

INSPECTION REPORT

THURLOW CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Nr Haverhill, Suffolk

LEA area: Suffolk LEA

Unique reference number: 124698

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Graham

Reporting inspector: Dennis Maxwell
8798

Dates of inspection: 04 - 08 December 2000

Inspection number: 224333

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 - 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Pound Lane Little Thurlow Nr Haverhill Suffolk
Postcode:	CB9 7HY
Telephone number:	01440 783281
Fax number:	01440 783281
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Camilla Collins
Date of previous inspection:	12/11/1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Dennis Maxwell (8798)	Registered inspector	Mathematics English Geography History Music Physical Education	Special Educational Needs English as an Additional Language What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve further? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Leonard Shipman (14061)	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Lynn Lowery (13805)	Team inspector	Science Information Technology Art Design & Technology Religious Education	Under Fives Equal Opportunities How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Essex County Council – Learning Services
Advisory and Inspection Service
PO Box 47
County Hall
Chelmsford
CM2 6WN

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	13
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	16
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	19
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	20
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	21
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	25
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Thurlow CE VC primary is a very small rural school for pupils aged 4 to 9 years. The school serves the immediate village of Thurlow and nearby villages but also draws around one third of its pupils from the nearby town of Haverhill. There are 66 pupils on roll and there has been a considerable increase in the number of pupils coming from outside the catchment area by parental choice of what the school offers. No pupils are from ethnic minority heritages. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The percentage of pupils identified as having special educational needs is below the national average and currently no pupil has a statement of need. Pupils' attainment on entry is average, and fourteen pupils were under the age of five at the time of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school that has made very good improvements since the previous inspection. It provides a good education that reflects its aims and helps pupils develop. Teaching and the management of the school are strengths that promote a stimulating education, resulting in steady progress. Achievement in all aspects of the school's life is valued and most pupils are keen to succeed. The school has a busy atmosphere that is encouraged by the professional dedication of all staff. The pupils are helped to feel secure through the close attention given to each child's needs, and many parents support its work. Special needs provision is very good. School improvements are promoted well by the committed governing body and all staff. The school encourages the personal development of the pupils effectively at most times so that they become responsible. The teachers give good attention to the pupils' academic and pastoral guidance. The overall effectiveness of the school is good and it provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average in the national tests of summer 2000.
- The quality of teaching is good. Provision of pupils with special needs is very good throughout the school.
- The foundation stage is a strength of the school. Throughout the school, procedures for planning the curriculum and systems for assessment are good.
- The management of the school is very good. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the educational direction of the school. The governing body is very committed and well informed.
- The school gives good attention to extending children's understanding of the world and the people in it, for example, through work on Ghana.
- The school has many good strategies for handling the behavioural and personal needs Of pupils.

What could be improved

- Despite the good teaching, behaviour in classrooms by a few pupils is sometimes immature for the age, with pupils displaying self-centred attitudes.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 do not record enough in history and religious education.
- There is no outdoor play area specifically for the children in the foundation stage, a shortcoming that has already been identified by the school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in November 1996. The school has made very good improvements overall since the last inspection. The problems with the early years teaching have been sorted out and an appropriate curriculum is in place for the youngest children. Teaching is good and there is no longer any unsatisfactory teaching. The school is implementing the National Literacy Strategy well and the approach is having a positive influence in other subjects. Information technology is well established and now meets statutory requirements, with a good ratio of computers which are used well across the curriculum. The provision for design and technology is now satisfactory and standards are in line with expectations. Similarly, the school has employed a specialist to support the teaching of music. The school has improved learning resources with a particular focus on English and library books, on information technology and on religious education, with resourcing linked to subject developments. There is now plenty of investigative work in science and in mathematics there are good examples of investigations and practical activities. Assessment procedures are now a strength and are used well to plan the curriculum.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
reading	A*	B	B	C	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
writing	A*	A	B	C	
mathematics	A	A	B	D	

Standards in reading, writing and mathematics were above the national average in the national tests of summer 2000. In reading and writing standards were at the average for similar schools, but standards were below average in mathematics. While all pupils gained Level 2 or above in writing and mathematics, no pupils gained Level 3 in writing, and in mathematics the percentage gaining Level 3 was below the national average. The difference in grades between the three subjects relates mainly to the fewer Level 3s gained in mathematics. The small Year 2 cohort requires a cautious interpretation to be made of a single year's results. Steady improvement is shown by the upward trend in the school's results at Key Stage 1 which were broadly in line with the national trend over the past three years. The category A* shows that the school's results in reading and writing in 1998 were in the highest 5 per cent nationally. The school's approach to literacy gives a good emphasis to writing and language skills. Inspection findings indicate that current standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Overall, pupils are achieving broadly in line with what would be expected in relation to their prior attainment.

Children in the foundation stage enjoy a wide range of worthwhile activities and make good progress as a result. The good foundation in information technology is becoming well-established across the curriculum. The school works hard to maintain a good breadth of experiences across all subjects. The pupils' literacy and numeracy skills support their work and progress across the curriculum. Standards in the foundation subjects are in line with the national expectation, although there was little opportunity to see geography and physical

education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils demonstrate good attitudes overall.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour around the school and at playtimes is good, when pupils are generally free to do as they want, but in class a few pupils present challenging behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between the children as well as the children and staff are good. Teachers use thoughtful strategies to promote personal development but several pupils have not yet gained appropriate levels of maturity and awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others.
Attendance	Levels of attendance and punctuality are good. This creates a good start to the day and has a positive influence on the children's learning and progress.

Standards of behaviour and personal development of the children are satisfactory. Their attitudes both towards the school and with their personal relationships are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Many children run happily into school. Most children respond eagerly to questions during lessons and collaborate well, exchanging ideas or resources. However, the behaviour of a significant minority of pupils is sometimes unsatisfactory in classrooms, which then makes teaching challenging. The activities are well structured and supported but a few pupils find self-motivation and concentration difficult, particularly during independent activities.

During playtimes children play happily and safely. There was no evidence of aggressive behaviour. There are no exclusions. All members of staff provide good role models by presenting a calm yet caring attitude. The personal development of the children is encouraged through assemblies, circle time or sponsoring a child in the third world. The school has established links with a school in Ghana, which helps to provide comparisons to study or reflect on our own multi-cultural society. A good example of how the school promotes the pupils' personal development well is that a committee of children decides how they will raise the money for their sponsored child, Hillary.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	The foundation stage	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching is a strength of the school, particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. There have been good improvements in teaching since the last inspection, especially in the foundation stage and in the provision for more practical activities in science and other subjects. This ensures that the needs of all pupils are met, including

good provision for pupils with special needs. The school has worked hard through their monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning to make good improvements. Planning and assessment procedures are very good. In the lessons observed during the inspection, 100 per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better. Teaching was good or better in 74 per cent of these lessons and in 17 per cent it was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching.

Strengths which promote pupils' progress well are the skills of questioning and teachers' informative, lively and well structured explanations. There is a good focus on literacy and numeracy skills and these are taught well. The activities are purposeful and pupils are encouraged to think about what they are doing, what they have learnt from an activity and how they can improve their work. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils so that pupils enjoy school and most want to work hard. Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are used carefully for further planning and teaching.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very well planned and the needs of individual pupils are taken carefully into account. The school initiates good opportunities to broaden pupils' experiences, for example, in camping in a field or pond dipping.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school gives very careful consideration to all pupils' needs and makes good provision. The tasks are differentiated well to allow for their needs in all subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	There is very good provision for pupils' cultural understanding, with valuable links to Ghana and a pupil in Kenya. Support for moral and social development is good in helping pupils to consider the effects of their actions and arranging for them to work together. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The teachers and all staff show a high level of thoughtful care for the pupils.

Pupils receive a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. The quality and range of the curriculum for pupils in the foundation stage is very good. The way the school plans for the curriculum is good. It reflects the aims of the school and meets statutory requirements and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Teachers review previous work carefully to improve it for the next cycle and have very clear learning objectives for every lesson. Systems for assessment are good. Teachers keep close observations of the pupils and use them to make alternative activities for different groups of pupils and to adjust their questions and responses. The school plans well for literacy and numeracy and this is having a positive impact upon standards. However, insufficient emphasis is given in history and religious education to recording and writing at length in Key Stage 2. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities and many pupils take part.

The school teaches personal, social and health education. It is well planned and contributes to pupils' personal development, although not as much as it might in terms of the development of independence and personal responsibility. Overall, the school makes good

provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. They show a caring attitude towards Hillary, the Kenyan boy the school sponsors. The school has continued to provide a caring school environment. This quality of care is a strength of the school. Procedures for child protection are very good. The procedures for health and safety, including first aid are of a very high standard. The building is maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are good. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and personal development are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits from the strong leadership of the headteacher and governing body. They are a questioning staff, continually discussing ways to make improvements. The headteacher has established good monitoring procedures.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governing body is actively involved in the life of the school. Members take their responsibilities seriously and fulfil them very well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school has good procedures to monitor pupils' progress and to check the effectiveness of its work.
The strategic use of resources	The teachers and classroom assistants are deployed well to promote good standards. Resources are used effectively and help pupils' learning.

