

INSPECTION REPORT

GREAT SAMPFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Great Sampford, Saffron Walden

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 114970

Headteacher: Mr Ian Pollard

Reporting inspector: Mr Sean O'Toole
20891

Dates of inspection: 21st – 23rd November 2000

Inspection number: 224565

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category:

Community

Age range of pupils:

4 - 11

Gender of pupils:

Mixed

School address:

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Great Sampford
Saffron Walden
Essex

Postcode:

CB10 2RL

Telephone number:

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Appropriate authority:

The governing body

Name of chair of governors:

Mrs S Gant

Date of previous inspection:

January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr S O'Toole 20891	Registered inspector	Mathematics Information and communication technology Art and design Design and technology History Equal opportunities	The school's results and pupils' achievements Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well are pupils taught How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further
Mr G Braddick 13504	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Mrs A Wilkinson-Tilbrook 10068	Team inspector	The foundation stage Special educational needs English Science Geography Music Physical education Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Great Sampford Primary School is located in the village of Great Sampford, seven miles from Saffron Walden. Most pupils live in the village with the remainder coming from surrounding villages. A total of sixty-six boys and girls attend the school, a figure which is lower than at the time of the previous inspection. The school is smaller than most other primary schools. Pupils are aged from four to eleven. Almost all pupils come from white ethnic backgrounds and live in an area which is economically advantaged. No pupil has English as an additional language. Two pupils are entitled to free school meals a figure which is below average. An average proportion of pupils has special educational needs although the percentage having statements of special educational need is below average. Four children are under five and are taught in the reception/infant class. On admission to the school in the reception class most children have average levels of attainment.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school. Determined and successful leadership and management have remedied the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. Attainment in English and mathematics are now above average and performance in national tests has improved sharply, through effective teaching, challenging target setting and rigorous pursuit of higher standards. The quality of teaching is good and the pupils are keen and well motivated learners who behave very well. The school makes good use of the funds provided to improve the quality of education and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English, mathematics, history and design and technology are above average at the end of the infants and juniors.
- Teaching throughout the school is good.
- The provision for and progress of pupils with special educational needs are good.
- Pupils' behaviour attitudes and personal development are very good.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are a very effective team who lead and manage the school successfully.
- The school fully involves parents in the education of their children and they make an excellent contribution to the life and work of the school.
- This is a very caring school where support for the pupils is given high priority.

What could be improved

- Standards in information and communication technology throughout the school.
- Standards in geography in the juniors.
- The pace and challenge in some science lessons.
- The school's library and resources for mathematics, geography, science and religious education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the previous inspection in January 1998. All of the serious weaknesses identified have been remedied. The governors and headteacher have welded together a strong and highly committed team who have excellent capacity to move the school forward. Teaching is much better than it was and the planning of lessons and match of work to pupils' abilities are good. Standards in English and mathematics have improved and overall attainment at the end of the infants and juniors is higher than at the time of the previous inspection. There is rigorous monitoring and effective use of assessment. The successful introduction of schemes of work has improved consistency in developing pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are now very good. All health and safety issues have been addressed. The school has made satisfactory improvement in providing for the pupils' spiritual and cultural development. Other improvements include the development of the outdoor play area for reception children and more involvement by the governors in shaping the direction of the school.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	E	E	A	A
Mathematics	E	E	A	B
Science	E	E	C	E

Key

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

Pupils start school with average skills in all areas of their development. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good throughout the school in developing basic skills. By the end of reception, the children have attained the early learning goals in each aspect of their work and made very good headway in reading. By the end of the infants, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. Standards in science are average by the end of the infants and juniors. In the national tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils attain well above average standards in English and mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in English and mathematics has increased. Overall standards are high enough although they are below average in information and communication technology throughout the school and geography in the juniors. Standards in English are well above those in similar schools and above average in mathematics. However they are well below average in science and more needs to be done to increase the proportion of pupils attaining higher levels in science tests. The significant improvement in results between 1999 and 2000 has been achieved through good teaching, better planning and challenging work. The school has met its targets in English and mathematics and is well placed to build on this success. Standards in history and design and technology are above average. Pupils in the infants and juniors achieve appropriate standards for their age in art and design, music, religious education and physical education.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are enthusiastic and well motivated learners who enjoy school. They respond very well in literacy and numeracy lessons. The pupils take great interest in homework, for example in their history topics in Years 5 and 6.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils listen attentively and show respect for their teachers and each other. There have been no exclusions. Behaviour in assemblies and at playtimes is very orderly.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils get on well together and are supportive and positive in forming relationships. They enjoy taking responsibility and respond enthusiastically to the school's awards for citizenship and endeavour.
Attendance	Good. The pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above the national average. Punctuality is good.

The pupils' behaviour, attitudes and personal development are now strengths of the school. The school is a very orderly place where all work together in harmony. Children under five settle quickly into school and make good progress in their personal and social development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
23 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.

Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good throughout the school. The teaching was very good or excellent in 35 per cent of lessons, good in 39 per cent and satisfactory in 22 per cent. Only one lesson was unsatisfactory. Strengths in the teaching include effective relationships and behaviour management, planning which takes account of the needs of all pupils and particularly those with special educational needs and secure teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Homework is used well and the teachers have high expectations that the pupils will work productively and persevere with tasks. Good support is provided for reception children. There is some very good and excellent teaching of English and mathematics. The teaching of science is satisfactory but there is insufficient pace and challenge in some lessons. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge with the exception of information and communication technology. They have developed effective ways of motivating the pupils through praise and reward. The pupils respond well to the teaching and are keen learners. They settle to tasks quickly, are adept in choosing resources, work hard and are good at co-operating with their peers. Teachers communicate clearly and effectively. They insist on good presentation of work and encourage independent thinking.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects are taught and the school places strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The organisation of topics in geography means that there is lack of consistency in developing pupils' geographical knowledge and skills in the juniors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils receive effective support and their individual education plans are well focused. Parents are involved extensively in reviewing their children's progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development and encourages their awareness of their responsibilities. Staff consistently reinforce good behaviour and encourage self-discipline. Assemblies and religious education are used satisfactorily to develop spiritual and cultural awareness but more could be done.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very effectively. This is a caring school where individuals are respected and encouraged. The staff make good use of assessment to identify ways of helping the pupils and to plan work for all abilities.

The school has excellent relationships with parents. The parents contribute much to the school's success through helping in classrooms, raising funds and supporting their children with homework. The school makes good provision for equal opportunities. There is a very good range and number of extra-curricular activities. Child protection and health and well being of the pupils receive high priority.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher leads by example and provides inspiration to staff and pupils. The staff form an effective and hard-working team. There is a strong commitment to school improvement. Rigorous analysis of results, good teaching, thorough planning and very effective teamwork are hallmarks of the school's success.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very effectively. The governors play a pivotal role in school improvement. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are rigorous in pursuing excellence. However, the school strategic plans are not prioritised sufficiently.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school makes effective use of data to analyse its performance. Challenging targets are set for the headteacher and for pupils' performance in national tests which are reviewed regularly.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial decisions are linked well to the school's priorities and there are robust controls. Funds are used well to raise standards and governors apply the principles of best value by tendering for supplies and services.

There is a sufficient number of staff and they have good expertise and experience. The accommodation is good and used well, particularly the new outdoor play area for reception

children. The school is short of resources for some subjects and has insufficient library books.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The way the school has improved standards: • That their children enjoy school and become mature and responsible: • Much improved and very good behaviour: • The good quality of teaching: • The way in which the headteacher and staff take account of their views: • The extra-curricular activities provided by the school: • The good progress made by their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provision of homework: • The standards in information and communication technology.

The parents' positive views are fully justified by inspection evidence. The inspection team found that the school makes good provision for homework; and this view was endorsed by parents at the meeting held prior to the inspection. There are gaps in the pupils' skills in using computers.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 The school has improved significantly since the previous inspection and standards are much higher than before in most subjects. Given the complete change of staff in the last 18 months and the school's serious weaknesses at the time of the previous inspection there has been very good progress made in raising standards. There have been fluctuations in the pupils' performance in national tests at the end of the infants and juniors over the last few years. The small number of pupils taking the tests has resulted in some variation from year to year. However, until the appointment of the new headteacher and current staff, standards were not high enough and the pupils made insufficient progress. This situation has been reversed and the school is beginning to attain higher standards through much more effective teaching and learning. The serious weaknesses in standards and progress identified in the previous inspection have been tackled effectively and there is now consistency in the development of skills, knowledge and understanding between classes. Standards are now sufficiently high in almost all subjects. Throughout the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. This is due to the effective way that teachers match work to the needs of the different abilities and ages within each class, monitor their performance and set well focused targets for improvement.
- 2 At the time of the inspection, four children were working in the foundation stage in the reception class. They make good progress, supported well by the class teacher and the nursery nurse. On admission to the school the children have appropriate levels of knowledge and understanding in each area of their development. They soon settle to the school's routines and become confident and well motivated learners making a good start to their formal education. The children are on target to achieve all the early learning goals by the end of reception. They have good communication skills and make particularly rapid progress in early reading, benefiting significantly from the support provided through the Early Reading Research Project. They have secure mathematical skills and make good gains in counting, matching and sorting. The children have a wide knowledge of the world around them and make good progress in learning how to use computers. The new outdoor play area is of much benefit in helping the children to develop their physical and creative skills. Effective planning and teaching linked with caring and purposeful support ensures that the children benefit for a suitable range of experiences so that they are equipped well for the National Curriculum by the time they start in Year 1.
- 3 National test results at the end of the juniors in 2000 have shown remarkable improvement over the previous years with standards in English and mathematics being well above average whereas in previous years they were well below average. This has been achieved through staff changes, improved planning, better teaching, the successful implementation of national strategies for literacy and numeracy, and effective target setting and monitoring. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in the English and mathematics tests has also increased due to a closer match of work to pupils' abilities. The school achieved its targets in English and mathematics in 2000 and is on course to maintain them in the coming year. Results of national tests at the end of the infants in reading, writing and mathematics in 2000 were about average with few pupils attaining the higher level 3. Since September a new teacher has been appointed and there is much more rigour and challenge in the teaching. Standards are rising rapidly and the increased challenge for the more able pupils is paying dividends.

