

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

## **WALTON ON THE NAZE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Walton on the Naze

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115300

Headteacher: Mr K R Grant

Reporting inspector: R E G Cross  
15917

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> October to 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2000

Inspection number: 224841

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Foundation
Age range of pupils:	4 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Standley Road Walton on the Naze Essex
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body, Walton on the Naze Primary School
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Bryan
Date of previous inspection:	11 <sup>th</sup> June 1996

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
R E G Cross 15917	Registered inspector	Geography, physical education.	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further?
Mrs D E Lott 14322	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?
Mrs W Simmons 23674	Team inspector	Science, design and technology, art. Special educational needs.	
Mrs R L Johns 22745	Team inspector	History, religious education. English as an additional language.	How well is the school led and managed?
Mrs A Quinnell 19142	Team inspector	English, music. Equality of opportunity.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mrs J S Worden 13160	Team inspector	Mathematics, information and communication technology. Children aged under five.	

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Walton on the Naze primary school educates boys and girls aged between 4 and 11 years. There are 266 pupils on roll altogether, which is about the same size as other schools of this type. The school has 65 pupils on its register of special educational needs which is above the national average and double the number on roll at the time of the school's last inspection. Two pupils have statements of special educational need which is broadly the national average. Around three per cent of the pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds which is low compared with most schools. Three of the pupils speak English as an additional language which is a bit higher than in most schools. These pupils speak English well enough to take a full part in the life of the school and to progress appropriately without additional support. The 22 youngest children are in the Foundation Stage in two classes, one of which also has Year 1 children in it. During the last school year, 22 pupils entered the school other than at the usual time of first admission and 15 left it at times which were not those of the normal leaving or transfer for most pupils. About 23 per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals which is broadly the national average. Pupils enter the school at below average levels of attainment.

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

This is a very good school. The pupils enter the school at below average standards of attainment but when they leave, standards in English, mathematics and science are higher than those found in similar schools. This is due to the very good leadership and management of the headteacher, governors and the staff which are very effective in improving the school and raising standards. The quality of teaching is good overall and promotes the pupils' progress well. The school provides very good value for money.

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

- The school effectively promotes the progress of the pupils so that they reach above average standards compared with similar schools at the end of Key Stage 2 although they enter at below average standards.
- The headteacher, governors and staff provide very good leadership which gives an excellent commitment to continued improvement.
- The overall good quality of the teaching helps the pupils to make good progress especially at Key Stage 2.
- The school's provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and is reflected in the very good behaviour and relationships which exist in the school.
- The very high quality of the school's links with parents significantly helps the pupils to reach the standards that they attain.
- The resources available to the school are very well used to promote the pupils' education.

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

- Curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage which does not, for example, maximise their personal and social development.
- Standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 where too few pupils reach standards which are higher than those found in most schools although most reach average standards.
- Curricular provision for the Year 1 pupils who are in a mixed age class and do not have such good provision as those Year 1 pupils who are in a single aged class.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school was last inspected in June 1996 and, since then, it has made a very good improvement. For example, the findings of the last inspection indicated that the standards attained by the pupils required some improvement. At Key Stage 2, standards are now both higher than they were at the time of the school's last inspection and above those found in most schools in eight of the 11 subjects taught. In the three other subjects at this key stage, standards are at least average and are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection. In addition, the quality of education provided by the school was judged to require substantial improvement at the time of its last inspection when 27 per cent of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory. This figure has been reduced to four per cent. The quality of the management and efficiency of the school was also judged to require some improvement in 1996. These aspects of the school are now very good. This is indicated by the

improvements already considered and by the fact that the key issues from the last inspection have been very well addressed. For example, the school now has very good assessment procedures and the quality and use of the school library have been greatly improved. There are still some weaknesses in the use of assessment information notably in the Foundation Stage. The school has an excellent capacity to improve further due to its very high quality leadership and management and the shared commitment which it has to improvement.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	D	C	C	B
mathematics	A	A	C	A
science	C	C	C	B

**Key**

well above average      A

above average          B

average                    C

below average          D

well below average      E

The table shows that, whilst standards are highest in mathematics, they are also above average in English and science when compared with similar schools. The school exceeded its targets for attainment in English and mathematics in the tests in 2000 and has set further challenging targets to continue to improve attainment in the tests in 2001. Over the period covered by the table above, the rate of improvement in the standards attained by the pupils has been faster than the national trend. The findings of the inspection are that standards in English, including literacy, mathematics, including numeracy, and science are higher than those found in most schools. This is due to the continued effectiveness of the management and the enhanced quality of teaching in the school in continuing to raise standards. In design and technology, information and communication technology, music, physical education and religious education, the findings of the inspection show that standards in Year 6 are also higher than those in most other schools. In art, history and geography, standards are average in this year. The pupils make good progress and reach good standards at this key stage.

At Key Stage 1, the pupils attained similar standards to those found in most schools in the 2000 national end of key stage tests and assessments in reading, writing, mathematics and science. Standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics compared with similar schools. The findings of the inspection judge standards to be the same as those found in these tests in these subjects. They also judge standards in Year 2 to be average in all other subjects except information and communication technology where they are above average. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on standards in music. These standards represent satisfactory progress and attainment at Key Stage 1 except for the most able pupils in science where too few reach above average levels.

Children in the Foundation Stage reach standards which are similar to those found in most schools in mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. In personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and creative development, standards are below average. Overall, this represents a satisfactory level of progress and attainment as the children enter school at below average levels.

Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous levels of attainment.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes are good. They work hard and show interest in their activities and this helps them to make good progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is very good. They respect each other, their teachers and the environment and, as a result, the quality of their learning is greatly enhanced.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show concern for the effect their action has on others. Older pupils care for younger ones very well. Paired reading is a particular strength. There are weaknesses in the development of the initiative of the younger pupils and in science.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. Unauthorised absence is lower than that found in most other schools.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall:	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.*

During the inspection, 21 per cent of the teaching observed was at least very good, 96 per cent was satisfactory or better and four per cent was unsatisfactory. Consistently good teaching was seen at Key Stage 2 where 82 per cent was at least good and no unsatisfactory teaching was observed. At Key Stage 1, 45 per cent of the teaching was at least good although five per cent was unsatisfactory. Eighty per cent of the teaching in the Foundation Stage was at least satisfactory but 20 per cent was unsatisfactory. Strengths of the teaching include the way in which the pupils' behaviour is managed and the use of support staff and homework to assist the pupils' learning. At Key Stage 2, the expectations which the teachers have of the pupils, the way in which they teach them basic skills and their knowledge of the subjects that they teach are also significant strengths. The major weaknesses in the teaching in the school, which are largely at Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage, are a slow pace, a failure to use assessment information consistently to provide work which challenges all pupils, particularly the more able, and an inappropriate curriculum. The quality of the teaching of English, including literacy, and mathematics, including numeracy, is good overall. It is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage. The quality of the teaching and learning of pupils with special educational needs is good and supports similar progress for these pupils. At Key Stage 2, the needs of all pupils are well met but, in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage, the more able pupils are not always fully challenged.

The quality of the pupils' learning and progress reflects the quality of teaching and is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage. There are no significant weaknesses in the quality of learning at Key Stage 2 where particular strengths are the speed with which pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and the effort which they put into their work. At Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage, most aspects of the quality of learning are satisfactory. There are no particular strengths in learning at these stages but the level of the pupils' concentration, interest and independence are weaknesses at both stages and, in the Foundation Stage, the degree to which children are enabled to apply themselves is also a weakness.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL



Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	This is good, especially at Key Stage 2. The National Numeracy Strategy is very well implemented and the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy is good. Provision for extracurricular activities and the contribution of the community to the pupils' learning are good. There are weaknesses in the curriculum in the Foundation Stage, for some Year 1 pupils and in the teaching of religious education which is sometimes too closely related to personal and social education so that some topics lack sufficient religious content.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special educational needs co-ordinator gives very good leadership and the pupils' individual education plans meet their needs well. The links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good and overall statutory requirements are met. Some teachers make very good provision for pupils with special educational needs which assists their learning greatly. Sometimes, pupils are withdrawn from lessons and miss their entitlement to work in mathematics and some other subjects.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Three of the pupils speak English as an additional language. Their command of English is good enough to allow them to take a full part in the life of the school and to progress appropriately without additional support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a considerable strength of the school. This development is very well promoted by the pupils' involvement in the school council. Spiritual development is not fully developed in science.
How well the school cares for its pupils	School takes good care of pupils. There has not been recent training in child protection procedures.

The school's partnership with parents is very good and greatly assists the pupils to make progress.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher gives the school very strong leadership and management which ensures that it has a very clear direction. He is very well supported by other staff with management responsibilities particularly the deputy headteacher. Most co-ordinators, for example, those responsible for special educational needs and information and communication technology, give the areas for which they are responsible strong leadership although there are weaknesses in the management of the Foundation Stage. There is no complacency in this school which is always seeking to improve.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their duties very well. They have a very good grasp of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, take responsibility for them and deploy their individual strengths well to help them carry out their responsibilities. The governors, particularly the Chair, have a close working relationship with the headteacher which is both supportive and questioning when necessary. Their work and commitment are significant factors which support the school very well in its attempts to get even better.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school evaluates its performance objectively and very well. It takes very effective action to secure improvements. Detailed analysis of assessment information and the monitoring of the teaching of core subjects, particularly English and mathematics, have been major factors in securing higher standards in the school.
The strategic use of resources	The school makes very good use of its resources and closely links its development planning with its spending intentions. When major purchases are made, the governors are very concerned to ensure that they get value for money. Purchases which ensure that the pupils get the maximum resources to help their progress are made which means that the cheapest tender is not necessarily accepted. Very good use is made of the funding provided for pupils with special educational needs which aids the progress that they make.

The school has a good number of teaching and support staff and its accommodation and learning resources support the teaching of the curriculum very well. These factors greatly assist the pupils to make progress.

### **PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fact that the quality of the teaching in the school is good.</li> <li>• The high expectations that the school has of their children.</li> <li>• The progress made by their children.</li> <li>• They are comfortable about approaching the school.</li> <li>• The school is well led and managed.</li> <li>• The school works closely with them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were no areas of the school which significant numbers of parents would like to see improved.</li> </ul>

The findings of the inspection fully support the positive views of the parents.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. Children enter the Foundation Stage at below average standards. They make suitable progress and reach appropriate standards given their below average entry point. In Year R, the children reach standards which are similar to those found in most schools in their mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development. Standards are lower than those found in most schools in communication, language and literacy, personal, social and emotional development and creative development. No judgement about the standards reached by children of this age was made by the school's last inspection. In personal, social and emotional development, where standards are below average, children are able to attend to their personal needs appropriately - putting on their coats (sometimes needing help with zips) and tidying away resources when asked. However, their social skills are less well developed. They do not always maintain suitable attention nor do they understand that there are codes of behaviour to follow when in a group - at times they call out far too much and do not sit quietly to let others have their turn at speaking. Limitations in the curricular provision narrow children's range of experiences and impede their progress. There are too few opportunities for children to choose and explore activities for themselves and initiate their own ideas. This confines their use of language, social interaction and creativity and slows progress in communication, language and literacy and creative development.

2. In the end of Key Stage 1 tests in 2000, standards were average compared with all schools in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards were well above average in reading and above average in writing and in mathematics compared with similar schools. Standards in all of these subjects have risen compared with 1996 and, although they fell in 1999, the standards reached reflected the ability of the year group well. In science, the assessments made by teachers were similar to those found in most schools at Level 2 and above.

3. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 2, the pupils reach average standards in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy, except information and communication technology where standards are above average. No judgement was possible in music because of insufficient evidence during the period of the inspection. These judgements are similar to those of the last inspection except in design and technology and information and communication technology where standards are now higher and religious education where they are now lower. The improvement in design and technology is due to enhanced curricular provision in the subject compared with the school's last inspection. In information and communication technology, the improvement is due to much improved resources and a strengthening in the quality of teaching. Lower standards in religious education are due to some work in Year 2 being too closely related to personal and social education and thus lacking a sufficiently specific religious content. Pupils reach satisfactory standards overall at Key Stage 1 although higher achievers are not always sufficiently challenged by their work, for example, in science.

4. In Key Stage 1, most pupils express their ideas with confidence but some do not concentrate sufficiently well when listening to others. They write their own interesting creative 'sounds' poems about, for example, 'bells ringing' but a few have difficulty in writing legible, individual letters. Most pupils enjoy reading and all pupils have a good understanding of letter sounds although more able pupils do not always reach their full potential as their reading material does not consistently challenge them. In mathematics, pupils in Year 2 use mental recall of some of the addition and subtraction facts to ten although some find difficulty when doing subtraction problems. They are beginning to use centimetres to measure length and use their knowledge of mathematics well in practical situations, for example, when sorting two-dimensional shapes and investigating odd and even numbers. In science, pupils in Year 2 have an average understanding of living things, the properties of materials and physical processes. By Year 2, pupils know about the importance of exercise, can sort and compare materials

and select different materials in order to make varied sounds. However, they do not undertake enough investigative work and their attainment in scientific enquiry is below average. This is the main reason why only a very low percentage of Year 2 pupils reach above average standards.

5. In geography at Key Stage 1, the pupils have appropriate early map work skills but they do not always complete or record their work appropriately. In religious education, the pupils know about simple aspects of world faiths such as Hinduism but they are less able to discuss moral issues at a level appropriate to their ages. In history, the pupils have a sound sense of chronology and are interested in the history of the local area but their methods of recording their work are limited. In physical education, Year 2 pupils dribble and run and dodge when holding a ball with appropriate skill but they often bunch together rather than making full use of the space available. In design and technology, pupils plan and use their ideas to make models with developing precision but they do not make enough decisions about the choice and use of resources for themselves. In art, the pupils paint successfully, for example, in the style of Van Gogh but they have too few opportunities to use their own imagination. In information and communication technology, the pupils show high levels of independence when changing colours and drawing when using a painting program but they find difficulty in using a program involving giving commands to change direction.