The headteacher has very good qualities of leadership that she uses to good effect in promoting a purposeful atmosphere and high standards. The headteacher has a clear view about the standards and expectations she is promoting. The school has continued to improve under her leadership. The school has addressed all the issues of the previous inspection thoroughly, making the improvements expected. The curriculum is managed and developed well by the whole staff, who form a strong team that works together well under the headteacher's leadership. The process of development planning is good. The headteacher and governing body work together well and have a firm handle on the strategic management of the school. Members of the governing body are quick to recognise their responsibilities and they fulfil their statutory duties very well. The school has several good procedures to monitor and evaluate performance. All members of staff are committed to high standards, following the lead and expectations of the headteacher. The school meets statutory requirements in all respects. All support staff contribute to the good community ethos of the school and the smooth running of daily routines and procedures. The level of staffing is good within the constraints of the size of school and the accommodation is good overall. Learning resources are satisfactory in range, quality and quantity and have received further investment recently. Special educational needs provision is efficiently managed and organised by the co-ordinator. The school is effective and efficient, applies the principles of best value in its decisions.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel their children like school • They think their children are making good progress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very few parents think their children do not get the right amount of homework • A very few parents do not feel well

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They believe that behaviour is good • They consider the teaching to be good • They are happy to approach the school about problems • They think the school expects the children to work hard and there is a good range of activities outside school • They think the school is managed well 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> informed about their child's progress • A very few parents do not feel that the school works closely with them
---	---

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents, both through the questionnaire and the parents' meeting. In relation to homework, it is noted that homework is normally given regularly and of an appropriate amount. The inspectors find that the annual reports to parents are of a good quality and are informative, and parents are welcome at the school to discuss their child's progress. The inspectors find that the school is strongly committed to working with parents and the community, although a very small number disagree.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards in the end of Key Stage 1 national tests for summer 2000 were above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils gaining Level 2 was very high in writing, mathematics and science and in the top five per cent nationally. However, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 was above average in reading but below average in writing and mathematics. The performance of boys has been above that of girls over the past few years but this was related to the individual children. In comparison with schools in similar contexts, having up to eight per cent free school meals, the percentage of pupils gaining Level 2 or above in writing, mathematics and science was very high while in reading it was well below average. When using the National Curriculum points system for overall performance, in comparison with schools in similar contexts attainment was average in reading and writing and below average in mathematics. Using teachers' assessment for science at Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is well above the national average, although pupils' understanding of work in Life and living processes was not so well understood. The upward trend in standards at Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with the national trend since the previous inspection. The small cohort numbers require interpretations to be made with caution.
2. Children's attainment on entry to the school in Year R is average, although several children do not demonstrate behaviour showing that they are ready to learn. The good teaching and well-chosen activities enable the children to learn well so that by the end of the foundation stage attainment is above average. The teachers create a positive and generally challenging atmosphere that encourages pupils to concentrate and work well. Pupils achieve in line with what is expected in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils of different attainment or background make appropriate progress. The requirements of pupils with special educational needs are identified early and accurately through the thoughtful and perceptive management. They receive well-targeted support, which enables them to make good progress towards the targets on their individual education plans. The school has good procedures to keep monitoring information up to date about the attainment and progress of pupils, and uses this well for further planning.
3. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average overall by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. This shows good improvement since the previous inspection when standards were more variable and some pupils were underachieving. The school sets carefully considered targets related to the ability profile of the pupils. Standards are rising as the National Literacy Strategy is making a positive contribution to pupils' learning. The National Numeracy Strategy is having a good effect on the approach to teaching and to standards.
4. The provision for children in the foundation stage is a strength of the school providing children with a good range of learning experiences. Most children make good progress in all areas of learning whilst in the reception class. By the time they are five their attainment is broadly in line with that normally expected at this age. Personal and social education has a strong emphasis with all teaching for children in the foundation stage and attainment in this area meets the early learning goals. Children make sound progress in their speaking and listening skills, and most children meet the early learning goals when they are five. Reading skills are developing well and the higher

attaining children are beginning to read and develop a range of strategies. The children develop a firm early understanding of number. The teacher gives good attention to the children's creative ideas and skills so that these are expressed through role-play and their constructions. The children's physical development is sound, and they make models with construction kits and are beginning to use pencils, paintbrushes and scissors confidently.

5. Standards in English have improved in line with the national trend since the last inspection by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. The teachers give good attention, through discussions and questions, to the pupils' speaking and listening skills, so that most are able to express themselves clearly. A few pupils lack confidence in speaking to the whole class, although the higher attaining pupils have good speaking skills. A few pupils have yet to give other children their full attention and to listen to what they are saying, so that listening skills overall are satisfactory. In Key Stage 1 the good teaching and competence in phonics help pupils to make sound progress in reading and spelling. Above average and average pupils read simple texts fluently and confidently. The successful implementation of the National Literacy Strategy has already helped to increase pupils' literacy skills, for example, in phonics and the standard of reading in the school. Overall standards attained in writing are above at the levels expected for both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1 most pupils write using simple punctuation such as full stops and they know when to use speech marks. By Year 4, the majority of pupils write using correct grammar and punctuation, and there are several good examples of pupils writing at length. The higher attaining pupils write confidently with good expression. Pupils write for a good range of purposes. The school gives regular practice in handwriting, but there is a variety of styles which are not always fluent and cursive since several pupils come from other schools.
6. In mathematics, by Year 2 most pupils read and count numbers to 100 confidently. Their numeracy skills are good and their knowledge and understanding of shape, space and measures is also above average. In Year 4 most pupils' numeracy skills together with mental calculation and rapid recall are above average. Pupils are developing their numeracy skills well in applying mathematics to everyday situations such as using a 24 hour clock to tell the time. The school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy successfully and explanations and instructions are generally very clear. By age seven, in science the teachers' good choice of tasks helps pupils to have mostly good experiences of practical observation and investigation. The experiments set up by the teachers provide good practical experience but the pupils are not always given sufficient responsibility in making their own investigations.
7. Attainment in art, design and technology, geography, history, information technology, music and physical education meets the expectation by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Attainment in religious education is in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus at both key stages. Standards overall have improved since the last inspection.
8. By age seven, pupils are beginning to use sketchbooks to try out new techniques and are able to mix different colours from primary colours. In design and technology pupils quickly develop an understanding of the design process, taking care with their work to produce finished items of a good standard, such as shadow puppets. In geography pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the different types of houses and the recreational facilities in the village. They are beginning to understand how their parents and grandparents had toys that are different to their own and have compared

the life of Leofric in 1294, with their own lives. Pupils use a word processing program to use punctuation when writing simple sentences. They have satisfactory rhythm and control in playing musical instruments such as Indian bells or a wood block. They know that the Bible is a special book and have learnt about some festivals and the significance of ceremonies. At Key Stage 2, pupils have studied Ghanaian art, making their own wooden printing blocks and printing traditional style fabrics. Some of their work related to Divali shows a good level of skill and creativity. The quality of their initial plans improves and their Anglo-Saxon houses are well made, with careful thought put into the choice of materials and the techniques used. Pupils have carried out a detailed comparative study of life in Thurlow compared with life in Ghana and have shown their results as different types of graphs and pie charts. Pupils have recently visited West Stow Anglo-Saxon village and have a very good understanding of life in Anglo-Saxon times. Pupils are more competent when word processing their work and use the Internet to carry out research. Many pupils have a good sense of rhythm and expression that is encouraged by the teacher's methods. They understand the significance of light in religions. They recall events from the story of Rama and Sita and know why Divali is a special commemoration.

9. The pupils with special needs make good progress against the targets on their individual education plans. They receive well-targeted support by the teachers and assistants, and provision overall is very good. Pupils with language needs are given focused help and those with behavioural difficulties are helped to understand the boundaries of acceptable behaviour so that they make appropriate progress.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The pupils have satisfactory standards of behaviour and personal development. Their attitudes both towards the school and with their personal relationships are good and have improved since the previous inspection. Levels of attendance are good. These values are fully appreciated by all the parents.
11. Nearly all the children arrive at school with their parents. They come smartly dressed and in several cases run into school with smiling faces. Some parents take the opportunity to visit their child's class and speak informally to the class teacher. This open door policy reassures the parent that their child is well looked after.
12. Once into class most children quickly settle into routines, such as quiet reading. In their lessons, most children respond eagerly to questions and are able to sustain their concentration levels for long periods. They are able to collaborate well, exchanging ideas or resources.
13. However in a minority of instances some children present challenging or immature behaviour. Their attention levels wane. Where class management routines are not clearly established or good behaviour not consistently promoted, pupils lose focus, especially towards the end of the day. Class teachers have to spend too much time managing this inattention or misbehaviour. As a result learning and progress for the majority are affected. Procedures to monitor and promote behaviour are very good. There are both playground and behaviour policies in existence. The behaviour policy has clear aims to prevent any anti-social behaviour. Racial or religious disharmony is not an issue at this school. In the event of persistent poor behaviour, the headteacher has established clear procedures.
14. In the play periods, children can release their natural energies in safety. There was no evidence of aggressive or abusive behaviour. Mostly they play in same gender

groups and there are suitable resources for the session. Staff supervise them well and the playground and behaviour policies are consistently well implemented. Bullying is not tolerated. There are no exclusions.

