

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SEBERT WOOD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Bury St. Edmunds

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124682

Headteacher: Mr R Rice

Reporting inspector: Mr Graham R Sims

28899

Dates of inspection: 4<sup>th</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup> December 2000

Inspection number: 224574

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First school
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Wakeling
Date of previous inspection:	9 <sup>th</sup> July 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr G R Sims 28899	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Foundation Stage Equal opportunities	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed
Mrs D Thomas 16383	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils How well does the school work in partnership with parents
Mr N Sherman 16493	Team inspector	English Religious education Special educational needs	
Mr E Morgan 22556	Team inspector	Mathematics Physical education	
Mrs P King 13110	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Geography	How well are pupils taught
Mrs G Beasley 27899	Team inspector	Art and design History Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Sebert Wood Community Primary School is situated on the eastern fringe of Bury St Edmunds. The school has grown rapidly since its inauguration ten years ago. It has substantially more pupils than it had at the time of the last inspection and is currently over-subscribed. At present, there are 322 boys and girls on roll between the ages of 4 and 9. It is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils come from the immediate vicinity, which is an area largely of recently built owner-occupied housing where socio-economic circumstances are above average. A very small percentage of pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds or from homes where English is not the main spoken language. This is below the national average. Around two per cent of the pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals, which is much lower than normal. Seventeen per cent of the pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and two pupils have statements of special educational need. These figures are similar to the national average. Children join the school at the beginning of the year in which they have their fifth birthday, but attend part-time until the term in which they are five. At the time of the inspection, there were 17 children in the Reception class attending full-time and 43 part-time. The attainment of children when they start school is very close to the average for schools in Suffolk.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Sebert Wood Community Primary School is a very good school. Pupils make good progress throughout the school, achieving above average standards in most subjects. The quality of the teaching is consistently good, and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. From its foundation ten years ago, the school has been very well led by a headteacher committed to the principle of continual improvement. Although there have been many staff changes as the school has grown, he has established and maintained a team of cooperative and hard-working teachers and assistant staff, who are equally committed to providing the best possible opportunities for the pupils. The attention and care given to individual pupils' personal development is very good. Expenditure per pupil is above average and the school provides good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve standards which are above average in most subjects and have good literacy and numeracy skills.
- The pupils have positive attitudes to their work, their behaviour is good, and they relate very well to each other and to the staff.
- The overall quality of the teaching is good and there is a significant amount of very good teaching.
- The school provides a curriculum which is enriched by a very good range of interesting activities, visits and other learning opportunities.
- The standard of care and attention given to individual pupils is very good. Staff know their pupils very well and work hard to meet their needs.
- The headteacher and senior staff provide very good leadership. The school reflects carefully on its own practice and seeks continually to improve.

#### **What could be improved**

- The way pupils' writing skills are developed through subjects other than English.
- The use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning.
- Opportunities for pupils to pursue work in subjects such as geography, history and religious education in greater depth.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and carers of pupils in the school.*

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been a good degree of improvement since the last inspection, which took place in July 1996. The school has responded effectively to the previous key issues. Setting arrangements for English, mathematics and science and extension classes for the most able have provided more challenge for higher-attaining pupils. Standards in physical education have risen as a result of in-service training for teachers. The range of books in the school library has improved considerably. The school has introduced imaginative and effective initiatives to help pupils with their personal development. The school has not, however, been entirely successful in eradicating the occasional inattention and silly behaviour of some of the older pupils.

The school reflects carefully on its current practice and has initiated other improvements: provision for the youngest children has improved; new play facilities have been developed; assessment procedures are more thorough and used more effectively; communication with parents has improved, and there is better provision for information and communication technology. Governors, headteacher and staff all show a positive commitment to ongoing improvement.

Although standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are no higher than they were at the time of the last inspection, the school has maintained standards which, in most years, have been above average and frequently well above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Despite a large turnover of staff since the last inspection, the school has maintained good standards of teaching. Regular monitoring of lessons, support provided by other members of staff and regular in-service training have all contributed to an ethos in which self-reflection and a desire to improve are noticeable, positive elements.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with all schools			similar schools	Key	
	1998	1999	2000	2000		
Reading	A	C	A	B	Very high	A*
Writing	A	C	A	B	Well above average	A
Mathematics	A	C	B	C	Above average	B
					Average	C
					Below average	D
					Well below average	E
					Very low	E*

Although there has been some fluctuation in the school's results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1, the school has generally maintained high standards over the last five years. The most recent results were well above the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. When compared to schools in similar contexts, the results were above average in reading and writing and average in mathematics. An unusually high proportion of pupils with special educational needs within the year group accounts for the lower results in 1999.

Children enter the school with average levels of skill. They make good progress in the Reception classes and, by the time they start Year 1, many children have progressed beyond the expected standards. Pupils continue to make good progress throughout the school and achieve standards which, overall, are above average. The standards of pupils currently in Year 4 are lower than those normally achieved, but nevertheless represent good progress in relation to their prior attainment. There are no subjects in which pupils' attainment is weak and, by the time they move on to middle school, nearly all pupils have acquired good literacy and numeracy skills. The school tracks pupils' progress very carefully and sets itself appropriate targets for improvement. The school identifies pupils who are not achieving as well as expected and gives them additional help.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to their work and are keen to learn. They are eager to please and approach their work with a sense of commitment. They participate well in lessons, often with great enthusiasm.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Most pupils have an acute awareness of the school's expectations and behave very well, both within lessons and around the school. They are polite, friendly and respectful, and fully aware of how their behaviour affects others. Occasionally, a small minority of the older pupils become disinterested and behave in an inappropriate and silly manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The pupils' relationships with their peers and with adults are very good. Pupils are prepared to listen to what others have to say and respect the views of others. They undertake responsibilities willingly and carry them out effectively. Older pupils show a high degree of maturity, commitment and personal initiative when preparing their own assemblies.
Attendance	Very good. The level of attendance is well above the national average and there are very few unauthorised absences. Pupils arrive punctually.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
78 lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The teaching was satisfactory or better in 99 per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection. It was very good or better in 27 per cent of lessons and was good in a further 37 per cent. The teaching was unsatisfactory in one per cent of lessons.

The quality of the teaching is good throughout the school. There are no subjects in which the teaching is weak. Much time and effort is given to planning the teaching of English and mathematics, both of which are well taught. Teachers are good at taking opportunities to develop skills of literacy and numeracy when teaching other subjects, although greater emphasis could be given to developing pupils' writing skills through work produced for other subjects. The school meets the needs of all pupils well. Setting arrangements for English, mathematics and science have helped teachers to match the work more closely to pupils' needs. Much thought goes into the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, and more able pupils are also provided with some extension lessons in which they are given challenging tasks. The teachers have good subject knowledge, structure their lessons well and relate well to the pupils. The quality of learning is generally good throughout the school.



## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school provides pupils with a good range of stimulating learning opportunities which are enriched through a good variety of visits to places of interest, visitors to the school, links with the community and a very good range of after-school activities. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to develop work undertaken in subjects such as geography, history and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Pupils are provided with appropriate work and their progress is monitored regularly. Various very good initiatives, such as 'Ladybirds', 'Play Club' and 'Nurture Group', meet specific needs of groups of pupils very effectively. Support assistants are very effective in helping these pupils. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress and offered additional guidance through the parents' support group.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. The school does a great deal to promote pupils' personal development. The lunch-time 'Play Club' and the 'Nurture Group' are particularly successful initiatives which are helping pupils to integrate socially. Staff provide good role models. There are good opportunities for pupils to accept responsibilities. The older pupils take their responsibility for leading a weekly assembly very seriously.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school manages child protection issues and all matters to do with pupils' health, welfare and safety very well. The good attention given by all staff to pupils' individual needs creates a caring environment in which pupils feel secure. The school has very good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and keeps a careful track of pupils' progress.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. The school welcomes parents and keeps them well informed about their children's progress and about what is happening in school. Parents are very supportive and many help in various ways within the school. The thriving Friends Association provides valuable help for the school. Parents support their children's learning well at home.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides clear-sighted leadership and is committed to providing pupils with a high quality education and to making improvements wherever possible. He coordinates the work of a united team of dedicated teachers well. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and a good team of subject coordinators who undertake their responsibilities well.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governing body exercises its role successfully, acting effectively as a critical friend well and ensuring that all of its statutory responsibilities are met. Governors are well informed. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the part they have to play in bringing about further improvements.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The governors, headteacher and staff are committed to ongoing improvement. They are self-critical, and all aspects of the school's work are monitored regularly. This has resulted in improvements to the quality of teaching and some highly effective new initiatives to help pupils' personal development. The school development plan outlines appropriate priorities for development. The school uses its performance and assessment data well to track pupils' progress and set appropriate targets for the future.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school makes good use of its teaching resources. Support staff are very well deployed. The school links its spending closely to the educational priorities outlined in the school development plan. The school uses its available funds well, applying the principles of best value in the purchase and use of resources and services.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Good. The school has a good number of appropriately trained and experienced teachers and a very good team of assistant staff who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. The school is well resourced, although the number of computers is inadequate. The school's accommodation is well maintained, bright and attractive, and classroom areas are well appointed. The school now caters for more pupils than it was designed for, causing some accommodation problems.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Their children really enjoy school and are making good progress</li> <li>● The good standard of behaviour</li> <li>● The high quality of the teaching</li> <li>● The approachability of the staff and the school's receptivity to parents' comments.</li> <li>● The way the school is led and managed.</li> <li>● The school makes their children work hard and also helps them to become mature.</li> </ul>	<p>Only a small number of parents commented on things they would like to see improved. These included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More information about what is happening and the progress their children are making.</li> <li>● A greater range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Whilst most parents are satisfied with the amount of work the school expects their children to do at home, a few parents feel the school gives too much homework and a few that it gives too little. A small number of parents raised individual concerns, which were not raised by any other parents.

The inspection findings endorse parents' positive views and show that there is very little cause for parents to have any concerns about the school. The school keeps parents very well informed about what is happening and is open and receptive to parents' comments. Posters in classroom windows, formal and informal meetings with staff, well-designed reading logs, the availability of the headteacher before and after school each day and clear, detailed and well-written reports provide ample scope for parents to be fully informed about what is happening and the progress their children are making. The school provides many additional activities, including visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, and a very good range of extra-curricular activities which are rotated to provide opportunities for different groups of pupils.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. In the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup> for the year 2000, the pupils' results were well above the national average in reading and writing and above average in mathematics. When compared to the results of schools in similar contexts<sup>2</sup>, they were above average in reading and writing, and average in mathematics. Nearly every pupil achieved the national expectation of Level 2 in reading and writing, and all pupils achieved this level in mathematics. Almost half of the pupils achieved the higher Level 3 in reading and over a third in mathematics. The school's results have fluctuated over the last five years. In some years they have been well above the national average, although in 1999 the results were the lowest the school has achieved, reflecting the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs in that particular year group. Overall, however, the school has maintained high academic standards since the last inspection.
2. There are no national comparisons for pupils at the age of nine, but county tests taken in Year 4 show that pupils maintain good progress in Years 3 and 4 and that, over the last few years, pupils have maintained standards which are generally well above average. The current Year 4 is an exception, as the inspection findings and the school's own assessments show that standards are only average in this year group. This reflects the larger percentage of pupils with special educational needs than in other year groups and the lower results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, but masks the fact that these pupils have made good progress in relation to their prior attainment.
3. Although the school is not obliged to set targets for pupils' attainment at Key Stage 1, staff have set appropriate targets for the future and pupils are making good progress towards achieving these. Staff track pupils' progress very closely and use their assessments to identify any pupils who are not achieving as well as they should. Additional support is provided whenever necessary and some extension classes are provided for the more able pupils. The good use of assessment and the additional support help to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory, and most pupils make good progress towards their own individual targets.
4. Girls perform somewhat better than boys in reading and writing at Key Stage 1, but this is not different from the national picture. The school monitors its results closely and seeks to identify any reasons which might cause one group of pupils to perform better than others. Nothing was noted during the inspection to suggest why these differences might occur, although a greater proportion of boys than girls are in the lower sets for both English and mathematics. Within lessons, staff give boys and girls equal consideration.

