

INSPECTION REPORT

R A BUTLER INFANT AND JUNIOR SCHOOLS

South Road

Saffron Walden

Essex

LEA area: Essex

Unique reference number: 115304

Headteacher: Mrs M B Horton

Reporting inspector: Mr R McGovern
10541

Dates of inspection: 4 - 8 March 2002

Inspection number: 242744

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Foundation

Age range of pupils: 5 - 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: South Road
Saffron Walden
Essex

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Appropriate authority: Governing Bodies

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J M Hasler

Date of previous inspection: 22 June 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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10541	R McGovern	Registered inspector	Equal Opportunities	<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
11437	T Anderson	Lay inspector		<p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
18331	J Sutcliffe	Team inspector	<p>Science</p> <p>Information technology</p> <p>Design and technology</p> <p>Physical education</p>	
22396	J Young	Team inspector	<p>Foundation stage curriculum</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Geography</p> <p>History</p>	

22788	S West	Team inspector	Mathematics Art Music Religious Education	
22196	J MacPhee	Team inspector	English as an additional language English	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The R A Butler Schools are situated on a shared site close to the town centre of Saffron Walden. They are both foundation schools and operate as a partnership under the leadership of one headteacher. The governing bodies work closely together under one chair. There are 533 pupils on roll in the two schools. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (0.93%) and those who have statements of special educational needs (1.3%) is well below the national average. Nineteen pupils are learning English as an additional language, but none of these pupils are at an early stage of English language acquisition. The infant school has three Reception classes and the youngest children in the year group attend part-time in the autumn term. The attainment of the pupils on entry covers a wide range, but it is mostly well above that which is expected.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Both schools are effective and make good provision for the pupils. Standards in the infant school are well above the national average in reading and above average in writing and mathematics. Standards in English and science at age 11 are above average and in mathematics they are average, but both of the schools could do more to challenge the more able pupils. The quality of teaching is very good in the infant school and satisfactory in the junior school. The leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff are satisfactory and they have put in place some strategies to secure improvement. The schools provide a rich curriculum and the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good. Overall, the schools give good value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of the teaching in the infant school is very good and, as a result, most of the children make very good progress.
- The teaching of those pupils who have special educational needs and the arrangements for monitoring their progress are very good and, as a result, the pupils achieve well.
- In both schools the pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are very good. The opportunities for their personal development are excellent.
- The curriculum in the foundation subjects is enriched through the very good use of staff and resources from within and outside the schools and standards in history and geography are much higher than those found nationally.
- The schools provide an excellent range of interesting activities outside lessons.
- The contribution the parents make to their children's learning at school and at home is a significant strength.

What could be improved

- The schools could set more challenging targets in English and mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils.
- The complex teaching arrangements in the junior school do not ensure a coherent experience for the pupils, particularly in English and mathematics.
- The way in which the schools communicate with parents.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

When the schools were last inspected in June 1998 they were found to be excellent in many areas. Many of these positive features have been maintained. The results achieved by the pupils in the national tests at the age of 7 and 11 over the last three years have been above the national average, but there is room for further improvement in the way that the teaching challenges the more able pupils. The only action point from the last inspection has been addressed

and there is now more consistency in the way homework is set. There have been improvements in the teaching of information and communication technology and in the pupils' use of computers to assist their learning. Computers are being used effectively in many lessons. Overall, the schools have made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	B	A	B	D
mathematics	A	A	C	D
science	B	A	A	B

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

In spite of the lower test results last year, taking the three years 1999 to 2001 together, the performance of the pupils in English and mathematics is above the national average, and in science it is well above the national average. The lower test results last year are explained by the fact that fewer of the more able pupils achieved at the higher levels in the tests. The inspection evidence confirms this picture, and it also indicates that the teaching could do more to ensure that the more able pupils achieve higher standards. The junior school's targets for pupils aged 11 in 2002 are higher than those set for 2001 but could, nevertheless, be more aspirational.

The performance of the pupils in the national tests at age seven shows that standards are above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. The inspection evidence confirms this picture, and it also indicates that the action the school is taking to ensure that the more able pupils achieve higher standards, particularly in writing, is having some success. The pupils' work shows that more pupils are likely to achieve at the higher levels in writing and that their understanding and use of number, particularly mental calculation, is well above average.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils are keen and eager to come to school. They show interest in their work and are keen to become involved in the very good range of activities outside lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are courteous, trustworthy and kind to one another and adults. They behave well in lessons and around the schools. They are able to reflect on what they do, and what others do, and understand its impact on others.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The pupils relish the opportunities to take responsibility for their learning or to do jobs around the schools. Boys and girls play well together and their play is imaginative and adventurous.
Attendance	Very good. The schools have very high levels of attendance and little unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

The quality of the teaching in Reception and Years 1-2 is consistently very good. The teaching of literacy and numeracy makes very good use of imaginative resources, support staff and parents and it challenges the pupils to think carefully to extend their learning. The teaching methods are well chosen and build on the pupils' prior attainment. This is particularly evident in Reception where the relationships in the classrooms provide a confident and positive atmosphere in which the pupils rapidly develop as readers and writers. Across the infant school the teaching encourages the pupils to work hard and the recent emphasis on improving the attainment of the more able pupils, particularly in writing, is showing some success.