15. Relationships between the children as well as the children and staff are good. Mutual respect is shown. Staff conduct themselves well. They provide good role models by presenting a calm yet caring attitude. The headteacher has high expectations that the children will become 'Thurlow' children, well known in the community as 'good' children.
16. The personal development of the children is assured using a number of strategies such as in assemblies, circle time or sponsoring a child in the third world. Academic achievement is recognised and celebrated with the 'Golden Tree of Achievement', including those children with special education needs, and this promotes good attitudes. The absence of litter, damage or graffiti indicates that the children respect their school and property.
17. The school has established links with a school in Ghana, which helps to provide comparisons to study or reflect on our own multi-cultural society, and fosters personal development and understanding. All children, regardless of background or disability, would be fully integrated wherever possible. Tolerance of others is fostered well.
18. Levels of attendance are good and have remained so for some years. Punctuality is good and registration is taken fairly quickly. This creates a good start to the day and has a positive influence on the children's learning and progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. The quality of teaching is a strength of the school overall. Teaching is good in most subjects. In the lessons observed during the inspection, 100 per cent of the teaching was satisfactory or better. Teaching was good or better in 74 per cent of these lessons and in 17 per cent it was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching is particularly good in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. It has several strengths, and there have been good improvements since the last inspection in 1996. This relates especially in the foundation stage and in the provision for more practical activities in science and other subjects. The school has worked hard in this issue through their monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, especially in the core curriculum.
20. Strengths, which promote pupils' progress, are the skilful use of suitable methods of teaching and the effective management of pupils. Teachers throughout the school use their skills of questioning to very good effect to elicit fuller answers. This is particularly apparent in discussion sessions that are common features at the beginning and end of lessons. Teachers' informative, lively and well-structured explanations led to good quality learning. The activities are purposeful and pupils are encouraged to think about what they are doing, what they have learnt from an activity and how they can improve their work. The effective use of plenary sessions to recap what has been learnt and what needs to be done next was evident in most lessons. In a few lessons, the opportunities for investigations and problem-solving activities are helping pupils to apply and extend their learning in new contexts. The teachers provide a good level of challenge in most lessons and use thoughtful strategies that bring out pupils' knowledge and extend their understanding.

21. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. They know them well and recognise their efforts through praise that encourages them. Consequently pupils enjoy school and most want to work hard. In most lessons pupils know what they are expected to do and the amount of time they have to do it in. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects and as a result they plan work that is effective in ensuring that all pupils make progress. They make good day-to-day assessments of pupils' learning. The marking of pupils' work is mostly consistent and purposeful. Teachers' assessments of the work is used sensibly for further planning and teaching.
22. In general pupils are well prepared for lessons. Teachers use a good range of organisation matched to requirements of the lessons and have well-chosen resources to promote learning. Whole class interactive teaching is used successfully in many lessons, across both key stages. In the majority of lessons, teachers are well-organised, and stimulate and promote pupils' learning through good use of resources. Teachers achieve a good balance between whole-class, small group and individual teaching. There is a purposeful atmosphere and time is set aside especially in literacy and numeracy sessions to share the learning objectives and encourage pupils to reflect on what they have learnt.
23. Teachers are gaining expertise through carefully selected in-service training. This is especially evident in the teaching of literacy and numeracy. Homework is set regularly and is used effectively to enhance pupils' learning in both key stages. A good feature of teaching in both key stages is the effective teamwork between all those involved. The support assistant plays an important role in promoting pupils' learning. She uses strategies well that help pupils with special educational needs.
24. The support and teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good, being perceptive and sensitive to their needs. Teachers generally plan interesting and worthwhile tasks with a good practical basis that engage the interests of pupils and help them move on in their learning. Teachers and support staff plan co-operatively and work well as a team to the benefit of all pupils.

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

25. Pupils are provided with a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum, which reflects the aims of the school. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and those of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the teaching of English and mathematics. The schools' planning and provision for the literacy and numeracy strategies is good and is having a positive impact upon the standards achieved. However, insufficient emphasis is given across the curriculum to encouraging pupils to record and write at length in subjects, for example, in history and religious education in Key Stage 2.
26. Pupils have the chance to study all the aspects of the information technology curriculum. It is used on a regular basis to contribute to work in most subjects, for example, English, mathematics, science, history, geography, art and music.
27. The quality and range of the curriculum provided for pupils in the reception class is very good. The curriculum includes all the areas specified in national guidance and places appropriate emphasis on personal and social development.
28. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good throughout the school. Information about the pupils and assessments of their needs are used to ensure that appropriate levels of support are provided. Classroom assistants are fully

involved with the planning of the work for pupils they support. Consequently, they are able to make a very positive contribution to their learning and enable them to have full access to the school curriculum. Systems for monitoring the children's academic progress and personal development are good.

29. The school provides a good range of extra curricular activities and large numbers of pupils are involved. Pupils have the chance to take part in a broad range of visits, including to Aklowa, an African village, and West Stow, an Anglo-Saxon village. These enable pupils to really experience life in other times and cultures. Pupils also have the chance to take part in a residential visit to Thornham in Norfolk, which makes a positive contribution to their social development.
30. Whenever possible, parents and the local community are invited into the school, for example, a mum brought in her young baby for the pupils to observe and a senior citizen shared her experiences of the war years with them. Pupils had the chance to meet a member of parliament, a story-teller, a dentist, a percussionist and an African band visited among many others. The school enjoys good links with the feeder pre-school and works well with the middle school which most of its pupils will attend.
31. The school teaches personal, social and health education. It is well planned and contributes to pupils' personal development, although not as much as it might in terms of the development of independence and personal responsibility. Pupils are made aware of the dangers of drugs within this framework.
32. Overall, the school makes good provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Assemblies are well planned and make a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Through religious education, pupils are made aware of different faiths and of the presence of a greater being. Pupils are encouraged to value the achievements of others.
33. Provision for moral development is good. Teachers and other adults in the school provide good role models. There is a clear code of conduct and home/school agreement. Teachers are quick to explain why certain behaviour and attitudes are inappropriate, but, despite the fact that they do this well, a few pupils are slow to respond and sometimes fail to show that they are aware of the impact of their behaviour on others. Pupils are encouraged to think of others who are less well off than themselves. They show a caring attitude towards Hillary, the Kenyan boy the school sponsors. A committee of pupils takes the time to plan and organise fund-raising activities in order to do this. Pupils have the chance to discuss moral issues such as environmental issues.
34. Good provision is made for the pupils' social development. There are lots of opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs and small groups. Most, but not all, pupils respond well to this. There is a good range of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in classrooms and around the school. Older pupils have the chance to take part in a residential visit. This provides them with the chance to become more independent and to cope with life away from home.
35. There is very good provision for cultural development. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate their own cultural heritage through history. In geography, they have the chance to learn about life in other countries, for example, Chembakoli in India, and Ghana. They have all visited an African village sited in Essex and they learn about everyday life in Kenya through Hillary. Religious education teaches them about world faiths and their impact on lifestyle. In art, pupils study the work of a range of artists

and they enjoy music from other times and places.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36. The school has continued to provide a caring school environment, building upon the previous inspection. This quality of care is a strength of the school. All members of staff have a very good knowledge of the children and their families. This helps the staff to deal sympathetically with the strengths and weaknesses of their class. The parents have expressed their satisfaction with the quality of care their children receive.
37. Procedures for child protection are very good. The headteacher is the designated member of staff and who has ensured all her staff has been suitably trained to a high standard. The school has adopted the locally agreed procedures.
38. The procedures for health and safety, including first aid are equally of a very high standard. There is also a designated member of staff for first aid. All relevant records are in place and the governing body is equally committed in ensuring good practice is followed. The building is maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
39. Systems for monitoring the children's academic progress and personal development are good. In addition, as part of the lesson planning, teachers include any comment that may affect the progress of a child, for example, a bereavement in the family. In religious education, for example, tolerance and understanding is taught using comparisons with other religions. In circle time 'Thinking of themselves' and their impact on others helps develop awareness and extends their vocabulary.
40. The annual progress report, individual education profiles, reading diaries or the home school logs provide the teaching staff with ample information to assess pupils' progress. The Code of Practice is followed well for those children with special education needs. Pupils with special educational needs are given good support that is specific to their identified needs and generally have access to the curriculum. There is evidence to show that pupils with special education needs are identified within the reception year and that information is passed on appropriately. Records of pupils likely to be a cause for concern are kept for Year R or Year 1. Pupils are identified as having special needs within Key Stage 1 so that pupils' learning needs are addressed. The quality of support and care for pupils on an individual basis by teachers, and particularly the classroom assistant, is good.
41. In classroom activities where the lesson is teacher directed the children respond well. However, in isolated cases, where there is inappropriate behaviour, it does show a lack of personal initiative. In the event of persistent poor behaviour, the headteacher, who is also the special education needs co-ordinator, has established procedures. These strategies involve the parents at an early stage as well as outside agencies if thought appropriate. Procedures to monitor and promote behaviour are very good. The behaviour policy has clear aims to prevent any anti-social behaviour. There is no form of racial or other disharmony at this school.
42. Procedures to monitor and promote attendance are good. The school secretary monitors the registers weekly and any concerns relayed to the headteacher for appropriate action. Each register is consistently well recorded. Parents seldom take holidays out of term so that the level of unauthorised absence is good.
43. Arrangements at playtime allow the children to safely pursue normal activities without

anxiety. They are well supervised by adults. The midday supervisors implement the school policies consistently well and in their view, behaviour is consistently good.