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<sup>1</sup> The words 'Key Stage' refer to the different stages of learning in schools. Children start school in the Foundation Stage, which caters for children aged 3 to 5 and generally refers to children who are in the Nursery, Reception or Early Years classes. Key Stage 1 is the first stage of compulsory primary education. It caters for pupils aged 5 to 7 and refers to pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. Key Stage 1 is also frequently synonymous with the term Infants. Key Stage 2 is the second stage of primary education. It caters for pupils aged 7 to 11 and refers to pupils who are in Years 3 to 6. Key Stage 2 is also frequently synonymous with the term Juniors. At the age of 11, pupils start Key Stage 3, which marks the beginning of their secondary education.

<sup>2</sup> The school's results are compared both to the national average (ie the average of the results of all schools in England, where pupils took National Curriculum assessment tests at the end of Key Stage 1) and to the average for similar schools (ie the average of the results for all schools whose pupils come from similar socio-economic backgrounds, determined by the eligibility of pupils within the school to receive free school meals).

5. The initial assessments undertaken when children start school indicate that their achievements are close to the average for all schools in Suffolk in English and mathematics, but below average in their personal and social development. In both of the Reception classes, the quality of the teaching is consistently good and children make good progress in all aspects of their learning, and particularly in their personal, social and emotional development. There are, however, marked differences in the level of attainment of the full-time children compared to the younger children who attend part-time. By the end of the Foundation Stage, nearly all of the full-time children exceed the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning, as do many of the part-time children. Overall, the level of attainment by the time children start Key Stage 1 is above average.
6. Inspection findings are broadly consistent with the picture given by the school's National Curriculum test results. In English, pupils achieve well throughout the school, maintaining good progress in each year. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average in speaking, listening and writing and are well above average in reading. Pupils listen very effectively in lessons and are keen to articulate their views, generally expressing them clearly and accurately. Pupils not only read accurately, but do so with good understanding and an ability to talk about what they have read. They know how to use non-fiction material to find out information. Although the presentation of their writing could be better, pupils make good progress in writing in English lessons and are beginning to write independently. Higher-attaining pupils use interesting vocabulary which enlivens their writing. Pupils continue to make good gains in their speaking and listening skills as they move into and through Key Stage 2. They are confident in speaking to adults and also in front of an audience. Older higher-attaining pupils are able to argue a point of view and give reasons for their views and opinions. Pupils have positive attitudes to their reading, which encompasses a wide range of styles, genres and authors. Most pupils have sufficiently well-developed skills to access reading material from CD-ROMS, books and other sources with few problems. Writing is the weakest of the four key skills in English, although pupils still produce an acceptable standard of work, varying the style of their writing and appreciating the need to plan their work carefully. However, writing skills are not always developed as effectively as they could be through written work undertaken for other subjects, and in some, such as religious education, few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing.
7. Pupils make good progress and achieve above average standards in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 1. The pupils have good numeracy skills. They have a secure grasp of number and display good mental skills. They have a good understanding of shape, space and measures and a good mathematical vocabulary. Whilst pupils in Year 4 are making good progress relative to their previous achievements, their mental ability is not as well developed as in other year groups. Pupils in Year 3, for example, display relatively better abilities in mathematics than those in Year 4. There is evidence to show, however, that most years, by the time the pupils leave the school standards are generally at least above average. Nevertheless, pupils in Year 4 have sound mathematical understanding and cope competently with the standard of work expected of the average eight or nine-year-old. Some pupils lack concentration and this impedes further progress. Throughout the school, pupils use their mathematical knowledge well within the context of other subjects, for example, to take measurements in science and physical education.
8. The overall standard of pupils' attainment in science is above average. Pupils are able to carry out simple investigations well, predict the outcomes of their experiments and are beginning to recognise the importance of fair testing. They use scientific vocabulary well and record their work with simple diagrams. At Key Stage 2, the attainment of the oldest children in the school is in line with national expectations. However, pupils in Year 3 are achieving at above average levels, and work from the last Year 4 indicates that this is a more typical level of attainment in the school. Pupils experience a good range of practical activities throughout the school, but their recordings are often poorly presented.

9. Pupils achieve the nationally expected standards in information and communication technology at the end of Key Stage 1 and by the time pupils leave the school, although in some aspects of their work, attainment is above average at the age of nine. A shortage of computers and lack of suitable accommodation are preventing pupils from making better progress, but a well-planned curriculum, some very good teaching, and imaginative, if inconvenient, use of resources compensate for this and enable pupils to have some good learning experiences which enable them to see how effectively computers can be used. Pupils are generally confident in using computers and make good progress within lessons. There are some examples of good and very good use of computers throughout the school, but the overall use of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in all subjects is constrained by the limited resources.
10. Pupils make good progress in art and design and attain standards above those expected for their age. Pupils respond well to the varied and interesting activities, which are planned well by teachers to spark pupils' imagination and to provide for the development of artistic and creative ideas. Pupils have good recollection of work they have undertaken in previous years, and there is a range of good quality art-work on display throughout the school. Attainment in design and technology is also above average. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have good design skills and a good understanding of the relationship between structure and function. As they move through the school, they develop the ability to evaluate their work. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject and persevere well when faced with difficulties.
11. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are average in geography and history. Teachers' plans for each year group show a comprehensive coverage of both subjects, but there is limited evidence of this in pupils' books and folders, although some is on display. Too little time is available for pupils to extend their learning, as lessons are often cut short for other activities to take place. Pupils are, nevertheless, motivated by many of the activities and resources provided. Standards in history are above average by the end of Year 4, and this reflects the interest engendered by a number of suitable visits, which helps history to come alive for the pupils. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of historical facts.
12. Standards in music are average at Key Stage 1, but sessions are often too short to extend pupils' skills. Standards are higher at Key Stage 2, where pupils' positive attitudes, the effects of participation in the school's musical productions and the large number of pupils who have recorder lessons have a noticeable effect on overall standards. In physical education, pupils' attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 1 and average by the end of Year 4. This represents progress since the last inspection, when the provision for physical education was deemed to have some shortcomings.
13. Pupils meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the main elements of the Christian faith, but their understanding of how the meanings of religious stories may apply to their own lives is somewhat weaker. Pupils develop a satisfactory understanding of other religious faiths at Key Stage 2 but, whilst learning in religious education is secure, the amount of time given to the subject often does not allow pupils sufficient opportunity to explore themes and topics in sufficient depth.
14. The school is very conscious of the needs of individual pupils and monitors pupils' progress carefully. There is, for example, very good provision for pupils with special educational needs, or for those experiencing difficulties in English and mathematics. Additional support within the classroom, short focused sessions at the start of the day and some withdrawal classes for small groups of pupils all help to ensure that these pupils make good gains in their learning. Particularly effective progress is made in pupils'

reading, where the warm praise and guidance given to them by their teachers or learning assistants often boosts their confidence. The bright, attractive environment within the school and the high quality of work on display reflect the fact that the school is providing pupils' with good learning experiences and that, overall, all pupils are achieving well throughout the school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. The school has maintained all of the positive features noted in the previous inspection regarding pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and attendance. Good progress has been made in rectifying the unsatisfactory behaviour which was observed in some pupils, although this problem has not been entirely eradicated.
16. The vast majority of pupils in the school are keen to learn and participate enthusiastically in all aspects of their education. In lessons, they listen carefully to explanations and instructions from the teacher, and this enables them to approach their work confidently and be fully aware of what they are required to do. The very good levels of commitment and perseverance they display when tackling new areas of learning are having a significant impact on the standards they achieve and the progress they make. An example of this was seen in a Year 1 design and technology lesson, when pupils had a first attempt at sewing on fabric to make a Christmas card. They have a great deal of pride in their achievements, and pupils of all ages and abilities enjoy talking about their work with visitors to the school. Pupils in all year groups make confident, sensible and mature contributions to class discussions. They work cooperatively in groups and pairs, supporting each other in small but significant ways. There are occasions, in some lessons, when a minority of pupils becomes disinterested and lacks focus and concentration. This occurs mainly in the few lessons where they are not sufficiently motivated and challenged.
17. Pupils have a keen awareness of the school's expectations regarding behaviour and try hard to adhere to the school rules. They are fully aware of how their behaviour affects others and understand the consequences of their actions. The vast majority of pupils of all ages are helpful, for example, showing visitors around the school, behaving courteously, opening doors for others without prompting. They are friendly and eager to make polite conversation. They work particularly well in groups and as a team. An example of this was seen in a physical education lesson for pupils in a Reception class, when, working in groups of four, they were required to put out the equipment. These young pupils have quickly settled into school and know what is expected of them. Behaviour during lunch and playtimes is good and no incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour were witnessed during the inspection. There are occasions in some lessons when the silly behaviour of a small minority of pupils disrupts the learning of others.
18. Relationships are very good throughout the school. Pupils form constructive relationships with each other, their teachers and the other adults with whom they come into daily contact. They are trustworthy and can be relied upon to carry on working independently when not being directly supervised by the teacher. In lessons, they listen patiently to what others have to say and, when asked to evaluate the work of others, do so in a positive manner. They are able to act on their own initiative and to accept any responsibilities given to them. An example of this is the way in which the older pupils take responsibility for planning assemblies. They treat the responsibility very seriously, using their initiative to decide what to include in the assembly, and spending a great deal of their own time in preparation. Pupils who serve on the school council take the job of representing their classmates very seriously and try hard to carry out their duties in a mature and sensible manner.

19. The level of attendance in the school is very good. At 96.5 per cent, it is well above the national average. The level of unauthorised absence is well below the national average. There are very few instances of lateness and pupils are eager to come to school.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?**

20. The quality of teaching is good. The school has maintained effective standards of teaching since the last inspection despite a significant turnover of staff. In almost a quarter of the lessons seen during the inspection, the teaching was very good and, in one lesson, it was excellent. The teaching was good in a further third of lessons. One lesson was unsatisfactory and the remainder were satisfactory. The impact of teaching over time is good because all pupils, irrespective of their prior attainment are making good progress and are working to their capacity. Particular strengths of the teaching include thorough planning in all subjects which identifies clear and precise learning objectives and makes sure that the work matches the needs of individual pupils. Teachers expect pupils to do well. They use pupils' ideas skilfully to explain new learning clearly. As a consequence, pupils have positive attitudes and show good interest in all of their work.
21. At the Foundation Stage, the teaching is good. The teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the needs of these very young children and plan a wide range of suitable activities through which to develop early skills in all areas of learning. Teachers have high expectations of children's behaviour and children are expected to do their best at all times. The learning environment is suitably organised to provide for focused and free activities, and these are monitored closely by all staff. Pupils work effectively with an adult in small groups and, therefore, receive a good amount of individual attention. Careful assessments of their learning are made and used effectively to identify suitable targets and plan the next steps in learning. Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning through their imaginative presentation of new ideas when working with small groups.
22. In English, the quality of teaching is good. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the subject and plan lessons which meet the needs of all pupils effectively. Literacy skills are taught well, reflected in pupils' above average reading, speaking and listening skills. Although writing skills are taught effectively and in a well-structured way in English lessons, they are not consolidated or developed sufficiently when pupils produce written work in other subjects. The practice of setting pupils according to their ability allows the level of work to be matched to pupils' individual learning needs. Pupils show a keen interest in all of their English work in response to the interesting and lively way that teachers present new learning. Time is used efficiently, and the pace of lessons is brisk.
23. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is good. Pupils have good basic numeracy skills, which are taught through structured and lively mathematics lessons. Resources are interesting and used effectively to interest pupils, who are motivated to play an active part in lessons. Pupils are keen to answer teachers' well-focused questions. Teachers plan lessons thoroughly and have high expectation of pupils' work output. The practice of setting for mathematics allows pupils to make good progress regardless of their ability.
24. The quality of teaching in science is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and lessons are planned to cover the scheme of work in a structured way. Suitable emphasis is placed on the learning of new scientific knowledge and suitable opportunities for pupils to develop enquiry and investigative skills are planned.
25. The quality of teaching in other subjects is good overall. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, and this ensures that pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are systematically developed as they move through the school. Questions are focused and



grow from pupils' ideas and thoughts, thus giving a relevance to their learning. Planning is a particular strength. It is detailed and identifies clear learning objectives for every lesson. Teaching methods are usually good, although an over-reliance on worksheets in some lessons impedes the rate of progress of some pupils. Homework is relevant and supports pupils' learning effectively.

