account when assessing the range of activities they cover. In these lessons, the standard that the pupils attain is broadly what is expected nationally, and they make satisfactory progress in their activities due to satisfactory teaching.

126. In Year 1, the pupils learn the simple skills of catching and throwing, combined with skills in controlling footballs with bats. They respond to instruction quickly and stop, start and move with agility. As the lesson progresses, the pupils improve their skills in passing and controlling the ball, but a very small minority make little progress. The teaching seen was satisfactory and the management of the pupils was secure. The activities chosen were matched to pupils' abilities and the expectations of the teacher were satisfactory. In Year 6, the teacher skillfully led a lesson that had to be taken inside the school's 'dome' at short notice because of bad weather. The pupils threw and caught accurately, and understood the conventions of a rounders game. They moved into space effectively and realised that creating space was important. The pupils worked together properly and shared the resources willingly. They listened to the teacher, who encouraged a good pace to the lesson by changing the nature of the activities frequently. The additional adult support was used well and this contributed to the satisfactory progress the pupils made during the lesson.

127. The coordination of the subject is being temporarily managed by the headteacher. The policy and scheme of work provides suitable guidance for pupils, but developments in the subject remain to be fully implemented. There are some after-school clubs such as football and netball, and the school has its own swimming pool that it uses for a short period during the year. The resources overall are good, with the school having extensive playing fields, a large hall and additional space in the outside 'dome' where activities can take place during inclement weather.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

128. It was only possible to observe three lessons during the inspection. A very limited amount of pupils' written work was seen throughout the school. The evidence for these findings is based on discussion with pupils, interviews with staff, an examination of teachers' documentation and the available resources. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of religious education does not meet the expectations set out in the locally Agreed Syllabus by the age of seven and eleven. This indicates lack of improvement since the last inspection, when the standards reported were satisfactory for seven year olds and unsatisfactory for 11 year olds. The progress of pupils across the school is unsatisfactory. This reflects the fact that religious education has a low profile in the school. Although

religious education contributes to aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, pupils' achievements in the subject are unsatisfactory overall. Most pupils show limited gains in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major faiths over their time in school.

129. The younger pupils begin to develop their own ideas about appropriate personal responses to right and wrong by looking at events in own lives. Year 2 pupils know the story of Christmas and a few aspects of Christianity. In a lesson, they were told the story of Moses. They recently made paper 'mezuzahs' and learnt about special times for Jewish people. Most however, show very little knowledge of the story and could make no links with the Jewish religion when questioned. This is mainly due to the weaknesses in teaching. The teacher in this lesson did not use artefacts or made effective links to pupils' knowledge of their own special times.

130. Pupils in Year 6 acquire adequate knowledge of Christianity, but they have little idea of God who is worshipped in different ways by different faith communities. Pupils' understanding is largely confined to facts about festivals such as Christmas, Harvest and Easter. They have limited knowledge of festivals of other leading faiths, such as Diwali or Channukah. Pupils have heard stories from the Bible, but most do not understand the deep meaning of the religious stories. Pupils have unsatisfactory knowledge and understanding of other major religions of the world, such as Judaism and Sikhism, and the life of people from various cultural backgrounds. They have insufficient knowledge of the festivals of other religions, the key people, the places of worship or holy books. The development of pupils' knowledge and understanding is inconsistent. As a result, they are unable to draw sufficiently on, and learn from, the positive actions of important religious figures, such as Jesus or the Sikh founder, Guru Nanak, to help them make decisions about their own lives and to make sense of what they see around them.

131. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. It was unsatisfactory in one lesson in Key Stage 1, but satisfactory in one of the remainder in Key Stage 2, and good in the other. The main weakness in the unsatisfactory lesson was the teacher's lack of appropriate knowledge and understanding of the subject. The task was not planned with due regard to suit pupils' level of ability and previous knowledge. A good lesson in Year 3 effectively engaged pupils in identifying questions about 'how life began'. The teaching of religious education makes some contribution to pupils' literacy skills, especially their speaking and listening skills. This was noted in a Year 6 lesson which used a range of life situations to identify acceptable behaviour. However, pupils across the school are not encouraged to record their knowledge and to write their own creative accounts. School assemblies support religious education and pupils' knowledge of their own religion. The absence of an agreed approach to recording and assessing the development of pupils' knowledge and understanding detracts teachers' ability to plan future lessons based on what pupils have already achieved. The over-use of worksheets limits pupils' ability to record independently with understanding. Pupils' attitudes and responses to learning are satisfactory. They listen carefully when information is given. Pupils behave well and respond to questions with confidence. Most pupils show a positive willingness to talk about and share personal experiences.

132. The subject co-ordination is satisfactory. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, but her monitoring role to check on the standards of teaching and pupils' work is under-developed. Resources are satisfactory overall, an improvement on the previous inspection, but standards have still to be improved sufficiently. The school has bought a few multicultural artefacts and books about other religions of the world. Pupils have visited the local church to enhance their learning in the subject. However, they have not had sufficient opportunities to invite visitors from other religions or to visit other places of worship.