Infant and junior pupils are on course to attain above average standards in the national tests and inspection evidence shows that standards are above average in English and mathematics.

- 4 Infant and junior pupils have good speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively and are able to sustain conversation with their peers and adults. They make effective use of a wide range of vocabulary and have a particularly good knowledge of the vocabulary for different subjects due to effective teaching of key words. Reading is given high priority throughout the school and standards are well above average with pupils confidently and competently reading from a wide range of texts. Writing skills are average overall but are improving through very effective teaching, good opportunities to write in different subjects and a much more structured approach to teaching spelling, grammar and punctuation. Given the current rate of progress, pupils should achieve above average standards by the end of Years 2 and 6. Pupils use their reading and writing skills well in other subjects. In history, the oldest pupils produce very good topics about their village making effective use of writing skills learned in literacy lessons. This homework is of good standard and illustrates the effective gains made by pupils in their learning since the start of the year.
- 5 By the end of the infants and juniors the pupils achieve above average standards in mathematics and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and very well planned lessons contribute much to the rising standards in the subject. The pupils have very good skills in mental arithmetic and apply their knowledge of number well to solving problems of increasing complexity. Their knowledge of space, shape and measures is good and the way that the pupils apply this knowledge in subjects such as design and technology is commendable. Similarly pupils have good skills and knowledge of graphs and use them to present data effectively. They also make graphs to illustrate their science work and some Year 5 and 6 pupils used a variety of charts to show historical facts.
- 6 At the end of both the infants and juniors, standards in science are average in national tests for seven and eleven-year-olds. However, when compared with similar schools standards in science are well below average. Progress in science is good in the infants and satisfactory in the juniors. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection but more needs to be done to raise pupils' level of attainment to match that in English and mathematics. The school is aware of the difference in performance between the subjects and has plans to review the teaching of science during this academic year. Standards in religious education are in line with those expected in the syllabus followed by most schools in Essex. However, standards in information and communication technology are not high enough and are below average. Pupils have appropriate skills in word processing but other aspects of their work in computers are underdeveloped and insufficient use is made of computers in other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in information and communication technology as they have additional opportunities to work on computers. Their work is linked effectively to their individual education plans. Although infant pupils have average skills and knowledge in geography, the juniors lack confidence and understanding of the subject and standards are below average.
- 7 Throughout the school, the pupils receive a good grounding in history, due to the teachers' interest in the subject they achieve levels which are above those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress in some aspects of physical education; their swimming skills are above average and they have imaginative dance skills. In design and technology infants and juniors make good progress and achieve good levels in

making, designing and evaluating models. Overall standards in music and art and design are average. Pupils enjoy music and benefit from a visiting expert in the subject. The pupils make satisfactory progress in art and design and standards are average for the pupils' ages. They have a good knowledge of the work of famous artists but lack skills in three-dimensional modelling as there are insufficient opportunities for them to work with a wide range of materials.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 8 There has been significant improvement since the previous inspection in pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development and the serious weaknesses identified have been overcome. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are now strengths of the school and are very good. This success has been achieved through the school's consistent approach to managing behaviour, the effective system of rewards and sanctions and more effective teaching and learning. Parents commented favourably on how well the school has responded to previous criticisms and expressed much pleasure in the way that the school promotes good behaviour and helps their children to become mature. The pupils enjoy coming to school and levels of attendance are above average and good. School starts promptly and the pupils settle to work quickly so that no time is wasted.
- 9 Throughout the school, behaviour is very good with no evidence of bullying or intimidation seen during the inspection. There have been no exclusions. The pupils say that incidents of bullying are rare and they report that the staff quickly deal with any such issues. Behaviour in most lessons is very good with some excellent behaviour in practical lessons such as design and technology and dance. During literacy lessons the pupils listen carefully and join in politely, taking care to show appreciation for others' views. The pupils move around the school in an orderly way and their entrance and exit from assemblies show that they are thoughtful about the purpose of special events. The pupils are helpful and considerate; they willingly show visitors around the school, stand aside so that adults can pass and are quick to offer help. The pupils respond very well to the school's citizenship and endeavour awards and the introduction of these awards has led to friendly competition and also heightened the pupils' awareness of the success of others. In some lessons, as in mathematics and English in Years 3 and 4, the pupils responded by clapping spontaneously when their peers answered questions correctly.
- 10 Children in reception settle quickly into the school's routines and adjust very well to being taught with Year 1 and 2 pupils. This is due to the friendly and purposeful relationships established by the staff and the care taken to ensure that these young children have suitable opportunities to learn through practical activities. The children show care for each other and are beginning to form effective friendships with their peers and older pupils. They know how to behave well and develop good skills in sharing toys and equipment and in taking turns when playing games. The good progress made in this area of learning equips them well for the National Curriculum.
- 11 Pupils' attitudes have improved greatly since the previous inspection. Older pupils respond well to homework and have begun to take very seriously their preparations for the next stage of their education by completing homework on time and using a variety of sources to find information. In a design and technology lesson in the infants the pupils were totally absorbed in following recipes taking care to present their dish attractively. The good teaching of literacy and effective use of the Early Reading Research Project act as spurs to the pupils' enjoyment of reading. Pupils read with

enthusiasm and are beginning to apply their knowledge of books to improve their writing. In mathematics lessons, the pupils respond eagerly to mental arithmetic questions trying to outdo one another in being the first to answer. Their enthusiasm bubbles over and contributes much to the positive and effective atmosphere in lessons. The pupils work well in groups, sharing ideas and helping each other with spelling. They use their initiative in checking their work, for example, using dictionaries to check spelling. The pupils take homework seriously and they are keen to learn multiplication facts and to bring items from home that complement their work, for example, in history many pupils have brought old toys and games for the class museum. In a very few lessons, notably in physical education in Years 5 and 6 the pupils lose concentration as the tasks set are not challenging enough.

- 12 Relationships are very good and the teachers and other staff encourage concern and care for everyone through citizenship awards. The pupils respond well and take pride in their own and others' achievements. They are tolerant of others' views and show respect for the traditions and festivals of other people. Older pupils take care of younger pupils and allow them to join in games. Pupils have a good sense of responsibility; they take the jobs around the school seriously, for example taking registers to the office. The pupils' personal development is monitored very carefully and pupils are making good gains in becoming responsible members of the community. They have a good awareness of village life and join in enthusiastically in singing to older members of the community. The pupils are capable of organising themselves and collaborate well. They grow in confidence as they get older and are able to plan their work. Almost all pupils now respond very positively to the high expectations of the school and the steps taken by the staff have greatly reduced the incidents of poor behaviour since the previous inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 13 Teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good throughout the school. The serious weaknesses identified previously have been remedied through the appointment of new staff, effective monitoring and support and thorough planning. Relationships are much better and the teachers now have high expectations of the pupils. During the inspection, the teaching was very good or excellent in 35 per cent of lessons, good in 39 per cent and satisfactory in 22 per cent. One lesson in physical education was unsatisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well. The staff make good use of individual education plans to identify each step in learning and plan activities which match the needs of the pupils. This has been particularly successful in reading where a rigorous approach to developing skills in building words from the sounds of letters has enabled these pupils to gain in confidence and be removed from the register of special educational needs as they have attained appropriate standards for their age.
- 14 Children in the reception class are taught well and receive much benefit from working with the teacher and support staff who are very aware of their individual needs. The staff encourage the children to develop good working habits through an effective balance of practical work and opportunities to learn basic skills such as reading and writing. Regular teaching of reading including extending children's knowledge of letter sounds helps them to make very good gains in learning to read. In mathematical activities the children are encouraged to experiment with apparatus in building shapes and they grow in confidence in using correct mathematical vocabulary as the nursery nurse explains the names of the shapes. Good opportunities are provided for the children to play in the flower shop where they learn how to take responsibility and share

resources. The staff note any key developments in the children's progress and use the information, as well as that gained from initial assessments, to plan work which has sufficient challenge. As a result, the children grow in confidence and become enthusiastic learners who are anxious to please their teachers. The staff make very effective use of questions and in a design and technology lesson helped the children to become aware of healthy eating, hygiene and effective food preparation by setting them a challenge to design and make a fruit kebab. The children loved it, not only enjoying eating the fruit but growing in knowledge of exotic fruits. The staff also develop pupils' independent skills very well by encouraging the children to dress and undress themselves for physical education. The children apply much effort in lessons; they focus well on tasks and maintain concentration for extended periods. They enthusiastically record and talk about their work being particularly keen on retelling stories they have heard. However, in a few lessons the children are not given sufficient opportunities to take part in role-play.