26. Teachers' day-to-day assessment is good in most subjects and the information is used to set challenging individual and group targets, which are shared with pupils. This ensures that pupils have good knowledge about their own learning. In mathematics and English, pupils' targets are shared with parents.
27. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The 'Ladybirds' early intervention group is particularly effective. In one very good session, pupils matched toys and other objects correctly to the letters on the alphabet. They responded to letter names and sounds confidently. Learning moves forward quickly due to the small groups, focused attention and the expertise of the learning support assistant, who plans and leads these sessions. Where appropriate, pupils are given additional support through the use of learning support assistants, who liaise effectively with the teacher to ensure that they know the most effective way to support the pupils in any one lesson. Targets included in individual education plans are considered in teachers' planning, and identified pupils are supported particularly well when working in small groups. Careful note is made of pupils' progress and this information is used well to determine what they need to do next in order to make further gains in their learning.
28. The teaching of the small number of pupils with English as an additional language is good. Teachers have been given useful and relevant advice and support which enables them to plan suitable work, matched to the individual learning needs of the pupils. This enables them to learn the basic vocabulary necessary to play and work with the other pupils in their classes and helps them to learn new skills effectively.

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

29. The school has maintained all of the positive aspects of curricular provision noted in the last inspection and now does more to cater for the needs of higher-attaining pupils in Key Stage 2. The school provides a good curriculum, meeting all statutory requirements for the National Curriculum and religious education. Pupils generally receive a rich and relevant curricular experience, enhanced by features such as artists in residence, visits in the locality, inputs from parents and other members of the community with specialist skills, and special events. The final week in Year 4 is notable for the wide range of stimulating activities from which pupils can choose, providing a memorable finale to their time at the school. Good additional provision is organised for pupils who are high attainers in Year 4, and for pupils throughout the school needing support for their social or other development. In religious education, history and geography, a good range of activities is planned but there is sometimes insufficient time to develop them and add depth to topics.
30. Strategies for teaching the basic skills of literacy and numeracy are good, especially at Key Stage 1, but literacy is not sufficiently developed through other subjects. Literacy and numeracy provision is monitored and evaluated closely to ensure its effectiveness.
31. Pupils benefit from a very good variety of opportunities for extra-curricular activities, including four recorder groups, a wide range of sports activities, chess and computer clubs. There are opportunities for pupils at both key stages and teachers and parents provide good quality activities which are popular with pupils and well attended.
32. The school provides very good support for pupils who need help. There is an active approach to ensuring equality of opportunity and access to the curriculum, taking care to

identify and support pupils who need help to make the most of their time at school. Pupils with special educational needs have full and equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. Their learning is planned well with both teachers and learning support assistants mindful of their particular learning needs and how best to ensure that pupils understand what they have to do in order to achieve success.

33. Provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is very good. In addition to circle time, where pupils share their experiences and feelings and support each other, there is a structured programme of personal, social and health education which is still evolving but supports pupils' personal and social development well. Within this context, health education is addressed and linked, where appropriate, with science. An audit of provision has been carried out as a preliminary to the full implementation of the citizenship curriculum now included in the non-statutory National Curriculum guidance. Policies are in place for sex education, which is addressed in the requirements of the science curriculum, and drugs education, which is planned to respond to issues raised by pupils.
34. The school welcomes visitors, and pupils benefit greatly from sharing the expertise of visiting artists, musicians and poets and from listening to the interesting experiences of members of the community. The involvement of community-based organisations, the fire service and the police do much to raise pupils' awareness of issues relating to their health, safety and general well-being. The school regularly accepts student teachers on placement and has developed a very effective programme for supporting and furthering their professional development. The school also offers work-experience placements to students from secondary schools. Their assistance in classrooms and general involvement in the school is very much appreciated and valued by the headteacher and staff. The school has developed strong links with the two main receiving middle schools. Pupils are provided with frequent opportunities to get to know the staff and to visit the school prior to their transfer. Regular liaison between staff and reciprocal visits ensure that a regular exchange of information takes place and that any worries or concerns regarding individual pupils, particularly those with special educational need, are addressed.
35. The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is better than it was at the time of the last inspection, particularly with regard to the provision for their cultural development. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision for their moral, social and cultural development. The school is a happy, caring environment where pupils are valued, and opportunities are provided during classroom discussions for pupils to talk about their own experiences and feelings. They have opportunities to reflect on special events in their own lives, such as Christmas, and what they mean to other people. Moments of quiet contemplation during collective worship give pupils suitable opportunities to reflect on their own lives and to consider moral dilemmas. During the inspection, for example, they considered how they might react at Christmas when they do not receive the presents they wanted. Collective worship is an integral part of the school day and, through a series of well-chosen themes, it makes an important contribution to pupils' personal and spiritual development.
36. Pupils understand clearly the difference between right and wrong and have a well-developed moral code, which forms the basis of their behaviour. Classroom rules are clear and positive and, whilst pupils display different signs of maturity relative to their age, most display impressive levels of self-discipline and accept responsibility for their own behaviour. Teachers and support assistants provide very good role models, and their high expectations of good behaviour are very largely realised. Pupils respect each other and appreciate clearly the concepts of truth, justice, honesty and fair play.

37. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils, in their turn, to take responsibility. Classroom tasks are allocated weekly, and each class nominates a representative for the School Council. Pupils work happily in small groups in classrooms and other workspaces and cooperate willingly with each other. There are rarely signs of disagreement or bad feelings. Pupils show initiative, as was seen during the inspection, when, without prompting, pupils helped their teacher and fellow pupils. Pupils know that they can be responsible for the school assembly on Fridays and many pupils are prepared to undertake the necessary preparation and practice required for this. They work in their own time in school and at home to prepare their chosen theme. This is a very worthwhile activity that suitably enhances their individual learning skills and self-esteem.
38. The school pays particular attention to promoting pupils' cultural development. Curricular documentation highlights the cultural dimension, and opportunities are sought to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of their own and other cultures and traditions. Through literature, for example, pupils develop a good insight into the stories and folk tales of Australian aborigines and, through music, they come to appreciate the different styles and rhythms inherent in African music. Studies in geography and history illustrate how our life-styles have changed and how children lived in the past and in different parts of the world. Pupils also have good opportunities to study aspects of belief and life-style in other cultures, such as the customs related to the celebration of Diwali. Good use is made of artefacts to support these studies. Visitors to the school, chosen to represent a range of different cultures, bring the teaching to life through, for example, African art exhibits.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

39. The school has maintained all of the positive features noted in the last inspection, in the way it cares for its pupils and has introduced some particularly good initiatives to help pupils who need a greater standard of care than others. Pupils are taught in a caring environment, where they can develop confidence, self-esteem and feel valued and respected as individuals. The headteacher and staff know the pupils and their families well, and a regular exchange of information between home and school ensures that any concerns relating to pupils' well-being are quickly addressed and dealt with. Pupils of all ages are able to approach staff confidently with any worries they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with in a tactful and sensitive manner. Staff are acutely aware of the needs, strengths and weaknesses of individual pupils in their care and provide them with constructive educational advice and guidance, which enables them to know what they are trying to achieve, and what they need to do to improve and to make progress.
40. The procedures for monitoring pupils' academic progress, personal development and behaviour are very good. The 'Playclub' and 'Nurture Club' are very effective strategies used by the school to encourage pupils to develop confidence, feelings of self-worth, positive attitudes to their learning and good standards of behaviour. The vast majority of pupils and parents alike are happy with the way in which the school deals with incidents of inappropriate behaviour. Circle time sessions are used effectively to address issues relating to pupils' attitudes and behaviour and to create opportunities for them to discuss their thoughts and feelings and, generally, to air their views.
41. Child protection procedures are very good. Staff are vigilant and are provided with clear guidelines and procedures for identifying and dealing with pupils who may be at risk. Pupils who become sick, or are injured, are well cared for whilst their parents are contacted. Much is done by the staff to ensure that all the guidelines in the school's health and safety policy are adhered to and that pupils are taught in a safe and secure environment. The school enlists the help of the support agencies effectively to help with raising pupils' awareness of issues relating to their health, safety and well-being, and pupils in Year 4 are able to move on to the next stage of their education well informed.

42. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are very good. Registration is carried out efficiently and in line with statutory requirements. Registers are analysed regularly for patterns of persistent absenteeism, and the educational welfare services are contacted if there are any concerns.
43. Since its previous inspection, the school has made very good progress in developing its strategies and procedures for tracking and evaluating pupils' academic and personal progress as they move through the school. Early assessments are made of what children are able to do when they commence their education. Effective use is made of the information gained to plan the next steps in the children's learning. As they move through into Key Stage 1, a very good range of procedures is in place to assess pupils' progress. The school has a detailed timetable for when assessments are to be carried out, and there is a high degree of consistency in the administration of these from class to class. The range of assessments includes a comprehensive range of tests to measure pupils' skills in reading, spelling and mathematics. Often, these are followed later in the academic year with further tests to measure the precise rate of pupils' progress. In addition, teachers make their own careful and accurate assessments of pupils' progress in relation to the National Curriculum. There is close and careful evaluation of all pupils' results by both teachers and the senior management team. From such work, teachers modify pupils' learning accordingly and set both individual and whole-school targets for improvement.
44. The academic progress of pupils with special educational needs is monitored carefully. Teachers have their own 'early warning sheets' that are used consistently to track any pupil who may demonstrate any initial concern. If necessary, additional support is given to individuals or groups of pupils who may require it. In most lessons, teachers ensure that the knowledge they have of pupils with special educational needs is incorporated into suitably devised activities that take into account the pupils' needs and what they need to do in order to make sufficient progress.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

45. The school has maintained very positive relationships with parents since the last inspection and, two years ago, took steps to improve the way parents are informed about what is happening in school, the curriculum and their children's progress. The school's partnership with parents is very good, and the headteacher and staff work hard to strengthen both formal and informal lines of communication. The vast majority of parents and carers are very supportive of the school and are satisfied with all aspects of their children's education. They appreciate the way in which staff always make themselves available to discuss any worries or concerns they may have and keep them fully informed of events relating to the life and work of the school.
46. Regular newsletters ensure that parents are fully informed of all forthcoming events, and the prospectus gives them a good insight into the school's routines and procedures. The quality of the annual reports is very good and gives parents a clear indication of their children's strengths, weaknesses and areas for improvement. They also contain thoughtful comments on the children's personal development. The quality of reports has improved since the school has started to use computers to help in the production of the reports. Parents are welcomed warmly and encouraged to play an active part in the daily life of the school, by helping in classrooms and around the school. Their involvement, which is very much appreciated by staff, makes a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, enables them to gain an overview of the work their children do and generally adds to the overall quality of school life.
47. The "Friends of Sebert Wood School Association" work hard to support the school financially by organising fund-raising and social events. These events are well attended and the money raised is put to good use by the school. Various workshops organised by the school, dealing, for example, with literacy and numeracy and special educational

needs, do much to help parents support their children's learning at home. The school's very good partnership with parents is making a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve and the progress they make.