44. Procedures for monitoring pupils' attainment and personal development are good. The school carefully assesses children under five when they first enter the school. Teachers keep very comprehensive records of pupils' attainment in all subjects. At the end of each unit of work, pupils are tested to check how much they have understood. The school carefully analyses its results in national tests, comparing its attainment with other schools in the county and those of a similar type nationally. It also uses this information to highlight areas of weakness in the curriculum so that it can target them for improvement. The school administers several assessments to gain a balanced range of information and, for example, individual pupil progress is measured through Suffolk reading tests and Salford tests, as well as standardised mathematics tests and the optional national tests. This enables teachers to notice any areas of concern early on. Each class has termly literacy and numeracy targets and pupils are fully aware of what these are. Individuals are given short-term, achievable targets in these subjects and they are changed as soon as they are achieved. Annual reports contain targets for personal and social development, in addition to literacy and numeracy.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The parents' views of the school are very good and clearly a strength of the school. These links have improved since the last inspection. Evidence from the parent questionnaires, comments made on those questionnaires, minutes from the parents' evening and from random sample, show positive responses. Three parents felt the school could improve the links with parents and provide a better quality of information about progress. Two parents felt there were inconsistencies in homework. Inspection evidence does not support those views and homework is used effectively, leading to improved levels of attainment.
46. The school enjoys a good reputation within the wider community. As a result over 30 per cent of the children arrive from out of the catchment area. This school is fortunate to have a pre-school group within the school grounds, so nearly all children and their parents have established liaison as they enter the foundation stage. Familiar surroundings and meeting up with former friends provide a good start to the children's education path. The induction process includes open mornings. This allows staff to explain methods of teaching literacy and numeracy.
47. Either through the reading diaries or the home-school diaries, parents support their children with homework. Teachers make comments in those diaries. One parent found this feedback very beneficial, especially as his children arrive by school bus. To help parents understand new guidelines on numeracy and literacy, sessions have been arranged by staff and the response has been encouraging. Better parental knowledge will improve the input towards homework and lead to higher standards of achievement.
48. Parents help in and around school in many ways, for example, helping with reading or numeracy. One parent helper worked with a child who had poor information and communication technology skills. Within four weeks of one-to-one support, that child could use the mouse confidently. This support helps improve the quality of education provided. A library of games is available for parents to take home to play with their children. These games, involving both children and parents, help raise awareness in both literacy and numeracy.

49. A well established 'Thurlow and District Voluntary School Association' provides a valuable channel of communication between parents and school. Events such as fetes help raise substantial sums of money to benefit the school. The purchase of resources, such as computers, software or play equipment, help improve the quality of education.
50. The quality of routine information is good. Parents feel welcome into school and given frequent opportunities to discuss issues with the staff. In addition to parent evenings, parents can, by appointment, monitor their children's work at any time. The annual progress report is specific to each child, contains target and includes comments on the personal and social education. However, the Prospectus and Governors' Annual Report to Parents do not include quite all the information set out in the 1999 requirements.
51. The school aims to work closely in partnership with parents of children with special educational needs. There are termly opportunities to attend reviews of individual education plans, and nearly all parents attend these and the annual review of a Statement of need. There are suitable procedures for parents to discuss and record their acceptance of the recommendations.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher has very good qualities of leadership that she uses to good effect in promoting a purposeful atmosphere and high standards. This has extended and consolidated the position noted by the previous report.
53. The school has addressed all the issues of the previous inspection thoroughly, making the improvements expected. The curriculum and teaching for the foundation stage is now good. Standards have been raised in design and technology, mathematics, English and music. There is good provision and support for pupils with special needs. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, although there are examples of inappropriate behaviour by a minority of pupils that affect learning. There are good assessment procedures to track pupils' progress and help with planning.
54. The headteacher provides very good leadership for the educational direction of the school. She has a detailed understanding of all aspects of the school and analyses the strengths and weaknesses thoroughly. She has helped to establish and motivate staff to improve standards. The teachers have developed their subject co-ordinator roles, particularly for the core subjects, so that these get good support. They evaluate their subjects in line with the priorities expressed in the school development plan. This enables them to advise on identified targets within their subjects and promote continuity and progression. The governing body has good links with the school that enable members to monitor the curriculum and developments. The curriculum is managed and developed well by the whole staff.
55. The management of special educational needs is good. The co-ordinator gives good support through the school. The record keeping systems have been reviewed and improved recently and help to make details of pupils easily available. There are good assessment procedures to provide information on learning difficulties or strengths, and these support the pupils. Most tasks are adjusted for the learning needs of pupils. The co-ordinator liaises closely with outside agencies to help pupils receive the best provision available.
56. The headteacher has strengthened procedures for the support and monitoring of

teaching by making classroom observations of all teachers. The discussions following these observations indicate good staff management by raising expectations and identifying aspects to improve. There are good procedures to monitor medium-term curriculum plans. All members of staff are very focused on the school's needs for improvement, and they are effective in supporting change, for example, in implementing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The whole staff forms a strong team that works together well under the headteacher's leadership. Staff professional development is carefully planned, and matched to school priorities.

57. The process of development planning is good. The staff and governing body evaluate the progress through the previous year carefully and agree new priorities for planned improvements. The school developments and initiatives are linked to staff development well. The headteacher and governing body work together well and have a firm grip on the strategic management of the school. The governing body is very effective in its work, is strongly committed to the school and bases its decisions clearly on raising standards and improving facilities. The overall implementation of the school's aims, values and policies is good. Many members of the governing body gain a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses of the school through their focused visits. They report back to their committees and have a clear view of priorities that will improve provision. Members of the governing body are quick to recognise their responsibilities and fulfil their statutory duties very well.
58. The school meets statutory requirements in all respects. The school provides daily assemblies and opportunities for pupils to pray or reflect on their beliefs and experiences. There are sufficient qualified and experienced teachers in the school. The teachers have additional responsibilities over and above their classroom duties and have appropriate job descriptions. Procedures are in place to ensure that staff new to the school are properly supported. The learning support assistant works well in partnership with the teachers and makes a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. The school receives very good support from the school secretary. Performance management is being actively implemented with targets for development. Internal spending and invoicing procedures are carried out in accordance with county guidelines. Powers are separated correctly, and minor areas outlined for development in a recent local authority audit have been acted upon. The money the school receives to fund its work is at an average level for a school of this size. Planning for the efficient expenditure of that money is good, and budgets reflect the teaching and learning priorities of the school development plan.
59. The accommodation provided by the school is satisfactory overall. The classrooms vary in size, and range from generous for the smaller classes of infant pupils to satisfactory for the junior pupils. The school building is in good condition internally and the decoration is significantly enhanced by attractive displays of pupils' work. The hall is of a good size and is multi-functional, being used as a serving area and for physical education as well. The school's external facilities are satisfactory. There is a suitable playground for the infants and juniors, although there is no separate play area for the children under five. There is a fair-sized football pitch and grassed area. The school uses the locality for work in science and environmental activities.
60. Learning resources are satisfactory overall in range, quality and quantity and are effectively used by teachers to support the pupils' learning. The school undertakes a range of outside visits and arranges visitors into school to support topics and the curriculum. With the governing body, the headteacher has improved resources, especially provision for English, mathematics, science and information technology, though with a very limited budget. Pupils' learning and research skills are supported

by the library. Special educational needs provision is efficiently managed and organised by the co-ordinator. The work of the learning support assistant is carefully monitored.

61. The school adds value educationally from when pupils enter at age five to when they leave in Year 4, with some good progress, and provides a good range of activities. The school shows several strengths in the way it plans the pupils' work and ensures that pupils have many good quality experiences. Improvements are carefully costed and are planned to ensure financially prudent spending. The school is effective and efficient, and provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. In order to improve the quality of learning for pupils and raise standards, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:
- 1 Implement the agreed procedures to improve the few pupils' behaviour in classrooms who require firm handling. (paragraphs 13 33 41 64 87 125)
 - 2 Extend the good practice in English lessons to help raise standards in writing by increasing the amount of quality writing in history and religious education at Key Stage 2, and monitoring writing across the curriculum. (paragraphs 25 81 86 124)
 - 3 Make provision for a safe outside play area for children in the foundation stage. (Paragraphs 75 76)

Minor issue

Ensure that the good progress pupils make in the Foundation Stage is maintained as they move into the next stage, by planning future work for these pupils at an appropriate level of challenge.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	23
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	16

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4	13	6	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		66
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		7

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	2
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	3.4	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.2	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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	6	6

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	6	6
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (95)	100 (100)	100 (100)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	6	6	6
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	100 (95)	100 (100)	100 (95)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	66
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	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2
Average class size	20

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	0.8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	21

Financial information

Financial year	April 1999 – March 2000
----------------	----------------------------

	£
Total income	173979
Total expenditure	164310
Expenditure per pupil	2739
Balance brought forward from previous year	10521
Balance carried forward to next year	20190

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	66
Number of questionnaires returned	22

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	36	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	48	0	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	64	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	45	9	0	14
The teaching is good.	55	41	0	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	55	32	14	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	32	9	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	36	0	0	5
The school works closely with parents.	50	27	23	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	23	14	0	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	45	5	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	55	9	0	9

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The inspectors agree with the positive views expressed by parents, both through the questionnaire and the parents' meeting. In relation to homework, it is noted that homework is normally given regularly and of an appropriate amount. The inspectors find that the annual reports to parents are of a good quality and are informative, and parents are welcome at the school to discuss their child's progress. The inspectors find that the school is strongly committed to working with parents and the community, although a very small number disagree.