The quality of the teaching in the junior school is variable, ranging from very good to unsatisfactory. It is satisfactory overall. The relationship between the teacher and the pupils is such that, in all lessons, the pupils are keen to get on with their work. However, the organisation of class timetables and the use of time in some lessons, particularly literacy and numeracy, does not ensure that time is always used well. The work makes appropriate demands on pupils of average and below average ability, but the teachers' planning and their confidence in, for example, some aspects of mathematics does not promote demanding work for the more able pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The curriculum is made lively and interesting and it responds well to the ability of the pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Very good use is made of resources from within and outside the school to enrich the curriculum.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The pupils' needs are identified and assessed at an early stage and they are given high quality support and targeted teaching to help them.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. None of the bilingual pupils are at an early stage of learning English but the staff are sensitive to their individual needs.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The curriculum draws very positively on the pupils' own cultural, family and religious backgrounds. It promotes respect for the differences between people and for their values and beliefs. The curriculum looks beyond the school to draw upon and appreciate art, literature and music from other cultures and traditions.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. All staff provide a high level of care for the pupils. Satisfactory records of the pupils' achievements are kept. The schools promote very good behaviour and attendance.

The schools have very good links with parents and carers that help the pupils to learn. These include working very effectively alongside teachers in classrooms in the infant school to, for example, helping the older pupils with homework. This aspect of the partnership with parents has a very positive impact on the pupils' attitudes to the school and learning.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. The leadership and management are clear about the strengths and weaknesses in the standards the pupils achieve and they have put in place some strategies to secure improvement, but there needs to be a sharper focus on the needs of the more able pupils. The work of the headteacher and key staff, however, is not as effective as it might be in ensuring coherence in the provision across the two schools.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. The governors monitor the schools' performance well and provide challenge. They fulfil their statutory duties very effectively in providing a sense of direction for the schools and in promoting the achievements of the schools.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The headteacher's vision is for the schools to become fully self-reviewing, but there are some areas in which the schools need to take more vigorous action. For example, they need to raise their expectations of the more able pupils, particularly in the junior school.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The schools have appropriate educational priorities linked to the available budget. Specific grants are used appropriately and the outcomes for pupils with special educational needs are very good. The schools have accrued significant reserves over the last five years. Appropriate plans are now in hand to use these financial reserves to improve the ICT facilities.

The schools have a very good number of teachers, support staff and resources to match the demands of the curriculum.

The schools apply the principles of best value rigorously to expenditure, but could do more to consult with parents when considering changes to the curriculum or changing school routines. In particular, the schools should provide parents with more information about why any proposed changes are in their best interests.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school; • The teaching is good; • The teachers are approachable; • The schools have high expectations of the pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The information they receive; • The range of activities outside lessons; • Aspects of the leadership and management.

The inspection team agrees with the parents that their children like coming to school and that the teachers are approachable. The teaching is very good in the infant school and satisfactory overall in the junior school. Although the information the parents receive is good, more could be done to involve them and consult them about changes. The range of activities the schools provide outside lessons is excellent and is better than that found in most schools. Of the 78 letters or additional comments submitted along with the parents' questionnaires, 36 raised concerns about aspects of the leadership and management of the schools. The inspection team judge the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff to be satisfactory.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The attainment of the pupils on entry to the Reception classes is mostly well above average and they are served well by the school. Most of the pupils make very good progress. The work in the Reception classes builds very quickly on the pupils' prior attainment and ensures that they rapidly develop as readers, writers and confident learners. The classrooms are print and language rich and the children are actively encouraged to talk and listen to their teachers and each other. Learning in mathematics is frequently active and engaging and the children enjoy the opportunities for counting, ordering and matching numbers as much as the activities that are planned for them to develop their understanding of shape and space. The teachers develop in the children very positive attitudes towards learning and most of the children are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals in the six areas of learning by the end of the Foundation Stage.
2. The performance of the pupils in the national tests at age seven shows that standards are above average in writing and mathematics and well above average in reading. The inspection evidence confirms this picture, and it also indicates that the action the school is taking to ensure that the more able pupils achieve higher standards, particularly in writing, is having some success. The careful analysis of the national test results by the infant class teachers, combined with improvements in the planning, teaching and setting of curricular targets for individuals and groups of pupils, has led to higher standards in the work seen now in writing and mathematics. In all of the infant classes a much higher proportion of pupils are working at a higher level than expected in their reading. The pupils are keen to read for pleasure and they are also capable of finding information quickly and efficiently. They read with good expression and become absorbed in stories, frequently using them as the basis for imaginative and dramatic play. Standards in writing are improving and are now good overall. The pupils are given many opportunities to write reports, stories and letters. They use a good vocabulary and more pupils in the work seen are achieving the higher levels. The focus on improving writing in the infant school has led to changes in the teaching and planning and much more direct teaching of skills. This is having a direct impact on the range and quality of the pupils' work. Similarly, in mathematics the work is well planned and the focus on improving the pupils' mental strategy in the first part of the lesson has had considerable benefit in developing the pupils' confidence with number.
3. Standards in the junior school are more variable. The pupils' markedly different results in mathematics last year (average when compared with the national figures) were reflected in the work seen during the inspection. In spite of introducing ability groups, too little of the work makes sufficient demands on the more able pupils, and the quality and depth of the work in Year 6 is not sufficient to ensure that all of the pupils who are capable of achieving at the higher levels will do so. The pupils' good progress in reading is maintained in the junior school and most of the pupils go on to become confident readers with their own preferences for particular types of books. Boys, in particular, enjoy books and reading and this has a significant impact on their performance in other subjects. The good progress in writing and handwriting in the infant school is not maintained in the junior school. There are some good examples of writing in subjects other than English, but the time devoted to teaching writing within lessons varies from class to class. Once again, a good proportion of the pupils are able to select vocabulary carefully, punctuate sentences and create tension and atmosphere in their stories. Overall, however, the work of the pupils in the more able groups, particularly in Years 5 and 6, does not reflect secure attainment at the higher levels. This is largely because the work they are required to do lacks challenge.