6. In the end of Key Stage 2 national tests and assessments in 2000, the school's results were average in English, mathematics and science compared with all schools. Compared with similar schools, standards were well above average in mathematics and above average in English and science. Since 1996, the standards reached by the pupils have improved faster than the national trend. The school has set challenging targets to improve further the standards attained in the tests in 2001.

7. The findings of the inspection are that, in Year 6, the pupils reach standards which are higher than those found in most schools, including in literacy and numeracy, except in history, geography and art where standards are similar to those found in most schools. Since the school's last OFSTED inspection, standards have improved in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, music, physical education and religious education and they have remained the same in the other subjects. Improved standards compared with the 2000 test results and the last inspection are due to the continued effectiveness of the management and the enhanced quality of teaching in the school. The pupils reach good standards at Key Stage 2 and on a whole school basis. This is because the quality of teaching at this Key Stage 2 is consistently good and builds successfully on the secure foundations made earlier in the school which the pupils generally enter at below average levels of attainment. The school's few pupils for whom English is an additional language are in Key Stage 2. These pupils, and able pupils make good progress at this key stage.

8. In English in Key Stage 2 the school gives good support to all pupils to ensure that they achieve the full range of academic language. Older pupils enthusiastically speak of their enjoyment of 'personification poetry', 'metaphors', 'inference' and 'deduction' during lessons. The use of classical literature such as excerpts from Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' helps pupils to develop a critical appreciation of a wide range of books. Pupils are able to choose their own reading material from a very good selection of books from the school's excellent library. However, they often select books which are easy to read and too few have a good awareness of a number of suitable authors. Older pupils write in a variety of styles. They write their own 'Witch's spell' and appropriately use different forms of writing, such as writing up an experiment for making a fair test for the properties of varied materials in science and facts about the Ancient Greeks in history. Although there is a good emphasis on precise vocabulary in lessons, this is not fully evident in the pupils' speech and writing at other times. Most pupils in Year 6 are working at the appropriate level for their age in mathematics. They are developing their own strategies for problem solving and most pupils understand short multiplication and division. Some pupils find work on fractions challenging, particularly the use of the technical vocabulary, such as numerator and denominator. In work on shape, pupils are able to draw angles to the nearest degree and most pupils are able to collect information and construct simple line graphs to

display it. In science in Year 6, pupils understand how to make a fair test, recognise parts of plants such as the stamen and stigma, identify four methods by which solids and liquids can be separated and know about conductors and insulators. The use of worksheets sometimes restricts the pupils' ability to work independently.

9. In music at Key Stage 2, the pupils sing confidently with good rhythm and pitch but their skills in appraising music are not well developed. In history, the pupils in Year 6 have sound knowledge of life and religion in Ancient Greece and the legacy of that civilisation but their ability to identify why the past is interpreted in different ways is insufficiently developed. In religious education, they have a good understanding of the beliefs and traditions of Christianity and Judaism but their religious knowledge is insufficiently developed in some of their work as this is too closely linked with personal and social education. In geography, the pupils show a sound awareness of the local area but, in some cases, too much of the work is identical which restricts their initiative and the development of their skills. By the time that they leave the school, almost all pupils can swim at least 25 metres safely using a recognised stroke, however, in gymnastics, they do not always demonstrate their performance well particularly in Year 6. In design and technology, the pupils have a strong understanding of the design process and know the limitations in the use of materials but do not always evaluate their products in sufficient depth. In information and communication technology, the pupils are very confident when using the Internet to find specific information but their keyboard skills are not highly developed as most use one or two fingers to operate it. In art, they use pencil drawings well, for example, to convey a sense of movement but their three-dimensional work is less well developed.

10. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and reach good standards relative to their previous attainment. They achieve well when their progress is measured against the specific targets set in their individual education plans. All pupils are making good progress, particularly when receiving extra support in English and mathematics and this helps to raise their attainment from well below average to below average.

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

11. Pupils have good attitudes to their work. In English, mathematics and science, they are enthusiastic to learn and in design technology and information and communication technology, their enthusiasm is very good. They are interested in the subjects and are keen to follow the teachers' instructions. In physical education, they listen attentively and sustain interest in the activities. In art, they concentrate and work at a good pace. Much of the time they enjoy contributing to the discussions but, at times, the teacher has to work very hard to move them from being passive learners. Pupils are particularly responsive in the more practical subjects and those where they can relate to their own lives, such as the Year 4 evaluation of traffic versus pedestrian access to Walton High Street. Pupils' concentration is usually good but some are easily distracted. They respect property, handle resources carefully and take care to keep the school neat and tidy. They work well in pairs and groups.

12. Overall, pupils' behaviour is very good which is better than in the last report when it was good. There are a few instances, however, of pupils calling out and chatting unnecessarily. Pupils know the school rules and are aware of the consequences of their actions. This is evident in the few behaviour report forms, which are feared by pupils, that have to be completed. They are considerate of their peers' right to learn and are usually aware of the impact of their actions on others. They are polite and friendly, know right from wrong and respect the views of others. Bullying is not a problem in the school. Pupils know that it is unacceptable and any incidents will be very firmly and effectively dealt with. They respect the environment keeping it free of litter and graffiti. There were no exclusions during the last academic year.

13. The personal development of pupils is good and the relationships, including racial harmony, in the school are very good. Since the last inspection, the school has increased the number of opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. The strong and active school council is a particularly

good example. Two elected representatives from each class take their duties maturely and initiate many ideas for consideration. Pupils also enjoy carrying out other opportunities for responsibility. These include setting up, operating and clearing away the necessary equipment for assemblies and being 'problem busters' on the playground. The juniors are very attentive and helpful to the younger pupils with their reading. Staff provide good role models to pupils. In science and the classes for children in the Foundation Stage, there is not, however, enough suitable teaching provision to enable children to show sufficient initiative.

14. Overall, pupils with special educational needs form very good relationships with all teachers, support staff and each other. The challenges in work are usually very well matched to pupils' specific needs and they quickly make progress and feel a sense of success. Furthermore, this results in very good motivation and concentration. For pupils with behavioural difficulties, behaviour is sometimes inappropriate, but the school is working successfully to ensure that this does not disrupt the learning of other pupils. Personal development is good overall and is supported by high quality individual education plans.

15. Children in the Foundation Stage feel secure in their surroundings and are happy to come to school. At the start of the day, they enter the classroom with enthusiasm and eagerly proceed to get out activities and equipment of their own choosing. They are well behaved and play agreeably alongside one another, occasionally sharing a play mat for their own imagined games. However, there are insufficient opportunities for sustained free choice activities, to develop children's initiative and personal responsibility.

16. Pupils' attendance continues to be satisfactory with unauthorised absence below the national average. Most pupils arrive punctually at school and their lessons. The number of authorised absences is inflated by the considerable number of pupils whose parents' employment in the area makes it impossible for them to take their own holidays during the school holidays. Some parents do, however, try to take more than the permitted number of days despite the school's clear and firm instructions.

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

17. The quality of teaching and learning is good although there are important differences between some parts of the school. This judgement is an improvement on the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection when the quality of teaching was found to be sound or better with wide variations ranging from very good to poor. There were also inconsistencies in both key stages which were more evident at Key Stage 2. In the 1996 inspection, 27 per cent of the teaching was judged to be less than satisfactory. During this inspection, 81 lessons or parts of lessons were seen. The quality of teaching was excellent in four per cent of these lessons, very good in 17 per cent, good in 43 per cent, satisfactory in 32 per cent and unsatisfactory in four per cent. The quality of learning closely mirrored these figures. The teaching makes identical provision for the needs of boys and girls and for pupils of different ethnicity. The three pupils with English as an additional language speak English well enough to take a full part in the life of the school and to progress appropriately without additional support.

18. The quality of teaching and learning for children in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and they make suitable progress and reach appropriate standards given their below average entry point. Within this overall judgement, teaching and learning are satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and physical development but unsatisfactory in personal, social and emotional development and creative development. No judgement about the teaching of children of this age was made by the school's last inspection. During this inspection, ten observations of the teaching of children in the Foundation Stage were made. Ten per cent was judged to be good, 70 per cent satisfactory and 20 per cent (two lessons) unsatisfactory. Teachers' planning, the way basic skills are taught, the management of children and use of support staff are satisfactory. Weaknesses are evident, however, in teachers' understanding of how to maximise children's learning and independence. The curricular provision does

not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to display their ingenuity, imagination and independent learning. This, in turn, restricts the extent to which they can interact socially and develop their language skills. Teaching methods are used appropriately to direct children's learning, for example, with number work, handwriting and practical skills, such as using scissors, but at other times, they confine children's creative development as they are not able to explore situations for themselves. The use of day-to-day assessment is unsatisfactory. It is not sufficiently regular or systematic in approach so that strengths and weaknesses are clearly identified in order to assist the next step of the children's learning.

19. At Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and promotes sound progress and appropriate standards. This judgement is similar to that made when the school was inspected in 1996. At this key stage, 20 lessons were observed during the inspection. Five per cent were excellent, ten per cent were very good, 30 per cent were good, 50 per cent were satisfactory and five per cent (one lesson) were unsatisfactory. For pupils in this key stage, the quality of teaching and learning is stronger in the classes which contain only one year group. In the key stage as a whole, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in all subjects, including literacy and numeracy, except in information and communication technology where it is good. There was insufficient evidence to make a judgement in music. At Key Stage 1, most aspects of the quality of learning are satisfactory. There are no particular strengths in learning but the pupils' concentration and independence are weaknesses.

20. A Year 1 literacy lesson based on the book "Mamba and the crocodile bird" illustrated the strengths of the teaching at this key stage and that the school has implemented the National Literacy Strategy well. The lesson was well planned with work provided for pupils of three different levels of attainment. The teacher's effective questioning, "What do you think the bird is going to ask?" helped the pupils to read with understanding. The good quality of the relationships in the class made them feel secure and gave them the confidence to answer questions without worrying about giving a wrong answer. It also enabled the teacher to get the pupils to read expressively without embarrassment. Their interest was maintained by basing their writing on the story they read as a class. Writing skills were well taught with questions such as, "Why does Mamba need a capital letter?" and answers like "Because it is a name". The teacher's very good control of the class was demonstrated when she reminded the pupils of the class rules and they quickly responded and maintained concentration by following their five rules. Good progress was made in this lesson.

21. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is good and promotes a similar rate of progress and above average standards. This judgement is an improvement on the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection which found teaching to be sound or better overall but inconsistent. During the inspection, 51 lesson observations were made at this key stage. Four per cent were excellent, 23 per cent were very good, 55 per cent were good and 18 per cent were satisfactory. There are no significant differences in the quality of teaching and learning in the different year groups in this key stage. The quality of teaching and learning is good in all subjects except art, history and geography where it is satisfactory. There are no significant weaknesses in the quality of learning at Key Stage 2 where particular strengths are the speed with which pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding and the effort which they put into their work.

22. A Year 5/6 lesson on probability exemplified the good quality of the teaching at Key Stage 2 and the very good way in which the school has implemented the National Numeracy Strategy. The pupils listened very carefully to the teacher's introduction and joined in very enthusiastically with a game saying "Yes!" when their colour of cube came up. The teacher had very good control of the pupils' behaviour and high expectations that they would not call out or talk over others. One boy who calls out constantly is severely reprimanded, "It is great that you want to contribute, but **put your hand up!** There are others who want to join in". The pupils appreciated that there was not an equal chance as seven red and five green cubes were used. Very good questioning by the teacher throughout the game enabled the pupils to refine their understanding of this concept well which one illustrated by

relating it to an even chance of being right or left handed. The teacher probed this idea by asking, "Do we know that 50 per cent of the population are left handed?" Excellent links are made with the pupils' understanding of fractions. "How many kings are there in a pack? Give me the number out of the total. Simplify and cancel the fraction. Great! One chance in 13 of getting a king". Very good progress was made in this lesson.

23. Strengths of the teaching include the way in which the pupils' behaviour is managed and the use of support staff and homework to assist the pupils' learning. At Key Stage 2, the expectations which the teachers have of the pupils, the way in which they teach them basic skills and their knowledge of the subjects that they teach are also significant strengths. The most significant weaknesses in the teaching in the school, which are largely at Key Stage 1 and in the Foundation Stage, are a slow pace, for example, in physical education and a failure to use assessment information consistently to provide work which challenges all pupils, particularly the more able. This is most evident in science at Key Stage 1 where too few pupils reach above average levels in the end of key stage national assessments largely because they are not given sufficient investigative work. In addition, the pupils in the Foundation Stage and the mixed Year R/Year 1 class do not always receive an appropriate curriculum.

24. Compared with the findings of the school's previous OFSTED inspection, whole-school and lesson planning, the timetabling of lessons, the teachers' knowledge of the subjects they teach, the marking of pupils' work and the provision of homework have all improved. The provision of investigative and independent work has improved but weaknesses in science at Key Stage 1 in the Foundation Stage remain and there are more limited weaknesses in the use of assessment information.

25. The quality of teaching and learning for pupils with special educational needs is good and gives rise to good progress and standards relative to their previous attainment. It ranges from very good to satisfactory. Where teaching is best, the teacher really understands how to use resources to make learning fun and challenging and has a very strong insight into the lives and needs of the pupils. As a result they often make basic skills teaching link to the pupils' own experiences. For example, in one session, the teacher made a strong connection between a pupil's trip to London to help her with comprehension and spelling work. The teaching of phonic skills, particularly by the co-ordinator, is also very strong and is well linked to the use of information and communication technology. Pupils are usually very highly motivated, they concentrate well and enjoy their successes. This is largely because teaching is very well planned so that pupils learn in small, but challenging steps. Where teaching is satisfactory, the teacher misses opportunities to consolidate and personalise learning as there is a tendency to try to rush through a wide range of activities, rather than developing one in greater depth, nevertheless, pupils still make satisfactory progress. Where pupils have behavioural difficulties, the school is working hard to develop work and targets which are appropriate to the individual needs of pupils, but sometimes there is not enough understanding of the span of concentration which can be realistically expected of these pupils. Overall, all teachers use good methods and resources, which enable pupils with special educational needs to learn effectively. Learning support assistants give good support and this is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science in particular. Teachers take full account of the targets set out in individual education plans. Individual education plans contain clear targets and they are sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. The links with the literacy and numeracy strategies are very good.