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

63. The children begin full time in the reception class in the term of their fifth birthday. The children who have birthdays after Christmas or Easter attend part-time from September for mornings only. On entry to reception class the children's experiences and understanding vary considerably and overall attainment is broadly average for their age. Several children demonstrate behaviour that shows they are not really ready to learn in a more formal setting. Children with special needs are assessed carefully and fully integrated into school life. The children make steady progress, with some examples of good progress in language and mathematics. They are all well prepared for the next stage of education through the good choice of activities and effective teaching. The quality of teaching is good in the foundation stage, showing a very good improvement since the previous inspection. The majority of children are ready to begin work within the expectations of the National Curriculum in all areas of learning by the end of the reception year.

Personal, social and emotional development

64. By the time they have completed the foundation stage the majority of children reach the national expectation in their personal and social development. Most children talk to each other happily to share experiences and play well together. Most children understand and respond well to instructions, and are keen to answer questions, although a few do not listen well at times. Children enjoy stories and become very involved, taking part in the patterns of phrases. The good classroom organisation provides for children to be generally purposeful and secure. They are beginning to make suitable choices about activities they would like to experience, and concentrate on them. They occasionally need staff to remind them to listen or take turns, and to be aware of the others. Most children take an interest in each other's comments although a few do not listen well to other's ideas. On a few occasions a few children are silly and immature for their age, refusing to listen or join in appropriately. Most children have learnt to tidy up their activities when requested. They want to share and talk about their work. They mostly get dressed by themselves and are becoming more independent. When they attend full-time, children learn how to join in activities amongst a group of older children, and this arrangement helps them mature.
65. The quality of teaching is good in promoting the children's personal development. Children are encouraged to develop good relationships with each other. The teacher plans good opportunities for children to learn to concentrate or to persevere, during language work, for example. The teacher provides good opportunities for children to choose and learn through exploration and play.

Communication language and literacy

66. By the time children reach the end of the foundation stage they meet the national expectation for development in language, supported by a well-balanced programme of activities that include a focus on developmental writing.
67. The children listen attentively and join in happily to a story that captures their interest well. For example, they enjoyed the repeating phrases and gradually emerging story

of 'Two Feet', and showed a growing understanding of the language. Several children are beginning to understand the meaning behind the text. The children enjoy and respond well to their literacy activities. Several well-planned activities following the 'Two Feet' story encouraged pupils to develop a range of skills. For example the higher attaining pupils wrote simple sentences into a little booklet using emergent writing, showing above average understanding. These children's ability in speaking is above average, with developing fluency and vocabulary about their activities. All the children know some conventions about books, and that pictures can tell a story and the text has meaning. The teacher arranges for children to take books home to share with their family and this helps them to making good progress in early reading skills. Children are gaining appropriate knowledge of phonics, and the lower attaining children know several letters and sounds. The higher attaining children read several words confidently and know the spellings of some words that they want for their own sentences. The majority of children are well prepared for the work required in Year 1.

68. The quality of teaching for language development is very good. Planning is thorough and the teacher promotes good interest in reading and other language work. For example, to encourage the children's sense of purpose she prepared booklets, with envelopes and stamps. The choice of big reading books is very good, having a memorable story line that the children enjoy with the repeating phrases. There is a good focus on speaking and listening, and all the conventions of established reading and writing. The classroom organisation encourages language development well, with a reading area. A well-organised area is set aside to encourage children to extend and practise their emerging writing skills. Language across the curriculum is supported through a good focus on key vocabulary and skills.

Mathematical Development

69. By the time they have completed the foundation stage the majority of children reach the national expectation for mathematics and several exceed it.
70. Children have the early skills for counting, matching and sorting objects. They recognise similarities and differences, using patterns, shapes or colour to sort socks, for example. Most children count up and down to 10 correctly, and several know the meaning of more or less. The majority of children count correctly matching one to one. They make repeating tile patterns and know simple two-dimensional shapes. Their drawings show that they can represent different sizes of members of their family. Their models of castles show good ability to work in three-dimensions, fitting sections together to make castle walls. They know the days of the week but only the higher attaining children sequence them correctly.
71. The quality of teaching is good for mathematical development. The teacher provides lively illustrations, such as a spider with boots on, to help the children count numbers to eight, and these give good opportunities for early mental mathematics. The teacher provides activities that help the children to focus on simple number relations and to talk about them. There are appropriate resources to promote their mathematical skills.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

72. By the time they have completed the foundation stage the majority of children reach the national expectation in their knowledge and understanding of the world.

73. The activities and materials provided by the teacher encourage children to use their senses, for example, things that give off light or that are made from various materials. They know many parts of the body and what we need to live. They know how several animals live and enjoy stories such as the Little Yellow Chicken being retold with puppets. They know about their own family and want to talk about family events. They know how to operate a concept keyboard to build sentences about a story and are familiar with basic computer use. They have used several materials in making a castle to cut the shapes of walls and join parts together, painting to create a good effect. Children choose to use the good range of equipment provided by the teacher, and build simple constructions with kits. With encouragement many children talk about themselves and name their family members.
74. The quality of teaching is good and promotes pupils' learning through the well-organised teacher-led and free-play experiences. Stories, for example, help the children to think about and identify with experiences of the world around them, such as walking in mud or through puddles, and what we wear. The teacher makes good use of the local area to help children observe things around them and to stimulate learning about the world.

Physical Development

75. By the time they have completed the foundation stage the majority of the children reach national expectations in their physical development and several exceed it. There is no protected outside play area and it was not possible to observe children using large play equipment. However, most children move easily, sit well and run around outside fluently at playtimes. There are several materials in the classroom to support children's physical co-ordination such as painting and the kitchen area. Children's fine motor control shows through several bold paintings with good brush strokes, and their handwriting is becoming more controlled with recognisable letters. There are opportunities for the children to take part in lessons in the hall, but none of these took place during the week of the inspection.
76. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teacher provides a variety of materials and activities that promote the children's physical skills and control. These are evident in design and technology, for example, as well as playing a musical instrument where careful control was encouraged. There is less evidence of the children having as much access as they need to physical education lessons each week to help their gross motor development.

Creative development

77. By the time they have completed the foundation stage children's attainment is broadly in line with national expectations.
78. The teacher ensures that a good range of creative activities and materials are provided. There is an enormous home-built castle to stimulate the children's imaginative play. There is a home corner that is currently a kitchen, but the setting is changed regularly. These encourage the children to use their imaginations and take on role-play. The children's paintings show that several use paint freely, with bold colours that are expressive. They have the early skills to cut and stick paper in creating a model castle, complete with towers and flags. The children have many opportunities to develop creative ideas, and explore the properties of texture, shape and form using play dough or other everyday materials. The children play percussion

instruments with suitable control and style, and most sing well, enjoying the repeating rhymes.

79. The quality of teaching is good. Evidence of work around the classroom shows that many activities are provided to develop pupils' skills with different media and tools. The activities give children good experiences, although there is less evidence at present of children making their own observational drawings. The planning and teacher's methods encourage the children to express themselves.

ENGLISH

80. By the time children reach the end of the foundation stage they meet the national expectation for development in language. The majority of children are well prepared for the work required in Year 1. Standards in English are above average overall at the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. The school has improved and consolidated standards since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through well-targeted support.
81. In the national tests of summer 2000 for Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level in reading was at the national average while the percentage reaching Level 3 was well above average. In writing the percentage was very high compared with the national average since all pupils gained Level 2. However, no pupils gained Level 3 in writing and the school has identified this as an area for development. Standards in reading and writing have improved in line with the national trend. Taking the average performance over the past three years, standards in reading and writing exceed the national average. The children were on average a term and a half ahead in reading and two terms ahead in writing.
82. When compared with similar schools for reading, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was well below average, although with a small number of children taking the tests this result should be seen in the context of performance over a few years being above average. The percentage of pupils gaining Level 3 in reading was above the average for similar schools. When compared with similar schools for writing, the percentage of pupils reaching Level 2 or above was very high, but for those gaining Level 3, was well below average. The overall performance of pupils in reading and writing compared with similar schools was average, using the National Curriculum points system. The results over the last three years show that boys performed better than girls in both reading and writing, but this is explained by their individual abilities. The teachers' assessments for 2000 indicate that speaking and listening, and writing skills at Key Stage 1, shown by the percentage of pupils gaining Level 2 or above, were very high and that reading was above average.
83. Standards in speaking and listening are average, with a few pupils showing good skills. A small minority of pupils have not developed the listening skills to concentrate on what the teacher or other children are saying and this adversely affects their progress, even though the teachers use consistent strategies. The teachers generally establish good attention from the pupils so that they are ready to listen. At Key Stage 1, the choice of big book 'Tall Inside' was good since many pupils identified with the feelings of the girl in the story. Several pupils explained clearly what happened, encouraged by the teacher's good questioning. A few pupils made good individual responses to questions showing good speaking skills in explaining their understanding that the girl felt left out and sad. A few understood that the Teddy was used to getting wet because the girl frequently held him while crying. The teachers use the activity of sharing a big book to bring out the sounds of words and prompt

discussion. Pupils are fully involved and full of ideas, demonstrating a growing confidence with vocabulary. Several pupils demonstrate that they have good memories for events in stories or information. Progress and standards in speaking are satisfactory. Pupils generally speak clearly, although several are reluctant to speak out in class and require encouragement from the teachers.