4. The pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as an additional language make very good progress. Their needs are identified early and very good intervention programmes are put in place to help them. The programmes include motor and co-ordination activities for those children who need them and additional, targeted work in literacy and numeracy. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants who provide a very good blend of challenge and support to individual pupils.
5. In both schools the work in science is interesting and practical. Standards at age seven are above average and by age 11 they are well above average. These high standards are a reflection of the good specialist teaching in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6. Good standards are achieved in religious education. By the time they leave the junior school the pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and other religions. They show a good ability to think deeply about important issues of faith and customs. Good standards are achieved in information and communication technology (ICT). The use of computers is well embedded in the teaching. Computers are used routinely in literacy and numeracy and very good use is made of them for research and for data and presentations. The standards achieved in all of the other subjects are above those expected at age seven and age 11. The learning in subjects like history, geography and music is made lively and interesting. It responds well to the pupils' very good knowledge of the world and their willingness to find out for themselves. All of these subjects look beyond the school to promote fieldwork and to draw upon and appreciate the work of artists, literature and music from around the world. The work engages the pupils and makes them want to learn more. Consequently, standards in history and geography are well above those found nationally.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

6. This aspect is a major strength of the schools and this is similar to the findings of the last inspection. The attitudes of the pupils to school and to their learning are very good overall and their behaviour in and around the schools is very good. The provision made for the pupils' personal development is excellent and the relationships between adults and children are very good. All of these factors help to create a very positive learning experience and environment. The parents have, in the main, very positive views about their children's attitudes to learning and behaviour in school. This view was clearly reflected in the comments that they made at their meeting, through their responses to the questionnaire and through comments made during the inspection.
7. The children in the Reception classes arrive at school in good time and settle happily into the day. They understand the routines of the classroom and respond with obvious interest and enjoyment to the various activities provided. They are enthusiastic and interested in their work. They are eager to go and collect objects that feel different on their 'texture trail' activity. They enjoy books and are eager to share and read with adults, and talk proudly about the wall displays in their classrooms. They play happily together, choosing activities and sharing resources. Their very good behaviour is consistently reinforced by the teachers and adults who work with them, and the children quickly learn what is expected of them.
8. In both the infant and junior schools all of the pupils are keen and happy to come to school. Their attitudes to school are very good. The pupils behave very well in lessons and most approach their work eagerly and with a level of maturity, sometimes beyond their years in the infant school. Similar standards of good behaviour were observed in the playground, in the dining hall and around school generally. The pupils have a very good understanding of right and wrong and show respect for their school. For example, there is no evidence of litter, graffiti or vandalism in or around the premises. There have been no exclusions in the last year.
9. In most classes the pupils are able to sustain concentration for extended periods and are eager to get on with their work. It is only when the pupils are given work that lacks challenge that their interest in

learning wanes. In the best lessons this willingness of the pupils to engage with their work is used well and the work rate, particularly in the infant classes, is very good.

10. The relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. The pupils enjoy working together. They share ideas and listen to each other. For example, during the lunchtime break a group of Year 3 boys discussed, in a very mature way, a variety of subjects ranging from holidays to games at playtime. They listened with interest to what each other had to say and shared their comments readily. In a Reception class the children discussed the intricacies of building a spaceship and, in response to each other's suggestions, they modified their respective designs! The pupils are consistently polite and well mannered towards teachers, other adults and visitors. They hold doors open for both adults and peers and they act with concern if they think someone has a problem. The high quality of these relationships has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning.
11. The opportunities provided for the pupils to take responsibility in the schools are very good and contribute much to their personal development. The School Council and the class representatives who serve on it take their responsibilities very seriously. They talk about the aims of the council and the impact of some of the initiatives with enthusiasm. The minutes of the meetings record discussions ranging from playground issues to school dinners. The decisions that are taken have a direct impact on the pupils, for example spending some of the raised funds on wet play equipment for classrooms. All of the pupils have the opportunity to raise issues by filling in and submitting a suggestion slip. The system for rewarding the pupils with house points is working well and the pupils are keen to win points for their house. The pupils make generous donations to a variety of charities. They are proud of the shoebox collection that was organised for children in Romania. The money raised from a non-uniform day went to support children in Bangladesh and Brazil. The pupils are very aware of the needs of others less fortunate than themselves.
12. Attendance rates are very good and are well above the national average and the pupils are punctual.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. The quality of the teaching is very good in Reception and in Years 1 and 2. It varies from very good to two lessons that were judged to be unsatisfactory in the junior school. The teaching was judged to be excellent in both schools at the last inspection.
14. The teaching in the Reception classes is consistently very good or better. The teachers are secure and confident in what they are trying to achieve for the children. They have established very good relationships with the children and there is a confident and positive atmosphere in all of the Reception classrooms which allows the children to flourish. The teaching methods are well chosen and build very successfully on the pupils' prior learning. The recommended approaches to teaching literacy and numeracy are well established and result in interesting and demanding work for pupils of all abilities. There is a very good balance of whole-class, teacher-directed and self-selected activities in these classrooms. The children's interest and excitement in their learning rarely wanes. They are kept busy and interested in their learning by the stimulating range of work provided.
15. In all of the infant classes the teaching is very well prepared and organised. Very good use is made of the teaching assistants and other adults to support groups and individual pupils. All of the adults provide a very good balance of support and challenge to the pupils. As a result, the pupils are confident to take risks and happily return to tasks to refine them or to persevere if they are not immediately successful. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well and great thought and care is given to providing learning resources and activities that challenge the pupils to think carefully and to extend their learning. The activities in numeracy lessons, for example, frequently provide opportunities for investigation of number and in literacy the recent emphasis on improving the pupils' writing is beginning to show signs of success with a greater range and quality of pupils' writing in books and around the school. All of the teachers are skilled at asking questions and leading