48. There are very good links with the parents of pupils who are deemed to have special educational needs. Parents are informed of their children's progress through regular review meetings. However, the school goes beyond this requirement, having established a 'Parents Support Group' aimed at parents whose children have special educational needs. Governors, in conjunction with the special needs coordinator, have been instrumental in setting up this group, which meets regularly and allows parents to have up-to-date information about issues relating to particular areas of concern. Such a structure further cements the strong relationship between the school and the parental body and allows them to be fully involved in the decision making process.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

49. The school has maintained all of the positive features noted in the last inspection about the way the school is led and managed. The headteacher continues to provide very good leadership, which is clear-sighted and strongly focused on providing pupils with a high-quality education. Through a period of expansion and a large turnover of teachers, the headteacher has maintained a very strong ethos and a united staff team which is committed to high standards in all aspects of the school's work. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and a good team of subject coordinators, who undertake their responsibilities well. Management tasks are delegated well. Staff have a very clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, which they carry out effectively. There are very good routines for the day-to-day management of the school and all staff are fully aware of what is happening and what is expected of them. The common sense of purpose means that pupils in all classes are being given consistent messages about what the school expects. The fact that staff have been able to maintain high standards in all aspects of the school's work since the last inspection, and their willingness to take on board new initiatives and be innovative in some of the solutions to problems which the school's own monitoring has highlighted, shows that the school has a very good capacity to continue to maintain its high standards and to tackle its few weaknesses effectively.
50. The governing body exercises its role well and ensures that the school meets all of its statutory responsibilities. Governors show a keen sense of commitment to the school, although the amount of time individual governors are able to spend on school affairs varies considerably. Some governors are able to take a more active role than others, in visiting the school and monitoring what happens. As a body, however, they act as a good critical friend for the school, holding the headteacher to account for what happens within the school and the standards achieved, whilst at the same time providing a good degree of support. Governors have clearly delineated roles and responsibilities, which they undertake conscientiously. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and ensure that resources, both human and physical, are allocated appropriately to help the school deal with any perceived weaknesses. Governors share the same commitment as the headteacher and staff for continual improvement and are prepared to embrace new initiatives and implement change, whenever this is perceived to be beneficial.
51. The school has good, well-developed procedures for monitoring and evaluating its performance. The headteacher and senior management team meet regularly and, through both formal and informal procedures, are well aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Effective action has been taken to tackle weaknesses, such as addressing the learning needs of high-attaining pupils and the provision of a wider selection of non-fiction material to support the teaching. The school also monitors pupils' progress and their behaviour carefully and this has been effective in maintaining the school's high standards. It has also led to very good new initiatives to promote pupils' personal development. A well-planned timetable of lesson observations, and scrutiny of

pupils' work and teachers' plans, ensures that all aspects of the school are monitored regularly although, in some subjects, the lapse of time between scheduled monitoring is too great to enable the subject coordinator to maintain a clear overview of what is happening within the subject. Nevertheless, all coordinators are expected to monitor their subject areas and do so well when it is their scheduled turn. The monitoring of teaching has resulted in the improvement of the quality of teaching since the last inspection in, for example, physical education. Governors have made some monitoring visits, which they acknowledge to have been valuable in helping them to understand the school's needs better, but the practice is not used as much as it could be. The openness of the staff and their willingness to support each other contribute to an environment of self-improvement, which is proving to be very effective in maintaining high standards and the very good quality of educational provision.

52. The school's monitoring schedule feeds the school's development procedures very effectively. The quality of the development planning and the action taken to meet targets is very good. The school identifies appropriate targets, and spending decisions are firmly linked to its educational priorities. Designated grants and funding are used appropriately and, in one instance, have resulted in reduced class numbers. This has improved pupils' learning opportunities greatly. Very good financial control is maintained, and the school's system for financial control is efficient and ensures that up-to-date information is available to the headteacher and governors on a regular basis. The recent auditor's report commends the school on its financial administration, and the few minor recommendations made in the auditor's report have been addressed. The school has adopted fully the principles of best value when purchasing services and resources.
53. There is very effective leadership and management of arrangements with respect to pupils deemed to have special educational needs. The coordinator, although only recently having taken up responsibility for this aspect of provision, is well qualified and has a good understanding of current expectations and procedures. She offers her colleagues good support and, through careful evaluation of pupils' progress towards the targets in their individual education plans, has a good understanding of the quality of teaching pupils with special educational needs receive. Governors are kept briefed fully in relation to the school's provision, and the committee set up specifically for this enables them to have a good understanding of the school's provision and ensures that their requirements in this aspect of their work are fully met. In addition, careful consideration is given to ensuring that the extra funds the school receives to fund and support pupils in their learning is spent effectively.
54. The school has a very good ratio of teachers and support staff to pupils. The teachers are suitably qualified and sufficiently experienced to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum, religious education, provision for children in the Foundation Stage and those with special educational needs. The educational support staff are very effective and work closely with teachers, particularly in lessons where pupils undertake tasks of a practical and investigative nature. An example of this was seen in a science lesson in Year 2, in which pupils were making an electrical circuit, where the active participation of the support teacher made a significant impact on pupils' learning. The school has seen it as an important priority to provide a very favourable staffing ratio in the Foundation Stage, and the nursery nurse makes a very significant contribution to a strong teaching team for the youngest pupils. There is a strong sense of team spirit throughout the school, and students placed at the school from higher education institutions benefit from the support the school has to offer. There is an effective induction programme for newly appointed staff, and the planned programmes of in-service training and staff development link into the targets and long-term goals identified by the school. The school has appropriate procedures for performance management. All the ancillary staff, including the cook, caretaker and midday supervisors, make a valuable contribution to the smooth running of the school. The administrative staff carry

out their duties efficiently and are an important first point of contact for parents and visitors.

55. Overall, the school's accommodation is satisfactory. It has many good features, but because the school now caters for many more pupils than it was originally designed for, it has a number of shortcomings. The school is housed in a well-maintained main building with an outside temporary classroom. Classrooms are well appointed, and staff make the best possible use of available space. Most classrooms have good access to toilet and cloakroom facilities. All internal areas of the building are in good decorative order and significantly enhanced by the bright, colourful displays of pupils' work. The hall can no longer cater adequately for the number of pupils in the school and this is having an impact on aspects of the curriculum, such as music and physical education. The small size of the hall also places restrictions on the number of parents who can be accommodated at school events. Whilst each pair of classrooms has a good additional area for group activities or practical work, the school lacks additional rooms which offer privacy, for example, for staff to hold consultation meetings with parents, for pupils to meet with specialist teachers, or for first-aid purposes. The school has good plans to improve its provision for information and communication technology, but the only area potentially available is already heavily used to teach pupils with special educational needs. There is also a lack of storage space. Good standards of cleanliness and hygiene are maintained throughout the school.
  
56. The school's learning resources are good. Classrooms house a range of accessible resources which are used effectively to support pupils' learning. The quality and range of reading material are good, and books reflect gender and cultural diversity. Resources to support the teaching of mathematics are also good. The school has a shortage of computers and software, but also lacks suitable accommodation in which to house additional machines if purchased. Financial support from parents helps in the purchasing of resources and in the payment of visits to places of interest in the local and wider community, which extend and enhance pupils' learning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

57. In order to improve the quality of education provided and the standards pupils achieve, the governors, headteacher and staff should work together to:
- ensure that pupils' writing skills are developed more effectively through written work undertaken for subjects other than English *[paragraphs 6, 22, 30, 75, 78, 87, 107, 133]*.
  - ensure that greater use is made of information and communication technology as a tool for learning in all subjects *[paragraphs 9, 55, 56, 113, 117, 120]*.
  - provide pupils with more opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding in subjects such as geography, history and religious education *[paragraphs 11, 13, 29, 104, 107, 108, 109, 121, 125, 132, 133]*
58. In addition to the key issues for improvement, the school should consider the following minor areas for improvement:
- Provide opportunities for coordinators to monitor their subjects at more frequent intervals *[paragraphs 51, 92, 103, 107, 112, 125, 129, 134]*.
  - Adopt a more systematic approach to the development of investigative skills in science *[paragraphs 87, 88, 92]*.
  - Improve the way pupils present their daily work *[paragraphs 6, 8, 84, 88]*.
  - Help the older pupils to improve their response in lessons *[paragraphs 15, 17, 77, 84, 89, 90, 106, 127, 133]*.



## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	78
Number of formal discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils [In addition to this figure, there were many informal discussions with staff, other adults and pupils]	38

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	26	37	35	1	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	YR – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	322
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	51

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	3.4	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	26	35	61

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	25	26
	Girls	35	34	35
	Total	59	59	61
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (89)	97 (88)	100 (95)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	26	25
	Girls	34	34	33
	Total	59	60	58
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (89)	98 (95)	95 (88)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

### Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	250
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

### Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

**Teachers and classes**

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.6
Average class size	27.4

Education support staff: YR – Y4

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	196

*FTE means full-time equivalent.***Financial information**

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	512,829
Total expenditure	564,872
Expenditure per pupil	1,797
Balance brought forward from previous year	14,995
Balance carried forward to next year	30,324

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	301
Number of questionnaires returned	136

Percentage of responses in each category<sup>3</sup>

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	67	28	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school	48	43	5	0	4
Behaviour in the school is good	48	51	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	34	53	11	1	1
The teaching is good	57	40	2	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	34	45	13	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	64	31	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	61	34	1	0	3
The school works closely with parents	38	50	8	1	4
The school is well led and managed	63	35	0	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	58	37	2	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons	28	45	16	3	8

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<sup>3</sup> Because of rounding, percentages may not add up to 100.

## **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**

59. There have been good improvements in the provision for children in the Foundation Stage since the last inspection. All of the positive features mentioned in the previous report have been maintained but, since then, much further thought has gone into the planning of the curriculum and range of experiences offered to the children. The teachers, nursery nurse and support staff form a very strong team which works very well together and provides the youngest children with a good, and in many cases very good, range of learning experiences.
60. The skills with which children enter the school vary from year to year but, generally, their level of attainment is very similar to the average for children in other schools in Suffolk. The standard of children's personal and social skills, however, is below average, and this has been noted as a point of particular concern by the staff who work hard on this aspect of the children's learning. The quality of the teaching is consistently good in all areas of learning and is particularly good in the area of children's personal, social and emotional development and some aspects of their physical development. As a result, all children make good progress and achieve well in all aspects of their learning, although there are marked differences in the level of attainment of the full-time children compared to the younger children who attend part-time. By the end of the Foundation Stage, nearly all of the full-time children exceed the Early Learning Goals in each area of learning, as do many of the part-time children. Overall, the level of attainment by the time children start Key Stage 1 is above average.

### **Personal, social and emotional development**

61. Although most children have attended a nursery or playgroup before they start school, many of the children enter the Reception class with immature personal skills. By the time they enter Key Stage 1, however, nearly all children are achieving the Early Learning Goals with regard to their personal, social and emotional development and many exceed them. This is a reflection of the favourable ratio of adults to children, the consistent approach to managing children's behaviour, high expectations and very good teaching in this area of learning. A few children are not quite so successful in reaching the standard of personal development of other children, but the staff keep very careful records, monitor the situation very closely and provide suitably tailored learning opportunities to help these children to make progress.
62. When they start in the Reception class, only a third of the children show the ability to work independently and play collaboratively. Their ability to concentrate without supervision and to express their own opinions is low. The carefully devised programme of activities for children to pursue on their own and tasks for them to undertake under the supervision of an adult, punctuated by short sessions in which they are expected to work together as a class, provides a well-structured day, so that children become familiar with routines and know what is expected of them. At the time of the inspection, many of the older children were already showing a good ability to work independently and to share resources and activities with other children. Their confidence to express their opinions and converse with adults had grown significantly. Many children showed the ability to concentrate for an appropriate amount of time on their chosen activity, although some children, especially the younger ones, still preferred to flit from one activity to another, and did not always concentrate well when working with an adult.
63. The school's key aims for the autumn term with regard to children's personal and social development have been promoted well, largely realised and, in many cases, exceeded.

The children have a very good understanding of the teachers' expectations and know that they are expected to take turns and share with others. The staff deal very patiently, but firmly, with children who forget this and reinforce the message of cooperation whenever necessary. Sessions were observed in the hall in which both older and younger children were being taught how to set out apparatus for their physical education lesson. The exercise was not only managed well, but was used very successfully to teach children the importance of cooperating with each other and of using their initiative to help when they saw, for example, that there were not enough children to carry a mat. The children are expected to show respect for others and their property. Snack times, for example, are used very well to reinforce consideration for other people. During one observation, the children were commended for the progress they had made in learning to talk quietly and behave well during their snack time so that everybody had an opportunity to enjoy the social occasion without being disturbed by others. By placing name cards randomly on the tables each snack time, the staff not only encourage children to socialise with all children in the class, but provide another opportunity to help them with their early reading skills as they have to recognise their written name.

64. The teachers provide very good role models for the children. There is an excellent spirit of cooperation within the Reception base. Routines are well organised, and staff have a very clear understanding of what they are expected to do, despite some quite complex timetabling and sharing of teaching responsibilities. The regular interchange of teaching duties helps the children to learn to relate to different adults. The staff treat each other and the children with courtesy and respect, and this promotes very good relationships at all levels. More importantly, it helps the children to feel secure within their environment and to develop a positive attitude to their learning and to school in general.