84. Standards in reading are above the national average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. The school has invested in a good range of texts so that there is a wide selection for pupils to choose from and enjoy. The pupils are gaining many relevant skills including recognition of letter sounds within words, word recognition and contextual clues. The pupils are beginning to use letter sounds to build unfamiliar words. A very well planned activity required Year 1 pupils to spell out words using sound cards while the Year 2 pupils spelt them on white boards - then checked each other. The task strongly promoted the pupils' phonic understanding and encouraged the pupils to take an active role in the lesson. Pupils have positive attitudes to reading, which helps them improve their skills. The reading skills of the higher attaining pupils indicate good fluency, expression and textual understanding. By Year 4 pupils tackle more demanding text, such as a play. Most pupils read and interpreted the speech or narrative correctly, and the higher attaining pupils read fluently with above average understanding. Pupils' reading skills are built upon systematically during literacy lessons, with good attention to vocabulary, sentence structure and inference. The practice of hearing individual pupils read has been maintained and supports their progress. Shared and guided reading within the literacy hour is helping to improve reading skills. A few pupils have good, fluent reading skills with full expression.
85. Standards in writing are above average by the end of both Key Stage 1 and Year 4. The teachers select tasks for a good range of writing that includes a variety of styles and writing for different purposes. By Year 2 pupils have written letters about healthy eating, a story of a balloon ride to London and postcards. The writing shows a growing confidence through the school in using writing conventions such as the correct punctuation, use of capital letters and letter formats. By Year 4 the higher attaining pupils show a greater command of sentence structure, and their spelling improves significantly. Pupils become increasingly aware of differing styles as they move through the school, and of the range of purposes for which language is used. Many have good inference and interpretation skills. They show a good developing style of handwriting. However there is considerable variation in handwriting styles through the school since so many pupils join from other schools, and the teachers need to continue with regular practice to establish their approach. The teachers' good focus on phonics, letter sounds and word patterns helps establish secure spelling, such as f-i-v-e patterns with the final e. Pupils in Year 4 inserted the punctuation into the text of a play, including speech marks, with mostly satisfactory understanding of the meaning to be brought out. Standards in handwriting and spelling overall are average, and show clear progress from Year 1 to Year 4. There are several good examples of pupils writing at length, with a good development and expression. The school has identified extended writing as an area for further development. Several good opportunities for writing were seen, and pupils use a story plan well to work out an introduction, middle and conclusion. There is a good emphasis on character; children are generally expressive in explaining their ideas although they find the discipline of writing them out more difficult.
86. The pupils' reading and writing skills support their work in other subjects such as history and science, and the teachers give a suitable emphasis to the technical language. Standards in reading and writing across the curriculum are in line with pupils' overall attainments. Vocabulary is extended in science and descriptions of the

Sutton Hoo archaeological dig, for example. There is less writing at length in history at Key Stage 2.

87. Most pupils have good attitudes and behaviour during English lessons. Teachers usually establish interest and purpose well and make a good choice of text to create a good focus for language development. Most pupils listen actively and many are keen to contribute to discussion. They settle to work quickly when a new activity is started. The purposeful teaching and the use of the literacy strategy by all teachers contribute to secure attainment. By Year 4 most pupils share ideas and work together co-operatively, respecting the ideas of others. The effort and concentration of most pupils supports their attainment well. The good attitudes are promoted by the teaching, which encourages pupils to try hard and take pleasure in the activities.
88. Standards of teaching have improved since the last inspection and are good in both key stages. Lessons are planned well using the literacy strategy and learning objectives are shared and discussed carefully with pupils. The teachers set clear expectations for attention and behaviour. Behaviour is usually well managed and teachers are responsive to pupils, encouraging their attention and interest. The careful planning results in work that is matched well to the needs of different pupils, and tasks are mostly differentiated, which provides suitable challenge. The pace of the lessons and the amount of work pupils produce is usually satisfactory. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, shown in their good questioning skills that encourage pupils to think and reason. Teachers use correct technical vocabulary, and extend the pupils understanding of it. Plenary sessions are used effectively to encourage pupils and to recognise their efforts. Teachers assess pupils' responses and use this to adjust their teaching effectively within the lesson or to re-focus their teaching in a subsequent lesson. Assessment procedures are good. The headteacher gives good attention to analysing test data and keeping on-going records of pupils' progress and difficulties.
89. Samples of written work in books from across the school show a mostly consistent approach to their use. Presentation skills are satisfactory, and are good amongst the higher attaining pupils. The books show regular opportunities for writing, although handwriting practice is not so evident. Teachers mark work very thoroughly with helpful comments that encourage pupils and indicate how to improve. The marking is sometimes related to the pupils' short-term targets.
90. The English curriculum is well structured, broad and balanced, with a good choice of texts. The school uses the National Literacy Strategy effectively as the basis for teachers' planning. The English co-ordinator has a good understanding of the role and provides helpful leadership. She is familiar with the strengths and weaknesses in the subject through the school, and observes lessons to monitor standards. There are sufficient resources to meet the requirements of the curriculum and this has been a recent focus for investment, extending the stock well. The school library is appropriately stocked and used by pupils. Work with computer programs is becoming established to promote pupils' writing.

MATHEMATICS

91. Standards in mathematics are above average by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. The school has improved standards since the previous inspection by ensuring that all pupils are attaining appropriately. The pupils are achieving as expected in relation to their prior attainment, including the higher attaining pupils. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress through well-targeted support.

92. In the national tests of summer 2000 at Key Stage 1, overall standards were above the national average but below the average for similar schools. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected Level 2 was very high, since 100 per cent reached this level, and this was in the top five per cent nationally. However, the proportion reaching the higher Level 3 was below average. When taking the past three years together, pupils' attainment overall has been above the national average by the equivalent of just over a term's work. The upward four-year trend is broadly in line with the national trend. Pupils make steady progress from when they are five to the end of Key Stage 1 through the good teaching. While the attainment of boys was above that of girls taking the past few years together, the difference is explained by the individual attainment of pupils.
93. The teachers' good planning using the numeracy strategy leads to pupils receiving a good choice of tasks. They provide good learning experiences and secure attainment. By Year 2 most pupils have a generally good understanding of numbers and numeracy skills, and how to calculate that comes from the good focus on numeracy skills. Within Reception children are introduced to early counting activities. By Year 2, pupils have a secure early understanding of how numbers work using hundreds, tens and units, and they are beginning to understand place value. They know the patterns of counting in the 2, 5 and 10 times tables. The higher attaining pupils demonstrate good facility with number and recall. The majority of pupils by Year 2 carry out simple calculations correctly. They are beginning to explain their methods, helped by the careful questioning by the teachers, although a few are not confident in explaining the method. Pupils can sort low numbers according to simple criteria such as odd and even. The higher attaining pupils understand how to sort shapes according to criteria such as having equal sides. Previous work shows that pupils have the skills and understand number, simple measures and shapes. They set out information in charts and understand simple relationships about the results. Most pupils set out their working neatly for the age.
94. Pupils' attainment is above average in Key Stage 2 to Year 4, supported well by the teachers' good attention to basic skills. In Years 3 and 4, for example, pupils build up their knowledge of the 24 hour clock through clear exposition by the teacher. The tasks are planned for differing abilities of pupils so that most pupils are actively involved in the work. Pupils know how to tell the time with an analogue or digital clock, with just a few errors. The Year 4 pupils find calculating times before or after a given time more difficult, such as 9.15 less 40 minutes. By Year 4 most pupils have a basic understanding of how to set out simple calculations using standard methods. Their numeracy skills are good and they use a variety of mental strategies to find answers.
95. The quality of teaching is good. The teachers use good strategies to establish interest and attention to promote learning well. The lesson planning is good, with clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils. Work is prepared well for different ability groups, to enable them all to make good progress. The planning contains few notes of the teaching methods to be used, however. The teachers plan to and implement the numeracy strategy well, for example in using activities to develop mental patterns and recall. Their clear exposition is based on good subject knowledge, usually making good use of mathematical apparatus that is suited to pupils' needs, particularly at Key Stage 1. In a few lessons teachers make insufficient use of apparatus to support the pupils' understanding, for example with work using larger numbers. Teachers work closely with the pupils and are observant of them, using their observations well to pick up difficulties and explain ideas again. The teachers usually have a skilled questioning approach that challenges pupils to reason.

Their management of the pupils is usually good, although several pupils exhibit challenging behaviour and need constant support to remain on task. Teachers have good arrangements to make evaluation notes at the end of each week to help further planning. The procedures for assessment and recording are good.

96. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes to learning are good overall. Most pupils enjoy the class discussions and settle quickly to the group tasks, usually working together well. They share ideas and help each other when needed. Most pupils are responsible in working independently when needed, and they apply their skills well to the tasks, although there is a small minority of pupils who occasionally exhibit inappropriate behaviour. The support assistant gives good support to pupils with special educational needs, so that the pupils make good progress.
97. Mathematics and numeracy are used in several subjects such as science and design technology. The school is beginning to use information technology, for example, with programs on time, simple calculation and data handling. Mathematics contributes well to pupils' speaking and listening skills through the skilled questions and discussions led by the teachers.
98. The co-ordinator for mathematics gives good support throughout the school. The scheme of work is based on the National Numeracy Strategy and provides secure coverage and progression so that the subject meets statutory requirements. Test results are analysed carefully for strengths and weaknesses, and the headteacher tracks pupils carefully and sets targets. The headteacher monitors teaching regularly, and discusses carefully how the school might improve. This is good practice. The co-ordinator reviews the subject continuously through the year and contributes to a development plan. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and easily available.