class discussions. Their questions are well targeted and challenge the pupils to think carefully. The teachers share the lesson's learning objectives with their pupils and make it clear to them what they will be expected to know and do by the end of a lesson. Computers are used well to develop the pupils' skills in reading and number and, in many of the lessons, the teachers present good opportunities for the pupils to think for themselves and to become independent learners.

16. The quality of the teaching in the junior school varies but it is satisfactory overall. The best lessons in literacy and numeracy interpret the planning carefully and match the work to the needs of the pupils. These lessons have an appropriate pace; the pupils are clear about the teachers' expectations and work hard. The time is used well and the pupils enjoy the lesson. These qualities were evident in a number of the literacy and numeracy lessons, but not in all lessons. The weaknesses in the remaining lessons that were, nevertheless, judged to be satisfactory, relate in part to the planning, the use of time and the arrangements for the teaching. In each of the year groups the pupils are taught for at least some of their lessons in ability groups for English and mathematics. The teachers plan the work together and this helps their professional development and team working but, at times, the work arising from this joint planning is not well matched to the pupils' needs. The work is too easy for some and too hard for others. The impact of this is for the pupils, particularly the most able, to lose concentration and interest. This was evident in a literacy lesson in Year 6. The teachers had chosen to teach the skills of skimming and scanning a text for its main points. The lesson plans were similar for each group, regardless of ability. The learning objectives were better suited to the more average group of pupils and they made good progress in the lesson. The more able group found the lesson undemanding. They worked hard at the tasks but could have been challenged to write a summary of the article rather than responding to the less demanding questions posed by the teacher. The match of work to the pupils' abilities is a weakness in literacy and this is also mirrored in numeracy lessons.
17. In a high proportion of the numeracy lessons in the junior school the work provided for the more able pupils lacked challenge. This is reflected in the work in the pupils' books. The work of the most able pupils in Year 6 frequently lacks the quality expected of pupils who are capable of achieving a Level 5 in the national tests. Some of the pupils' work is too limited in quantity to secure the depth of understanding necessary to achieve at the higher levels. In both literacy and numeracy in Year 6 the pupils frequently mark their own and each other's work. Whilst this has many advantages, it has extended too far and there is too little evidence of evaluative marking by some of the teachers. In the best lessons mental strategy is taught well and the pupils are required to explain how they arrived at their answers. Overall, however, the satisfactory and better lessons have all of the elements suggested by the national strategies for literacy and numeracy but more needs to be done to interpret the planning to the needs of each group.
18. Some of these issues are further compounded by the over-complex teaching and timetable arrangements in the junior school. English and mathematics are taught in both ability groups and mixed-ability class groups. In Year 3, for example, the pupils are not grouped by ability for all of their lessons. In some of the classes the pupils also see at least one other teacher other than their own class teacher over the course of the week so as to provide release time for managers or to accommodate part-time staff. As a result, some of the pupils experience inconsistencies in their teachers' expectations and this has a negative effect on their learning and attitudes to work. In all aspects of the teaching, therefore, there is a need to ensure greater consistency of approach and to evaluate the impact of the teaching arrangements on the pupils' day-to-day experience and the level of challenge the teaching can provide.
19. In the infant classes the teachers are clear about what the pupils need to learn and group or individual learning targets are displayed in classrooms or in the pupils' work books. This very good practice is not so evident in all of the junior classes. The marking and evaluations of the pupils' work in the infant school consistently encourage reflection and self-assessment by the pupils. However, this good practice is not consistent throughout the junior school. Homework is being used more

productively and is set consistently in both schools. The best is linked to the work in the lesson and is a good balance of consolidation and investigation.

20. The teaching in subjects other than English and mathematics has a number of strengths. In both schools the National Curriculum orders are interpreted imaginatively and much is done to encourage the pupils to work independently and to research topics for themselves. This is particularly evident in the work in geography, history and religious education. Very good use is made of artefacts and other teaching resources to engage the pupils. The pupils have very good general knowledge and this is frequently used by the teachers to develop lines of enquiry and to set them off on research tasks. The pupils have good skills in using computers and this, combined with the very good instruction and support from teachers and teaching assistants, enables them to use the computer both as a means of learning and for research. Each subject has a scheme of work that is used to guide the teachers' planning, but there is very little assessment of the pupils' progress in the foundation subjects and science. Consequently, although the lessons are generally clear about what will be taught, the level of demand varies and this frequently reflects the individual teacher's confidence and subject knowledge.
21. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is very good. In all of the lessons the learning support assistants are deployed well and provide a good blend of help and challenge to the pupils they work with. This support is very effective in ensuring that the needs of those pupils with special educational needs are met. Many of these pupils are withdrawn from classes for targeted work with teachers and teaching assistants. These lessons are of high quality. The work is well planned, challenging and enjoyable. Consequently, the pupils make good progress. When the pupils are taught in the larger classes the teachers take good account of their needs and make good use of the additional adult support or learning resources that are made available to help them.