### **Communication, language and literacy**

65. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children attain standards that are above the expectations for children starting Key Stage 1. A major factor to the good gains children make in the development of their early English and general literacy skills is the quality of the teaching. This is often good and ensures that many children gain a secure mastery in using these skills in their first few terms at the school. A key feature in the quality of teaching is the highly effective use of assessment information collected about the children's development. Teachers make careful assessments of where children are succeeding and where others need more support to move on in their learning. This information is used well to plan the precise next steps in the children's learning.
66. By the end of the Foundation Stage, children are aware of, and interested in, writing in everyday life. Through their talk, they show an appropriate awareness that writing takes a variety of forms through books, lists and simple messages. Many children are able to compose text orally, with the teacher acting as a scribe. Children know that writing proceeds from left to right, and many exercise some control over the size, shape and orientation of letters and lines of writing. Higher-attaining children are able to write their own names independently and a few of these children are able to write very simple sentences. Children develop good attitudes to reading, and progress in this aspect of their English work is good. They have a secure 'book knowledge', knowing that an author is someone who writes a book, that pages are turned and the pictures in the text can help tell the story. Some children are able to read along with the teacher and point to simple words that they recognise. Children make equally good gains in their speaking and listening skills. Teachers ensure that good opportunities are provided for children to develop such skills through the use of glove puppets, for example, or the 'home corner'. Children listen very attentively to each other and their teachers and, when speaking, are aware of the need to take their turn and of the need to make their talk clear and interesting.

## **Mathematical development**

67. The children make good progress in their mathematical development and, by the time they enter Key Stage 1, most achieve and progress beyond the Early Learning Goals. Most children can sort sets of objects according to simple criteria when they start school, and about half can count objects accurately. Although many can count to 10, few children recognise the numbers when written or use them to solve simple addition or subtraction sums. The teachers provide good opportunities for the children to develop their mathematical understanding through a wide variety of independent activities, focused tasks supervised by adults, and short whole-class sessions, in which the teacher may explore mathematical concepts, practise simple mental mathematics or help the children to learn number rhymes.
68. During the inspection, the children made good progress in acquiring knowledge about two-dimensional shapes. Indeed, some of the older children's understanding of shape is already well beyond that expected of five-year-olds, as they confidently identify a wide range of two-dimensional shapes, talk about their colour and size and then identify various three-dimensional shapes. Some of the younger children, however, still show some confusion in naming shapes, and found it very hard to recognise triangular shapes in the stars they were making for Christmas. There is a similarly wide variation in the children's ability to sort objects according to different criteria or to place objects according to positional words. Some children lack the concentration to sort more than a few objects correctly, whilst others sort a large tray of objects quickly and accurately. Most children know a good variety of number rhymes. They count confidently to 10, and many count well beyond this. Not all of the children, however, are able to apply their counting skills to practical situations, but most of them grasp the idea of pointing to a new object each time they count on one more.
69. The children enjoy the times in which they work together on mental mathematics, even though the sessions are very short. They participate willingly and enthusiastically and are becoming confident in answering questions and speaking in front of other children. The teachers use a good variety of resources to maintain the children's interest and make their learning and practical activities relevant. Teachers and helpers use every opportunity to reinforce children's understanding of mathematical language, so that an activity which is designed to help them develop their creative skills, for example, may also be used effectively to reinforce their concepts of number. Although all of the activities planned are carefully structured to teach and reinforce mathematical concepts, not enough recognition is given to some of the mathematically more able children. The staff keep careful records of what the children are able to do, but do not always act on this information by providing more challenging activities for the more able children.

## **Knowledge and understanding of the world**

70. The level of children's knowledge and understanding of the world when they enter the school is average overall, although very varied. Through the good variety of experiences planned for them and good quality teaching, all children make good progress in this area of learning and exceed the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Key Stage 1. Through a wide range of activities and some good interactive displays, the teachers encourage children to use their senses to observe and investigate. Various children were very keen, for example, for the inspector to share their fascination at looking through differently coloured sheets of acetate and to note the changes of colour when a second sheet was added as a filter. The children have many opportunities to design and make objects using a variety of construction materials and show imagination in what they build. Most children are prepared to run programs on the computer which help them to develop literacy and numeracy skills, and are beginning to develop control of the mouse to select and move items on the screen. The role-play area is used successfully to widen the children's knowledge and understanding. For example, in its use as a shop or a café, children were acquiring an understanding of how transactions are made and widening

their knowledge of different types of fruit and vegetable. Story books are well-chosen and help to widen the children's understanding of the natural world. In one session, the teacher used a factual book about elephants, not only to illustrate how information can be found in non-fiction books, but to help children identify features in the natural world. In another session, the children joined in a singing rhyme with great enthusiasm and demonstrated that they had a good understanding of the main parts of the body, as well as being able to name parts such as 'ear lobe' and 'nostril'.

### **Creative development**

71. The children work in a well-organised and visually attractive environment, which stimulates and encourages their creative development well. The teachers encourage the children to respond to a wide range of experiences, using all of their senses, by providing a full range of materials and tools, and scheduling well-run sessions to develop children's appreciation of music, dance and movement. There are many opportunities for the children to explore a wide range of artistic media, and the attractive displays throughout the Reception area show that the production of creative art-work is a prominent aspect of the children's work. Some children demonstrate a very good ability to draw and paint. Most children have a good knowledge of colour, although some of the younger children are still only able to name half a dozen colours correctly. The children's ability to express themselves musically is satisfactory. They sing a variety of songs from memory, enjoying the experience, but not always singing as well as their attainment in other areas might suggest they are capable of. The teachers and adult helpers use questions well to develop the children's imagination when reading stories or visiting them in the role-play area, which changes every half-term to provide a different focus for the children's imaginative play. Overall, the children are achieving well in this area of learning and exceed the expectations set out in the Early Learning Goals by the time they start Key Stage 1.

### **Physical development**

72. The children make good progress in their physical development. Regular opportunities for the children to play outdoors and timetabled sessions for physical education in the school hall provide ample opportunity for the children to develop their physical abilities. A wide range of well-chosen activities within the classroom also ensures that good attention is given to the development of finer skills such as cutting, sticking and manipulating smaller objects. The children's ability to use a range of tools, objects, construction and malleable materials is improving steadily. Some children handle paintbrushes and scissors skilfully and carefully, although some of the younger children found it difficult to cut around the boundary of the Christmas stars they were making. Most children are making good progress in using a pencil to form letters accurately. By the time children start Key Stage 1, they are confident in their physical abilities, and show good command of the objectives for physical development set out in the Early Learning Goals.
73. The quality of the teaching in this area of learning is good, and when the children are brought together for sessions as a whole class in the hall, it is very good. The way the teachers and assistant manage their classes in these lessons is excellent. During the inspection, two sessions were observed in which children were learning to use apparatus in the hall. On both occasions, the teachers established a very orderly atmosphere and paid very good attention to aspects of health and safety. Aware of the teachers' high expectations, the children responded particularly well, demonstrating a very good and mature level of discipline, but also great enjoyment and enthusiasm. The teachers gave clear and precise instructions, but also plenty of opportunity for the children to use their own initiative, for example, when deciding how to move around the hall or across a bench or when helping to put apparatus away at the end of the lesson. The children are developing a good awareness of space and others around them. Most children move confidently around the hall, although less so when asked to travel across a bench using



different movements. Some children show very good control of their movements, hopping and jumping with great confidence. Others are more diffident, but aware of their limitations and showing a good concern for safety. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils, however, is a significant factor in giving the children confidence to try out new movements. On a number of occasions, gentle encouragement and persuasion brought about marked improvement in a child's performance. Individual children were asked to demonstrate their movements to others, but no opportunity was provided for children to comment on the performance of others. The children are starting to appreciate the changes which happen to their bodies when they take part in physical activity. Although many are unable to do so when they start school, most of the older children now change out of, and into, their school clothes for their physical education lessons. Some, particularly the younger children, still need much encouragement from the teachers and take a long time to do so. Outdoor sessions are less formal, but the school provides the children with a good range of play equipment within a safe environment. Most children used wheeled toys with confidence and are learning to catch and throw balls and bean bags with an appropriate degree of control.

## ENGLISH

74. Although there have been some fluctuations in the school's results, the school has maintained high standards in English since the last inspection. The findings of the current inspection indicate that, by the end of Key Stage 1, pupils attain standards that are above those expected for seven-year-olds. Results of the Key Stage 1 National Curriculum tests in 2000 in reading and writing were well above the national average. The results show that the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 in reading was well above average, but was only average in writing. The school's own assessment and samples of work produced by previous year groups show that standards at the end of Year 4 have generally been at least above average in both reading and writing. Pupils achieve well throughout the school, maintaining good progress in each year. Standards in the current Year 4, however, are only average, reflecting the much higher proportion of pupils with special educational needs than in other year groups and the fact that the baseline and Key Stage 1 assessments for these pupils were much lower than for other year groups. Nevertheless, these pupils are also achieving well when compared to prior attainment.
75. Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with above average levels of attainment. The good teaching of English ensures that many pupils continue to make good gains in their learning as they move through the school. However, teachers could make more use of opportunities in other subjects to promote pupils' literacy skills. The school pays very good attention to extending pupils' speaking and listening skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are above average. Pupils listen very effectively in lessons and, when asked to venture their opinions and views to the rest of the class, their classmates listen attentively and respectfully. Most pupils are confident talkers and express their views or answers to questions clearly and articulately. Pupils continue to make good gains in their speaking and listening skills as they move into and through Key Stage 2. Pupils recount events, narrate simple stories and express opinions using an increasing vocabulary, and older higher-attaining pupils are able to argue a point of view and give reasons for their views and opinions.
76. Pupils make good progress in their reading in both key stages. By the end of Key Stage 1, standards are well above average. Pupils have a growing number of favourite authors and give simple opinions as to why they prefer one author to another. Pupils make good progress in choosing their own reading materials independently and explain clearly how information in non-fiction materials can be located by using the index or contents. Higher-attaining pupils read aloud with meaningful intonation and step into the role of and read as the character in a story easily and freely. Most pupils are able to discuss the plot of a story, why they like a particular book and give simple preferences for the type of reading they like to undertake. Many pupils make good gains in their sight vocabulary of

a growing number of common words by recognising the common syllables and phonics within them. As they move through Key Stage 1, pupils, including those with lower attainment and pupils with special educational needs, recognise and develop well their ability to self-correct when their reading of unfamiliar text has not made sense. Pupils continue to develop both their reading and their positive attitudes to reading as they move through Key Stage 2. By the age of nine, when they leave the school, pupils explore information books and other sources such as CD-ROMs effectively to seek out answers to questions. Pupils keep records of their own reading, and their personal tastes in what they like to read is becoming more varied, cutting across different styles, genres and authors.

77. In both key stages, pupils make good progress in writing, although the general presentation of their work could be better. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write independently and are beginning to take into account the reader's needs by, for example, adding detail to their work. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to use interesting vocabulary to give their writing added vibrancy and impact. Pupils spell common words correctly and show an awareness of spelling patterns and word families. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to identify and check their own incorrect spellings, referring to such sources as personal word books, simple dictionaries, or, as seen in one lesson, the spelling facilities of a word-processor. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and the few pupils deemed to have English as an additional language, make good gains in the development of their handwriting skills. Many join their letters and, by the end of Key Stage 1, are comfortable in producing joined-up handwriting. While the overall standard of presentation throughout the school is satisfactory, it could be better. Some pupils' work is rather scrappily presented, and some work is not always dated or titled. Consequently, this spoils the overall quality of their work. At Key Stage 2, pupils' writing abilities continue to develop satisfactorily. They demonstrate effectively their understanding of how writing can be varied according to the nature of the task, and good teaching enables them to distinguish between how writing a newspaper article will differ, for example, from that of writing poetry. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, have a good understanding of the need to draft work and how this is an important feature of the writing process. Pupils continue to make good gains in the development of their handwriting skills. By the time they leave the school, many use joined-up writing freely and easily in many subjects.
78. The quality of teaching is good overall, and there were some examples of very good and, occasionally, excellent teaching noted during the inspection. Teaching is effective in promoting positive attitudes to learning in the majority of pupils. Pupils enjoy their work, listen carefully to explanations and, in the main, are keen to succeed. Across the school, teachers have a good command of the subject and are very effective in utilising the principles for teaching literacy as advocated in the National Literacy Strategy. Lesson plans are clear and build effectively on what has been taught in previous sessions. In most classes, teachers make good use of fiction to stir pupils' imaginations and to promote their speaking, listening and writing skills. They ask pupils, for example, to predict what might take place next in a story or ponder on the course of action a character may take. Pupils respond well to such questions, and many are willing to venture an answer, even if they are sometimes unsure of what the correct one may be. Some effective links are made with other subjects to promote pupils' literacy skills. In history, in Year 2, for example, pupils write clearly about the events leading up to the Gunpowder Plot and in geography in Year 4, pupils write about the effects that global warming has on certain countries. However, writing skills are not always developed as effectively as they could be through written work undertaken for other subjects, and in some, such as religious education, few opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their writing.
79. The quality of teaching across the school is strengthened by teachers being extremely diligent in implementing the school's range of procedures to monitor, track and plan

pupils' future learning. There is also consistency of practice in how teachers use homework to extend pupils' learning. Pupils are given homework regularly in the form of reading, learning spellings or producing first drafts of written work in preparation for future lessons. The use of homework supports pupils well in their learning. As good as teaching is, it could be better with more effective use of computers to support pupils' writing in lessons. While some opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their research skills, opportunities for pupils to use word-processing facilities on a day-to-day basis as a means of planning, editing and drafting their work are more limited.