- 15 Teaching and learning are good in both the infants and juniors. There is good teaching of literacy and numeracy skills and pupils are encouraged to apply these skills in subjects other than English and mathematics. However, computer skills are not taught sufficiently to support pupils' work in most subjects. The staff plan lessons well to include a good balance of activities and methods. The work set matches the pupils' abilities and takes account of the different ages in each class. The more able are given sufficient challenge and this results in improved standards. Lessons in English and mathematics follow the guidelines of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Lessons start with brisk introductions in which previous learning is discussed, any mistakes the pupils have made are pointed out and good guidance is given on how to improve. The teaching of reading is good with a strong emphasis given to regular practice, homework and learning new skills such as reading quickly to find information. The teachers are enthusiastic about English and convey this interest to the pupils by using a wide variety of texts. Teachers focus well on developing writing skills and insist on correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. The teachers also encourage the pupils to use what they have learned in other subjects such as history. As a result, the weaknesses identified in pupils' writing are being overcome. Lessons in mathematics always start with a brisk introduction and testing of mental arithmetic. These introductions are linked well to what the pupils have been learning in homework. Skilful questioning and the use of mathematical vocabulary by the teacher stimulate the pupils' interest in mathematics.
- 16 High expectations of pupils' behaviour and performance mean that the pupils have a clear understanding of what is expected of them. The teachers consistently reinforce good working habits and reward pupils for well-presented and correct work. By creating a positive atmosphere in lessons, the teachers inspire confidence in the pupils and achievement flourishes. This was seen to best effect in some lessons in English, mathematics, design and technology and physical education. The teachers set high standards and insist that the pupils apply themselves rigorously. Consequently, pupils make very good gains in lessons and grow in competence and confidence. The pupils are left in no doubt about what is expected of them in most lessons. The teachers tell the pupils the learning objectives and refer to them during the lessons. At the end of the lessons they review what has been achieved. In setting targets for improvement the teachers concentrate very much on getting the most from the pupils. The pupils' response is very positive and results in them working hard and concentrating for extended periods.
- 17 The teachers have good knowledge of most subjects although there are gaps in their understanding of information and communication technology. The approach to teaching

information and communication technology is unsatisfactory as insufficient emphasis is given to the direct teaching of skills and computers are not used sufficiently to support most subjects. Most teachers have a limited knowledge of music but the school employs a part-time specialist to support the work in this subject and standards are not adversely affected. The headteacher has identified areas of further training for staff and this is having a positive impact on teachers' confidence and skills. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the lesson lacked sufficiently challenging tasks and the momentum of learning was lost as the pace was too slow. In a few lessons, for example in science and geography in the juniors, the pace is too slow and pupils lose interest and the rate of learning becomes pedestrian.

- 18 The school has improved the use of assessment to identify strengths and weaknesses in the pupils' performance. Teachers make good use of this information to plan work and to set targets for the pupils. All pupils have individual targets in English and mathematics and are clear about what is expected of them. Parents have been informed of the targets and provide good support through homework. The teachers mark pupils' work sensitively and correctly. They give guidance about how the pupils might improve and regularly check on how well the pupils are doing in meeting their targets.

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

- 19 The school has developed its curriculum since the previous inspection and planning is much improved. Throughout the school, the curriculum is broadly based and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education, although there are gaps in the provision for information and communication technology and geography in the juniors. The school fulfils statutory requirements as plans are in hand to extend the range of opportunities for pupils to study geography and information and communication technology. There are no issues regarding equal opportunities and the school works hard to ensure that everyone is included in its activities. All pupils have access to the curriculum and the procedures for identifying pupils with special educational needs are effective. The school is aware that there are slight differences in attainment between boys and girls although this is due to the small cohorts which make reliable comparisons difficult. The provision for children in the foundation stage has improved markedly since the previous inspection and is now good. Children have good opportunities to work together and to share experiences with the Year 1 and 2 pupils. The teacher plans very well to take account of the particular needs of the youngest children. Links between classes are effective and much closer co-operation in planning and assessing pupils' performance has resulted in skills, knowledge and understanding being developed consistently.
- 20 The school places much emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Much improved teaching combined with the rigorous use of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is paying dividends in raising performance in national tests. In both English and mathematics there have been significant improvements in the standards attained by pupils in the last year. Skills learned in literacy and numeracy are used in other curriculum areas, for example in history where the oldest pupils write very good projects about their village. The introduction of the Early Reading Research Project has had a dramatic impact on raising standards in reading in the infants due to a strong emphasis on teaching and practising early reading skills. The school has appropriate policies to support the teaching of the subjects and uses national guidelines as a basis for planning work. Planning is now a strength and the headteacher has a good overview of what is to be taught in each subject. There has been some

improvement in the provision for information and communication technology but more remains to be done to extend opportunities for the pupils to use computers in other subjects.

- 21 The school provides a very good range and number of extra-curricular activities. Staff and pupils enjoy these activities which include sport, art and computers. Parents are very involved in helping with football, netball, jazz dance and computers. Educational visits and visitors to the school enhance the curricular provision. The very well organised visits to Kentwell Hall and other places of historical interest provide a good starting point to topics and help pupils to come to a very good understanding of history. Opportunities are provided for older pupils to go on residential visits. The staff work hard to provide an interesting and challenging curriculum which includes opportunities for pupils to compete and join in with activities at other schools.
- 22 The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Health education, including sensitive and informed teaching of sex education and drugs' awareness, is promoted well. These opportunities include lessons in design and technology where the infants design a menu for healthy eating. Visitors to the school such as the police make a good contribution to pupils' personal and social education. The school's awards for citizenship and endeavour are much prized by the pupils.
- 23 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all classes across the school. Individual education plans are in place for all pupils on the stages of assessment. These are written by class teachers with the support of the special needs co-ordinator. Individual plans are clearly focused with specific targets to ensure that pupils make significant gains in their learning. The programmes are so successful that a considerable number of pupils are removed from the special needs register during their time in the school. Where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for individual work every care is taken to ensure that they do not miss important parts of lessons. Teachers know their pupils well and ensure that work set for them is well matched to their particular needs. Funding for pupils with special educational needs is used well and monitored closely to ensure that it is appropriately targeted. Parents are involved closely by the school and they are invited to attend regular meetings to review their child's progress. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- 24 Since the previous inspection there has been improvement in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Moral development is now good and social development is very good. Throughout the school pupils are given good opportunities to work co-operatively and collaboratively in the classroom and within the very wide range of after school clubs. The very good team spirit amongst all the staff in the school presents pupils with a very good example of positive relationships and pupils respond to this very positively. Older pupils in Year 6 take responsibility for the youngest pupils when they enter the school, and this enables the pupils in reception to settle in to the school very successfully. Citizenship assemblies provide very good opportunities to focus on social and moral issues. Pupils value highly the citizenship award which is given to those who help others in the classroom or in the playground. The retelling of parables and stories with a clear moral message helps pupils to consider their actions and develop an understanding of right and wrong. Class assemblies actively promote positive attitudes towards others pupils. There is less emphasis given to spiritual and cultural development. Overall spiritual development is satisfactorily developed through religious education lessons and assemblies. Although pupils listen attentively to prayer there is very little time for them to reflect on their own beliefs and values and those of others. Younger pupils are reading the story of Handa's Surprise and listen to music from Uganda; older pupils have very good opportunities to learn about their own cultural

heritage. They visit living museums such as Kentwell Hall and have completed a topic on the local church. In assembly all pupils listen to Spanish music and learn how children in Spain celebrate the Festival of San Jose.

- 25 The school has very good links with the local community. The building is shared with the village and close ties are established with all who use its facilities. There are good links with local churches and festivals such as Christmas and harvest are community events. The pupils visit places of interest in the local area and an interesting range of visitors come to school to talk to them to extend their understanding and learning. There are well-established connections with other schools and good opportunities for the staff to join in training with colleagues from other schools. There are good links made with the secondary schools through opportunities for pupils in Year 6 to visit and take part in some lessons. The school has its own website and this is regularly updated. Opportunities to contact others through electronic mail have been limited through inadequate resources although the recently installed computers have access to the Internet. The school has good links with local playgroups and they help to make the start of school life smooth for the youngest children.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 26 The school justifiably prides itself on the support and care it provides for all pupils including those with special educational needs. Parents speak highly of the care shown by staff and comment very favourably on how this aspect has improved since the appointment of new staff. The school has strengthened this aspect of its work since the previous inspection through the introduction of a good system of rewards for endeavour and citizenship. Other improvements include the good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' academic and personal development and the use of this information to plan work. The school has a good system of checking on the pupils' personal development and staff have very positive relationships with the pupils which help to inspire confidence. The very good relationships between pupils and their teachers ensure that the pupils feel safe and happy within the school community and this has a very significant impact on their learning and attainment. Good emphasis is placed on helping the pupils to become mature through an effective programme of health education which includes appropriate teaching about sex and drugs. The quality of the overall pastoral care of the pupils has improved since the last inspection. The school now manages behaviour well and staff are consistent in dealing with pupils. Another improvement has been the whole staff's training in first aid.
- 27 Children in the reception class are cared for very well and their individual needs are met effectively in a happy, constructive and purposeful way. The children have good opportunities to visit the school prior to starting full-time education and parents expressed confidence in this system. The staff and parent helpers consistently reinforce good work and behaviour with praise and provide a warm, secure and caring environment in which the children flourish. The school provides good opportunities before and after school for parents to discuss their children's progress with the staff.
- 28 In the infants and juniors the pupils are settled and at ease in school because of the firm, fair and friendly relationships. The teachers know the pupils well and keep a watchful eye on any who may feel left out. The school's procedures for health and safety are good and issues identified at the time of the previous inspection have been rectified. Risk assessments and fire drills are carried out regularly. The school makes very good provision for first aid with all staff being trained. Parents are kept informed of any minor bumps that happen during the school day and are contacted immediately. The headteacher is the designated member of staff for child protection and has

received an appropriate level of training which is being disseminated to all staff. The school follows recognised guidelines and staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to this aspect of care. The mid-day supervisors are well organised and the quality of supervision during the mid-day break is good.