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

22. The quality and range of learning opportunities are very good and the statutory requirements for all of the National Curriculum subjects and religious education are met. The schools justifiably pride themselves on providing a broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils. The curriculum is well organised and an effective programme of work is set out over a two-year period. This ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat work unnecessarily.
23. The provision for children in the Reception classes is very good. It follows the curriculum guidance for children in the Foundation Stage, providing them with challenging work that ensures a smooth transition into the National Curriculum. The curriculum is enriched through imaginative teaching and an effective balance between whole-class, teacher-directed and child-chosen work.
24. The schools' provision for developing the pupils' literacy skills in other subjects is good. A cross-curricular approach is evident. For example, the pupils in Year 6 studying history were reminded of the work they had done in a literacy lesson on information retrieval and the pupils in Year 3 linked their work on The Romans to their work on asking research questions in a literacy lesson.
25. The work of the specialist teachers in science and music enhance the teaching of these subjects in the junior school. The provision for all other subjects is good.
26. The provision for ICT across the curriculum is good and has improved since the last inspection. The pupils are able to use the computers for word processing and to retrieve information. They use the Internet to research projects and topics. Each classroom has a small bank of computers that are used daily by the pupils and the introduction of the 'Alphasmart' computers is proving to be effective, especially for those pupils who find writing and spelling difficult. The pupils use the digital camera to

record events such as assemblies and outdoor activities and there are plans to further enhance the schools' resources for ICT.

27. The provision for the pupils with special educational needs and those learning English as an additional language is very good. Individuals and small groups of pupils are withdrawn on a regular basis to focus on aspects of literacy. The teaching assistants offer effective support to these pupils in lessons and the class teachers take good account of the pupils' needs when planning lessons.
28. The provision for the pupils' personal, social and health education is very good and is catered for in specific lessons and across the curriculum as a whole. The schools are enrolled in the Healthy Schools Programme and an action plan for this will be in place by September 2002. The pupils receive age-appropriate sex and drugs education. As part of the science programme of study the pupils in Key Stage 1 learn about drugs that are 'good for us' and in Key Stage 2 the pupils have the opportunity to discuss the use of drugs and alcohol. In Year 6 the pupils focus on 'safety and yourself' and tackle issues such as personal safety and drug taking. Parents are invited to preview the teaching videos on sensitive issues and can make an informed choice as to whether they wish their child to take part in the lessons. During the inspection, 'circle time' for the pupils in Years 3 and 4 focused on making friends. The pupils discussed their own personal experience of friendship and were keen to talk and give their ideas about how new children to the schools could make friends. A look in the PHSE diary of events reveals a diverse list of past events: the Mayor's visit, Jeans for Genes Day, UNICEF non-uniform day, a silver collection for the local teddy charity, and a collection of pencils and books for schools in Kenya. The co-ordinators for this subject are enthusiastic and well informed.
29. The programme of extra-curricular activities is excellent. In the term of inspection the choices include a variety of sports and music activities, chess, cross-stitch, a film night, and a newspaper and book club. The newspaper club is run by a parent and makes very good use of ICT skills. The activities change each term with staff offering choices suitable to the time of year. Many pupils join in these after school and lunchtime activities on a regular basis. Individuals learn to play a variety of musical instruments and many are involved in the orchestra and sporting activities. All Year 6 pupils are offered the chance of gaining their road safety certificate. Regular working parties look after the wildlife area, the quiet area and the gardens that surround parts of the school. The pupils have the opportunity to go on an exciting variety of day and residential visits at different times of the year. For example, Year 5 visit a Field Study Centre in Norfolk, and Year 2 pupils visit the local museum. In the second part of the summer term Year 6 have the opportunity to learn some basic French and they also take part in a residential trip to York.
30. Relationships with other schools and partner institutions are good. Good links with the local secondary school help to ease the pupils' transition at age 11. The 'Curriculum Continuity Project' has looked at the standards achieved by the pupils in Year 6 and has the potential to be a very effective means of raising standards.
31. The provision the schools make for the pupils' spiritual development is good. The pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own beliefs and the beliefs of others. There is evidence of a spiritual dimension to the work in many subjects and assemblies. The pupils are given opportunities to reflect on the value of creativity and the wonders of the natural world. They also consider the worship element of other faiths and reflect on their own worth and their own qualities.
32. The school provides very effectively for the pupils' moral development. The inspection team agrees with the parents' views that the school promotes positive attitudes and values. The pupils are encouraged to develop a strong moral awareness. The pupils in the infant school listened intently to a lesson about Joseph and the Dreamcoat. They were able to talk about their own feelings about forgiveness after listening to the story. There are clear codes of behaviour in the schools. All of the pupils know the difference between right and wrong and teachers expect and receive very good behaviour from their pupils. The calm, sensitive and caring approach used by the staff provides

effective role models for the children. They are encouraged to reflect on issues of everyday morality and the major issues in the world such as care for the environment.