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

26. Overall, the quality and range of the curriculum provided by the school are good, particularly at Key Stage 2 and promote the aims of the school well. It includes all subjects of the National Curriculum, together with religious education, but this sometimes lacks sufficient religious focus. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements and offers pupils a good range of opportunities. Personal and social education receives particularly good attention. Health, sex education and the use and misuse



of medicines are taught as part of science and within the context of caring relationships. Pupils are provided with accurate information, which promotes positive attitudes to a healthy lifestyle. The few pupils who have English as an additional language are able to participate in all the school's opportunities and do not require additional curricular provision. Although pupils, who have special educational needs, are provided with good support, some miss parts of the curriculum, such as science or history, when they are withdrawn for extra literacy support. There are also some weaknesses in the curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage and for the few Year 1 pupils in the Year R/1 class, who are not receiving their full entitlement to the curriculum for Key Stage 1 pupils. Appropriate policies and schemes of work are in place and there is an acceptable amount of time given to all subjects. The provision for homework is good for Key Stage 2 pupils and satisfactory for other pupils in the school.

27. The school's previous inspection report identified as a key issue the need to 'maintain and further develop the school's very caring ethos and provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development'. The school has addressed this issue well by ensuring that pupils are taught within the boundaries of a family-like community where the needs of everyone are important. Everyone within the school is treated fairly and with respect, knowing that class rules are there to ensure that every individual is given the right to learn. The school has made good improvements to each aspect, providing pupils with a very caring environment and very good provision overall for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which together make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

28. Long-term and medium-term planning is satisfactory and provides for the coverage of all programmes of study. Weekly plans are detailed, with the best focusing on specific skills, which groups of pupils are to learn. The headteacher and subject coordinators monitor planning of the curriculum.

29. Overall the quality and range of learning opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage are unsatisfactory. There is a newly developed scheme of work for this stage and the plans for this term, covering the six areas of learning, are in place. Planning for the forthcoming terms are nearing completion. Weekly planning appropriately covers each area of learning, however, there are both strengths and weaknesses. For example, there are excellent opportunities for paired reading with pupils from Year 6 but there is insufficient provision for children to choose for themselves what they will do. Although there is a good range of resources available, children do not have adequate time, on a regular basis, to plan and choose freely from a wide range of different activities. This, in turn, reduces their opportunities to use language for conversational and imaginative purposes, holds back their personal and creative development and limits their independence to choose, experiment, explore creatively and initiate ideas of their own.

30. The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been successfully implemented. The literacy strategy has been well resourced and is having a good effect on helping to raise standards. The influence of the numeracy strategy on standards is very good.

31. The curriculum is appropriately organised for pupils with special educational needs. Provision is good overall and matches the findings of the last inspection, although there has been further improvement in the quality of the individual education plans and resources. The quality of individual education plans is at least good, often very good and occasionally excellent. Where they are best, targets for pupils are listed in progressive and easily measurable small steps that can be achieved quickly. Overall, arrangements for using individual education plans are very effective in ensuring needs are met. However, most pupils are regularly withdrawn from lessons for group work at the same time each week in a wide variety of subjects. This means that their attainment and progress in lessons are sometimes hampered as pupils miss introductions and, occasionally, whole lessons so that they are not having the same equality of opportunity as other pupils.

32. Extracurricular provision is very good and pupils are able to take part in a very wide range of activities. They are able to participate in clubs during the lunch hour and after school, where they can learn to play the recorder, piano or guitar, sing in the choir, play football, softball, gymnastics or netball,

search the Internet, undertake homework, science and country dancing. Pupils take part in various sporting activities with other schools where they are often very successful, winning many trophies, including a cup for softball. Parents and governors are also closely involved, especially with coaching for football and softball. The school has boys' and girls' football teams. These teams are fortunate in having a coach and players from Ipswich Town football club regularly come into the school to help them to improve their football skills. The curriculum is enhanced through having a very good range of visits made by pupils and by visitors to the school. Visiting theatre companies and musicians enlighten pupils' understanding of historical events and different cultures. Pupils visit different local places of worship, geographical features, such as The Naze, museums and The Royal Albert Hall. Older pupils take part in a residential or an outdoor pursuits visit.

33. There are good links by pupils and staff with partner institutions, such as the local Nursery and secondary school. These good links help to prepare pupils well for their transfer to their next stage of education.

34. Provision is very good for pupils' personal development. It is very good for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' spiritual development is enhanced through religious education, where they learn about the many world religions. In collective worship, the focus is mainly Christian; pupils sing hymns, take part in prayers and have time for reflection. In a religious education lesson about Moses, pupils were asked to close their eyes and silently think how they would have felt should they have seen the burning bush in the desert. They were asked to consider if they would have realised that God was calling them. They have visited Rochester Cathedral and other places of worship and listened to speakers from different religions. Pupils are encouraged to develop an appreciation of and, to wonder at, the natural world during art lessons.

35. The very good provision for pupils' moral development is founded on the very high expectations that staff have for them. All staff are very good role models for their pupils and are very consistent in the way they show respect for both pupils and adults. The school's positive approach to the management of behaviour and rewards, such as team points and headteacher's praise, are making pupils aware of what is acceptable and helping them to develop an appropriate idea of what is right and wrong. Moral issues are taught well and pupils are very well behaved in and around the school. At the start of each year, pupils discuss and decide on their own class rules, which are displayed well in the classrooms and which pupils adhere to very well. In the Year 1 class, if pupils' concentration starts to wander during a whole class teaching session, they respond very positively, when the teacher very quietly reminds them of their class rules of 'looking, listening, hands in laps, legs crossed and no voices'. Through their sporting activities, pupils are developing a healthy sense of competitiveness and pride in their group achievements.

36. The school makes very good provision for pupils' social development. The school creates a strong sense of identity as a very caring community in which everyone is well cared for and supported very well. Pupils are democratically elected and are proud to represent their class as members of the school council, where they propose and discuss a wide variety of issues. They decide on which charities the school will support and the introduction of fruit for sale during break times was one of the initiatives proposed and successfully introduced through the school council. During a personal and social education lesson, pupils took part in a well-structured discussion on caring for the environment showing a sense of maturity beyond their young age through their very good ideas. Year 4 'Litter Busters' conscientiously help to care for the memorial Rose Garden in the school grounds. Pupils enjoy and look forward to their sessions, when they are 'paired reading partners' with pupils from other classes. They are given very good opportunities to be aware of the wider community. The local policeman not only comes into school to help pupils to be aware of strangers and police work, but also comes in each week to play a melodeon for country dancing. He also comes into school to speak about his collection of musical instruments, which helps pupils with some aspects of their work in music and history. The choir and country dancers entertain local elderly residents at harvest and Christmas. Some

of the elderly residents come into school to speak about their lives, thus enhancing and extending pupils' knowledge of the history of the local community.

37. There is very good provision for pupils' cultural development. Pupils' understanding of the many different cultures in the world is enriched through the school's membership of the Commonwealth Institute. Members from the Institute come into school to work with staff and pupils and extend their knowledge of Chinese, Indian, South American and Caribbean cultures. They bring in artefacts, traditional costumes, and different forms of music and art, which make learning interesting. There are a few Turkish pupils within the school who willingly explain about their culture and belief. Geography and religious education lessons help pupils to have a good understanding of the rich cultural diversity in the world. Visits to concerts, such as the visit to the Junior Proms at The Royal Albert Hall, greatly enhance pupils' knowledge of music and different places of interest. The study of artists from around the world and visits by theatre companies and musicians, such as the African drummers, or the experience of hearing about a 'Victorian childhood' with Victorian songs and dances, ensure that pupils are well aware of both historical and present day cultures.

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

38. The school takes good care to provide pupils with a welcoming, safe and supportive environment which has positive effects on their attitudes to learning and their achievements. Staff take pains to know pupils as individuals. There is attention to child protection matters but not all staff have been trained in the procedures for handling incidents and others have not had any recent training, although training for all staff is planned for next term. The written policy and procedures are sound. Suitable records are kept but the school does not ensure that these are securely stored at all times.

39. Attention to health and safety matters is good with particularly good written risk assessments for the required areas. However, there is no book for employees to record matters that need attention. There is good provision for delivering first aid but not all requests are recorded. The Local Education Authority's guidelines for occasions when pupils leave the school site are followed and a risk assessment is done for each occasion but there is no easy way for staff to ensure that all aspects are covered.

40. Pupils' personal development is monitored and mostly recorded in an easily accessible way that provides a good long-term outline of the child's successes as well as misdemeanours. The weekly allocation of time for pupils' personal and social education gives good opportunities for topics to be covered. These include sex and drugs education, which have contributions from the school nurse and the police, and the school is updating the scheme of work to ensure that all aspects of personal and social education are covered. The school also has good relationships with the other external agencies that it uses.

41. The school provides well for pupils with special educational needs. There are effective assessment procedures in place to identify pupils with special educational needs, which are fully understood by staff. The co-ordinator has developed very good links with parents and support agencies to ensure that pupils' difficulties are understood. There is good inclusion for pupils with behaviour difficulties and mild autism.

42. Children in the Foundation Stage are well cared for and it is evident that they feel at ease in their surroundings. The well-planned induction procedures are an important factor in creating this situation. The children play happily in their own play area, which is fenced off from the main playground, but are equally eager to join the infants at play in the afternoon in the 'big' playground. Staff are on hand to deal with any mishaps and children display their feeling of security by the way they run eagerly into the classroom at the start of day and are quite unperturbed when a teacher other than their own is present.

43. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in the procedures for assessment and the analysis of data. This aspect is now a strength of the school. Very soon after children enter

the school at the Foundation Stage, they are assessed in relation to the Early Learning Goals using a procedure designed specifically for this age range. It builds upon the earlier evidence from parents and provides valuable information for planning activities to meet their individual needs. In the intervening period between the national tests in Year 2 and Year 6, the school uses optional tests for Years 3, 4 and 5, similar to those at the end of Key Stage 2, and annual standardised assessment tests, for reading, mathematics and English. The data are analysed methodically to provide the school with much useful information. For example, the analysis enables the school to set clear and appropriate targets for each pupil, to ascertain which pupils require further support in 'booster' classes and also to group pupils for the mathematics teaching sets in Years 5 and 6. In addition, specific individuals and groups of pupils are tracked for their progress in English and mathematics term by term. The data are also used to evaluate how well the school is doing compared with other schools nationally and locally. Teachers also regularly examine samples of pupils' work, for example, in mathematics, samples of work have been moderated and annotated to demonstrate the levels attained. They are then placed in special portfolios to provide a useful evidence base to which teachers can refer. The school has appropriate individual records for pupils, which are updated termly, and provide an end-of-year summary of assessment for all subjects.

44. The school does not have a consistent approach for logging information gained from on-going assessment of the foundation subjects, information and communication technology and religious education - teachers use their own individual methods for keeping track of pupils' progress in these subjects. Whilst there is evidence of good assessment and rising standards, the informal notes which teachers keep of pupils' individual achievements are variable in quality and usefulness. This weakness is more evident in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Where the quality of assessment is good, it is regular, specific about different pupils' strengths and weaknesses, is easy to access and inform the next stage of teachers' planning and provides an accessible overview for whole-school monitoring. The last inspection judged that the school needed to place greater emphasis on the use of assessment to inform pupils' learning and, although there has been a good improvement in Key Stage 2, it is not consistently of the same quality in Key Stage 1 and the Foundation Stage. It lacks rigour and a systematic method for noting pupils' strengths and weaknesses so that they are clearly identifiable and feed into the next stage of their learning.

45. The procedures for promoting good attendance and monitoring it are very good. Pupils' punctuality is carefully watched and the reasons for authorised absence are scrutinised thoroughly. The headteacher takes a firm line on days taken for holidays during term time and makes every effort to discourage parents from keeping their children away from school. However, he is aware of local employment factors which often make it impossible for parents to make alternative arrangements.

46. The behaviour policy provides a sound foundation for the very good behaviour that there is in the school. The school's expectations are made clear to pupils and parents. Since the introduction of the behaviour report forms, inappropriate behaviour is said to have diminished as pupils dislike the recording of this type of behaviour. This considerably reduces the number of incidents that go beyond the first recording. Any incidents of bullying are monitored within behaviour generally. Pupils are rewarded with a range of certificates and house points for their achievements.

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

47. Parents are rightly very happy with the information that the school provides for them and the way that they are encouraged to work closely with the school to support their child's education. Regular newsletters keep them well informed of general matters. The parents and their children meet with the class teacher to agree targets which help the pupils to make good progress. Parents' views of the school are actively sought and their ideas are acted upon. Termly consultation evenings for parents are well attended which, together with the homework diaries, enable parents to keep in close touch with the class teacher and abreast of their child's progress. The annual reports to parents have been considerably improved since the last inspection so that they are now very informative and helpful.

There are some minor omissions, largely concerning details of provision for pupils with special educational needs, in the provision of statutory information. However, parents of pupils with special educational needs are properly involved in identifying their needs and support their children's learning well. The parent teacher association is very active and well supported in its efforts to raise funds to support the school's resources. This very good partnership between the school and parents makes a very good contribution to pupils' learning and achievements.

48. The induction programme for the youngest pupils is very good. Early years staff liaise with nursery and pre-school groups and home visits can be made, for prospective pupils, if necessary. There is a meeting for parents and children who are transferring from the nursery next to the school are invited to attend infant assemblies and 'taster' sessions in school. They can stay for lunch on one of the visits. There is also a scheme whereby parents can borrow special activity packs and books before their child starts school. Approximately two weeks after the start of their child's first term, parents receive a questionnaire so that, if they wish to, they can respond on the effectiveness of the procedures.