80. The subject is very well managed. Through regular evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning across the school, the coordinator has a good understanding of the strengths within teaching and in the areas where improvements could be made. Governors are kept regularly informed as to developments in the subject and are also fully involved in the target-setting process. The coordinator gives a good lead in the subject and supports her colleagues well in terms of lesson planning. There is a good range of resources to support teaching, and the quality of both fiction and non-fiction materials, including dictionaries in classrooms is also good. These are well organised, allowing pupils easy access to their use. The school has an attractive library that is timetabled for all classes to have access to on a weekly basis. This supports pupils effectively in their learning, as well as developing successfully pupils' healthy interests in books.

## **MATHEMATICS**

81. Standards of attainment are above national expectations at the end of Key Stage 1 and broadly in line with national expectations in Year 4. The standards currently pertaining in Year 4 are lower than they have been because of the large percentage of pupils with special educational needs in this year group. Progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good in both key stages, with the current Year 4 pupils showing a substantial improvement on their Key Stage 1 results. The school has maintained high standards since the last inspection.
82. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure grasp of number. They count confidently in ones, twos, fives and tens to an appropriate level, both forwards and backwards and recognise number patterns. Pupils understand simple fractions, including halves and quarters, and know what fractions make up a whole. This work is reinforced when they learn to tell the time in half and quarter hour sequences. Pupils understand place value to 100, and higher attainers recognise the significance of digits well beyond that. Most pupils display good mental skills when adding and subtracting numbers to 20 and can solve problems involving larger numbers. The pupils have a good understanding of shapes and measurement. They can name a range of common two-dimensional shapes, including rectangles, squares, triangles and circles, and the higher attaining pupils are able to recall some of their properties. For example, they know that the four sides of a square are equal in length and that different closed shapes have the same number of sides and corners. These pupils can draw the lines of symmetry based on these shapes. Many pupils can name simple three-dimensional shapes, such as prisms, pyramids and cylinders. Most pupils can measure accurately and they know that mass is measured in grams and kilograms and that millimetres, centimetres and metres are measures of distance. Pupils collect data and record their results in tabular form which they convert into block graphs. They interpret information presented in such graphs and draw realistic conclusions. In one instance, the class had considered what music they would have at a party and were able to identify the most popular choice from their graphs. Pupils have a good mathematical vocabulary and are familiar with terms such as 'data', 'estimate' and 'approximation', which they use in their discussions.
83. Pupils in Year 3 continue to make good progress in developing their mathematical skills. They have a good understanding of number and number bonds. Most pupils understand place value to 1000 and use mental recall of addition and subtraction to 50 and beyond.

Their mental ability is well developed, and they can solve problems involving simple fractions. The higher-attaining pupils can order fractions in terms of which are the largest, for example halves, thirds, quarters, sixths and eighths, and which are equivalent fractions, such as a quarter and two-eighths. Pupils use the four mathematical operations confidently and realise that multiplication is repeated addition. Pupils' idea of shape and space is well developed. They can distinguish between different four sided, two-dimensional shapes and know the properties of squares and rectangles and how they differ from other quadrilaterals. They are proficient at finding lines of symmetry. Higher-attaining pupils in Year 3 are able to select appropriate units of measurement and know that there are, for example, a thousand millilitres in a litre, a thousand metres in a kilometre and that a kilometre is a little less than a mile. Pupils in Year 3 have a good mathematical vocabulary. This was well illustrated when undertaking some data-handling activities involving them producing pictograms to illustrate their results. They use terms confidently, such as 'frequency table', 'tally charts', 'vertical and horizontal axis' on graphs. Virtually all pupils in Year 3, whatever their ability, undertook their work enthusiastically when engaged in a data-handling activity based on their favourite mode of travel. A few of the higher-attaining pupils conversed enthusiastically about their work and, relative to their age, displayed a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject.

84. The above average standards achieved in Year 3 are more typical of those normally attained by the school. Whilst pupils in Year 4 are making good progress relative to their previous achievement, their mental ability is not as well developed as in other years groups, and standards are only average. Some pupils, for example, do not have sound strategies to undertake simple multiplication and division by ten or a hundred. A number of pupils in Year 4 lack the ability to sustain their concentration and become distracted too easily, requiring continual input from the teacher to keep them on task. The quality of written work in Year 4 is variable and, in some instances, unsatisfactory.
85. The school has given considerable attention recently to numeracy and the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. Overall, this has been successful and has had a positive impact on pupils' progress and attainment. Pupils' mathematical ideas and numeracy skills are consolidated through a range of activities across the curriculum. Pupils' scientific investigations, in one instance, involved careful measurement and recording as they determined how far a toy car travels down different slopes. In geography, pupils record changes in temperature, which involves an understanding of negative numbers. Accurate measurements of distance and time are made in physical education when pupils record their own performances, as well as recording pulse rate during and after periods of activity.
86. The scrutiny of pupils' work indicates that the teaching of mathematics is generally good throughout the school and, during the inspection, some very good teaching was observed. Lessons are well planned and initial introductory discussions are used well to consolidate previous learning and to set targets for the lesson. Teachers use questions very well to develop pupils' thinking, to extend the highest attainers and to support the lower ability pupils. Tasks are well matched to pupils' abilities and the setting arrangements make it much easier for teachers to match work to pupils' individual needs. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject, and this enables them to present activities in an interesting manner. One of the features of the very good teaching seen during the inspection was the way in which teachers shared learning objectives with the pupils and, towards the end of the lesson, reflected on the extent to which they had been achieved. The subject has been well led and managed, and the monitoring of teaching and learning has ensured that the good quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection.

## SCIENCE

87. The overall standard of pupils' attainment in science is above average. At the end of Key Stage 1, teachers' assessments indicate that attainment is higher than in most schools and in line with that of schools in similar contexts. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average. Pupils are able to carry out simple investigations responding well to teachers' skilful questioning, and expressing their ideas clearly. They predict the outcomes of their experiments and are beginning to recognise the importance of fair testing. In their work on electricity, pupils of all abilities meet an appropriate level of challenge. They have a clear idea of the nature of electrical circuits, and higher-attaining pupils explain confidently why a variety of incomplete circuits will not work. Scientific vocabulary is used well and teachers encourage this effectively. Pupils record their work with simple diagrams, for example in their work on the effects of forces on speed and direction, and make good labelled drawings of simple electrical circuits. They are not required to articulate their own ideas enough through writing, with the result that there is lack of challenge for higher-attaining pupils and opportunities are lost for pupils to develop their writing skills. Recorded work, therefore, does not reflect the level of understanding which is seen in lessons and revealed in discussions with pupils. Pupils in Year 2 have not yet studied living things and materials this year, but they have good recall of key learning from work in earlier years, including characteristics of living things, the requirements of germination and simple properties of materials.
88. At Key Stage 2, the attainment of the oldest children in the school is in line with national expectations. However, pupils in Year 3 are achieving at above average levels, and work from the last Year 4 indicates that this is a more typical level of attainment in the school. Pupils experience a good range of practical activities throughout the school, but their recordings are often poorly presented, lacking a date and with no consistent approach to setting out work. Pupils in the current Year 4 carry out investigations, making predictions and recording their results in tables and simple graphs, for example in their work on cooling and insulation. Where activities are recorded on worksheets which only require the insertion of words into spaces, such as in their recording of their work with switches in electrical circuits, pupils, especially higher attainers, have insufficient challenge to express what they have learned from their work. This limits opportunities to develop their writing skills, as well as not guiding pupils to draw meaning from their activities.
89. Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. The majority are enthusiastic in their approach to science, and apply themselves well to their work, taking part in tasks so that they are actively learning and cooperating with others. The small, but significant, number of pupils in Year 4 who find concentration difficult are enthusiastic but, where science is planned for a whole afternoon, their attention span is challenged unless teachers structure the lesson carefully to avoid this.
90. The overall quality of the teaching in science is good, and some very good lessons were seen during the inspection. Teachers plan carefully for pupils' learning, and organise interesting activities which motivate pupils. Where teaching is particularly effective, questions are used well to encourage pupils' thinking and explanation of their ideas, and reflect the teachers' good subject knowledge. In Year 4, some groups of pupils tend to be inattentive, and teaching is less effective when this is not fully addressed through careful pacing to maintain interest and insistence on listening to instructions. Teachers use a variety of worksheets and guidance structures to support pupils' recording of their work. The absence of a systematic approach militates against pupils developing and improving their recording skills as they move through the school. The use of 'Key Facts' sheets and a glossary of key vocabulary in Year 4 has the potential to make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, although these are not used currently to good effect; they could usefully be introduced into other year groups. Use of information and communication technology is underdeveloped, but, where it is used, it is integrated well with teaching of the subject, for example, where pupils in Year 3 research and present their findings on food for a healthy diet. The organisation of pupils into groups, based on

levels of attainment in Year 2, results in very effective teaching and learning ,with an appropriate level of challenge, and teaching approaches matched to the learning needs of the group. Elsewhere, the needs of pupils who find learning difficult are generally met well, through carefully tailored work or additional support by the teacher, as seen in a Year 1 lesson on forces, or by other adults in the classroom. Teachers do not always give sufficient consideration to the needs of higher-attaining pupils.

91. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in the development of science. Attainment now exceeds expectations for most year groups, but the needs of higher-attaining pupils are still not always addressed fully in lessons.
92. The subject is led with enthusiasm and a clear sense of direction. The new coordinator has rightly identified the need for a more systematic approach to the development of skills in scientific enquiry, linked to guidance for recording work to encourage a consistent and increasingly challenging approach to supporting pupils' scientific thinking. These are areas of development for the subject. Although some monitoring of planning and teaching is carried out by the coordinator, it is not sufficiently systematic and regular to ensure that an overview of the planned and taught curriculum can be maintained. Assessment procedures for science are similar to those in foundation subjects but, for a core subject, this provides insufficient focus to set targets and track pupils' progress effectively, especially in scientific enquiry.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

93. Pupils throughout the school make good progress and attain standards above those expected for their age. The school has maintained these standards since the last inspection. Pupils respond well to the varied and interesting activities, which are well planned by teachers to spark pupils' imagination and to provide for the development of artistic and creative ideas.
94. In Key Stage 1, pupils use paint and paper to learn what new colours are made when two different colours are mixed together. They can also say what happens to the shade when black or white are added to the primary colours of red, yellow and blue. They experiment and explore these tints and tones with confidence. In one lesson, for example, most pupils successfully matched them to those on a painting entitled 'The Snail' by Matisse. In Year 2, the skills and concepts are developed further through the study of texture and pattern. Pupils' collections of textures and patterns from around the immediate school environment are displayed attractively by teachers and this stimulates pupils to consider, and develop a growing awareness of, how artists combine these two elements to create interesting pictures and sculptures.
95. In Year 3, pupils are able to talk about how they integrated their knowledge of texture and colours to create the best background to display their self-portraits effectively. They are confident in the way that they apply paint to paper and, in response to skilful questioning, are able to evaluate the finished paintings, using a good level of technical vocabulary. Teachers have high expectations of the level of skill pupils should show in their observational drawings, and the finished portraits consequently contain a very high level of detail. The pupils show a particular pride in their work. The posters produced for the 'Farminanglia Competition', for example, are of a high standard and are a reflection of the high standard of pupils' independent work.
96. Pupils in Year 4 show a growing knowledge of a range of artists and their work. They talk knowledgeably about the work of Van Gogh, for instance, and remember their paintings of a vase of flowers when studying his 'Sunflower' composition. They recall much of the work completed when they were in Years 1, 2 and 3 and remember the previous Year 4's Maoi statues displayed in the Atrium. This reflects the high level of interest, generated by a very good quality scheme of work, which is used by teachers to plan relevant and interesting activities. The work in sketchbooks shows the pupils' growing

ability to plan and design their own ideas, and the observational drawings show a good understanding of line, shadow and tone. Pupils can describe how they got their ideas for the very good quality clay plaques produced as part of their study of autumn and how their imagination was sparked by consideration of colour and shape in a previous lesson.