33. The pupils' social development is promoted very effectively. The rich diet of extra-curricular activities provides the pupils with opportunities to socialize away from lessons and with pupils of other ages. The opportunity to join clubs and to compete against others is available to all pupils. The residential and other visits and charity fundraising activities also contribute to the pupils' social development and to their awareness of what it means to be a good citizen. The School Council aids the pupils' understanding of how everyone can have a voice and helps them to gain an understanding of the democratic process. The pupils are encouraged to take their responsibilities seriously and there are many occasions when they have to give careful consideration to one another when they are working as individuals, in small groups or as a whole class.
34. The provision for the pupils' cultural development is very good. The pupils are taught to appreciate their own cultural traditions and those of other cultures by being introduced to many kinds of music and different forms of art and literature. Art and music clubs promote interest and participation in creative activity. In a religious education lesson the pupils discussed the influence of the Hindu God, Ganesh, with interest and maturity. The wall displays reflect the cultural diversity of society, showing different languages and scripts, and different people and artifacts from around the world. These displays are further reflected in the work that the pupils are doing and in the very good general knowledge the pupils have of the world.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The schools' procedures for child protection and the pupils' welfare are good. The schools monitor the pupils' personal development very effectively and provide them with a high level of support and guidance.
36. Child protection procedures are in place and effective. The teaching staff, well supported by the classroom assistants, know their pupils very well and, as a team, they provide a high level of welfare support and guidance for the pupils. During the inspection there were a few examples of pupils receiving minor bumps in the playground and the lunchtime supervisors and administrative staff were quick to offer an appropriate level of care. Detailed records are maintained of all accidents and the parents are informed of any injuries sustained by their child. The schools conduct regular health and safety checks of the site and there is a regular fire drill. A small number of minor health and safety issues were reported to the headteacher and the schools are to review their procedures on these matters.
37. The system of monitoring and improving attendance is good and the schools' good links with the Education Welfare Officer support these procedures. The entries made in the respective school registers are consistently applied across the schools. The schools also maintain other relevant and helpful records linked to pupil absence, such as a log book of parental telephone calls, a term time holiday book and a 'sent home' book used in cases where children are taken ill during the school day.
38. Those pupils on the SEN register are well supported by the school and the 'Bubble Group' is particularly effective in promoting friendship and peer mentoring for pupils who experience difficulties in learning or in their behaviour.
39. The pupils' good behaviour is promoted very well through, for example, the 'yellow card' system in which pupils in the junior playground may be sent to the 'thinking steps' for five minutes to reflect on their inappropriate actions. The impact of this provision can be seen in the consistently very good behaviour both in classrooms and around the school.
40. The schools acknowledge the pupils' individual achievements through the praise given to them in the classroom and, more formally, during merit and reward assemblies in which the pupils' success is

shared with the whole school. The opportunities presented by the schools to the pupils in order to enhance their personal development through taking on responsibility for various tasks around the schools, are very wide and include older pupils looking after and supporting younger ones.

41. The schools' procedures for assessing the pupils' progress are sound. The teachers in the infant school keep detailed records of the pupils' academic and personal progress and these are used very effectively to set curricular targets for groups and individual pupils. This very good practice is not so evident in all of the junior classes. The junior teachers are clear about the National Curriculum level each pupils is working at, but this is rarely translated into group or individual curricular targets as found in the infant classes. Combined with the practice of peer marking and little evaluation marking by some teachers in the junior classes, the day-to-day assessment of pupils in the junior school lacks rigour.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42. The parents' views of the schools are good, as are the schools' links with the parents. The impact of parental involvement with the schools is very good and the information provided to parents about the pupils' progress is satisfactory.
43. The parents' meeting with the inspectors was well attended and the percentage return to the questionnaire was significantly high. The majority of parents who completed the questionnaire are very supportive of the schools and of their aims and objectives. They feel that their children like school and that they are making good progress. However, a significant minority of parents felt that they were not kept well informed, that the schools were not well managed and that they do not provide an interesting range of activities for children outside lessons. The inspection team agrees with the parents that their children like coming to school and that the teachers are approachable. Although the information the parents receive is good, more could be done to involve them and consult them about changes and to ensure that the reasons for change are more fully explained. Of the 78 letters or additional comments submitted along with the parents' questionnaires, 36 raised concerns about aspects of the leadership and management of the schools. The inspection team judge the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff to be satisfactory with strengths outweighing weaknesses.
44. The schools' annual reports to parents provide a good level of information to parents in terms of what their children have been studying and their progress over the past year. The depth of information about future targets for improvement is, however, limited and the alphanumeric grid system showing the levels achieved is a little confusing, particularly for those children who are taught in ability sets. The schools also send out regular newsletters to keep parents informed and these provide a good level of detail covering curricular topics and other relevant day-to-day issues. The governors' report to the parents is of a very high standard and provides the parents with significant detail of the school's progress and activities over the past 12 months. A number of the parents have expressed concern about the way the schools communicate changes to procedures or policy. The leadership of the school could do more to explain to the parents why such changes are made and why they are in their best interests.
45. A large number of parents are regular visitors to the schools and many help in classrooms, listening to pupils read and in assisting with extra-curricular activities. The schools operate an 'open door' policy and the headteacher holds regular 'surgeries' on a Saturday morning to discuss any particular areas of concern with parents and carers. The level of parental support to pupils both at school and at home is very good and this has a significant impact on their very positive attitudes to school and learning and the standards they achieve.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46. The leadership and management of the schools are satisfactory. The schools' aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum and to promote high standards of achievement are faithfully reflected in their work. The headteacher is in her third year and the two deputy headteachers, although having been promoted from senior posts from within the schools, are in their first year in this role. One of the strengths of the leadership is its success in maintaining many of the positive features of the schools that were evident at the time of the last inspection. For example, the curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by an excellent range of activities outside of school. The leadership has implemented the arrangements for the performance management of teachers and has a very good policy for the appraisal of other staff. The leadership has been very successful in attracting high quality staff to replace the seven that have left over the last two years and provides good support to both newly qualified and experienced staff who join the schools.
47. The leadership responded well to the only key issue for action set out in the last report. Homework is now set more regularly and the decisions about what homework is set and when it will be returned are generally made clear to the pupils. Overall, however, a great deal of the homework in the upper junior school is open-ended. This has the advantage of allowing the pupils to research topics for themselves and to actively seek out information, but it leads to some confusion on the part of parents and pupils about what is expected of them and how long the work should take.
48. The headteacher's vision is for the schools to become 'fully self-reviewing'. Within this aim the schools are developing their systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing the quality of the teaching and raising standards. One outcome of the recent work is the recognition that the schools could be doing more to improve the outcomes for the more able pupils. The pupils' work in the infant school shows improvement and it is likely that the more able pupils in the infant school will achieve better results in the national tests this year. This is not so in Key Stage 2 where there are few signs that standards are rising for the more able pupils. The senior management team has made a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the raw data from the national tests last year to highlight areas for improvement, but the quality of the teaching and the demands made on the pupils, particularly in Year 6, are not leading to significant improvements in English and mathematics among the 11-year-old pupils. The headteacher has made a good start to monitoring the schools' performance, but the next stage is to ensure that effective strategies are in place for raising the quality of teaching in the junior school and improving the outcomes for the more able pupils.
49. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties well. The governors are strongly committed to the schools and they provide a very effective strategic steer to its further development. The governors are well organised. They have effective committees and good procedures for monitoring the schools' work. The chairperson is extremely well informed about the schools. The respective roles and responsibilities of the senior management team and governors are well defined and understood. They have trust in the headteacher but, nevertheless, expect her to be fully accountable to them. This accountability would be aided if the school improvement plans and subject action plans contained measurable success criteria against which they could judge progress.
50. The teachers with responsibilities for managing subjects and other aspects of the schools' work are generally effective. This is most clearly seen in the work of the co-ordinator for special educational needs who manages the provision very well. She ensures that the pupils' needs are met through the careful deployment of support assistants and the provision of good quality individual learning plans for the pupils who need them. The leadership offered at the Foundation Stage is particularly effective. It ensures that demanding and exciting work is planned and taught and this accounts for much of the good progress these pupils make.
51. There are no significant weaknesses in the work of the schools' leadership, but there are some areas in which it needs to take more vigorous action. For example, the roles and responsibilities of senior