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

49. The leadership and management of this school are very good. The headteacher gives the school very strong leadership and management which ensures that it has a very clear direction and that the school's very appropriate aims and values are very well reflected throughout its work. This judgement is an improvement on that made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection which found that guidance was strong on administrative practice but that leadership of the monitoring of the curriculum was less well developed. The headteacher is very well supported by other staff with management responsibilities particularly the deputy headteacher. The skills of the headteacher and deputy headteacher complement each other very well. These skills are deployed very effectively and they are a very purposeful and efficient team. Most co-ordinators, for example, those responsible for special educational needs and information and communication technology, lead the areas for which they are in charge of strongly. There are some weaknesses in the management of the Foundation Stage. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage lacks sufficient rigour, aspects of curricular provision are not fully catered for and on-going assessment has shortcomings.

50. The effectiveness and improvement of the management and leadership of the school are clearly shown in the very good improvement that it has made since it was inspected in 1996. At Key Stage 2, standards are now both higher than they were at the time of the school's last inspection and above those found in most schools in seven of the 11 subjects taught. In the four other subjects at this key stage, standards are similar to those found at the time of the last inspection and are above average in information and communication technology and average in history, geography and art.

51. The key issues from the last inspection have been very well addressed. For example, raising the standard of the quality of teaching was a key issue. At the time of the school's last inspection, 27 per cent of the teaching was judged to be unsatisfactory compared with only four per cent in this inspection. This is due to improved monitoring. Improvement in monitoring of the curriculum was a key issue. The school now evaluates its performance objectively and very well and takes very effective action to secure improvements. Detailed analysis of assessment information and the monitoring of the teaching of core subjects, particularly English and mathematics, have been major factors in securing higher standards in the school. In addition, the school now has very good assessment procedures and the quality and use of the school library have been greatly improved. The school's ethos has been maintained and its provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development improved. Opportunities for pupils to develop investigative skills and independence are better although there are still some weakness in these areas and in the use of assessment information in some subjects and the Foundation Stage. The school has an excellent capacity to improve in the future due to the very high quality of its leadership and management and the strong team spirit which

gives a shared commitment to improvement. This is a school which is always successfully striving to improve further and in which there is no complacency.

52. School development planning has also improved since the school's last inspection. The strengths noted by that inspection, for example, the involvement of parents and governors and the relevance of the priorities for development have been maintained. The school now has a three year management plan and a one year improvement plan. The improvement plan concentrates on how standards will be raised and gives details including costs, timescales and how success will be measured. The plan is completed by co-ordinators' subject action plans although not all of these are formal written plans. The management plan covers all appropriate areas of the school and is a very useful document.

53. The governors fulfil their duties very well. Statutory requirements continue to be well met apart from minor omissions in the statutory information for parents and some administrative welfare procedures. The governors know the school well and understand its strengths and weaknesses. They accept responsibility for them and use their individual strengths well to help them carry out their responsibilities. They have an appropriate committee structure to help them in their work, make visits to the school to see it in action and attend appropriate training. The governors, particularly the Chair, have a close working relationship with the headteacher which is both supportive and questioning when necessary. This is based on mutual trust and respect. For example, the headteacher modified his views about a particular staffing issue after discussion with the governors. In addition, the Chair of governors often joins the headteacher for meetings with parents. The work and commitment of the governors are significant factors in the successful improvement of the school.

54. The school makes very good use of its resources and closely links its development planning with its spending intentions. When major purchases are made, the governors are very concerned to ensure that they get value for money. The cheapest tender is not necessarily accepted as governors examine the specification of what is to be provided. This ensures that the resources available to the school are very well used to promote the pupils' progress. Very good use is made of the funding provided for pupils with special educational needs which aids the progress that they make. Very good use is made of information and communication technology for administrative and curricular purposes as is shown by its widespread use in other subjects. Budgetary procedures are very good and the school's finances are very carefully monitored and controlled. Although the budgetary figures presented to the inspection showed forecast reserves to be low at 0.06 per cent of the school's total income this does not represent the true position as the school is awaiting repayment of expenditure for a building improvement project. The financial position of the school is very secure.

55. The last report judged that all pupils had equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is now satisfactory with weaknesses. Some pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from lessons for additional support and are not taught the subject which the rest of the class receives. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage has weaknesses, for example, in provision for the personal and social education of the children. Furthermore, the Year 1 pupils in the mixed Year R/Year 1 class are not taught the National Curriculum in the same depth as the pupils in the single age Year 1 class.

56. The special educational needs co-ordinator gives very good leadership to this area. She has worked hard to ensure that all documentation is meticulously organised and easily accessible and has very good knowledge of the subject and how to develop provision in the future. The co-ordinator is proactive in gaining high quality additional training and gives very good support to other teachers, by monitoring their teaching and planning work together. Additionally, the deputy headteacher is also very strongly involved in daily support for the learning support assistants and this ensures good continuity with the part time teachers. Resources and accommodation for pupils with special educational needs are of a very good standard overall. The only exception is that the room is also used for additional music support and this means that on one day a week, there is no easy access to information and

communication technology for pupils with special educational needs. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has changed but standards of provision remain high and this is a strength of the school.

57. The number, qualifications and experience of the school's teaching staff meet the needs of the curriculum well. There are 16 full and part time staff who are deployed efficiently to make the best use of their expertise. They are aware of their own and others' roles and responsibilities and form a good team who are committed to the school and to the pupils' learning and welfare. The special educational needs coordinator is employed on a part time basis and her time is used very effectively to work in close liaison with class teachers, two support teachers and eight support assistants. Support staff provide pupils with good standards of care and educational support. The school also benefits from having a music specialist who gives class, group and individual tuition. A good level of high quality administrative support ensures that the daily business of the school runs smoothly and unobtrusively and contributes positively to pupils' welfare. Induction procedures for new staff are satisfactory and arrangements for the introduction of performance management are well in hand. All this broadly reflects the findings of the previous inspection.

58. Overall, the accommodation is very good and has a very positive impact on the quality of education that the school provides. The school's fabric is in a good state of repair. The classrooms are generally of sufficient size and the shared activity area between two classes is used effectively to support all areas of learning. The school is a stimulating learning environment, which is enhanced by colourful displays of pupils' work, and the computer suite and library are focal points of the school. The school has addressed the key issue from the previous inspection to improve the quality and use of the library very well. The library has been restocked and refurbished and provides an attractive and welcoming area for pupils to browse and enjoy books. It also promotes their study skills well and some pupils take part in an after school homework club with quiet study facilities. The designated room for special educational needs is well used for small group work. There is an appropriate play area for children under five and the school has ordered resources to improve their provision.

59. Resources are at least good in all areas both in terms of their range and appropriateness. Most are in good condition, easily accessible and well organised. In the previous inspection, resources were generally adequate with the exception of the provision of books in the library and up-to-date maps in geography. This has now been rectified. The school makes good use of the nearby swimming pool and this facility, as well as the large hall and playing field, provide very good accommodation for physical education. Overall, the quality and quantity of the school's resources make a very good contribution to pupils' learning. The school also makes very constructive use of the local environment as a resource and a wide range of visits to places of interest enriches the curriculum.

## **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

**60. In order to continue to improve the quality of education offered to the pupils the headteacher, governors and staff should:**

**(1) Improve curricular provision for children in the Foundation Stage by:**

- improving the quality of teaching in personal, social and emotional development and creative development;
- providing regular opportunities for children to develop their initiative and independence through planning and choosing activities for themselves;
- making regular and better use of assessment information when planning the children's work;
- developing a broader range of situations in which the children can use and listen to language;
- giving greater emphasis to the effectiveness of the management of the Foundation Stage;
- presenting a range of different experiences to develop personal enquiry, imagination and creativity across the curriculum.

(Paragraphs 1, 13, 18, 23, 26, 29, 49, 55, 61 to 68)

**(2) Raise standards in science at the end of Key Stage 1 particularly for more able pupils through:**

- making better use of assessment information to help teachers to identify pupils who have the potential to achieve higher than average standards;
- planning lessons which are more challenging for pupils of higher ability;
- widening the opportunities for pupils to undertake more investigative activities;
- giving the pupils more chances to decide how to record their observations.

(Paragraphs 4, 13, 23, 92, 95)

**(3) Improve curricular provision for the Year 1 pupils who are in a mixed age class with younger children in order to ensure that they receive a curriculum which is more comparable with that given to the Year 1 pupils in the school's single age class by:**

- arranging for the teacher to work with them as a group more frequently;
- more closely planning their work in relation to the National Curriculum programmes of study;
- allowing them to work with the pupils in the single age group class in some lessons.

(Paragraphs 19, 26, 55, 78, 90, 97)

## **OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL**

- Ensuring that the planned training for staff in child protection takes place. (Paragraph 38)
- Making sure that pupils who are withdrawn from classes for support with their special educational needs do not miss the material covered in the lesson from which they are withdrawn. (Paragraphs 26, 31, 55, 90, 102, 106)
- Being certain that the school prospectus and the governors' Annual Report to parents contains all of the statutory information required. (Paragraph 47)
- Ensuring that religious education does not reflect personal and social education so much that there is insufficient religious content in some topics. (Paragraphs 9, 26, 132)
- Reviewing the use of assessment information in those areas where this report identifies weaknesses. (Paragraphs 23, 44, 86, 89, 101, 120, 123, 127)



## • **PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS**

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

Number of lessons observed	81
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	53

### ***Summary of teaching observed during the inspection***

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4	17	43	32	4	0	0

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

### ***Information about the school's pupils***

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	YR – Y7
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	266
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	61

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

<b>Special educational needs</b>	YR – Y7
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	65

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

### ***Attendance***

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	5.8
National comparative data	5.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	20	25	45

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	14	18
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	38	38	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (76)	84 (71)	93 (78)
	National	83 [82]	84 [83]	90 [87]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	14	17	18
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	38	41	42
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	84 (44)	91 (59)	93 (59)
	National	84 [82]	88 [86]	88 [87]

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2***

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	12	15	27

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	22	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	81(73)	81 (76)	85 (85)
	National	75 [70]	72 [69]	85 [78]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	9	9	10
	Girls	11	13	13
	Total	20	22	23
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (70)	81 (79)	85 (82)
	National	70 [68]	72 [69]	79 [75]

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



### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	5
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	233
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

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

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22
Average class size	26.6

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y6**

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	154

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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Total income	544322
Total expenditure	547250
Expenditure per pupil	1990
Balance brought forward from previous year	27681
Balance carried forward to next year	24753

## ***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	284
Number of questionnaires returned	94

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	44	51	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	51	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	45	48	6	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	37	52	9	1	1
The teaching is good.	51	47	1	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	34	56	8	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	37	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	59	37	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	54	7	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	42	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	57	39	3	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	53	39	6	1	1

## **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**

61. The last inspection did not report on children aged under five years of age, therefore, no comparisons can be made with the current Foundation Stage as to whether or not improvements have taken place. Many children begin school with levels of attainment below those expected for their age.

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

62. Standards are below average in this area of learning as the quality of teaching and learning of the children's personal, social and emotional development is unsatisfactory. Most children are happy and secure in their surroundings and have settled in well since starting school. For example, at the beginning of the day, they enter the classroom with enthusiasm and eagerly proceed to get out activities and equipment of their own choosing. The children are not upset if a teacher other than their own is in the room. News that they are going out to play on the 'big' playground, with the infants, is greeted with great joy and all play happily during the afternoon break. During a class assembly, where the theme is about being special regardless of how different we all are, children are very well behaved and participate well. They reflect on feelings and know that being unhappy means to be sad. Children are able to attend to their personal hygiene appropriately and most can put on their coats independently but may sometimes need help with zips. Children are forming good relationships with their peers and adults but their social development overall is too slow. It is good, for example, during registration. They respond appropriately, remember to answer with a "Good morning," greeting to their class teacher and are sufficiently confident to take the register back to the office with a partner. Sometimes, however, children take advantage of a teacher's quiet, calm approach especially when teaching lacks vitality. They call out, do not take turns when speaking, and do not address their teacher properly, by name. But, when a good 'game' is used to encourage them to line up for play they respond very well and try very hard to do as they are requested – clearing up, dressing themselves in their outdoor clothes and tip-toeing into line. Teachers' knowledge of how to best develop this area of learning is unsatisfactory and curricular provision is limited. It restricts aspects of the children's social development and also impinges on the breadth of other areas of learning to a greater or lesser degree but, in particular, on communication, language and literacy and creative development. Although there is a good range of resources available, teachers do not make sufficient use of times when children can choose activities for themselves, initiate their own ideas and develop their independence. This hampers progress in social interaction, awareness and sensitivity to the needs of others and the pace at which they can develop a clear understanding of co-operation and taking turns with one another.

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

63. Overall, teaching and learning and progress are satisfactory although standards are on course to be below average by the end of the Foundation Stage. Lessons are well prepared but, at times, the pace is slow with explanations overlong and too drawn out. Sometimes, the group work is identical to that discussed with the class and, although the children show appropriate attitudes to learning, there is an underlying restlessness. Many children are easily distracted from listening even though their teacher has carefully emphasised this need. Free choice activities are less frequent. However, language and communication develop well when children are involved in role-play in the home corner 'café'. Good involvement of the teaching assistant opens up ideas for the children. They ask questions about the choice of food on the menu and make notes about their 'orders'. The children take turns being the cook, the waiter or the customer and sustain their play and concentration well. One child, motivated by the teaching assistant, writes 'a letter' and the 'address' but later interaction by the teacher is superficial and does not focus on developing language and communication.

64. Support staff are used effectively in small group situations when direct teaching is involved. This helps children to develop their knowledge of letter names and sounds and to form letters correctly when writing. Worksheet tasks, though useful for coordination when handwriting, do not allow for wider development of writing. Most children know that print carries meaning and that text is read from left to right. They show positive attitudes to books and are aware that pictures also 'tell the story'. Some children are confident that they can read and are eager to share their reading books with adults. They run their fingers under the text in the appropriate direction and recognise a few familiar words. There is good liaison between home and school through the individual reading records. Paired reading with pupils from Year 6 provides an excellent opportunity for promoting interest in reading. The Year 6 pupils are attentive, talk to the younger pupils with care and consideration about their reading books, reading snippets, discussing the pictures and helping them with words. The younger pupils are entranced and concentration levels are exceptionally high. They are sufficiently confident to initiate conversation with their new partners and quickly build a good relationship, take turns when conversing and choose new books which interest them. Teaching staff keep an appropriate oversight of the children during this period but do not use the opportunity as well as they could to gain additional assessment information.