- 29 The teachers and secretary monitor attendance effectively with the support of the education welfare officer. Parents are well aware of the requirement to report absence. Registration procedures comply with statutory requirements. The school has very good procedures for recording any persistent instances of poor behaviour and, in such cases, parents are always involved at an early stage. The pupils are motivated well by the awards for citizenship and endeavour and are beginning to appreciate their own responsibility for good behaviour. There are very effective procedures to deal with bullying and harassment and both parents and pupils are confident that the school will listen to them and act to eliminate this type of unacceptable behaviour.
- 30 There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development. The staff keep detailed records of achievement, good behaviour and individual progress in personal and social development. All pupils are valued and given the same opportunities to achieve their potential. Pupils with special educational needs take part in all aspects of school life and receive a good level of support, both personal and academic. There are effective links with outside agencies
- 31 The school has improved assessment and its use to plan work since the previous inspection. The headteacher and governors analyse the pupils' performance in national tests and use the information to set targets for improvement. This has been very effective in contributing to improved standards in English and mathematics. In the main teachers' assessments are similar to test results although the small cohorts of pupils affect the percentage difference between expected and actual performance in tests. The school is aware of this difference and has introduced good systems to measure the pupils' performance using a wide range of tests. Teachers make good use of data to plan work for their pupils; lesson plans include detailed objectives for each group of pupils so that work is matched well to their needs. The staff with the support of the co-ordinator for special educational needs make good use of individual education plans to pinpoint areas for improvement. They carefully monitor and assess performance and use the information to plan work and to share developments with parents. The teachers have effective practices to identify how well the pupils are making progress and keep detailed and accurate records. These records also include notes on how well the pupils' are making progress in their personal and social development. Underpinning the school's effective use of assessment is the staff's strong commitment to encouraging every pupil to do his or her best.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 32 The school's relationship with parents is excellent. Parents speak highly of the work done by the staff and express much confidence in the headteacher. The results of the parents' questionnaire showed that about a fifth of parents felt that the school's approach to homework was unclear. At the meeting with parents the overwhelming view was that the school provides the right amount of homework. Inspection evidence supports the latter view. Following the previous inspection several parents removed their children from the school and there was a lack of confidence in the school's ability to provide an acceptable standard of education. The governors have appointed new staff and the parents now have very positive views of the life and work of the school. Their confidence is justified by inspection evidence.

- 33 Parents say that they are made to feel welcome in the school and that their children make good progress. The inspection team observed many lessons where parents supported the learning. Parents were clear about what was expected of them and spoke glowingly of the way in which staff treated them. The school has very effective links with parents and this has a positive impact on the work of the school. The parents thoroughly enjoy being involved in their children's learning and contribute much by supporting their children through homework. The school provides good quality information for parents which includes details of the pupils' progress, newsletters, a well-written prospectus and guidelines about what is to be taught. Staff spend much time in writing reports on the pupils and parents appreciate the effort and time saying that the quality of information provided is helpful and good. The school shares targets in English and mathematics with the parents and this is useful in guiding parents about how to help their children at home. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in the decision making process and are kept well informed about the needs of their children.
- 34 Parents are kept well informed about activities in the school and many support the fund-raising activities that are organised. The Parent and Teachers' Association raises significant funds for the school which are used well to purchase resources. The school is committed to involving parents in their children's learning and in the life of the school. There is a new and helpful policy on homework. Several parents help regularly in classrooms with reading and practical activities and many volunteer to accompany the children on visits. The school values this help. The parents have responded positively to the introduction of the home-school agreement and take their responsibilities seriously.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 35 The success of the school in remedying the serious weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report is due to very good leadership and management by the headteacher, staff and governors. Almost all staff have been at the school for less than two years. There is a strong commitment to school improvement and rigorous analysis of results, improved teaching, more thorough planning and very effective teamwork are hallmarks of the school's success. The school is in an excellent position to build upon its success. The inspirational headteacher has a very clear understanding of how to move the school forward and this vision is shared by all associated with the school. Underpinning the school's work is the strong commitment to providing equal opportunities for all. The school's prospectus and other information provided for parents are good; they convey a sense of purpose and indicate a desire to raise standards further. The effectiveness of the school's leadership and management is enhanced through effective teamwork and dedication. The teaching staff take their responsibilities for the curriculum very seriously and this has led to well focused planning, rigour in checking on what is taught and thorough analysis of what the pupils have learned. All of this has been achieved in a very short time and is a tribute to the staff's commitment to improving the quality of education.
- 36 The management of all areas of school policy is very effective. The headteacher delegates responsibility well and staff respond with enthusiasm. All take part in monitoring teaching and learning. The governors also play a key role in monitoring. Their reports on progress in the subjects and analysis of trends in improvement show perception and rigour. The work of reception children is managed well with a good balance achieved in learning opportunities which are appropriate for the age of the children whilst being sufficiently challenging. The provision for special educational

needs is managed successfully and has resulted in rapid progress for pupils with particular needs. Effective identification of underachievement in reading prompted the headteacher to introduce the Early Reading Research Project. This project is managed well and has resulted in very rapid gains for pupils in reading. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is organised very well and managed in such a way that pupils' needs are identified early and appropriate action is taken.

- 37 The governors have a clear understanding of the way ahead and pursue improved quality through exceptional support and effective use of the school's resources. They ensure that the school meets statutory requirements and have been very active in appointing staff and improving the school since the previous inspection. Their rigorous appointing procedures have been successful and resulted in a strong and well-balanced team. The governors' careful monitoring of teaching and learning and high levels of support through training have contributed much to improved standards. The governors are secure in their knowledge of performance management and set annual targets for the headteacher and staff. They provide good support and opportunities for training and development. Targets to raise standards in English and mathematics have been pursued rigorously and achieved.
- 38 Finances are used to best effect to improve the quality of education. The school has good financial controls and all requirements from the previous audit have been met. Governors have a good understanding of finance and plan ahead very well. They have prudently built a surplus to provide continuity in the levels of staffing following a fall in the numbers of pupils at the school. They link finances well to priorities in the school's improvement plan. However, the plan itself includes too many tasks which are not sufficiently focused. Ways of measuring the school's success in meeting its priorities are not clearly defined. Governors take their responsibilities seriously and work hard to ensure that best use is made of available funds. Competitive tendering is used to inform decisions about spending.
- 39 The school has sufficient and experienced staff to teach the National Curriculum and religious education. The reception/ infant teacher has good experience of working with young children. Support staff work well with the teachers in planning work and are effective in working with pupils, although they are not always sufficiently involved at the start and end of lessons. The secretary provides good administrative support and her efficiency frees time for the headteacher and teaching staff to focus on working with the pupils. The school makes good use of computers and other aids to ensure the smooth running of the office. With such a large turnover of staff, the headteacher and governors have introduced a very effective induction system which is backed up with a strong staff development policy. Training needs are linked to the school's priorities. Staff share their expertise well and lead meetings to share information gained on courses.
- 40 The school shares its accommodation with the village community and this arrangement works well. The good accommodation is enhanced by being well maintained and spotlessly clean. Recent improvement to the building including the library and outdoor area for the youngest children make very good use of space and have a beneficial impact on standards. There are shortages of resources in some subjects. There are sufficient computers although some staff lack confidence in using them effectively. The school lacks library books of good quality and there are insufficient books to support the teaching of science and geography. Shortages of science equipment, religious artefacts, maps and globes restrict learning opportunities for the pupils. Some of the apparatus to support work in mathematics is in poor condition and there is a lack of three-dimensional shapes.

- 41 In view of the school's rapid improvement in the last year, the pupils' average attainment on admission to the school, the good standards pupils attain in English, mathematics, design and technology and history by the time they leave the school, and the good quality of teaching, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 42 In order to build upon the substantial improvements already achieved and to raise the standards and quality of education further, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

1) Raise standards in information and communication technology by:

- Systematically developing pupils' skills in using computers:
- Providing more opportunities for pupils to use computers in other subjects:
- Providing more effective training for staff to raise their confidence in teaching the subject:

(Paragraphs 6, 17, 20, 40, 62, 83 - 85).

The school has identified this issue in its plans.

2) Raise standards in geography in the juniors by:

- Having a more consistent approach to developing geographical skills, knowledge and understanding:
- Improving resources for the subject.

(Paragraphs 7, 17, 19, 40, 76 - 79).

The school has good plans in place to improve the development of geographical knowledge

3) Improve the pace and challenge in science lessons by:

- More effective planning:
- Additional training for teachers.

(Paragraphs 6, 17, 40, 64 - 68).

Improve the school's library and extend resources for science, mathematics and religious education.

(Paragraphs 25, 40, 62, 63, 68, 79, 82, 96).

The school has a strategy to upgrade resources as funds become available.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Improve the school's development plan by defining priorities more sharply and having well focused ways of measuring the school's success. (Paragraph 38).
- Improve opportunities for the pupils to increase their spiritual and cultural awareness and provide a greater range of multi-cultural resources. (Paragraph 24).

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	18

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
13	22	39	22	4	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 – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/A	66
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	N/A	2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/A	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/A	15

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	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.6
National comparative data	5.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2000	8	6	14

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	13	10	13
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93	72	85
	National	75 (71)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Total	13	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93	86	86
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

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

*Results at the end of Key Stage 1 have been omitted due to small number of pupils taking the tests.