staff and subject leaders are well defined, but they do more to support the day-to-day management of the two separate schools rather than providing strategic management that is focused on ensuring a coherent educational experience across the two schools. In both schools there is a need to ensure that all of the teachers have the same high expectations of what the pupils can achieve as those of its most effective teachers. This is particularly important in the junior school where the teachers' confidence and subject knowledge in aspects of English and mathematics needs to be assessed. The leadership needs to provide more guidance to teachers on how they can help the pupils to set personal targets, particularly in English and mathematics, and help the pupils to understand what standards they are expected to achieve by the end of Year 6. The leadership also needs to ensure that the school improvement plan and subject action plans contain measurable success criteria against which the governors can measure the schools' progress.

52. The day-to-day management of the schools is good. The daily routines are effective in creating an orderly environment in which pupils can learn. The work of the clerical staff, learning support assistants, lunchtime supervisors, site manager and cleaning staff all contribute significantly to the smooth running of the schools. This frees teachers to concentrate on teaching and on meeting the needs of the pupils.
53. The schools' financial planning is satisfactory overall. The governors monitor the budget well. The headteacher, the governors and the school administrator control the schools' finances effectively. The schools have appropriate educational priorities linked to the available budget and has reported suitable plans to use the accumulated balances to the local education authority. The schools apply the principles of best value rigorously to expenditure, but could do more to consult with parents and to provide them with more information about how and why decisions are taken. Taking into account the context of the schools and the outcomes, they provide good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

54. In order to raise standards further the leadership should:

- (1) Set more challenging targets in English and mathematics, particularly for the more able pupils, supported and informed by:
 - an appraisal of the aspirational targets set for individual pupils in writing and mathematics; *
 - setting targets for improvement that are linked to programmes of action in the school improvement plan and subject action plans that contain measurable success criteria.
(paragraphs: 2, 3, 15, 16, 41, 48,51)
- (2) Raise the quality of the teaching in the junior to the level of the best in the schools by:
 - reviewing the complex teaching arrangements, particularly in English and mathematics;
 - checking the effectiveness of the teaching and learning, and
 - raising the teachers' expectations of the more able pupils.
(paragraphs: 13-21, 48, 51)
- (3) Review the way in which the schools communicate and consult with all parents and, in particular, when informing parents of decisions or changes, to explain more fully why it is in their best interests.

Other issues which should be considered by the school for inclusion in the action plan:

- (4) Implement the plans for reducing the schools' accumulated balances within the published timescale. *
(paragraph 53)

* It is acknowledged that the school is aware of these issues and has begun to take some effective action.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	80
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	23	37	16	2	0	0
Percentage	2	29	46	20	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	533
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	85

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	19

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.55

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.05

National comparative data	5.6
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	39	36	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	38	38
	Girls	36	35	35
	Total	74	73	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	99 (92)	97 (89)	97 (96)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	38	38	37
	Girls	36	35	35
	Total	74	73	72
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	99 (92)	97 (88)	96 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	35	44	79

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	27	25	34
	Girls	38	30	40
	Total	65	55	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	82 (91)	70 (81)	94 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	26	31
	Girls	36	31	39
	Total	62	57	70
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	78 (92)	72 (82)	89 (91)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	521
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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)	20
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	23
Total aggregate hours worked per week	381

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
	£
Total income	1114768
Total expenditure	1090862
Expenditure per pupil	2024
Balance brought forward from previous year	165108