97. The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. From the earliest age, teachers plan exciting and interesting opportunities for pupils to develop their artistic and design skills. This ensures that the needs of all pupils, including those with a particular flair are met. The range of activities on offer is varied, and pupils enjoy working in two and three dimensions with a range of materials and media. Teachers use questions skilfully to encourage pupils to evaluate their work and to consider how a particular technique will add to a desired effect. Teachers' planning is thorough, and a detailed scheme of work not only gives ideas on how particular learning can be presented, but also gives guidance to non-specialists on teaching points. Teachers assess pupils' work carefully and make sure that during the next lesson particular targets are dealt with. Sketchbooks are used throughout the school to enable pupils to explore and try out their own ideas. Pupils are encouraged to review their own work by updating their own portfolio of artwork during each year.
98. The coordination of the subject is very good. Regular staff meetings allow for the discussion of policy, and team-planning meetings regularly review the scheme of work and its relevance to a particular year group. Art and design is used particularly effectively to support other subjects. Press prints based on Viking designs have been used to make a fetching cover for history books and equally detailed designs have been created for a Roman mosaic bath panel. The Easter Island project undertaken in Year 4 is used particularly well to support pupils' work with sculpture and makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development. The Year 4 project week similarly provides suitable opportunities for pupils to work with a range of media to develop their artistic talents and, at the same time, makes a very good contribution to their social development. Information and communication technology supports the study of colour and shape, and pupils' information technology skills have been successfully developed through their computer-generated paintings in the style of Kandinsky and their exploration of African art, for example. The pupils also make good use of digital photography in one of their topics in Year 2. There is a good range of art materials, which are used imaginatively by teachers when planning suitable art and design activities for pupils to undertake.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

99. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in design and technology is above average. They have good skills in cutting and joining, which they use in Year 1, for example, to make simple three-dimensional card representations of mice and penguins, and in the production of moving pictures involving sliders. In Year 2, they develop their design skills well and are able to select appropriate materials and tools to translate their design into a working model. Their labelled drawings of design ideas for a winding mechanism as part of a fishing rod show a good understanding of the relationship between structure and function. In their work with food, pupils have been taught to adopt a very high standard of food hygiene. The teachers' good understanding of food hygiene has arisen because of good and relevant in-service training.
100. The oldest pupils produce work of average standard. Work from the previous Year 4 is of a higher standard and shows that pupils have used pneumatics to good effect and planned and constructed a simple alarm system. Pupils in Year 3 use criteria well to evaluate their packaging for food, targeted to a particular type of customer. They offer advice to each other for improvements and appreciate evaluation as a natural part of the design and make process. A positive feature of this work, and of much of the design and technology curriculum, is the link with other subjects, in this case science and the

components of food. The packaging shows good attention to detail and to the criteria of the design brief.

101. Pupils make good progress and have a very positive attitude to the subject, cooperating well and working independently. They show a very high level of perseverance when faced with difficulties, and teachers encourage a positive approach to problem-solving, by inviting class members to offer suggestions for resolving difficulties encountered by a group. This is very effective in encouraging mutual support and the acceptance of problems as part of the process.
102. The teaching is good. Careful planning addresses techniques, designing, making and evaluating. There is a good level of challenge, with pupils of all ages expected to think through problems, with support from classmates where appropriate. Where teaching is most effective, lessons are carefully structured to maintain pace, and to ensure that pupils who finish quickly have additional tasks to make good use of their time. Good health and safety practices are encouraged with all age groups.
103. Leadership shows vision and enthusiasm, and there has been good progress since the last inspection. The subject is well organised. Good use is made of resources and the curriculum is carefully planned for progression. Although the coordinator monitors planning, teaching and pupils' work, this does not happen frequently enough to enable the coordinator to remain fully informed about what is happening in the subject throughout the school.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' work in geography is in line with the standards expected nationally. Although teachers' plans for each year group show a comprehensive coverage of the subject, there is limited evidence of this in pupils' books and folders, although some is on display. Pupils in Year 2 are aware of a variety of places in the British Isles. Their illustrated maps of Australia, linked to a visit by a teacher, show an understanding of key physical and cultural features of the country, based on research.
105. Pupils in Year 4 are also working at the standards expected for their age group. They have sufficient skills to produce an island sketch map using a key, a simple map of their locality showing understanding of two-figure coordinates, and a map of the British Isles showing principal mountains and rivers. They have a basic awareness of the difference between climate and weather and are beginning to recognise the idea of climate zones. In Year 3, a challenging project linked to environmental issues and surveys of people's behaviour and preferences, has been used effectively for the production of graphs, both manually and with a computer. This is linked well to local issues, and pupils show an appreciation of the relationship between aerial photographs and local maps. Vocabulary is used well, for example to distinguish between human and physical geographical features, and pupils' work is of a good standard.
106. Pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. In the lessons seen, there was some lack of attention from groups of pupils, although the majority were engaged with the activities and willing to discuss and listen to ideas from others. Progress is satisfactory and, as pupils move through the school, they develop their skills and understanding. Teaching is satisfactory, with careful planning. Teachers use questions and appropriate vocabulary well to encourage pupils' learning. A positive feature of the teaching is the link with real-life experiences and current affairs, as in the display of newspaper articles in Year 4 on flooding, and weather forecast information. A further good feature in Year 4 is the extension work provided for the higher-attaining pupils which enables them to achieve above average standards in some aspects of geography, although these opportunities for further in-depth work are not available for other pupils.



107. At the time of the last inspection, standards of work and pupils' progress in geography were good. Since that time, progress has been limited. The introduction of a comprehensive scheme of work based on national guidance provides good support for teachers' lesson plans. This should ensure good subject coverage, but the limited amount of time allocated to the subject militates against in-depth coverage of topics, and younger pupils have insufficient opportunity to draw and write about their work. The coordinator has insufficient opportunity to monitor lesson plans, teaching and pupils' work in progress.

## **HISTORY**

108. Pupils in Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress and, by the end of Year 2, attain standards that are in line with national expectations. There is a range of suitable opportunities for pupils to handle artefacts from another time in history, and this adds a fascination to the subject. However, too little time is available for pupils to extend their learning, as lessons are often cut short for other activities to take place.

109. In Year 1, pupils show an awareness of the passing of time, by considering the changes that have occurred in themselves since they were babies. They are able to talk about these differences using simple historical vocabulary. They show a great interest in the toy collections in their classroom and can say which ones are old and which ones are more modern. Higher-attaining pupils can also give reasons for their opinions. These range from noting the patches on the teddy bears to the furniture in the Victorian doll's house. When comparing two toys from different times, they are able to identify simple things about them which are the same and things that are different. Teachers choose toys which are relevant to the interests of pupils, and this motivates them to handle and notice their characteristics more readily. The extent of their learning is limited to the toys studied during lessons, however, and there are few opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding beyond the average level. Pupils in Year 2 are very motivated by the opportunity to handle 'old' and 'new' army uniforms and objects as part of their study of the Second World War. They handle these with care, giving due consideration to the fact that they belong to someone else. They give informed opinions about which ones are new and which are old, in terms of the shape, size and material from which they are made. Teachers plan activities which allow pupils to consider what it was like at the time of the war. Pupils were fascinated by, and listened attentively to, the reminiscences of a pilot who was responding to the questions developed by pupils in a previous lesson.

110. Pupils in Key Stage 2, including those with special educational needs, make good progress and, by the end of Year 4, attain above average standards. This is similar to the last inspection report, showing that the school has maintained standards since then.

111. Teachers present history in a lively and stimulating way. A number of suitable visits are incorporated into the scheme of work, and history comes to life in a number of projects planned by teachers. Pupils in Year 3 are very interested in their study of Bury St Edmunds and are able to talk knowledgeably about the life followed by the monks at the time of Edmund's life. Pupils in Year 4 recall with excitement the day when they were all 'evacuated' to the countryside because of the bombs being dropped on their city. They recall the labels containing their names being hung around their necks, the way they were greeted by their 'foster' carers and the subsequent celebrations on VE day, when they all enjoyed eating carrot cake. The visit to Duxford Museum was equally memorable. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of historical facts and are developing a good knowledge of historical times. They understand how history is divided up into periods and talk knowledgeably about the time-lines that they have made over the years. Suitable links to information and communication technology have been identified in the scheme of work and these provide sufficient guidance to help teachers with their planning.

112. The coordination of history is good. There have been good opportunities for the coordinator to monitor teachers' planning, and this has led to sustained above average standards in Key Stage 2. There are insufficient opportunities provided for the monitoring of teaching to ensure that learning moves forward at a fast enough pace. There is a satisfactory range of resources, which are used to support the subject well. These are supplemented with additional artefacts from the museum service and regular visits to places of interest.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

113. The school has maintained its positive approach to the teaching of information and communication technology since the last inspection and, in many respects, has improved the school's provision for the subject. A well-planned curriculum, some very good teaching, and imaginative, if inconvenient, use of resources are helping to combat a shortage of computers and lack of suitable accommodation and to ensure that pupils achieve standards which are at least in line with national expectations by the ages of seven and nine.
114. Pupils receive a solid foundation for acquiring information technology skills in Year 1. They gain an understanding of the ways computers can be used as sources of information and to carry out complex tasks. They learn how to control the mouse as they move the cursor to select words to compose sentences or move objects to create a picture. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils are confident in using a computer. They know how to locate and open a program, and save and print their work. Although some pupils are still slow to locate letters on the keyboard, they know how to obtain capital letters and how to edit text using backspace, delete and cursor keys. They can use an encyclopaedia on CD-ROM to find out information.
115. By the age of nine, pupils show a good awareness of audience as they use different features of a word processor to set out their text. They use titles and subtitles appropriately and are able to find, insert, resize and reposition clip art to illustrate their text. Teachers find appropriate contexts for the pupils' work; in Year 4, for example, they use a word processor to produce a Christmas book and in Year 3, to illustrate their work on healthy eating. Most pupils know how to use a spellchecker and understand that this tool will not recognise all spelling errors. Pupils show an appropriate level of competence using graphics and data-handling programs. A display of computer-generated African art provides a particularly striking and colourful example of pupils' work, which not only shows good mastery of different tools and techniques, but a good appreciation of the basic ideas and colour patterns used in African art. The work linked very effectively with studies of an African village undertaken in geography.
116. The school makes satisfactory use of information and communication technology in other areas of the curriculum, although there are some examples of good and very good use of computers. In the after-school computer club, pupils in Year 4 have created and maintain an attractive and informative web site for the school. The activity is enthusiastically supported by many pupils and contributes significantly to the development of their information technology skills and their appreciation of the way computers can be used as powerful sources of information. Although the pupils have received much assistance from adults in this task, some of them already show skills in this type of work which are above those expected for pupils of their age. Pupils use data-handling programs effectively to create bar charts and pictograms to display data in mathematics and geography. Younger pupils use listening centres and reading programs to help them develop their literacy skills. Pupils with special educational needs use a program which helps them to compose sentences. Research is undertaken in history and geography using CD-ROMs. An excellent example of the effective use of new technology is the way a digital camera has been used to take pictures of work in physical education, showing pupils how new technology can provide immediate results, but also enabling them to see very clearly how they perform in dance and gymnastics. The digital

camera has also been used effectively in art in Key Stage 2, where pupils have undertaken a unit of work based on video and photography. Staff are beginning to use technology to help with other tasks, such as creating more effective classroom displays and for writing pupils' annual reports.