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	62
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 – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	3.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3
Average class size	22

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	65

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year*	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	206,478
Total expenditure	213,009
Expenditure per pupil	2,840
Balance brought forward from previous year	18,269
Balance carried forward to next year	11,738

**75 pupils on roll in 1999/2000*

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

66

Number of questionnaires returned

38

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	45	50	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	42	50	3	5	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	68	8	3	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	47	21	3	0
The teaching is good.	58	37	3	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	42	8	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	82	16	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	58	37	0	5	0
The school works closely with parents.	55	29	8	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	58	34	3	5	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	50	42	0	5	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	39	5	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

Parents described the school as much improved in the last year since the arrival of the new headteacher. In addition the complete change in teachers has brought about much improvement in standards.

Some parents felt that information technology needed to be improved.

All parents delighted with the start made in reception.

Very confident that reading standards are rising.

Parents commented strongly that they felt the staff plan work well which is matched to their children's individual needs.

Mixed aged classes are well organised.

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

- 43 Children enter the school with average levels of attainment. This is confirmed by the initial assessment that is conducted with these young children. By the time they are ready to begin Year 1 the children achieve well and attain all of the early learning goals. This is through good support and a well-planned range of activities. The quality of teaching is good and reading is taught very well. The school is following the Early Reading Research Project and this is having a very positive effect on children's early reading skills. Staff are generally well deployed but there are times, for example, in the literacy session when the role for the teaching assistant is not sufficiently productive. There is a good range of assessment procedures, which staff manage well and use effectively to plan a wide range of activities that meet the needs of all children. Each child has a record of achievement which identifies their progress towards the early learning goals and there is an Early Years' observation book which is used well to record regular, focused observations which are shared with parents and carers. The provision for reception children has improved since the previous inspection. The new outdoor play area provides a stimulating environment in which the children have good opportunities to develop their interest in the world around them.

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

- 44 Children make good progress in their learning in the area of personal, social and emotional development and this is due to the skilful teaching and the very good relationships that the staff have with the children. At the start of the day children enter confidently and readily settle to activities in both large and small group work. They share resources and take turns well and are developing good personal independence, for example, they dress and undress themselves quickly and competently for physical education lessons. Children show interest in the wide range of activities that are provided for them and concentrate and work diligently on their writing for example designing and making their party invitation. Class assemblies enable children to consider the needs of others and learn about different cultures and beliefs, for example, they learned about Thanksgiving Day and how and why it is celebrated in America. In religious education lessons, the focus on feelings enables pupils to consider how important it is to be kind and caring and they understand what is right and wrong and why it is important to behave appropriately. The teaching of this area of learning is good. The staff concentrate on improving children's confidence by providing a good balance of activities which include opportunities for the children to make choices. When children are praised for good behaviour they place a cube in a jar so that all children in the class share the reward. This results in very good behaviour throughout the class. All staff relate well to the children and this has a significant impact on their sense of security and the quality of learning.

Communication, Language and Literacy

- 45 Children achieve well and make good progress in speaking and listening and very good progress in early reading skills. This is due to effective teaching and the consistent development of skills and understanding. The "News Board" is used effectively to encourage children to speak clearly and to listen to adults and to each other. They

express themselves very well in sentences and sequence simple stories correctly. The nursery nurse gives good support in teaching writing skills through, for example, writing invitations dictated by the children. All staff encourage children to contribute in discussions and share their feelings with others, for example, in circle time and class assembly. In literacy sessions, children listen well to questions and instructions and respond to stories attentively. They join in enthusiastically when reading whole words and linking sounds to letters. The staff make good use of the National Literacy Strategy to develop the children's knowledge of sentences. They use a good range of stories and well-known tales and the children respond enthusiastically joining in with well-known phrases. Children know a good range of songs and rhymes, especially number rhymes, and sing these with enjoyment and enthusiasm. In the writing area there are pens, paper and crayons and children access these freely. Staff actively encourage children to make marks on paper, and in their alphabet sessions are beginning to recognise and write the letters of their name. The "Flower Shop" provides very good opportunities for children to write orders for the customers and to make labels for the bouquets. However the focus on reading and writing activities means that there are times when not enough emphasis is placed on practical work, especially role-play and this results in some loss of interest.

Mathematical development

- 46 The staff work hard to promote mathematical skills, understanding and language through structured play and in small group work, for example, they intervene skilfully when purchasing flowers in the flower shop. They use actual flowers and seed packets to measure the size of plants and have planned to design a height chart for the flowers. The children benefit well from these practical activities and attain the levels expected for their age. Children count confidently to 10 and, in numeracy sessions, show good improvement in counting forwards and backwards. Staff use some of the guidelines in the National Numeracy Strategy to encourage children to develop addition and subtraction skills adding one more object and taking one away, for example, when setting out the fruit at snack time, they then record this in their books. There is a large number line and children recognise and use numbers in the environment and readily in their play. The teaching of mathematical development is good. There are many good opportunities for children to use numbers in games and activities and they use mathematical terms confidently when comparing objects, such as tall and taller and explaining that "mine is bigger than hers". Children have carried out a survey of their favourite fruit and recorded this in a block graph. Staff are very supportive and constructive when working with the children, but also allow them to make choices, for example when making three-dimensional shapes using different sizes and variety of shapes. Children recognise and name two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and are making cones and cylinders as part of their work on shapes. When working with construction toys they recognise and recreate simple patterns and in water and sand play they explore different mathematical ideas.

Knowledge and Understanding of the World

- 47 There are very good opportunities for children to explore and investigate the world around them, and the teaching of this aspect of the children's development is good. The children attain the levels expected for their age by the time they leave the reception year. When working in the flower shop children plant bulbs and talk about how they need water to grow. They compare the touch and feel of flowers and identify similarities and differences. In an experiment in the science lesson they stood white daffodils in water with added dye to prove that flowers drink water. They look closely at different objects through a magnifying glass and coloured, transparent film. They use the

computer with increasing confidence and show real enjoyment and delight as their picture grows using the paint and draw package. Some children manipulate the mouse to make shapes on screen. Staff intervene well with less confident children encouraging them to change colours and to use different tools. Children are developing a secure sense of time showing understanding between the difference between old and new toys, identifying the kind of toys that their parents used to play with. They use comparative vocabulary, talking about their older and younger brothers and sisters and recognise how their body changes as they grow, recording this with photographs from home in zig-zag books. In geography they develop a sense of place through walking around the village and drawing a map of what they saw. They identify different rooms and the function of rooms using small world toys and dolls. In religious education lessons, children learn that a church is a special place and in literacy session are learning about the life of a little girl who lives in Africa. There are good opportunities for children to make models using construction toys and use clay, playdough and recycled material; for example, they make puppets using balloons and paper mache.

Physical Development

- 48 In physical education, the children make good progress. They move with increasing control and confidence and show clear awareness of space and each other as they travel around the hall. By the end of reception they have well-developed physical skills. The teaching is good and focuses on providing effective opportunities for the children to climb and balance when using the large apparatus and use their imagination in dance. The children use small apparatus, for example hoops, balls and skipping ropes with increasing skill. Staff support and challenge children very well and encourage them to think about what happens to their bodies when they exercise. In science lessons there is a very good focus on healthy living as children compare “good” and “bad” foods, for example, they are currently making fruit salad and fruit kebabs. In cooking they learn to use different kitchen tools safely and with increasing control and know the importance of washing hands before eating. In design and technology lessons children handle a good range of small tools as they cut and join using scissors and glue spreaders with increasing confidence. They explore different shapes in clay and playdough, sometimes making letters to support their reading skills.

Creative Development

- 49 By the end of the reception year, the children attain appropriate standards for their age. They make good progress and respond well to the good teaching. Children explore colour when they paint and have made some very attractive self-portraits and family groups. They develop their imaginations when painting and drawing and there are good opportunities for them to use different media when printing, using their fingers, hands, feet and shoes. They use pastry cutters with dough and explore different textures and shape when making puppets. In music, they delight in clapping simple rhythms and listen attentively to music in both lessons and assemblies. They move imaginatively in dance lessons, explore the sounds of different musical instruments and sing a good range of rhymes and songs. The staff provide good practical activities and resources which stimulate the children’s interest. The children respond excitedly to the different feel of objects when they touch objects in the “feely” bag and record those objects that are hard and those that are soft. They explore different tastes and smells when cooking and compare the different smells of the “smelly pots”. The flower shop provides very good opportunities for children to make up stories and enjoy role-play.