### **Mathematical development**

65. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The pupils make good progress and are on course to reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. Teaching methods are used appropriately to develop learning. Most children can copy write their numbers and a few are able to record their numbers unaided. They can mostly count up to three or four accurately, and a few can count up to a higher number, for example, eight, and record it with the correct number of pictures. Appropriate opportunities are used to learn about numbers through songs and jigsaw puzzles and when activities are finished, children can choose from a range of number and language tasks. With some jigsaws, they focus on matching the shape to a hole and with others, they use numbers to place the pieces in the correct order. In early work on measurement, there are good opportunities, with support from teaching assistants, for exploration using the water and sand trays. The children use teapots and water to fill and empty small cups. This enables them to learn the relevant vocabulary and distinguish when something is half full. Children pour dry sand through funnels to fill containers in order to make monsters. They work well alongside each other, sharing the containers and occasionally talking about what they are doing. Appropriate interaction with an adult enables them to reflect on whether their containers are full or not.

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

66. Children enter the Reception class with a basic general knowledge which teachers build on to help them know more about the world around them. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and most children progress well and are on course to achieve appropriate standards by the time they enter Year1. Lessons are well organised for rotational activities and good planning, linked to the Early Learning Goals, shows clearly how teachers and their assistants are involved. Effective questioning focuses children's attention and probes their understanding. Artefacts, such as a flat iron, are used well to help children compare the difference between past times and now. In work related to scientific enquiry, they are able to name parts of their body correctly and are beginning to develop an understanding about their five senses. They know about healthy food and choose food in the class café or create menus for a monster. They understand that several ingredients are used to make a pudding. Good teaching, which focused on helping children to learn more about food, arose from discussion - they learnt that baked beans were not potatoes. Most tasks are supervised by teaching staff, which enables them to instruct children and develop specific skills, such as how to handle scissors correctly and how to cut out. Most children have difficulty cutting on a given line but use glue sticks appropriately to fix legs and a hat onto 'Humpty Dumpty'. Independent learning is less in evidence as the opportunities for free choice are limited. Occasionally, children who are still finishing

their work miss the story. The children make appropriate progress when using computers in the computer suite and teaching staff keep a good oversight of their progress, providing regular support to them as they work. Most pupils are able to use simple drop-down menus to choose different colours and paint effects without any help from the adults. A good explanation is given when a child does not understand that a red spray effect does not show up on a red background. Generally, attention spans are good and, although teachers ensure that children take turns, many lose interest when it is not their turn and, because of their waning concentration, the lesson ends rather abruptly. Occasionally, the quality of teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. The task is inappropriate and is too challenging for their age. Badly chosen resources, such as a very small globe of the world, are another area of weaknesses in some instances. Activities rely on an adult providing information, thus the teacher talks for too long and the children's attention spans are short lived. They call out and talk across each other. They do not have an adequate understanding of the appropriate codes of behaviour and the teacher does not make this clear to them.

### **Physical development**

67. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The children make sound progress and are on course to reach average standards by the end of the Foundation Stage. The attractive outdoor play area is a recent initiative and the children have been involved in planting containers. Much thought has gone into this area and it is appropriately fenced so that young children will not feel overwhelmed by the older pupils at break times. Wheeled toys and the outdoor sand and water trays are not in place due to problems in delivering an order placed for these resources. There are occasions when a request to play outside, even though it is not raining, is overlooked. It is not regarded as an activity on offer during a free choice period but more as an activity that takes place only at play time. When in the hall, children listen properly to the 'Let's Move' tape and follow the instructions well. Good involvement by the teacher gives them a useful model to follow and they all pursue it energetically. They show appropriate skills for their age and use movements such as stamping, sliding and moving on tip-toes. They show remarkable imagination when 'making patterns' even though their use of the space is not yet fully developed. Teaching does not always fully maximise what children can do. Although the tape is stopped to clarify instructions, there is no direct teaching of how to improve – through demonstration or through a simple evaluation. Fine movements involving hand control are developing appropriately. Children try hard to control their pencil when writing their numbers and letters and staff give effective help by guiding their hand when there is obvious difficulty. They make good attempts at cutting out, even though some children find it hard when there is a guideline.

### **Creative development**

68. Children are below average in this area of learning and progress is slow. The quality of teaching is unsatisfactory and there are weaknesses in the curricular provision with too few opportunities for children to choose from a range of activities. This limits their independence to choose and initiate ideas of their own, to experiment, to explore creatively or imaginatively, for example through role play, and holds back their creative development. Much of the artwork is influenced by an adult with children producing carefully managed outcomes with little freedom to explore and express themselves. On the occasions when pupils do have an element of choice, teachers do not keep a record of this so that choices can be monitored; neither is there regular noting of on-going assessment information which can be used for future planning. During a period when free choice was observed, one child was engrossed in work at the sand tray and three boys were concentrating well making models with special bricks that stick to each other. Although there were a few wheeled toys to play with, other items, such as trees and buildings to extend imaginative play, were not available. Intervention strategies are generally unsatisfactory and focus more on platitudes rather than on developing learning. These strategies do not demonstrate how skilful interaction can successfully



channel children's free choice and focus on developing their language and writing skills when playing in the home corner.

## ENGLISH

69. Standards in Year 2 in English and literacy are similar to the findings of the last inspection and remain typical for seven-year-old pupils. Standards in English, including literacy, in Year 6 are above average and there has been a good improvement since the last inspection. Results in the 2000 national tests show that standards for both seven and 11 year olds are comparable with all schools, but above those found in similar schools in reading, writing, speaking and listening. Standards in spelling are above average for the age of pupils. There has been a consistent improvement over the past four years at both stages, except for Year 2 pupils in 1999, when there was a slight decline. This was due to those pupils entering the school with below or well below average standards of attainment and, although they made steady progress, this was insufficient to enable them to achieve average attainment. Since then, however, standards have continued to rise and the findings of this inspection team confirm this. The school did well to attain above its challenging targets for 2000 for both seven and 11 year old pupils. The findings of the inspection reflect the test results at Key Stage 1 but are higher than the results at Key Stage 2. This is because of the consistently good quality of teaching and learning at this key stage. Over the past four years, boys have consistently achieved higher standards than girls in English, but the findings of this inspection team show similar attainment for boys and girls. At Key Stage 1, the satisfactory quality of teaching and learning promotes sound progress but, at Key Stage 2, where the quality of teaching and learning is good, the pupils' progress is also good.

70. Many pupils enter the school with poorly developed speaking and listening skills and weak reading and writing skills. Effective teaching enables them to make steady progress in their ability to use language to express their ideas coherently. By the age of seven, standards are average in speaking and have improved in listening although there are still some weaknesses. Pupils in a Year 1 class listen attentively and confidently express their ideas about 'Mamba and the crocodile bird', and recognise the rhythm and rhyme of 'jug, bug, tug and hug' although some Year 2 pupils lack sufficient concentration when listening.

71. By the age of 11, standards in speaking and listening are generally typical although some pupils reach above average standards. Pupils achieve high standards due to effective teaching as teachers are good role models and use a rich and varied vocabulary together with high quality literature. Year 5 pupils compare and concisely state the main similarities and differences between the book and film version of 'The Sheep Pig', using clear examples to substantiate their views. Year 6 pupils clearly explain the differences between a biography and an autobiography during their class discussions about the life of Jacques Cousteau. Although many pupils lack confidence when they first enter school, pupils achieve well in speaking and listening by the end of Key Stage 2.

72. By Year 2, most pupils achieve average attainment in reading although more able pupils do not always reach their full potential as, too frequently, the books they read do not extend them. All pupils quickly gain a good understanding of the use of letter sounds, which enables them to decipher unknown words. The good support provided for pupils with special educational needs enables them to know and understand how to use letter sounds, which increases their ability to read and to access other areas of the curriculum. Most pupils enjoy reading and all look forward to the paired reading sessions when they read with their 'reading partner' from a different age class.

73. By Year 6, pupils attain above average skills at reading, which reflects the quality of teaching they have received in the school. Teachers are good models for pupils, when they expressively read high quality literature aloud to their pupils, such as the reading of 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes in the Year 5 class. The teacher's use of effective, open-ended questioning, such as 'What are you expecting to find out about Jacques Cousteau by the end of this week through reading excerpts from this book and why?' encourages Year 6 pupils to develop the higher order reading skills of inference and deduction. The use of classical literature, such as excerpts from Shakespeare's 'Macbeth' and

Rudyard Kipling's 'Just So Stories', help the pupils to develop a critical appreciation of a wide range of books. Pupils are able to choose their own reading material from a very good selection of books from the school's excellent library. However, they often select books which are easy to read and few have a good awareness of a number of suitable authors. The timetabled lessons in the library and in the excellent information communication technology suite help all pupils to be able to find information from a wide range of different sources.

74. In Key Stage 1, the pupils reach average standards in writing. After listening intently to the teacher expressively reading a poem 'The sounds of home', Year 2 pupils enthusiastically wrote their own creative 'sounds' poems about 'bells ringing', and 'crocodiles snapping'. They can use their knowledge of letter sounds to check their spellings in a simple dictionary.

75. In Year 6, most pupils attain at least average writing skills, which shows good achievement from their low starting point, when they first enter the school. The most able pupils achieve above average writing skills. Older pupils write in a variety of styles. They write their own 'Witch's spell' and use personification for their poems and imaginative stories about 'Rain cascading from the silver haired sky' and 'the spidery fingers of the fog'. They appropriately use different forms of writing, such as writing up an experiment for making a fair test for the properties of different materials in science and facts about the Ancient Greeks in history.

76. Throughout the school, pupils have high order presentation skills and use neat, legible, joined writing for all aspects of their work. The teaching of joined writing throughout the school is enabling most pupils to achieve high standards. This shows very good improvement, as most enter the school with weak pencil control. The consistent approach to the teaching of letter sounds and spelling patterns has a positive impact on their work, helping most pupils to have good skills at spelling. There is a consistent approach to marking with appropriate, constructive comments on how pupils can further improve their work.

77. The quality of the teaching and learning of English is consistently good at Key Stage 2 and occasionally very good. At Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, but variable as they range from unsatisfactory to excellent. Overall, this shows good improvement from the last inspection, when teaching was judged to be sound throughout the school, but ranged from good to poor, with a 'greater variation at Key Stage 2'. A Year 1 lesson, which exemplified the strengths of the teaching throughout the school and the effectiveness with which it has implemented the National Literacy Strategy enabled these young pupils to make very good progress with their reading and writing skills. The teacher clearly demonstrated the close links between reading and writing by incorporating pupils' own ideas for writing extra sentences to add to the text, which they were using for the class shared reading session. Through brisk pace and the use of very effective, open-ended questioning, such as 'What do you think the bird is going to ask?' and 'What do I need to remember when writing 'Mamba'?' pupils' knowledge of how to read using prediction and deduction and their understanding of the correct use of capital letters were extended. The success of this teaching is evident from the pupils' sustained concentration, eagerness to answer and their expressive reading of 'Mamba and the crocodile bird'.

78. The unsatisfactory teaching in the Reception/Year 1 class is due to inappropriate planning for the Year 1 pupils, as they are not receiving their full entitlement to a literacy hour each day. The work is not always appropriate for their stage of development and this leads to underachievement. The teacher engages them well in speaking and listening activities, but misses opportunities to provide appropriate support for pupils, when they are undertaking handwriting skills. This was evident when a pupil made a great effort with his writing, but was reinforcing the learning of inaccurate letter formation, and also when pupils were attempting to write their own labels. During their free writing activity to create labels for different foods, few were able to write any legible, individual letters and the teacher missed the opportunity to help them to develop high quality writing by asking them for their

ideas and writing these down as the pupils spoke, showing them the connection between spoken and written words. Consequently, pupils are not making sufficient or quick enough progress for them to achieve at least average attainment.

79. All teachers have a good understanding of their shared responsibility to create an environment that is rich in language for pupils, who have a limited vocabulary when they first start school. Throughout the school, they have a good understanding of how to teach reading and writing, which enables pupils to make good progress from their weak beginnings. Teachers make relevant links with work previously covered by pupils and make sure they know what they are expected to learn in each lesson. Teachers enable pupils to extend their vocabulary. Across the curriculum, there is a constant use and reinforcement of specific vocabulary and the school gives good support to all pupils to ensure that they achieve the full range of academic language. Older pupils enthusiastically speak of their enjoyment of 'personification poetry', 'metaphors', 'inference' and 'deduction' during lessons but the range of their written and spoken vocabulary is narrower when they are not directed. Pupils are encouraged to develop their intellectual thinking and achieve a greater depth of understanding of their reading by effective, probing questioning, such as 'What is the purpose of the first verse?' and 'Why does the poet describe the moon as a ghostly galleon?' The end of literacy hours is used well to reinforce learning and to enable pupils to understand what they have learned and to encourage them to understand how they can further improve their work.

80. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate, good support, which enables them to make good progress. They have detailed individual action plans and they receive well-focused teaching. The learning support assistants provide pupils with many, varied opportunities to reinforce their learning. During literacy sessions, the learning support assistants will often be observed speaking very quietly to pupils with special educational needs, simplifying the teacher's explanations or questions in order to allow them to gain in their understanding and to be fully included in the lesson. The three pupils at Key Stage 2 who speak English as an additional language have a sufficiently good command of English to allow them to take a full part in the life of the school and to progress appropriately without additional support.