117. The school's use of information and communication technology is, however, constrained by limited resources. The school would like to extend the work pupils do on computers, but is unable to do so until appropriate accommodation is provided. There are insufficient computers to be able to develop pupils' information technology skills and, at the same time, use them as tools for learning in other subjects. The school lacks appropriate accommodation to fulfil its ambition to group computers together in order to provide pupils with better teaching opportunities and more time in which to complete their work. Once a week, staff move all of the computers into a small room for a day, in order to provide teaching for half a class at a time. Whilst these sessions are very successful and productive, the arrangements are cumbersome and time consuming. They also deprive classes of their own computers and the room is unavailable on this day for teaching pupils with special educational needs. Because these arrangements only apply for one day a week, pupils only receive these specialist lessons once every two or three weeks. The frequent movement of computers has also caused some technical problems. The shortage of resources and lack of accommodation acts as an unwelcome restraint in an area in which the school shows considerable initiative, good ideas and distinct talent. It also prevents pupils from achieving higher standards which their enthusiasm and positive approach indicate they are well capable of achieving, and it limits the extent to which the school can use computers as an integral and frequently used resource in all areas of learning.
118. Overall, the quality of the teaching in information and communication technology is good. Some of the teaching is very good. The school has a very good approach to ensuring that staff acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject to teach effectively. The weekly large-group teaching sessions are not only used to provide good opportunities for the pupils, but also as training opportunities for class teachers who accompany their pupils and are able to observe lessons which are very well taught by the subject coordinators. Specific training is also planned for all staff in the near future. Teachers acknowledge that their skills and confidence have increased as a result of these sessions. The specialist lessons are very well planned and provide a very good basis for follow-up work by class teachers and individual practice sessions for the pupils. By teaching half a class at a time, the coordinators are able to match the work more closely to pupils' needs, thus catering effectively for both lower- and higher-attaining pupils. Just after the inspection finished, for example, separate extension sessions were provided for the higher-attaining pupils in Year 4. A very good specialist lesson for pupils in Year 2 was observed. Through brisk and purposeful questioning, the teacher quickly established what the pupils had already learned during the term, gave a very clear explanation of what they were expected to achieve during the lesson, and then proceeded to provide pupils with effective support while they were working in pairs. The lesson was well organised and appropriate word-banks were available to help pupils with their writing. The session finished with pupils carrying out a self-assessment of their own skills, thus highlighting areas for them to practise on their own. The teacher also paid very good attention during the lesson to the development of social skills, ensuring that pupils worked cooperatively, took their turn at using the keyboard and stressing the fact that she would be looking for good partnership work, with the non-typist taking an interest in what the partner was typing. The teacher's skilful classroom management skills ensured that her high expectations were fully met by the pupils. In addition to these specialist teaching sessions, class teachers provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, identifying specific tasks for pupils to complete each week, ensuring that all pupils are given opportunities to practise and providing some additional teaching sessions. A good example was observed in Year 1, in which the teacher introduced pupils to the writing task they were to practise over the coming days.

Explanations were clear and thorough, although the session was not as successful as the large-group lesson, because pupils were not able to practise the skills they had been taught straight away, because only one computer was available for them to use. In Year 4, pupils were learning how to use a spellchecker. The teacher had provided clear guidance and appropriate tasks for the pupils to acquire a helpful new skill. Again, the effectiveness of the practice sessions was limited since the teacher was unable to give pupils more attention because she was engaged in teaching another subject to the rest of the class. Despite the drawbacks, the current arrangements are enabling the pupils to make good progress and to achieve well. Now that the school is providing half-class teaching sessions, the coordinators have noted that pupils are acquiring skills at an earlier age and becoming competent more quickly than in the past.

119. The quality of learning is good. Pupils are keen to learn, particularly when they have extended opportunities to use the computer, as they do on Thursdays when the computers are all moved together. They concentrate well on their tasks and take an obvious pride in their finished work. Further evidence of their enthusiasm is seen in the number of pupils participating in the after-school computer club, which provides a variety of worthwhile activities. The enthusiasm of the two subject coordinators also helps to promote a very positive image for the subject, to which the pupils respond well.
120. The curriculum for information and communication technology is planned well. The school has adapted an exemplar scheme of work to fit into other aspects of the curriculum and, although the use of information and communication technology is not fully incorporated into the work of other subjects, the school has good plans to extend its current work once better resources and accommodation are available. There are good systems for assessing pupils' attainment. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work, and National Curriculum levels are recorded at the end of each year. A good feature is the use of self-assessment, which helps to make pupils aware of their own strengths and weaknesses. Staffing for the subject is currently very generous for the half-class teaching sessions, but is helping to compensate for limitations imposed by lack of resources. Specialist lessons are staffed by two teachers, whilst a third teaches the other half of the class. The subject is led well by the two coordinators, both of whom have a good grasp of the subject's requirements and have done much to improve the expertise of other teachers. There are good plans for the development of the subject once additional accommodation can be provided.

## **MUSIC**

121. Pupils in Key Stage 1 attain standards which are in line with national expectations. Pupils take part in a weekly singing assembly, which provides a sound opportunity to learn new songs and hymns. However, these sessions are often too short to extend pupils' skills, and pupils are not given enough time to refine their singing skills well enough. Pupils know a number of songs, which they sing from memory and in tune, giving thought to expression and mood through singing louder or more quietly. They are able to play pitched and unpitched percussion instruments, as well as body percussion, to add simple sound effects to a story.
122. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress and attain standards in line with those expected for their age. This is a similar picture to that found in the last inspection. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are able to sustain their part in a round and showed great interest and enthusiasm when performing the rap 'The Human Drum Kit'. The performance of 'Noah's Shanty' was impressive, when pupils not only kept the relevant animal actions going when they were singing their verse, but they were also able to keep the tune in their heads when asked, keeping an accurate pulse before restarting the singing at a given point in response to the teacher's direction. The standard of singing is good. Pupils are able to sing in tune with good diction. They give suitable thought to dynamics and expression.

123. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. Pupils support the many and varied musical productions through attendance at rehearsals, which take place after school. There are currently 48 pupils who attend recorder lessons regularly, and pupils are keen to perform in front of the school in assemblies and at other times. Their rendition of 'Now Light 1000 Christmas Lights' was played accurately and with obvious pride and enjoyment. Pupils rehearse regularly for these occasions at playtimes and lunchtimes, often without the presence of a teacher. Instruments are handled with care and respect. Pupils in Key Stage 2 work well together when composing a tune or accompaniment to a song, discussing and listening respectfully to each other's ideas. These are subsequently performed to a high standard.
124. The quality of teaching is sound at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. Lessons are planned thoroughly, and learning objectives are clear and precise. Teachers' subject knowledge is satisfactory overall, and the teaching of basic skills is sound. Pupils are able to compose simple pieces of music, which are recorded in graphical form to enable them to remember them when they perform these to the rest of their class. When teachers' subject knowledge is more secure, pupils are taught in interesting and lively ways. For example, in one very good lesson, pupils played the game of 'Hunt the Musical Notes', correctly directing the pupil looking for the notes by altering the dynamics of their singing but managing to keep on the same note. This is a difficult skill and ensured very good learning of the two elements of dynamics and pitch.
125. The coordination of the subject is good. Opportunities to monitor teachers' planning take place regularly and this has helped to ensure that pupils receive a broad and balanced curriculum. However, there is insufficient monitoring of teaching to ensure that learning moves forward at a fast enough rate. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to sing together for longer periods of time so that singing skills can be developed further, particularly at Key Stage 1.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

126. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above national expectations and in line with national expectations at the end of Year 4. Progress is good throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils are well coordinated and show good control on floor exercises and on activities involving simple apparatus. In music and movement sessions, pupils respond appropriately to the mood of the music and vary their movements accordingly. They have a good sense of balance and respond imaginatively when prompted by their teachers. Pupils are beginning to evaluate their actions and those of others and practise to improve their performance. Pupils learn about the changes that occur when exercising, such as increased heartbeat, and understand the need to warm up before beginning to exercise. They perform running and other exercise safely and are capable of working cooperatively and sensibly in small groups.
127. Pupils at Key Stage 2 know that vigorous activity increases breathing and heart rate. They also appreciate the importance of exercise in maintaining a healthy life-style. In one lesson in Year 3, where the activities were strictly controlled and the aims clear, pupils undertook their activities with sustained enthusiasm. They worked in pairs and then in small groups and were prepared to practise in order to refine their skills. These pupils played simple games fairly and with due consideration for their colleagues. Overall, pupils in Year 3 are making good progress. However, in other lessons at Key Stage 2, some pupils lack the necessary self-discipline required to participate effectively in the lessons and lack the sustained concentration necessary to improve their performance. In such instances, other pupils become distracted and consequently pupils' overall performance and progress suffers. Although not observed during the inspection, the school provides a comprehensive programme of swimming for pupils from Year 2 onward. By the end of Year 4, almost all pupils achieve the minimum standard expected for the end of Key Stage 2, and many pupils exceed these expectations.

128. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 is good. Occasionally, it is very good. At Key Stage 2, the teaching is more variable. It is generally satisfactory and was very good in one lesson seen. The lessons judged to be good or better were well planned, effectively managed and built on pupils' previously acquired skills and understanding. These lessons proceeded at a brisk pace, instructions were clear and teachers had high expectations of the pupils' behaviour and performance. These were very largely achieved.
129. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection and teachers are now more confident when teaching physical education.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

130. The school has maintained standards in religious education since its last inspection. Current inspection findings indicate that, at the end of both key stages, pupils attain standards that are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. As they move through the school, pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory gains in their learning of the key features of different religions and their particular customs, festivals and traditions.
131. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of the main elements of the Christian faith. They know, for example, that Christians remember Christmas for the birth of Jesus. They know that Easter is the special time in the Christian calendar that is remembered for his death and that the symbol of the cross commemorates this. For their age, pupils have a secure understanding of the importance that a church plays in the lives of Christians. They know that this is somewhere where people may gather in a community to worship or learn about the message of Christ through the Bible. However, pupils understand that people other than Christians have different faiths and traditions and that these are celebrated at different times of the year. While pupils have some understanding of the stories that Jesus told, their understanding of how their meanings may apply to their own lives is the weaker aspect of their attainment.
132. Pupils continue to make satisfactory gains in their learning of religious education as they move through Years 3 and 4. By the time they leave the school, they attain standards as outlined for nine-year-olds in the locally agreed syllabus. In Year 3, pupils learn about the importance of rules and that, from a religious perspective, moral guidance is given to Christians through the Ten Commandments. They learn about the importance of the symbolism of light through exploring the importance of an Advent wreath to Christians, Diwali to Muslims and Hanukkah to the followers of the Jewish faith. By the end of Year 4, pupils understand that the stories of Jesus often contained a particular meaning. They know, for example, that the parable of the Good Samaritan is important for its message of the need to offer friendship to each other regardless of the faith, colour or background someone may have. Pupils have learned about the main principles that underpin the Muslim faith and that Moslems pray five times a day and always from east to west..
133. Teachers are successful in developing good attitudes in the pupils to their work in the subject. In most lessons, the pupils are attentive and interested in what they are doing and listen carefully to others who may be explaining their views on a certain issue. Some older Year 4 pupils, however, do not demonstrate the same mature attitudes to the subject, and this can spoil the attitudes of others and the flow of learning. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with some examples of good teaching. Teachers have sufficient subject knowledge and use questions well to allow pupils opportunity to explain their thoughts and feelings. Good reference is made to the materials outlined in the locally agreed syllabus to plan pupils' learning over the course of a term. The quality of this planning is good and shows clearly what ideas and concepts pupils are expected to learn as the term progresses. However, while learning is secure, the amount of time given to the subject does not allow some of the planned themes to be taught in sufficient

depth. This precludes pupils from deepening their understanding of what they are exploring. Following on from this, the lack of time does not always allow pupils to record their work, and the potential to use aspects of religious education to extend pupils' literacy skills is often missed. This is particularly pertinent at Key Stage 1.

134. The coordinator has only just taken over the responsibility for the leadership, management and coordination of the subject. At present, opportunities for her to evaluate the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' learning in the subject have been very limited. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Issues of a moral nature, for example, are often given to pupils to discuss and reflect upon.