SCIENCE

99. Pupils achieved standards that are well above the national average, based on the teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 in the national tests of summer 2000, although pupils' understanding of work in Life and living processes was not so well understood. All pupils achieved a Level 2 or above. Twice as many pupils achieved a Level 3 than is the case nationally. The scrutiny of pupils' work during the inspection indicates that pupils are on target to achieve similar standards at the end of the year, although slightly fewer pupils are likely to achieve a Level 3. This indicates good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are developing confidence in carrying out investigations. They are able to make predictions and can record the results of their tests on simple charts, prepared by the teacher, or in picture form. Higher attaining pupils are expected to write more about what they have observed. Pupils do a lot of work in the time available. It is generally neatly presented and finished. Pupils understand the idea of 'life cycles'. They know a good range of equipment which uses electricity and can construct and draw simple circuits. Pupils know what causes shadows to be formed and are beginning to be able to classify materials according to their properties. They have a good idea of which foods are good for us and know that we have five senses and what they are used for.
100. At the end of Year 4, pupils are achieving standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally and are on target to achieve appropriately at the end of the key stage. This is satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. Pupils become steadily more competent and independent when carrying out investigations. Their ability to record their results improves appropriately. They are able to describe in more detail what they have observed. They record their results using standard

measurements and often show them on different types of graphs or pie charts. Higher attaining pupils are expected to produce more detailed conclusions and to try to suggest reasons for their findings. During the inspection, they were beginning to appreciate the need to re-test in order to check the reliability of their findings. All pupils understand the need for fair testing.

101. Pupils understand what plants need to grow and can name the main parts of plants. They know about seed dispersal and germination. They have found out about teeth and know that we have different types and that they are used for different purposes. Their understanding of light has been extended and they have investigated the apparent movement of shadows during the day using shadow sticks. Pupils know that materials can be opaque, transparent or translucent and understand what each term means.
102. At both key stages, pupils who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. They receive effective adult support and the work prepared for them fully takes into account their individual needs. As a result, they are able to undertake the same work as the rest of the class and achieve success.
103. Pupils at both key stages enjoy science, particularly when they are carrying out practical investigations. They are keen both to ask and answer questions. The majority are able to work well in groups, but a minority find this difficult and this has a negative impact on learning at both key stages and in reception. In each class, there is a significant minority of pupils who are slow to follow instructions, settle to work and who find it very difficult to concentrate on the task if the teacher is not working directly with them. These immature and inappropriate attitudes make it difficult for teachers to teach and can prevent other pupils working.
104. At both key stages, teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and science is well taught. Teachers' planning is very thorough and the pupils clearly build upon work that has gone before. Teachers take into account the needs of all pupils in the class when preparing lessons. They clearly have different expectations of pupils, which are based upon a thorough knowledge of their ability. Lessons generally include extension activities for more able pupils and extra help or more structured work for those who find the subject difficult.
105. Teachers place an appropriate emphasis on investigative work and plan interesting activities, which makes the subject enjoyable for the pupils, but the pupils are not always given sufficient responsibility in making their own investigations. Questioning is used well to check what pupils know and to get them to apply their knowledge in different situations. Classroom support assistants and helpers are well briefed and make a very effective contribution to pupils learning. They help lower attaining pupils access the work and they are also used to work with the most able on more challenging activities. Teachers mark work frequently and keep detailed records of pupils' achievements and attitudes. Their assessment system is thorough, accurate and is used to help them plan work. Whenever relevant, teachers use computers to support the work in science. Teachers generally enjoy good relationships with their pupils.
106. Science is well managed and teachers are able to attend relevant courses to enable them to keep up to date with curriculum changes. The co-ordinator monitors the work of the school and has an appropriate development plan for the subject. The school makes good use of visits and visitors to make the subject more interesting for the pupils.

ART

107. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is in line with the national expectation. Year 4 pupils achieve standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally. They are on target to achieve the national expectation at the end of Year 4.
108. Key stage 1 pupils are beginning to use sketchbooks to try out new techniques and to record their ideas. They are able to mix different colours from primary colours and know how to produce different shades using white. They have experimented with line and are developing the ability to observe closely and observe what they see. They have used different materials to add texture and have learnt how to make coiled pots using clay. Pupils have had the chance to look at Ghanaian art and will have the chance to study the work of Kandinsky.
109. At Key Stage 2, pupils have studied Ghanaian art, making their own wooden printing blocks and printing traditional style fabrics. They have studied Anglo-Saxon jewellery and have designed and made their own. They are able to mix colours competently using paint. Some of their work related to Divali shows a good level of skill and creativity. They become aware of the work of other famous artists.
110. Pupils generally enjoy art. They are quick to settle to their work and show interest and enjoyment. Almost half the pupils are keen to attend the after school art club on a weekly basis. They take care with their work and are pleased with their results. They tidy away well at the end of lessons, but often need too many reminders before they actually do it.
111. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and are able to give competent demonstrations of skills and techniques. They are well organised and make good use of the resources available. Pupils' work is attractively displayed in some classrooms. The scheme of work ensures the National Curriculum requirements are being taught, but there is a need to ensure that skills are systematically developed as pupils move through the school. Some of the best work is done through the art club and not all pupils are able to benefit from this. The art curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

112. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. Pupils in Year 4 are achieving standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally and they are on target to achieve the national expectation by the end of the key stage. Pupils at both key stages develop skills and knowledge using all the materials specified in the national curriculum, for example, wood, clay, food, textiles and recycled materials. Pupils at Key Stage 1 quickly develop an understanding of the design process. They draw simple diagrams of what they intend to make and label them to show the materials and colours they intend to use. Through discussion with the class teacher and other adults, they learn to identify what is wrong with their plans and to suggest how they could be improved. They learn to use tools and equipment safely and to make their own decisions, with adult guidance as appropriate, about materials and techniques. They take care with their work and produce finished items of a good standard. For example, during the inspection, pupils were making shadow puppets, testing them out and improving them if necessary. All achieved success in

this project and some of their drawings of existing puppets to show how they worked, are of a very high standard.

113. Pupils continue to develop their practical skills as they move through Key Stage 2. The quality of their initial plans improves and they pay more attention to the specific requirements of the task. For example, they put more thought into the materials they plan to use, ensuring they are fit for the purpose. They acquire a broader range of skills and techniques and carry them out with greater precision. The quality of their drawings improves and they begin to include measurements. Their Anglo-Saxon houses are well made and careful thought has been put into the choice of materials and the technique used to form the basic structure.
114. Pupils at both key stages enjoy this subject, particularly when it involves practical work. They take a pride in their work and are keen to produce good quality artefacts that they are pleased with. They are able to work both independently and in groups, although they are not always as co-operative with each other as they should be. They do not always listen to the teachers' instructions properly as they are too keen to get on with the practical activities. As a result, they sometimes make unnecessary mistakes and then need extra help to correct them.
115. Teachers have a secure understanding of this subject and their lessons are based on a detailed and appropriate scheme of work. The tasks planned are interesting and, whenever possible, they are closely linked to ongoing work in other subjects. For example, the shadow puppets link well to the ongoing light topic in science and the Anglo-Saxon houses and jewellery are sensibly linked to the current history topic. Teachers are well aware of the need for pupils to make their own decisions and they allow them the freedom to do this, but at the same time, are quick to step in to help pupils to avoid them having any disasters! Teachers keep careful records of pupils' achievement in the subject and this helps them to accurately assess pupils' levels of attainment and write useful comments on pupils' reports.
116. Co-ordination of the subject is effective and good use is made of the resources available. Monitoring of the work done is good and enables the school to ensure that work becomes increasingly more challenging as pupils move through the school.

GEOGRAPHY

117. It was not possible to observe the teaching of geography during the inspection as this subject will be taught in the spring term. Evidence was gathered from a close scrutiny of pupils' work in books and on display around the school, scrutiny of teachers' planning files and records, discussions with staff, pupils and governors.
118. Standards of attainment in this subject are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 4 attain standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally and they are on target to achieve at least the national expectation by the end of the key stage. Key Stage 1 pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the local area. They know about the different types of houses and the recreational facilities in the village. They can locate their own house on a map of the area and can produce a simple map to show their route to school. They are also able to draw clear plans to show the layout of the school. Pupils in Year 2 know that places have different characteristics and they can say how life in Thurlow is different to that on a Scottish island. They have also compared their lives with that of people in Ghana and know that houses and the weather and food are quite different.

119. Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of rivers. They can use maps to locate places and know that climate varies in different parts of the world. They have carried out a detailed comparative study of life in Thurlow compared with life in Ghana. This has involved a study of maps to make detailed comparisons between temperature and rainfall in each country. The pupils have shown their results as different types of graphs and pie charts. They have identified similarities and differences between the houses, food, occupations and daily life in the two countries. A visit to Aklowa, an African village in England, has enabled pupils to have a good understanding of the different lifestyles. This study has made a particularly strong contribution to the cultural development of the pupils.
120. Geography is well taught in the school. Pupils develop appropriate levels of skills and knowledge as they move through the school. Teachers plan carefully to ensure the needs of individuals are met. They plan interesting activities and make excellent use of visits and visitors to bring the subject to life, and, to make it more enjoyable for the pupils. Teachers have a good understanding of the subject and make good use of national guidance when planning their work. Pupils' work is regularly marked and detailed records of pupils' attainment are kept. This information is used to help teachers when they are planning. It also enables them to write informative comments on pupils' school reports.