ENGLISH

- 50 On the basis of the inspection findings attainment in English is above average at the end of both the infants and the juniors. Standards in speaking and listening are good in all classes and reading is also good. There is a wide range of writing but standards remain average. This is due mainly to a lack of focus on pupils' creative and extended writing. The school has recognised this as an area for improvement and through thorough and detailed planning and effective teaching of the literacy strategy is addressing this issue. National tests at the end of Year 6 indicate that standards in English are well above average both nationally and when compared with similar schools. The school has worked hard to maintain these standards which are similar to those in the previous inspection report. Following the previous inspection standards in English dipped significantly, but the school has reversed this trend and standards are rising.
- 51 Throughout the school, the pupils enjoy English lessons and respond with enthusiasm and interest to the range of texts they study in the literacy hour. The teachers use a wide and interesting vocabulary and the pupils enjoy learning new and difficult words which they then use in their writing. This good emphasis on teaching vocabulary is very effective in several subjects and is having a positive effect on pupils' ability to write imaginatively. The teachers move lessons on at a good pace and this keeps the pupils on task and well motivated. Pupils apply good effort in their work and respond well to homework in learning spellings and, for example, in writing topics in other subjects such as history. The teachers manage behaviour very well and use praise and rewards effectively. The pupils respond well to this positive approach and behaviour is very good.
- 52 Pupils make good progress in speaking and listening across the infants so that by the time they reach the age of seven pupils' attainment is above the level expected nationally. All pupils listen attentively to their teachers and respond to questions, contributing confidently to class discussions. Pupils in Year 2 express their ideas with clear articulation. They explain their views, often using interesting vocabulary, for example "dedicated" and "blurb" when talking about their current reading books. In class assembly, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to other pupils so that at the end of the session they were able to explain why Guy Fawkes could not attend the church of his choice. In the juniors pupils develop more confidence in speaking and use more sophisticated sentence structures. In geography lessons in Year 5 and 6 there are well-planned opportunities for pupils to debate issues of interest. The pupils are guided by the teacher to listen to the amount of formality used and identify how it affects another person's response.
- 53 Pupils enter the school with average standards in reading but the introduction of the Early Reading Research Programme has a significant effect on developing pupils' initial reading skills. For example, pupils in Year 1 build three and four letter words confidently and have a wide vocabulary of simple words. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, benefit considerably from the shared and guided reading within the literacy hour and this ensures that they make good progress in reading across the school. By the age of eleven above average and many average pupils read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts fluently and with expression. They talk confidently about the characters and the plot and compare books by the same author. They are adept at using reference books for research and can explain how to use a glossary. Below average pupils use their knowledge of different letter sounds to help them with difficult words and are becoming increasingly confident in tackling unknown words. The school places a high emphasis on reading. Younger and below average pupils read

frequently to their teachers and take books home each day. The reading development record is shared with parents who regularly comment on the progress their child is making.

- 54 By the time pupils reach the age of seven and eleven their attainment in writing is average. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress. In the infants there are good links between pupils writing and learning letter names and sounds and this has a beneficial effect on their spelling skills. Pupils complete the tasks set during the Literacy Hour but there is a lack of focus on pupils developing creative writing skills. The school has identified this as an area of development and in the juniors pupils write for a widening range of purposes and audiences. This includes poetry, reports, letters and recounts of events creative writing and researching the origins of archaic words. There are now increasing opportunities for pupils to be involved in extended writing topics, for example, in writing a sequel to "The Listeners" entitled "Downloaded Dreams". Most pupils in Year 2 form their letters well and are in the process of transferring to joined script, however in Years 3 and 4 there is a lack of consistency in pupils' handwriting with some pupils continuing to print. There are now good opportunities for pupils to use their literacy skills in a number of subjects and a range of different contexts. For example, in religious education and history, in particular, pupils are encouraged to write in a variety of ways and teachers focus on sentence structure and spelling skills in their marking. There are satisfactory opportunities for the pupils to use computers in some aspects of writing but insufficient time is given to research to extend pupils' thinking.
- 55 The quality of teaching is good in the infants and very good in the juniors. Lessons are well planned to meet the needs of all the pupils. This ensures that all pupils make good and often very good progress in lessons, especially those with special educational needs. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and implement the literacy hour very effectively. Lessons proceed at a brisk pace in the juniors, but in the infants the extended introduction means that pupils sit for too long on the carpet. This has a negative effect on the learning of the younger pupils who are not always sufficiently engaged. There are very good links with other subjects for example, in Years 3 and 4 the shared text was about the discovery of Tutenkahmun. Pupils were very effectively challenged to think about the content, the timeline used and to précis the information. The very skilful use of questioning ensured that all pupils were able to contribute. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and make good use of praise and encouragement. For example, a teacher whispered to one pupil who had made a considerable effort "You are a star". Teachers identify what it is that they want the pupils to learn at the beginning of the lesson and this ensures that pupils are clear of the purpose of the activity. The very skilful teaching in literacy sessions ensures that pupils listen attentively to instructions, work co-operatively in groups and are highly motivated to learn.
- 56 There have been improvements in the range of reading books that are now available for pupils in the classroom. However, the school library is poorly resourced and at present offers only a limited selection of books. The school has identified this as a priority for action. The school makes good use of assessment to plan work and to target improvement. Monitoring of teaching and learning is effective and has resulted in focused training in key areas such as implementing a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. The subject leader monitors the teaching and also analyses the pupils' work and this has helped to bring about a cohesive and well-focused approach to teaching writing.

MATHEMATICS

- 57 The school has made very good improvement to the standards and teaching of mathematics since the previous inspection. Results of national tests in 2000 show a significant improvement on the previous years' results due to much better teaching, the successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, more rigorous monitoring of the pupils' performance and challenging target setting. The school has achieved its targets in the national tests in 2000 where standards were well above the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. This represents good success for the school as in previous years the standards have been well below average. Due to the careful match of work to ability and more challenging tasks, the percentages of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in the tests has increased. Inspection evidence shows that standards are above average in each aspect of mathematics (number, algebra, space, shape and measures and data handling). Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in both the infants and juniors. Although a very small number of infants took the national tests at the end of Year 2 evidence from their books shows that standards were about average. Since September, all pupils have made good progress and as a result of effective teaching are on course to attain above average standards. There are no marked differences between the performance of boys and girls.
- 58 By the age of seven, the pupils have a good knowledge of number. They add and subtract confidently and are beginning to use simple multiplication and division to solve problems. The pupils make good gains in learning mathematical vocabulary and have a good knowledge of signs and symbols which helps them when investigating and solving problems. The pupils are able to tell the time by the half and quarter hour and the more able use minutes accurately. The pupils know the names of a good number of shapes and talk confidently about the relationship between two and three-dimensional shapes. Already the pupils are beginning to use graphs and charts to represent data.
- 59 This good start to learning mathematics is built upon in the juniors and by the age of eleven standards are above average. The pupils have good skills in recalling number facts quickly and accurately. They respond well to challenging questions and carefully explain different ways of solving complex problems often involving several operations. The pupils are good at estimating and competently use a variety of measures. They use their mathematical skills well in other subjects. In lessons in design and technology they accurately measure wood before cutting it to size. In history they use timelines and charts to sequence events in order. The pupils have good skills in using a variety of graphs. They present data in several forms including line graphs and pie charts and are adept at explaining their answers.
- 60 Throughout the school, teaching and learning are good. In a lesson in Years 3 and 4 the teaching was excellent, pupils learned at a blistering pace and responded with enthusiasm and tenacity in solving complex problems. The pace of learning throughout the school is good and the teachers make effective use of the National Numeracy Strategy to organise their lessons so that learning is purposeful and effective. Briskly paced introductions set the tone of the lessons and are used well to increase the pupils' confidence in mental arithmetic. Regular practice of multiplication facts has helped to increase the pupils' confidence and also their enjoyment of mathematics. The pupils work hard during lessons and enjoy completing homework. They work productively and the teachers keep a careful check on how well they are doing by marking rigorously and providing guidance on how the pupils might improve.

- 61 In the excellent lesson observed during the inspection, the teacher made very good use of questions to check on the pupils' understanding and then quickly introduced new ways of collecting and presenting information. The pupils responded with tremendous excitement, desperately wanting to be the first to answer questions. Skilful and thoughtful teaching focused well on the needs of individuals with different levels of ability. The tasks set provided just the right amount of challenge and the pupils settled quickly to their tasks as they were sure what was expected of them. In the infants the teacher uses her good subject knowledge well to provide interesting activities which include good opportunities for the pupils to use mathematical apparatus. She works well with each group offering support and guiding the pupils well but at the same time expecting much from them. Her confident and supportive manner and the effective use of classroom assistants ensure that all pupils make sufficient gains in their learning. Teaching of the oldest pupils is also good. The teacher manages the class well and keeps them on task by moving the lesson on at a good pace. During the introduction the teacher asks difficult questions and asks the pupils to explain their answers by suggesting several ways of solving the problem. The pupils respond very well to this rigorous questioning. During the main part of the lesson the pupils work hard and maintain their concentration well. Throughout the school the teachers show good skills in managing behaviour and in keeping the pupils on track. They consistently reinforce good behaviour and by using the school's system of rewards ensure that the pupils know exactly what is expected of them.
- 62 One of the strengths in the teaching is the very effective planning which is linked to the National Numeracy Strategy. The teachers have a good understanding of how to develop mathematical skills and knowledge and their detailed planning pays good attention to the needs of different abilities and ages in the classes. The teachers clearly identify what is to be taught and share this with the pupils so that they are in no doubt about what is expected. The good balance between oral and written work and the effective use of time at the end of lessons to discuss what has been done ensure that teachers are able to keep track of pupils' progress and use the information to plan the next stage in learning. However, with the exception of those with special educational needs, pupils have insufficient opportunities to use computers in mathematics.
- 63 The subject leader has a firm grasp of developments in mathematics at the school and there are good plans to extend the school's scheme of work and to add resources. There are some gaps in resources particularly to support the pupils' work in shape and measurement. One of the reasons for much improved standards is the school's rigorous system of testing. The staff make good use of the results of these tests to pinpoint any weaknesses in the curriculum and to guide them in planning work for individual pupils. The headteacher and governors have monitored the work of the teachers and provided good support through further training.

SCIENCE

- 64 On the basis of the inspection findings attainment is average at the end of both the infants and the juniors. National tests at the end of Year 6 indicate that standards in science are average, but when these results are compared with similar schools they are well below average. In the previous report standards are shown as above average at the end of the juniors but overall the school has improved the coverage of subject. Although standards are average, they are improving with an increased proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 5. In the infants, standards were reported as below average with poor progress in Years 2 and 3. There has been considerable improvement in pupils' progress, and attainment is now in line with the standards

expected for seven-year olds. This is the result of better teaching, planning and resources and can be seen in the quality of pupils' work and the supportive and constructive marking in the subject.