81. The English co-ordinator has been in post for one year and is developing a good understanding of her role. She has established some clear and appropriate priorities for the development of English and for her own role. Previously, the school had two reading schemes, which she has sorted and upgraded into one scheme and she has monitored teaching in every class and is aware of the standard of teaching for English throughout the school. Resources for English are very good. The excellent library is attractive, offers a good range of reading material for pupils of all abilities and is used very well. Curricular provision is enhanced by book weeks, visiting authors and theatre visits.

## **MATHEMATICS**

82. Standards in the Year 2 national tests have declined since 1998 and were well below average in 1999, compared to all schools and to similar schools. The increased numbers of children who entered the school with lower levels of attainment than that previously found reflects the lower levels achieved. However, the results for pupils in Year 2 in 2000 show a good improvement. The school has continued to set challenging targets and their numeracy targets were exceeded in 2000. Standards in the test results are now average when compared with all schools and above average compared with similar schools.

83. The findings of the inspection are that standards in mathematics are average in Year 2 which is similar to the findings of the school's last OFSTED inspection. Most pupils in Year 2 are working appropriately within Level 2 of the mathematics curriculum, except for a few below average pupils and pupils with special educational needs who find some aspects of this work too challenging. Most pupils can use mental recall of some of the addition and subtraction facts to ten and can order numbers correctly up to 100, and beyond if they have no more than three digits. Some pupils find difficulty when doing subtraction problems especially when the missing number is the initial one, such as 'X - 2

= 5'. Pupils are able to solve simple money problems and are beginning to use centimetres to measure length and tell the time when on the hour or half-hour. They use their knowledge of mathematics well in practical situations, for example, when sorting two-dimensional shapes and investigating odd and even numbers.

84. Analysis of the school's results for the Year 6 national tests in 2000 show continued improvement since 1996 and at a greater rate than that found nationally. Standards are average in mathematics compared with all schools and they are well above average when compared with similar schools. The school exceeded its targets for the tests in 2000 and has set even more challenging targets to improve attainment in 2001. The findings of the inspection judge standards in Year 6, including those for numeracy, to be above average. This judgement is a very good improvement compared with the last inspection when attainment at Key Stage 2 was variable and ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Improvement is due to the good quality of teaching now found at Key Stage 2 and to the very effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. Past results show that girls do less well than boys in the national tests although this was not apparent during the inspection nor was anything of great significance found by the school when further analysis was done.

85. Most pupils in Year 6 are working at the appropriate level for their age although there is some higher attainment. They are developing their own strategies for problem solving and making good use of estimation. They present their results well, sometimes as diagrams, for example, when investigating pentominoes, and at other times as graphs. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, use efficient written methods for computation, such as short multiplication and division and higher achieving pupils are able to do long multiplication and division. Some pupils find work on fractions difficult, particularly the use of vocabulary, such as numerator and denominator. In work on shape, lower achieving pupils understand how to draw nets to make a cube. Average and higher achieving pupils are able to draw angles to the nearest degree and know that the sum of the angles, in a triangle or at a point on a straight line, is equal to 180 degrees. Most pupils of all abilities are able to collect and represent data in frequency diagrams and can construct simple line graphs to display the information. When higher achieving pupils are working on probability they use percentages to describe an even chance and are able to progress quickly to using a '0 to 1' probability scale.

86. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory and promotes sound progress. In lessons, good quality teaching was observed but from scrutiny of pupils' work, it is apparent that insufficient use is made of on-going assessment for some pupils. Work is not consistently matched to the needs of pupils, who have varying abilities, and, too often, older pupils receive the same work as each other. In lessons, the teachers are well organised with resources ready for use and support staff aware of what they are required to do. Teachers maintain good control of the pupils with a friendly, but firm, atmosphere and successfully involve them, by name, switching the focus of their questions from one to another. Pupils respond well to this method and are attentive and willing to explain their mental strategies. Other methods, such as open-ended questioning, enable pupils to reflect and think for themselves when investigating the properties of shape, before they move on.

87. Teachers in both key stages have a secure understanding of the National Numeracy Strategy, which they apply effectively. Year 1 pupils use number rhymes and songs to help build up their basic knowledge and skilful questioning develops this further, as mental addition and subtraction are required before they can commence the next verse. Good activities engage high levels of interest from the pupils. For example, when Year 2 pupils were investigating odd and even numbers, they were enthusiastic and very keen to check their answers because their partner could receive the 'bonus' cube depending on the outcome. In Year 3, pupils have to guess what number the teacher is thinking of but are only allowed five questions. This involves them in judicious questioning, such as rounding to the nearest ten, if they are to obtain the correct answer. They are very eager to be involved and are consolidating their understanding of place value and number facts in an exciting way.

By the time pupils are in Year 6, they are using a wide range of skills and knowledge in situations requiring mental agility. In work on probability, they use multiplication, keep running totals, understand percentages, simplify fractions and predict likely outcomes of an event. The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has improved the pupils' investigative skills compared with the findings of the school's 1996 inspection.

88. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is good overall and gives rise to good progress. It is never less than satisfactory and, on occasions, it is very good or excellent. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection when teaching was judged to be inconsistent (it ranged from very good to poor). Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are mostly good and this is evident by the very good methods employed and the way basic skills are taught. Pupils are required to apply intellectual effort through the way teachers challenge their understanding in problem solving situations and are then asked to explain their thinking. For example, in Year 4, pupils needed to know about multiples, odds and evens and be able to use doubling and halving strategies to find unknown numbers and verify rules in sequences. Good humour, such as "Do you want to phone a friend?" kept the pace going if concentration showed signs of flagging. Teachers' planning is for the most part, good. They provide the right level of challenge to meet pupils' needs and use teaching assistants, resources and homework well to support learning. Where it is less successful, with the younger pupils in Key Stage 2, the pace of the oral introductory activity is slow and uninspired. In the upper school, lower achieving pupils do not have work that is well matched to their needs. Although teaching staff are clearly focused on helping specific groups of pupils, the same task is used for the whole class and structural apparatus is not used to help the below average pupils understand the complexities of fractions. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language mostly make good progress for their abilities.

89. The improvements, which the school has made since the last inspection, are having a positive effect on attainment throughout the school and in particular at Key Stage 2. A very able coordinator, who clearly understands what is required to maintain high standards, manages and monitors the subject very well. Strengths include the setting arrangements in Years 5 and 6, the range and use of the assessment procedures, the individual targets set for pupils, the effectiveness of the strategies for teaching the National Numeracy Strategy and the clear education plans for pupils with special educational needs. In addition, mathematics is used well across the curriculum and is successfully supported by information and communication technology. For example, graphs and measurement are used in science and geography and information and communication technology is used for reflective symmetry and handling data.

90. There are however some weaknesses as a few pupils do not receive their full entitlement to the numeracy hour. This includes Year 1 pupils in the Reception class and pupils with special educational needs who are withdrawn from class but do not receive support for numeracy during this period. As previously referred to, a small number of teaching groups do not use resources and ongoing assessment adequately. Assessment information is not used sufficiently well to plan work that meets the needs of a range of differing abilities.

## **SCIENCE**

91. In Year 2, standards are average which is the same judgement as was made by the school's last OFSTED inspection. Pupils with special educational needs achieve slightly lower than average standards overall at this key stage, but make good progress. The findings of this inspection are that pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve standards that are above average in 2001. These findings are also a good improvement on the judgement of average standards at the 1996 inspection. There has been good progress in increasing scientific enquiry work and in the progressive teaching of skills. Pupils, including those with special educational needs or with English as an additional language, are achieving well for their abilities and make good progress at Key Stage 2. This inspection finds no

significant difference in the performance of boys and girls, both of whom often achieve above average standards.

92. Pupils in Year 2 show average factual knowledge of living things, life processes, properties of materials and physical processes. However, too much of their knowledge comes from learning facts rather than from taking part in first hand sensory investigations. As a result, their attainment in scientific enquiry methods is below average. Moreover, this is the major reason why Year 2 pupils are only getting a very low percentage of pupils beyond the average Level 2 attainment. In 2000, only four per cent achieved Level 3, while 93 per cent of pupils achieved Level 2 in the teacher assessments. There are a significant number of pupils with special educational needs in this class and they are being helped to make good progress and achieve broadly average standards. Higher attaining pupils are not reaching their full potential. By the age of seven, pupils sort and compare materials. In Year 1, work on this shows good independent learning as pupils choose materials for a raincoat for the story character 'Mr Grinling, and to make musical instruments. There is a stronger approach to scientific thinking in Year 1 than Year 2. Pupils know about healthy food and why exercise is an important part of a healthy life style. They can identify seeds in fruits and explain the cycle of growth. They observe leaves, talk about a wide variety of living creatures and can explain changes which occur through the year.

93. The 2000 national test results show that pupils in Year 6, achieved average results compared with all schools and above average results when compared with similar schools. A particular strength of attainment is the well above average number of pupils who achieved Level 5 in the national tests at 11 years and this is on course to be maintained in 2001. Trends over time from 1996 to 1999 show that the school's performance was slightly lower than the national average, but this reflected the much lower attainment in one year in 1997, otherwise attainment is average. The results in 2000 reflect the same pattern of improvement found in this subject across the country as a whole. Since 1996 to 2000 there has been improvement in boys' attainment, from below average to at least average, and girls achieve at least average results.

94. In Year 6, pupils have a clear understanding how to make a fair test, recognise parts of plants such as the stamen and stigma, know about conductors and insulators and can compare the absorbency of different materials. They compare the characteristics of different rocks and soils and can identify four methods by which solids and liquids can be separated. They know how to conduct experiments, make predictions, simply interpret their results and draw conclusions from their investigations. Their work is accurately recorded using graphs, charts and diagrams and is aided by good use of information and communication technology and close links with mathematical measurement and number work. Pupils of above average attainment confidently discuss their scientific work using accurate vocabulary. They can explain the properties of thermal insulators and can measure gravitational pull using newtons. They accurately test the water absorbency of different paper towels and compare their results by using a syringe to measure the unabsorbed water. Their work shows creative thinking when interpreting results and drawing conclusions.

95. The quality of teaching and learning is broadly satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and promotes sound progress. Teachers' knowledge is satisfactory and results in appropriate factual learning. However the planning and expectations for higher achieving pupils are unsatisfactory. In one lesson, in Year 2, pupils knew about the life cycle of butterflies due to satisfactory teaching and learning of facts, but they did not investigate life cycles using first hand observation and there was over use of work sheets to record work. There are termly assessments of pupils' work, but these do not clearly identify pupils with the potential to achieve the higher Level 3. Whilst teachers' termly planning shows a range of activities, the balance between independent investigation, recording and factual learning is too heavily weighted on factual learning, with limited 'hands on' investigations.

96. The above average attainment, at Key Stage 2, is almost wholly due to good teaching, which results in good learning and good progress. The quality of teaching was consistently good in all six

lessons seen and very good in Year 4. Very good teaching makes very good use of marking to assess pupils' difficulties in learning. For example, a teacher's assessments of pupils' understanding of gravity resulted in a special lesson to help pupils to improve the quality of their thinking and recording. In this lesson, the teacher raised pupils' attainment from below average to average. Her standard of questioning was very open ended, she constantly 'nudged' the pupils' learning by setting very high expectations, asking the same question in several different ways and in not giving up. As a result of this, some previously unresponsive pupils managed to give accurate explanations of gravitational pull. In other years, the work is equally challenging and well matched to the different abilities in the classes. There is good evidence of progression of skills as pupils move through the school, this was seen in the Year 3 lesson on materials. In Year 5, the high standard of teaching was clear in the analysis of pupils' work and in lessons. This work showed very good challenge and high expectations. Nevertheless, the use of work sheets is inconsistent and not always helpful to pupils as they sometimes stifle independent work. Across the key stage, teachers have good subject knowledge and ask very good questions and lessons are lively. A good example of this was in Year 6, where the teacher gave a very clear description of dirty drinking water in Egypt in ancient times. She then asked the pupils to think about how this could be improved by separation and, by the end of the lesson, pupils had suggested methods of sieving, decanting, filtering and evaporation.

97. There are inconsistencies in the provision of the National Curriculum in Year 1 as six pupils in the Year R/Year1 class do not have equal opportunities in the amount of time which is allocated to the direct teaching of the subject or in the way in which the subject is covered as their work is planned as part of the Foundation Stage Stepping Stones. These pupils miss the opportunity to engage in more systematic and focused scientific enquiry which is clearly evident in the otherwise good planning for Year 1.

98. The leadership of the subject is good overall, with good improvement since the last inspection, especially at Key Stage 2 where there was some unsatisfactory teaching at the last inspection and investigative work was not well developed. Attainment is improving at both key stages. Monitoring is developing appropriately and assessment is progressing effectively overall. The co-ordinator has started a science club following a suggestion from the school's council and this is a good initiative. The curriculum in science is enriched by a good range of visits. Progress since the last inspection is good and the subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum overall, with the exception of the pupils noted above. Literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology support learning in this subject to a good standard. Resources have improved from satisfactory to good. The subject makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attention to health and safety is good.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

99. It was only possible to see three art and design lessons during the inspection and, therefore, judgements also include evidence from displays, work sampling and from discussion with pupils. The evidence indicates that pupils reach average standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 although, in Year 6, attainment in line drawing is above average. These judgements are similar to those made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language achieve similar standards to other pupils. All pupils achieve well as skills are taught progressively. Pupils show good attitudes to their work; they concentrate well and show good creative development.

100. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. However, the work sampling and display evidence show that pupils are not given enough opportunity to develop fine detail in both their observational and imaginative work, as brushes are often too thick for this type of work. Teachers' expectations are satisfactory, but work sometimes lacks originality and imagination and is over directed by the teacher. Pupils look closely at insects and vegetable seeds and have produced observational drawings which show some appreciation of detail. However, this is inconsistently

developed by teachers and does not make good use of the range of microscopes which is available. The pupils blend and mix autumn colours for leaves but, in lessons, paints are all too often made up for them and they do not experiment in mixing colours enough. In a good Year 2 lesson, on Van Gogh the teacher used the picture 'The Sea at St Maires' very well to help pupils to appreciate how an artist uses different colours to create the sky and sea. Following this, pupils were very creative in using paint, tissue paper and chalks to work in his style. A few pupils also managed to create a similar effect using the computer. However, a few pupils were given mathematical cubes to arrange in patterns and this limited range of resources cramped their creativity and learning.

101. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 2, but stronger in Years 5 and 6. Lessons are well planned and organised with clear learning objectives. Assessment is broadly satisfactory but, where it is good, pupils achieve higher standards. For example, in a Year 5/6 lesson, pupils looked at some contemporary Black African work by Dina Cuthbertson. Following this, the teacher showed pupils how to create successfully figures in the fore and background, while others experimented with colour mixing to make different tones and effects in the subtle, misty style of her work. The good intervention and ongoing assessments of pupils' work resulted in above average attainment. However, assessment information is not consistently well used as the work sampling showed, but its use is good in Year 5 and 6. In Year 6, pupils are confidently developing their skills in drawing as teachers have good subject knowledge and are demonstrating this technique to a good standard. However, pupils are not sufficiently encouraged to use different sketching pencils to create varied effect. Pupils have an appropriate understanding of the range and use of colour and blend and mix colours effectively to produce different tones in their paintings. They apply the style of different artists in their life study work and are able to express their opinions and feelings about different examples of art. A significant number of pupils are very successful in creating movement in their drawings. A good example was seen in their line drawings of athletic movement of sports personalities. Higher achieving pupils are well extended by the teacher as their work shows muscle tone and a strong sense of speed as they use shading to good effect. Moreover, this has been developed for all pupils in their drawings of a dancing ballerina in the style of Degas. Work relating to fabric is closely related to design and technology in the summer term. The range of work in three dimensions is under developed, as at the time of the last inspection, and there are missed opportunities to explore art through homework projects.

102. Leadership in this subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has some good ideas of how to develop the subject but they are not formalised in detailed development plan. Currently, the school does not have procedures for identifying and supporting gifted or talented pupils, although where teaching is strong, they receive good support. Pupils rarely visit galleries or receive lessons from local artists to support their learning. The accommodation and resources are good, nevertheless, some classes do not use sufficiently high quality paper for their final watercolour and line drawing work. Displays are attractive. The findings reflect those in the school's previous inspection, although there has been satisfactory development in assessment and in the use of different artists' work. As before, there is very good use of art work to support other curriculum subjects and the use of information and communication technology is good. Art work contributes well to pupils' overall personal, social and cultural development. However, although artists' work is well used there are missed opportunities to develop this to its full potential to support mathematical work. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils' work on design, pattern and shape does not link with such artists as Bridget Riley. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, but sometimes pupils are withdrawn from lessons and do not always have the same opportunities as other pupils.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

103. From evaluation of the small number of lessons seen, scrutiny of planning and pupils' work, photographic evidence and discussion with pupils, indications are that pupils make sound progress and achieve average standards in Year 2. In Year 6, standards are above average. This includes pupils



with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language. The variation in the rate of progress between the key stages is due to differences in the quality of teaching and learning which are discussed in the following paragraphs.

104. The lesson seen, the scrutiny of work and discussions with pupils indicate that teaching and learning are satisfactory at Key Stage 1. In Year 2, pupils plan and use their ideas to make models and use scissors with developing precision. Sometimes, work does not allow them to make enough decisions about the choice and use of resources for themselves. They make musical instruments, salt dough fridge magnets, dinosaurs with moving parts and following a visit to 'Little Hall, Lavenham', they design and make Tudor houses. These activities provide development in a range of cutting, joining and assembly skills. Work in Year 1 is developing to an above average standard in fabric work.

105. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 2. Teachers have good subject knowledge and set high expectations. The use of ongoing assessment is sound and results in improvements in pupils' designs. Pupils are managed very well and use their time effectively. They show very good attitudes to learning. Furthermore, they are highly motivated and show very good concentration. A particular strength is the way in which pupils share their ideas and work collaboratively. Teaching methods are very good, for example, in one Year 4 lesson in which pupils designed electrical switches for an alarm, there were strong links with science and a positive working atmosphere motivated the pupils. Moreover, the teacher carefully balanced whole class teaching with individual help and as a result, pupils made good progress in designing inventive burglar alarms although the evaluation of these products was a comparative weakness. Teachers in Year 5 and 6 are especially strong in posing probing questions, such as, when pupils were asked to suggest three ways in which to strengthen their canopies. Work is suitably planned and develops progressively over the two yearly programme of study. In Year 6, pupils design and make small working umbrellas. They have a strong understanding of the design process as they clarify their ideas well using accurate technical vocabulary and draw clearly labelled diagrams. They confidently discuss design features that work well or could be improved. For example, in one lesson, pupils realised that their umbrellas were not rigid enough, so they experimented with a range of resources, to modify and improve the strength in the handle. Pupils know the limitations of most resources, as was evident when they tried to find out how to improve the strength of tissue paper by adding more layers and then covering it with plastic glue. There were strong links with science, as pupils knew that this would only withstand limited penetration of rain, as the glue was likely to change from a solid to a liquid.

106. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory, as the co-ordinator has only recently taken over. She has good ideas of how to develop the subject, although the development plan is very broadly based. Resources and the accommodation are good. There has been good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection as the subject was under represented in its own right and attainment at Key Stage 1 was slightly lower than the expected average. There has been particularly good improvement at Key Stage 2 in evaluation and modification of designs, which was judged to be insufficient in 1996, although pupils do not always do this in sufficient depth. Furthermore, there has been good curricular guidance from Walton's partner secondary school and a Local Education Authority. Links with other subjects are strong. Links with the community are good, especially the visit to Lavenham Press, where pupils gained a good insight into the design and publication process of a local newspaper. Attention to health and safety is good. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good overall, but sometimes pupils are withdrawn from lessons and do not always have the same opportunities as other pupils.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

107. During the inspection, it was only possible to observe the teaching of geography in Year 3 and 4 and to analyse the pupils' work in these year groups and in Years 1 and 5 because of the school's timetabling and curricular organisation. Judgements are based on this evidence, on discussions with teachers and pupils and on the school's planning and records. The indications are that average

standards are achieved in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and that progress and attainment, including that made by pupils with special educational needs, are satisfactory. This is the same judgement as that made when the school was inspected in 1996. There are no differences in attainment between boys and girls.

108. The evidence indicates that the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1 which is the same judgement as that made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection. The analysis of work shows that pupils in Year 1 have appropriate early map work skills. The teaching successfully uses the pupils' own local knowledge and they have drawn satisfactory maps making use of picture symbols to show their route to school. They have also mapped the school playground. Some of these maps contain very little detail and the teacher has indicated this to the pupils in the marking of the work. The pupils are generally given the same task to work on but they respond at their own level and their work is usually neatly presented. However, there are weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning in that the amount of work recorded is limited indicating a slow pace of learning. The pupils do not always complete their work adequately and the work is not always sufficiently challenging.

109. At Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory although some very good teaching was observed. This judgement is the same as that made by the school's 1996 OFSTED inspection. In Year 3, the scrutiny of work and the lesson observed, indicate that the pupils' local knowledge continues to be built on effectively. In a lesson about Walton High Street, the pupils' learning was well promoted by the use of numbered photographs of shops which are located on maps. The pupils were very keen to offer their ideas about the shops in the High Street and skilful questioning prompted and developed their thinking. The work was planned at three levels of difficulty to meet the needs of all pupils. In a very good Year 4 lesson, the pupils discussed whether Walton High Street should be closed to traffic. Through careful inquiry by the teacher, the pupils were able to indicate how a visitor to the school had told them that the amount of traffic could increase accidents and several were able to discuss the benefits of traffic free areas they knew. The pupils showed a good understanding of how traffic affects the environment which was developed very well by this lesson. The analysis of work for this year group showed good application of literacy skills, for example, in well presented free writing and of numeracy skills in a survey chart. The analysis of work in Year 5 showed that the pupils have a good knowledge of the water cycle and of rivers including technical vocabulary such as confluence and tributary. However, too much of the work was identical which restricted their initiative and the development of their literacy and numeracy skills.

110. The subject is well managed by a knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Since the last inspection, there has been a good improvement in the subject. For example, a scheme of work is now in place, resources are now good and the library supports learning in the subject well. The co-ordinator has spoken with the governors about the scheme of work and has a well thought out action plan for the continued development of geography in the school. This plan includes further development of the already strong use of information and communication technology in the subject and of its links with other subjects of the curriculum. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and include formal termly assessments and the inclusion of geographical work in the pupils' individual collections of work.

111. Curricular provision is very broad. It includes use of the local area, fieldwork in other locations, consideration of environmental issues and a strong element of varied map work. This promotes the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well as, for example, they learn about their own and other cultures, know how man affects the environment and work together.

## **HISTORY**

112. Standards in history are average in Year 2 and Year 6. This judgement, which is the same as the previous inspection, takes into account the lessons observed, an analysis of pupils' work and displays, scrutiny of teachers' planning and discussion with teachers and pupils. Pupils make sound progress as they move through the school and pupils with special educational needs achieve well relative to their previous attainment.

113. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 1 is satisfactory. In the previous inspection, teaching was judged to be 'sound or better' at both key stages. A strength of history teaching in the school is the use of local resources to promote pupils' learning. In a Year 2 lesson, pupils examined old and new buildings in Walton to develop their sense of chronology. A colourful display of photographs provided a good stimulus for learning as the teacher took away a familiar picture to reveal an old photograph underneath. This created suspense, which ensured pupils' total absorption in the task. They were fascinated to learn that the present library was a school in 1838 and that Walton station had changed little since 1867. The teacher's own enthusiasm and careful preparation successfully channelled pupils' natural curiosity about their own area and they gained good understanding of how buildings are adapted to suit the times. Year 1 pupils can construct 'teddy timelines' and talk about 'old' and 'new' teddy bears but a leisurely pace to the lesson and insufficient direct support in group activities meant that pupils did not maximise their learning.

114. The quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory. History is only taught in Year 6 and in the Year 5/6 class in the autumn term. In Year 6, pupils have sound insight into the way of life, beliefs and achievements of Ancient Greece and the legacy of that civilisation. The analysis of work shows that they use this effectively to describe characteristic features of these times such as the differences between living in Athens and Sparta, Greek architecture and the influence of the Gods. They have a satisfactory understanding of chronology, use dates accurately and can empathise with historical characters, for example, a diary account of the first Marathon. Pupils are also well aware of the importance of war and warriors to the Ancient Greeks. This was evident in a Year 6 lesson when, under the thoughtful direction of the teacher, pupils keenly discussed the significance of the Olympic truce, the honour of winning for the city-states and the links between religion and the games. The teacher skilfully guided them in their ability to analyse historical change as they compared how the gathering of nations was celebrated in the recent Olympic games in Sydney.

115. The previous inspection reported that pupils were given no time for independent study. There is now an appropriate balance in the school between giving pupils information and allowing them to investigate different sources. Pupils are sufficiently aware of historical language and have sound skills as young researchers. This was shown in a Year 5/6 library lesson where the teacher successfully reminded them to skim read and make bullet points about the Greek theatre or government in preparation for the next history lesson. However, teachers do not give pupils adequate scope to identify why the past is represented and interpreted in different ways.

116. A good policy now supports teaching and learning in the subject. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority guidelines have been adapted as a schemes of work to fit into the school's curricular plan. The co-ordinator, a subject specialist, has a clear vision for the future development of the subject in the school and targets, which include linking content with citizenship and environmental education, are appropriate. Her role in classroom monitoring, scrutinising teachers' planning, work sampling and sharing professional expertise with colleagues is well developed. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection when lack of guidance for teachers and monitoring of teaching and planning adversely affected standards. Assessment procedures are satisfactory but do not systematically record pupils' progress in acquiring historical skills. Marking gives pupils positive and informative feedback about their work. Literacy skills are developed soundly, for example, a soldier's view of fighting the Persians, and numeracy skills are evident in time lines and links with Pythagoras. Information and communication technology supports teaching and learning in history well. Displays such as the Millennium boards depicting figures who have shaped the course of history are stimulating focal points and the school's log books showing entries in 1890 and 1900 give pupils a strong sense of the school's past. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through their understanding of the legacy of ancient civilisations to modern society, discussions about the morality of actions carried out in the past and through the encouragement of group work in researching information. The curriculum is enriched by visits to places like Colchester Castle, the Imperial War Museum, Rochester and the Tower of London. Visits

by theatre groups, wearing Tudor costume at Kentwell Hall and Greek workshops effectively bring history to life for pupils.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

117. Standards are above average in Year 2 and Year 6 and information and communication technology is now one of the school's strengths. This judgement is an improvement on the findings of the previous inspection when attainment for Key Stage 1 was in line with the national average. In addition to the observation of lessons, discussions took place with pupils and work on display was scrutinised. A folder of past work provided evidence of a broad and balanced curriculum with high but appropriately challenging work. Throughout the school, most pupils make good progress and show positive attitudes or, as in Key Stage 2, very positive attitudes to the subject. Most pupils are learning effectively for much of the time. Pupils understand what they are doing and the tasks are demanding and mostly achievable. Pupils collaborate very well and demonstrate the very good relationships that exist. Attitudes are of the highest order in Year 6 - a clear reflection on the very high quality teaching, which is purposeful, challenging and engages all pupils' effectively. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make very good progress.

118. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 1 as it was when the school was last inspected. This is based on the clear instructions which teachers provide and the way skills are effectively taught. As a result, pupils in Year 2 show a high level of independence when using computers. For example, when investigating a 'paint' program to create a seascape reminiscent of one by Van Gogh, they were able to change colours, draw lines, use various paint effects and amend things they had done. They know how to open a new document and make good progress with little additional help from teaching staff. Once they have completed their exploratory work, they know it is not necessary to save it so they click on 'No' when asked this question. Helpers, whether they are teaching assistants or another teacher, make a good contribution to pupils' learning so that they use information and communication technology across the curriculum well. For example, in science, it was used to draw and label a diagram of a flower and in religious education, to word process the titles. In Year 1, the level of challenge provided by the teacher in one lesson was too great and the carefully prepared diagrams (aimed at helping pupils control the direction of movement) confused them further. As a result, they found difficulty with simple programs that required them to control a screen frog to move in specific directions. They had considerable difficulty making the connection between actual movements linked to personal knowledge and those that they were trying to achieve on the screen.

119. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 2 which is similar to the judgement made at the last inspection. Teachers carefully build on the pupils' knowledge and each step in their learning builds on the previous one well so that, in Year 6, pupils are confident and industrious. They are able use the Internet for research purposes and type in the World Wide Web address with relative ease. Two pupils, unable to access the site, immediately checked the address for errors and were helped to find their mistake by another pupil. They confidently use drop-down menus and short-cut icons. Once they have chosen the picture from the Internet site, they are able to follow written instructions to import it into their document and organise it as they see fit. They are able to resize the picture and move it around on the document and are beginning to work out how to insert a table. Keyboard skills are less developed and, for much of the time, pupils only use one or two fingers. In Year 4, there is evidence of teachers using assessment information well. Pupils use well-prepared, interesting, screen acetates to develop better mouse control. As they improve, they begin to use their skills of estimation to plot the distance for a screen turtle to travel. Good levels of interest are maintained as pupils continue through the school and teaching assistants work well with pupils. They ask taxing questions to see if they fully understand what they are doing. Year 6 pupils word-process work in English and history and where appropriate include text and graphics together. Evidence from last year shows that spreadsheets and charts have been used in mathematics and geography. In Key Stage 2, some pupils, with special educational needs, are not able to see the instructions on a flip chart

and have to rely on the adults for the information. From time to time, in Year 5, towards the end of a lesson a small number of pupils struggle for too long before they receive help.

120. The subject meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. All aspects of the programme of study are addressed and there is a clear, concise well-structured scheme of work in place. Weaknesses reported in the previous inspection are no longer evident. The expenditure on information and communication technology has been well targeted on the computer suite. There is a very favourable ratio of pupils to computers and the rising standards are a clear indication, not only of the good quality teaching but, of money well spent. The time allocated to the subject is more than that usually seen but it is effectively used and pupils are familiar with its application in other curricular areas. The subject enhances pupils' personal and social development – they work well in pairs sharing tasks, sensibly discuss which options they will choose and relate positively to peers and adults alike. The subject coordinator has only recently taken on this responsibility. Even at this early stage, she provides good leadership through her enthusiasm and knowledge. The previous coordinator has formally monitored teaching. The new coordinator plans to continue the role of monitoring teaching and learning next term. The subject lacks a cohesive whole school approach to logging pupils' progress, in particular, the skills and knowledge they are acquiring.

## **MUSIC**

121. Key Stage 1 pupils sing well showing good control of pitch and rhythm during assemblies. However, due to timetabling arrangements no direct teaching of music was observed and there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on attainment, teaching and learning for pupils in this key stage. In Year 6, pupils attain above average standards and they enjoy their music making activities. A part-time music specialist teaches music to all but the youngest pupils in the school and, together with the tuition provided for guitar, piano, recorder and the choir, further enhances the provision for pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as additional languages make good progress because much of the work is carried out in groups and pupils support each other very well.

122. The quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 is good. The music specialist has good subject knowledge, which she uses well to challenge and extend pupils' creative learning through imaginative teaching. She stimulates pupils' ideas through good open-ended questioning, encouraging them to explore and experiment with different musical instruments before deciding, which they will use for their 'desert animal' for the class composition. The music coordinator and the music specialist regularly meet to discuss the music curriculum. Together, they ensure that pupils are taught a wide range of musical activities and acquire good development of skills, as they progress through the school. The Year 4 and Year 6 music lessons clearly demonstrate this. Pupils in the junior-age classes memorise and learn new songs well. Younger pupils are starting to learn to sing a two part round, whilst the older pupils confidently do this with good rhythm and pitch. They learn to improvise and create their own compositions, often using correct musical notation and a good range of percussion and tuned musical instruments. They show a good understanding of correct musical notation and use terms such as 'semi-tone', 'dynamics' and 'rest', when asked about their music making. They record their own compositions and singing and evaluate and improve what they have done. For example, pupils can hear when they are singing in tune or if they are 'flat', which was their judgement of their first attempt. They show good understanding of the sounds made by different musical instruments and how they can be used effectively for their own compositions, as observed when pupils chose a 'rainmaker' to represent a 'rattlesnake' as part of their 'desert' composition. However, their skills in appraising music are a relative weakness. The high quality teaching helps all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, to sustain concentration and to make good progress. Visiting specialists, such as the African drummers and visits to the Junior Proms at the Royal Albert Hall, together with participation in school productions and entertaining elderly local residents with songs and country dancing, enhance pupils' knowledge of many different styles of music.

123. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, when music was judged to be satisfactory at Key Stage 2. There is now a more structured and consistent approach to teaching music. However, there is still no formal system of assessing and recording pupils' progress in music. The coordinator monitors planning, but is unable to monitor the teaching of music other than when the music specialist is teaching the coordinator's class. Although class teachers remain with their class, while the music specialist teaches pupils, the coordinator does not have first-hand knowledge of the quality of this teaching, which limits her role as the music coordinator. Music makes a good contribution to pupils' social and cultural development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

124. Standards in physical education are average in Year 2 and above average in Year 6. Progress and attainment, including that by pupils with special educational needs, are also satisfactory at Key Stage 1 and good at Key Stage 2. This judgement is similar to that made by the school's previous OFSTED inspection at Key Stage 1 but it is an improvement on the average judgement made for Key Stage 2 by that inspection. This is because the school has successfully addressed the issues raised by the last inspection concerning insufficient apparatus to keep pupils active, time spent waiting for a turn at an activity and lack of opportunities to reflect on their performance in dance. There are no differences in standards between boys and girls.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 and promotes average standards which is the same judgment as that made by the last inspection. However, the standard of dance is higher than that found in most schools. For example, in a Year 1 lesson in which the pupils were asked to respond imaginatively to a range of varied stimuli, the teacher helped the pupils to develop their sequence of movements representing hatching from an egg well. The pupils were allowed to select which animal they were to be and they developed skills such as tension and mirror movements in their performance. Their skills of evaluation were also well developed. Year 2 pupils dribble and run and dodge when holding a ball with appropriate skill. They show suitable co-ordination when making "swimming" movements and when walking during warm up activities. The pupils are enthusiastic about their work in physical education but some are unnecessarily noisy and lack concentration. The teachers are well able to control this but the need to do so slows down the pace of the lesson and the progress made by the pupils. Progress is also slowed down when the pupils are not given sufficient direct teaching of the skills they are set to practise. A general weakness in attainment at this key stage is in the way pupils use the space available to them as they often bunch together rather than making full use of the area available.

126. The quality of teaching and learning is good in Key Stage 2 which is an improvement on the "mostly sound" judgement for Key Stage 2 in the previous inspection and directly promotes the present higher standards. The major differences between the quality of teaching at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are the faster pace of learning at Key Stage 2 and the way skills are taught more specifically. Swimming lessons for Years 5 and 6 are well organised into groups based on attainment. These groups receive appropriately challenging activities, for example, using floats to swim, improving the quality of their strokes and increasing the distance that they can swim. The pupils show confidence and enjoyment during swimming lessons. By the time that they leave the school, almost all pupils can swim at least 25 metres safely using a recognised stroke. Many swim much further than this using a range of strokes and showing good technique. In games, in Years 3 and 5, the pupils have good control of a ball when dribbling, make good use of space and think tactically. These skills were well developed in a Year 5 lesson in which the teacher had good management and control skills, high expectations and set the pupils a series of increasing demanding exercises to extend their skills. The pupils were well motivated by praise such as, "Alan's got a good jab going there!" and made good use of the opportunities that they were given to progress. In another lesson for older juniors, good use was made of a video to stimulate the pupils and to give them ideas to develop in the lesson. In gymnastics, pupils show good co-ordination and control when moving and stopping, understand some of the effects

of exercise on the body and demonstrate average skills of skipping. The pupils do not always demonstrate their performance well particularly in Year 6. They are sometimes reluctant to do so, show embarrassment and perform below their capabilities. This was acknowledged by a teacher who told the class, "Don't pick people to embarrass them".

127. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the subject since the last inspection as demonstrated by the improved standards at Key Stage 2, and the way weaknesses in the quality of teaching have been addressed. The co-ordinator manages the subject effectively and sets an example through enthusiastic teaching. However, although some monitoring of the teaching of the subject takes place the co-ordinator has not had sufficient influence in raising its quality particularly at Key Stage 1. Assessment procedures are not well developed and, although the co-ordinator has a clear idea of how the subject is to be developed, these ideas are not formalised into an action plan. Extracurricular provision is strong, as it was at the time of the last inspection. Facilities for the subject are still very good and resources are now very good rather than adequate and promote learning well. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral and social cultural development. For example, they organise themselves into groups well, show good levels of co-operation and reflect thoughtfully on the successes and limitations of their own and others' performance.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

128. Standards in religious education meet the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus in Year 2 and exceed those expectations In Year 6. This judgement differs significantly from the previous inspection when attainment was good at Key Stage 1 and unsatisfactory at Key Stage 2. It was reported that pupils in Key Stage 2 were given limited opportunities for discussion and had insufficient knowledge and understanding of the values, beliefs and practices of some major world religions. As will be shown, the school has addressed these weaknesses well which has resulted in an improved quality of teaching and learning for older pupils. However, at Key Stage 1, they have too few opportunities to discuss issues which arise at a level appropriate to their ages which accounts for the variation in standards compared with the school's last inspection. As they move through the school, pupils make steady progress at Key Stage 1 and good progress at Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs are involved in all class activities and discussions and, with support and encouragement, make good progress

129. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory at Key Stage 1, which broadly reflects the judgement of the previous inspection. The analysis of work shows that pupils have a sound understanding of some of the traditions and beliefs important to Christians such as Christmas and Jesus being a special person. They have also looked at simple aspects of world faiths such as Sikhism and Hinduism. Teachers create a warm, supportive environment for pupils to think quietly about what they have learned and to develop responses and new ideas. This was shown when Year 1 pupils described what made them feel happy 'riding my bike without stabilisers', 'making friends'. However, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to discuss moral issues at a level appropriate to the age of the pupils and to challenge higher achievers. This happened in a Year 2 lesson about a special time – Halloween - when pupils talked about 'trick or treat' without being encouraged to explore its wider implications.

130. The quality of teaching and learning is good at Key Stage 2, which is an improvement from the previous inspection when it was judged to be 'sound to unsatisfactory'. By Year 6, pupils have good insight into the beliefs, festivals, symbols, traditions and literature of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism. They learn to appreciate the importance of prayer in the lives of believers as in a Year 3/4 class where, as a result of well structured and thoughtful teaching, pupils discussed the Christian belief of God as a loving father and wrote their own simple prayers of thanksgiving, praise and forgiveness. Pupils also understand that holy texts, such as the Bible, contain teachings and moral guidance that are helpful to people in their lives. Year 5 pupils explore the meaning of the parables and write their own beatitudes and in a Year 5/6 lesson, the teacher used the Bible very effectively as a resource to develop and stimulate pupils' learning about the significance of the temple for the Jews.

131. Since the last inspection, the school has placed greater emphasis on reflection and guided meditation in religious education. This was well illustrated in a Year 4 lesson in which the teacher very successfully communicated to her pupils the profound nature of Moses' encounter with God in the burning bush. She used the power of story well to capture her pupils' interest and imagination and then invited them to explore stillness and silence - 'Imagine you are alone in the desert.....' and to express the feelings of Moses through their gestures. Pupils were engrossed in the activity and displayed considerable creative effort. As a result, they had a mature grasp of the significance of the story and their spiritual awareness had been heightened very effectively by the teacher's sensitive control and good knowledge of drama techniques.

132. In Key Stage 2, a strength of the teaching and learning of religious education in the school is the way in which teachers create an atmosphere of mutual trust and support in which pupils are unafraid to voice their opinions, talk about the mysteries of life and share their experiences. Perceptive and penetrating questions challenge pupils well, 'Can God talk to people without being a person?' 'What is meant by holy ground?' asked the Year 4 teacher. In general, pupils of all ages show sensitivity towards others and the world in which they live. They learn to value others' beliefs and ideas and show respect and tolerance towards different faiths. This was evident in a Year 3 lesson when pupils discussed why believers prayed in different ways and showed maturity when the teacher skilfully questioned them about their thinking. However, pupils' ability to distinguish the ways in which different religions have influenced each other and apply their own interpretations is insufficiently developed by teachers. Sometimes, poor time management results in a missed opportunity to review learning. Pupils in Year 5 were enthralled by the story of Rama and Sita but the lesson ended very abruptly without drawing together the main themes of the lesson. The distinction between religious education and personal, social and health education in several classes is sometimes blurred and topics are not examined within a secure religious framework. This was particularly evident in the analysis of work and in the Year 2 lesson on Halloween where religious links were contrived.

133. The subject is well led and well resourced. A good policy and the coordinator's monitoring of classroom teaching and pupils' work support teaching and learning well. Themes in collective worship reinforce topics covered in religious education very effectively. Targets for development are appropriate including reviewing the new schemes of work. Assessment is linked to the level descriptions in the locally agreed syllabus but they are not fully integrated into the school's system of assessment. Information and communication technology supports learning effectively. Marking contains good developmental and evaluative comments to help pupils. These procedures represent a great improvement since the last inspection and have contributed significantly to the raised standards in Key Stage 2. Literacy skills are developed well, for example, discussion about religious beliefs, listening to, and reading, biblical stories and writing newspaper reports about David and Goliath. Although pupils can make thoughtful comparisons between the local parish church and Walton Baptist Church following the visit of Years 3 and 4, there are few visits or visitors to enrich the curriculum. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is developed well when they reflect on prayer, study some major religions and learn that stories like the Ramayana illustrate the common features of faiths and their moral codes.