HISTORY

121. Pupils in Key Stage 1 are on target to achieve the national expectations by the end of the key stage. Pupils in Year 4 are achieving standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally and are on target to achieve the national expectation by the end of the key stage.
122. Pupils at Key Stage 1 are beginning to understand how things have changed over time. They know that their parents and grandparents had toys that are different to their own and have made a class museum of toys which show this. They have realised that we need to look for clues to help us decide whether things are old. The pupils have found out about castles and have a good idea why they were built. During the inspection, they used this knowledge to help them decide where they would build a castle on the map they were given. They also know that life was different in the past and they have compared the life of Leofric in 1294, with their own lives. A visit to Colchester castle has helped them to empathise with people who lived in castles. Pupils have found out how a trip to the seaside fifty years ago would have been different to their own visit. They are building up a clear understanding about the past and how life has changed.
123. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to develop their historical skills as they follow the National Curriculum study units. They extend the range of their historical knowledge. They have found out about the Ancient Greeks and have learnt about life in the local area during the last war. They have recently visited West Stow Anglo-Saxon village and have a very good understanding of life in Anglo-Saxon times. They know how the houses were constructed and with what materials, using this information to produce realistic models. They know about Anglo-Saxon dress and have dyed their own wool using traditional methods. They know that archaeologists use evidence from items found buried with people to establish their status and likely occupation. During the

inspection, pupils were given information about the artefacts found in Anglo-Saxon graves and they used this and their previous knowledge to guess what type of person was in the grave they were studying. They did this competently and were able to justify their conclusions. Pupils have the ability to make comparisons between our lives and those of other people in other periods in history. They are also beginning to understand some of the ways in which our lives have been influenced by those of people in the past.

124. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, clearly enjoy history at both key stages. They particularly enjoy their visits to places of historical interest and talk about them with enthusiasm. They remember well the information they have found out on these visits. Pupils written work is limited at Key Stage 2, but their practical work is of a good standard and indicates they know far more than their written work suggests. Pupils can work collaboratively when required and older pupils can carry out independent research.
125. Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers at both key stages have a secure understanding of the subject, which enables them to plan interesting activities for the pupils. Whenever possible, the school arranges visits to places of historical interest, which really brings the subject to life for the pupils. Teachers plan lessons very thoroughly, taking into account the needs of individual pupils. Those with special educational needs receive support so that they are able to take a full part and achieve success, while the higher attaining pupils are given more challenging activities. Teachers often use questioning, not only to check understanding, but also to challenge pupils. Planning ensures that all the requirements of the National Curriculum are fully met and teachers have recently updated their scheme of work to ensure they have made the best use of national guidance. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' attainment and this helps them plan work and informs the useful comments on pupils' school reports. Teachers have to work hard to manage the pupils and to keep them on task since for a few pupils their concentration is not always focused.
126. There is effective co-ordination of the subject and monitoring of the work in all classes ensures that planning is put into practice and that pupils are building on what has gone before as they move through the school. Good use of visits and visitors supplements the school's own resources for history. Information technology is now being used effectively to support pupils learning in history.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards in information technology are in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils in Year 4 are achieving standards similar to those of pupils of the same age nationally and are on target to achieve the national expectation at the end of Year 4.
128. The school has installed new computers in every classroom since the last inspection. The ratio of computers to pupils is now above the national average. The school has also extended its range of software which now represents most subjects. The computers are used in most lessons. Pupils are confident in their use and use them for a wide range of purposes.
129. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to use a keyboard and a mouse. They can use a word processing program to write using upper and lower case letters. They are able to use punctuation when writing simple sentences. Pupils can print their work

and some of the oldest pupils are able to combine text and pictures. Pupils use a graphics program to produce some good pictures. This has involved them in using the mouse to select different colours and apply them in different places. Pupils can use the mouse to select icons and to move items on the screen. This ability was observed during the inspection when pupils used a CD Rom to investigate castles. Pupils also use computers to help them with their number work. They have learnt how to give simple instructions to a 'Roamer' to make it move in different directions.

130. By Year 4 pupils are more competent when word processing their work and can print independently. They are able to program a screen turtle to draw squares, oblongs and triangles. They are able to use the Internet to carry out research and use a good range of CD Roms with confidence. They have the early skills to enter information onto a database and use it to present their findings attractively as graphs and pie charts. They can send e-mails.
131. Pupils enjoy using computers and show sound levels of concentration when working at them. In general, they are willing to take turns and to help each other. Pupils treat the equipment with respect and show real interest when shown how to use a new piece of software.
132. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages. All teachers and support staff are confident in their use of ICT. Their subject knowledge is good and this enables them to use lots of opportunities to use computers to support work in the classroom. They are now used in most subjects, for example, English, mathematics, science, music, art, history and geography. There is a detailed scheme of work for teachers to follow. It has been updated to take account of recently produced national guidance. Teachers plan very thoroughly and ensure that all the requirements of the national curriculum are taught. Teachers clearly specify the intended learning outcome for each computer activity. Pupils' attainment is measured against this and detailed records are built up which clearly show progress and the skills and knowledge acquired. This enables teachers to accurately assess their level of attainment and to provide useful comments on their reports.
133. The co-ordination of the subject is effective and an appropriate development plan is in place. The school is well resourced now and it makes very good use of the hard and software available.

MUSIC

134. Only a few lessons were observed in music but the indications are that pupils are gaining appropriate skills and standards meet the expectations for the subject. This is a good improvement at Key Stage 2 since the last inspection. From the evidence gained, infant pupils have satisfactory rhythm and control in playing musical instruments such as Indian bells or a wood block. They follow and repeat rhythm patterns. At Key Stage 2 pupils are more confident with these skills, and many pupils have a good sense of rhythm and expression that is encouraged by the teacher's methods. The pupils sing well in parts, given a good lead by the teacher. This ensures that pupils have a chance to perform with the others, and to listen to the singing patterns. Pupils have a satisfactory, clear singing voice, and mostly sing tunefully in pitch. During assemblies the pupils sing out well. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 played chime bars competently, producing a good sound and tone. Most pupils followed the rhythms and patterns of the song, and listened to the overall effect produced by the group, thus developing their appraisal skills. Overall pupils are making sound

progress through the school, supported by the programme of study. Pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress.

135. Most pupils are responsive to music and are keen to join in, encouraged by the good choice of tasks and the active example of the teacher, so that they have good learning experiences. They enjoy their music making, and want to develop their skills. Pupils' attitudes are good overall in both key stages, and behaviour is good by the great majority of pupils. The pupils participate well in the activities. Pupils are beginning to listen carefully to the sounds and patterns of musical instruments.
136. The quality of teaching is good at both key stages overall. The teachers' management of pupils is good, and pupils are arranged suitably for lessons to help them take an active part. The subject planning allows for opportunities to compose, perform, listen to and appraise music, so meeting statutory requirements. The co-ordinator provides satisfactory leadership and direction. The accommodation is good and teachers use the school hall on occasions. There is a suitable selection of instruments, including some from differing cultures. There is an extra-curricular music group to widen pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils have opportunities to appreciate music in assemblies.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137. There was no opportunity to observe any formal physical education lessons. From observation of the pupils around the school they move fluently, and during playtimes take part in active running and ball games. The after-school football coaching gives the pupils good opportunities to develop specific skills. The pupils take part enthusiastically and are learning to play as teams as well as control and direct the ball with suitable skill.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

138. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Key Stage 1 and Year 4. Pupils make steady progress through the school and pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress. Only one lesson was observed, so evidence is drawn from pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff as well.
139. Pupils in Key Stage 1 know that the Bible is a special book and some of the stories from it. They have learnt about some festivals, the significance of ceremonies, and of some special events of the Christian and other religions' years such as the Nativity and Advent. Pupils have discussed why their families are special, and the importance of relationships. They have produced a book of class prayers that indicate an early understanding of how a religious faith influences people's lives.
140. Within Key Stage 2 pupils understand the significance of light in religions. They recall events from the story of Rama and Sita and know why Diwali is a special commemoration. They have produced attractive Rangoli patterns. The pupils also understand that Hanukkah is celebrated by Jews, and know about the eight candles that are lit on successive days. Previous work indicates that pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the background to Christianity and other world religions, and several of the significant events, customs and beliefs. By Year 4 pupils know some of the Hindu and Jewish stories and customs associated with Diwali and Hanukkah. The quality of the work and the pupils' understanding indicates good subject knowledge overall by the teachers that helps to bring out the special nature of a religious life. The quantity of pupils' own writing could be more extensive, although assessment procedures are

good. Pupils' work also has a good emphasis on the importance of tolerance and respect for those who have views and faiths different from their own. The teachers' planning is thorough and linked well to the locally agreed syllabus so that pupils' have good learning experiences across all aspects of the subject. In the lesson observed, there was a good emphasis on the main events and traditions for Hanukah which kept pupils' interest well with appropriate attention to knowledge and skills. The teacher exercised good control, using careful questioning to promote the pupils' attainment, although the discussion of the background was rather brief for consolidating the pupils' knowledge.

141. The pupils' work indicates that they have good attitudes to the subject in both key stages, presenting the tasks well on most occasions, and a good level of interest. By Year 4 pupils' work shows a developing maturity to deal with ideas sympathetically, and suggests effective teaching. Many pupils present work maturely on several aspects of religious life and beliefs, and they try to present their work neatly.

142. The curriculum meets fully the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, from which lessons are planned carefully, with clear learning objectives. The subject is led and managed well by the co-ordinator. The staff share experience informally to help with planning. A helpful selection of resources has been built up to teach about Christianity and other faiths, and they contribute well to the pupils' learning. The subject contributes well to pupils' understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, by giving opportunities for pupils to learn about their own culture and the diversity in the wider community.