- 65 Progress in the infants for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Year 2 pupils talk about the differences between things that are living and those that have never been alive. They know that animals move, grow and use their senses, for example, they have been on a "feeling and listening" walk. They recognise and name a range of fruits and common animals. They know that plants need light and water to grow and accurately explain the life cycle of the butterfly. Planning is detailed and thorough and shows that all aspects of the science curriculum are fully covered during the time the pupils are in the infants.
- 66 Progress in the juniors is satisfactory for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils in all classes know the importance of a fair test and identify soluble and insoluble materials. In Years 3 and 4 pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of circuits and conductors and use the appropriate symbols when recording a circuit. They know the difference between vertebrates and invertebrates and have studied the human skeleton. They are able to describe what a joint is and compare and contrast hinge joints with ball and socket joints. In Years 5 and 6 in their topic on interdependence and adaptations pupils show that they know the importance of food chains and talk about the differences between consumers and predators. Pupils record their work well in a variety of different ways including the use of computers to interpret data through bar charts. For example, the number and range of minibeasts and pond beasts found in the conservation area.
- 67 The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was satisfactory and overall teaching is satisfactory. The teachers have secure subject knowledge but more training is needed to boost confidence in order to make lessons more challenging. The teachers manage pupils well and use effective questions to build skilfully on pupils' own knowledge and understanding. Teachers encourage pupils to predict outcomes. For example, in a lesson in Years 5 and 6 the teacher asked the pupils whether the substances they had chosen would dissolve more quickly in hot or cold water, listened carefully to their answers and encouraged them to speak at length on their observations. However, introductions to lesson are too long and as a result learning is slow paced. There is insufficient challenge for more able pupils and because lessons are slowly paced the pupils have limited time in which to complete activities. The teachers manage behaviour well and encourage positive attitudes to science. Pupils in both the infants and juniors enjoy science. Infants talk with enthusiasm about their study of the life cycle of the butterfly and how the caterpillar changes. In Years 3 and 4 pupils are very keen to share their knowledge of the human skeleton. In Years 5 and 6 all pupils become actively involved in their practical work and, although at times they become noisy, they concentrate well on the task and work together co-operatively in pairs.
- 68 There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum overall but more specific resources are needed to fulfil the requirements of the planning for the new National Curriculum. The subject leader has a clear plan to raise standards and has begun to monitor the pupils' books to ensure that all aspects of science are covered. The teachers record the significant achievements of the pupils and use the information to plan lessons.

ART AND DESIGN

- 69 Overall standards in art and design are at a similar level as at the time of the previous inspection, being in line with expectations for pupils aged seven and eleven. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in most aspects of their work and they make good gains in their work in the style of famous artists. The pupils enjoy artwork and present their work with care. They talk confidently about a variety of techniques they have learned and express preference for different artists' work.
- 70 The school follows national guidelines for the subject and has introduced a consistent approach to developing pupils' skills and knowledge of art and design. The staff are beginning to build resources for the subject including prints by famous artists and a wide range of materials. Pupils' drawing skills in the infants are improving and the teacher emphasises a variety of techniques such as shading and line drawing to develop pupils' competence in drawing still life objects. The pupils show good skills of concentration in this aspect of their work and their self-portraits include appropriate detail. They then transfer these observations to larger pictures using paint effectively. They blend colours to make appropriate skin tones and add detail which results in accurate representations.
- 71 The teacher of Year 3 and 4 pupils has good subject knowledge and develops the pupils' skills in combining printing techniques with painting skills to produce good quality work illustrating plants in autumn. The pupils show suitable skills in mixing colours and talk confidently about how they produced their work. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have an appropriate knowledge of sketching and use their skills well to illustrate their work in history. They make accurate observations of buildings in the village and make good use of line, form, tone and colour to enhance their work. The pupils enjoy using computers to experiment with art and design. In Years 3 and 4 they produce good symmetrical patterns showing good control of the computer's mouse and a secure understanding of some of the program's tools. In Years 5 and 6 they have accessed the national gallery through the Internet and have a good knowledge of several famous artists and their work. However, there are gaps in the pupils' knowledge and skills in modelling using a variety of materials. This is compensated for to some extent in design and technology where pupils apply good skills to building models but the creative side of art in modelling is insufficiently developed.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 72 Since the previous inspection the school has improved standards in design and technology in the infants and maintained good standards in the juniors. Throughout the school standards are above those expected for the pupils' ages. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. The pupils high levels of interest and enthusiasm for design and technology coupled with effective and knowledgeable teaching ensure that progress is consistent throughout the school. The staff make very successful use of national guidelines for the subject to provide broad and interesting activities which are challenging. Very good links are made with other subjects, particularly history. The teachers encourage the pupils to make effective use of their numeracy skills by measuring and making out their models and following templates accurately.
- 73 During the inspection, the quality of teaching was very good overall with some excellent teaching in the infants. There are no significant weaknesses in the teaching of design

and technology. In the infants, the teacher made good use of the story of “Handa’s Surprise” as a stimulus to writing and following recipes for healthy eating. The pupils responded with much enthusiasm and excitement and made significant gains in their learning about fruit and vegetables from around the world. By the end of the lesson they knew about hygienic practice, care in food preparation, how to present food in an attractive way and identified ways in which they might improve their recipe. The teacher made excellent use of the support of parents and classroom assistants in this lesson, their contribution in asking well-focused questions and providing guidance on using kitchen utensils added much to the pupils’ knowledge and confidence.

- 74 In a very good lesson in Years 3 and 4, the teacher set a challenging task in which the pupils worked collaboratively on making a model of a Tudor house. They used saws correctly and were given good hints on how to improve their technique of cutting. Pupils were totally absorbed in the task and throughout the lesson behaved impeccably. They made good comparisons with photographs and knowledge gained on their visit to Kentwell Hall to compare their designs with actual Tudor buildings. The pupils followed their plans carefully and took time to cut and shape wood with care and precision. Working in small groups helped to develop excellent co-operative skills and the discussions between pupils revealed a secure knowledge of how Tudor buildings were constructed. In Years 5 and 6 the pupils’ work and discussions with them showed that they have a secure grasp of the principles of designing, making and evaluating models. Their work in using a variety of materials to design and make a comfortable slipper shows much promise. Pupils make good use of accurate measurements and prototypes to develop their slippers. They pay good attention to ensuring that the final product is safe and comfortable and compare manufactured goods to their own. They use a good range of techniques including sewing to finish their slippers in an attractive way.
- 75 As a result of very effective planning, careful monitoring of the development of skills in the subject and the teachers’ enthusiasm the pupils show much interest and enthusiasm for design and technology. Resources are good and the teachers are imaginative in using them. The teachers encourage the pupils to take responsibility for care of tools and to be imaginative in their designs. The pupils listen very well to instructions and willingly make suggestions of how to improve their work. Assessment is used well; the teachers encourage the pupils to be critical of their own work and in this way guide them effectively on ways to improve.

GEOGRAPHY

- 76 The school has made limited improvement in standards in geography since the previous inspection and standards are not high enough at the end of the juniors. By the age of seven the pupils achieve appropriate standards for their age but eleven- year-olds have below average skills, knowledge and understanding of geography.
- 77 Pupils of all abilities in the infants make satisfactory progress. They have walked around the school and examined some of the features of their environment. Following a walk around the village they have drawn suitable maps and talk about and record how the environment affects their senses. They know that Africa is a long way away and that it is often hot. They accurately describe the different kind of clothes people wear in hot weather and cold weather.
- 78 By the end of the juniors the pupils have had insufficient experience of geography and this has resulted in unsatisfactory progress and standards that are below those expected for eleven-year-olds. Pupils in Year 6 have drawn a bird’s eye view of their

bedroom and many of them have been on a field trip to Derbyshire and could talk about the 'plague village' they had visited. However, their knowledge, skills and understanding in geography are very limited. This is due mainly to the way that the subject is timetabled as geography is covered only every other term. As a result, pupils have difficulty in remembering what they have learned previously. The lack of suitable resources to cover all aspects of the curriculum also has an adverse effect on pupils' learning.

- 79 The quality of the teaching is satisfactory in the infants but there are gaps in the teaching of geographical skills in the juniors. Lessons are linked appropriately to national guidelines but there is insufficient depth in the coverage of the subject to challenge the juniors sufficiently. The teachers correctly emphasise geographical vocabulary but do not have rigorous enough checks to ensure that the pupils have fully understood them. Due to insufficient teaching of geography in the last academic year pupils have limited understanding of the symbols used in maps and lack the necessary geographical skills and knowledge to successfully complete the tasks that were set. The school has recognised the need to improve standards in geography and to this end has recently introduced new curriculum documents.

HISTORY

- 80 The standards, teaching and learning of history have improved much since the previous inspection. By the end of the infants and juniors, the pupils have above average historical skills, knowledge and understanding for their age. The pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. They show much interest and enthusiasm for the subject spurred on by effective teaching, the good use of visits to places of historical interest and the effective use of homework. Throughout the school, the teaching is good and enthuses the pupils' with a love of the subject. In the juniors, pupils' work, discussions with them and analysis of their homework show that teaching makes a good impact on learning. The pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and talk knowledgeably about historical skills of enquiry and research. They take much pride in their work and Year 5 and 6 pupils' presentation of a local study shows very good use of literacy skills.
- 81 By the end of the infants the pupils have a good understanding of several historical personalities and they accurately describe them and their influence on British history. Having visited a toy museum they were knowledgeable about how toys had changed and made reasonable estimates of the age of toys on display in the classroom. They are able to sequence several old items in order and use a good range of vocabulary to describe time. They write with great care in making their own descriptions of items for the class toy museum and use their artist skills well to draw accurate representations of historical objects.
- 82 By the end of the juniors the pupils have a detailed knowledge of their village and how it has changed over time. Individual research into different buildings in the village add real interest to their work, and one pupil wrote in great length about the village church and her writing brought to life social and economic changes in the village. In Years 3 and 4 the pupils have a very good understanding of life in Tudor England. Their visit to Kentwell Hall, where they dressed in Tudor costume and took part in sixteenth century life filled them with enthusiasm and knowledge of the subject. The pupils are keen to search for information and use books well, although access to computers is limited. The teachers have an obvious love of history which they communicate to the pupils effectively. Lessons are planned very well and the structure of topics ensures that there

is good coverage of National Curriculum requirements. There are sufficient resources, supplemented by objects brought in by staff and pupils, however, the library has an insufficient range of history books.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 83 The previous inspection reported that standards were in line with expectations but current evidence shows that, although there have been recent improvement in the pupils' skills, standards are below those expected by the end of the infants and juniors. Pupils make satisfactory progress in word processing but in the other aspects of the subject they have limited opportunities to make sufficient gains in their learning. Overall, pupils are underachieving in the subject and lack sufficient confidence to use information and communication technology effectively. However, pupils with special educational needs make good progress. This is due to the individual work set for them. For example, before school each day some of the pupils with special educational needs spend time on the computers practising basic skills which enhance their learning of mathematics and English and give them confidence in using computers.
- 84 There has been a shortage of computers at the school and poor quality machines have inhibited progress in information and communication technology. The school is aware of the need to raise standards and information and communication technology is a priority in the school's improvement plan. Within the last few weeks new computers have been purchased with the help of the parents and have been installed in each classroom. There are now sufficient machines of good quality to support all aspects of information and communication technology. The subject leader has checked on the pupils' level of understanding and there is an adequate record of the skills achieved. The staff have prepared a good scheme of work, linked to national guidelines, to improve standards but this has yet to make a significant impact on progress. There are gaps in the teachers' understanding of information and communication technology. The approach to teaching information and communication technology is unsatisfactory and computers are not used sufficiently to support most subjects. Some of the teachers lack confidence in the teaching of information and communication technology. There are suitable plans for further training. Although the pupils have opportunities to use computers there is little direct teaching of skills to groups of pupils and this results in some wasted time and lack of consistency in improving pupils' level of attainment.
- 85 Throughout the school, the pupils are keen to use computers and have appropriate levels of competence in word processing. Infant pupils write short phrases and know how to use tools such as a spell checker. They know that fonts can be changed in size and colour. In the juniors, pupils improve these skills and by the age of 11 are able to import pictures to illustrate their text, format a page and print their work. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 use a drawing program to produce simple symmetrical pictures and in Years 5 and 6 they access the National Gallery website to find out about portraits. However, they have limited experience of using electronic mail. Some pupils have computers at home and they willingly share their expertise with their friends. The pupils have limited experience of developing ideas and controlling actions using computers. Their skills in using scanners, digital cameras and desktop publishing are below those expected for their age. Pupils enjoy finding out information from the Internet but have insufficient access to it. The school has its own interesting website and this has proved to be a helpful starting point in improving pupils' skills in using computers to communicate information.

MUSIC

- 86 The school employs a specialist to teach music to each class and staff are beginning to benefit from this support. The teaching has a beneficial impact on the quality of pupils' singing and performance. Overall pupils of all ages and abilities make satisfactory progress and attain the standards expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. There are good opportunities for pupils in the infants to play tuned and untuned musical instruments. They copy and clap simple rhythmic patterns and identify the difference between quiet and loud sounds. In the lesson seen during the inspection, pupils learned how sounds and voices can be used to good effect and listened attentively to the music, responding to the tempo and rhythm. They clearly enjoyed the unusual sounds of the Ugandan voices and the African lilt in the song and clapped their hands to the beat. Older pupils talk with animation of the current song they are learning and compare the 'caterpillar boogie' with the 'butterfly lullaby'.
- 87 In the juniors, pupils acquire an appropriate range of skills and knowledge in musical composition. They work in small groups using a range of untuned instruments and express enjoyment and pleasure when talking about their music lessons. Pupils show their own ideas and feelings through responding to music in dance lessons. In a dance lesson, the excellent standard of teaching ensured that pupils interpret the rhythm of the 'magnetic music' highly effectively. The pupils listen to a range of recorded music with increasing concentration. For example, in art lessons they listen to different classical composers and 'paint the picture that forms in their mind'. In assembly pupils listen to the music played and identify the style of music and the main instrument being played. There are limited opportunities for pupils to sing in assembly, but when they do, they sing enthusiastically and tunefully. Older pupils understand the need for notation and talk knowledgeably about crotchets and quavers.
- 88 Overall, teaching is satisfactory. The quality of teaching in the lesson seen was good. The teacher introduced the lesson very effectively capturing the pupils' imagination and setting the African scene. The teacher showed good subject knowledge and emphasised how music can be made using instruments and voices. She carefully developed a sensitivity of expression, for example, the translation of the song ended in the cat catching the mouse and emotions involved in the death of the mouse. She gave responsibility to the pupils to lead the song and this resulted in a good improvement in performance. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum and although there is no subject leader the school makes every effort to ensure that pupils have high quality, enjoyable lessons.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 89 During the inspection it was possible to observe only gymnastics and dance lessons. However, planning shows that all aspects of the physical education programme are covered fully. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, attain standards in line with those expected for seven and eleven-year-olds. The picture was much the same in the last inspection although there has been considerable improvement in the progress that pupils make especially in the infants and Years 3 and 4 due to expertise in the teaching.
- 90 Pupils' swimming skills are well above average. All pupils up to Year 4 learn to swim and by the end of the year all pupils can swim the minimum requirements of 25 metres and many do more than this. In gymnastics by the end of Year 2 pupils know the importance of warm up and cool down activities at the beginning and end of lessons. They show a good awareness of space and others as they explore different ways of travelling around the floor. They hop, skip, jump and run and show good control and co-

ordination, and freeze on the spot, listening to the teacher for the next instruction. Pupils are energetic in their work and talk confidently about what happens to their bodies when they exercise, for example they are aware how fast their heartbeats when they sustain vigorous activity.

- 91 In the juniors, pupils make very good progress in dance. They move in time with the rhythm of the music through a sequence of movements starting from slow unwinding actions then building up into a highly effective crescendo. They practise and improve their performance repeating the movement patterns with increasing control and find imaginative solutions to the challenge of completing the sequence. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6 make limited progress in gymnastics due mainly to unsatisfactory teaching and inattentive and unco-operative behaviour by a small number of pupils.
- 92 In the lessons seen during the inspection, the quality of teaching varied from excellent to unsatisfactory in the juniors and very good in the infants. The strength of teaching is in the development of skills, the brisk pace of lessons and high emphasis on activity. Pupils respond well to the very good and excellent teaching. They become totally engrossed in developing the finale of their planned sequence and work very hard to improve their performance. The teachers value highly pupils' contributions and use praise effectively; this results in pupils becoming highly motivated and enthusiastic. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the teacher lacks secure subject knowledge, the pace of the lesson is slow and too much time is spent on a range of disjointed activities with pupils demonstrating little idea of what makes a performance effective. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum and the school makes good use of the facilities. The range of out of school clubs is very good and contributes very effectively to pupils' personal, social and sporting development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 93 Pupils of all ages and abilities make satisfactory progress across the school so that by the time they leave the school they achieve standards that are in line with the expectations of the syllabus followed by most schools in Essex. The pupils respond appropriately to religious education and listen attentively in assemblies. The work done in assemblies complements the school's programme of work in religious education as pupils share in assemblies some of the things they have learned in lessons. The subject meets statutory requirements and sufficient time is allocated to lessons.
- 94 Pupils in the infants learn that each person is special and describe places important to themselves and situations that make them happy. They are aware of the difference between right and wrong and why it is important to help people. Older pupils have written about their feelings and know about special books. They know about the Pilgrim Fathers and why and how Americans celebrate Thanksgiving Day. The pupils talk about a time when people were not able to worship in the church of their choice. Pupils throughout the school respond with interest to the subject and are particularly fascinated by festivals. They listen well and show respect for the beliefs and traditions of others.
- 95 In the juniors pupils are learning about the Bible and Christian and Hindu faiths. They know that there are different places of worship and have made a detailed study of the local village church. They celebrate Harvest Festival and know about other faith festivals, for example Divali and the Spanish festival of San Jose. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a satisfactory understanding of some church practices; they have looked at why people get married in church, why we have funeral services and what happens on

Remembrance Sunday. Older pupils have compared a Christian church with a Hindu Mandir and talk confidently about the similarities and differences.

- 96 The quality of teaching of religious education is satisfactory. In a lesson in the juniors, the teacher built skilfully on pupils' past knowledge with some effective questions, however, after the initial introduction the pace of the lesson slowed and some pupils failed to listen when others were talking. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and encourage the pupils to think about different aspects of worship, for example, identifying the different uses of incense and considering why it is used in different faiths and climates. Good use is made of religious objects to engage the pupils' interest and to develop their respect for the traditions and beliefs of others. Pupils learn effectively through handling and drawing religious objects and they begin to name and recognise how different religions have special signs and symbols. For example, pupils recognise some Christian symbols and also name the different Hindu Gods. However, there are insufficient resources to meet the needs of the curriculum, especially a wide range of artefacts specific to different faiths. There were no judgements made at the last inspection so it is not possible to determine the level of improvement in the subject.