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	7
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	533
Number of questionnaires returned	353

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65.0	33.0	2.0	1.0	0.0
My child is making good progress in school.	49.0	45.0	3.0	0.0	2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42.0	53.0	2.0	1.0	3.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40.0	50.0	8.0	1.0	1.0
The teaching is good.	65.0	33.0	1.0	0.0	2.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	40.0	45.0	12.0	2.0	2.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	65.0	27.0	6.0	2.0	1.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61.0	35.0	2.0	1.0	2.0
The school works closely with parents.	43.0	47.0	7.0	2.0	2.0
The school is well led and managed.	33.0	47.0	9.0	2.0	9.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	52.0	42.0	2.0	1.0	3.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35.0	45.0	15.0	3.0	3.0

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

55. The procedures, practice and teaching in the Foundation Stage of learning are very good and a major strength of the infant school. These findings are similar to those of the previous inspection.
56. The children are admitted to one of three parallel Reception classes in the September before their fifth birthday. Those who have a birthday after December are admitted part-time until January and full-time thereafter. Although there is a wide spread of ability, the baseline assessment completed soon after admission shows attainment to be above that expected in most schools for a significant number of the children in language and literacy skills and mathematical learning. By the end of the Reception year, most of the children will have achieved or exceeded all of the early learning goals. The children are very well prepared to begin work within Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.
57. The quality of the teaching in all of the areas of learning is very good. It is particularly effective because the lessons are very well planned to challenge children of all ability levels and move them along at a pace that suits them best. The teachers, and all of the adults who support them, have a very good understanding of the needs of young children. Carefully prepared topic activities ensure that the children's interest levels remain high. The choice, variety and availability of tasks ensure there is a continuing enthusiasm and excitement about learning. The teachers take great care to make sure that the children are given tasks that are appropriate for their age. The subtle changes in the curriculum plans to cater for the youngest children, those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language is impressive. This practice impacts significantly on the quality of the learning of all of the children.

Personal, social and emotional development

58. The school makes very good provision for the children's personal and social development and most of the children are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals on entry to Year 1. The children, including the youngest class members have a mature approach to school and each other. They quickly settle because they feel happy, secure and valued for the contributions they make. The Foundation Stage environment is an interesting, exciting and enjoyable place to be. All the Reception classrooms are designed to be as 'self-manageable' as possible for the children. Equipment is readily available and easy to replace. Tidy-up routines promote the children's independence. The children sense that their teachers want them to be happy and successful, and they respond extremely positively to this trust. They think for themselves and try hard. Consequently, they often make very good progress in lessons. The older Key Stage 1 pupils welcome these younger children into the playground and look after them. They are quickly made to feel part of the school community. As a result, they respond very positively to school and behave very well. They have very good manners. They quickly gain in confidence, learn to play and work collaboratively and show concern and respect for each other. They have a growing understanding of the difference between right and wrong. The high quality teaching by all of the adults develops their sense of curiosity and wonder, and makes learning fun. Those who have English as an additional language and those with special educational needs are identified early, supported and included in all activities whilst being given the particular help they need.

Communication, language and literacy

59. The school makes very good provision for the development of the children's communication, language and literacy and most of the children are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals on entry to Year 1. They make good progress over time and often very good progress in lessons. They strive to be fluent and attentive. The teachers are very skilled in ensuring that they have plenty of opportunities to express themselves orally to the class, for example, when reading 'A Wishing Well', individuals offer suggestions for a wish, whilst others notice and correct grammatical errors in the text. This whole-class teaching provides opportunities for all of the children, irrespective of ability, to respond to the teacher's carefully chosen questions. The children are becoming very confident in the early stages of writing and reading and are well prepared to start the National Curriculum. They enjoy 'reading' books and know that the pages tell the story in a sequence. They know that books are for enjoyment as well as helping them to find out things. Many of the children are competent early readers with a very good grasp of early spelling techniques. Most of the children have begun to develop their early writing skills effectively. Many can write their own names, using capital letters correctly. The teachers work very hard and manage to keep an appropriate balance between the teaching of the conventions of writing English with the imaginative emergent stage of the children's own story writing. A group of children write and illustrate books for the class 'Book Shop'. Others compile recipes for the new Chinese menu in the Corner Café. 'Chinese New Year' greetings cards decorate one display, other written contributions hang from the ceiling. The work in the Foundation Stage interprets the National Literacy Strategy in an exciting and imaginative way, promoting high standards and building very effectively on the children's learning at home.

Mathematical development

60. The school makes very good provision for the children's mathematical development and most of the children are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals on entry to Year 1. The early stage of the National Numeracy Strategy has been adapted very skilfully to fit closely to the children's needs. The teaching is very good and the children are given a very good range of practical mathematical problem-solving opportunities. They concentrate for longer than expected when focusing on a task and try hard to offer solutions to practical mathematical problems. Groups of children make good use of computer programs to demonstrate their knowledge of numbers to ten. They show an increasing familiarity with the use of number in all aspects of their daily classroom routines. Most of the children count confidently to ten on their own and to 20 and higher with the support of an adult. The higher attaining children cope well with doubling numbers, as for example when they find different ways of partitioning numbers to make 10. In one task, they showed very good progress as they kept one number in their heads when adding on another. They enjoy counting games and rhymes, and are starting to show a familiarity with number facts beyond 10. Playground counting games are used as a brisk introduction to addition and subtraction up to 10. Because they are absorbed in the task, their concentration span is extended. The adults encourage the children to offer solutions to mathematical problems. They know the names of shapes such as circle, square and triangle as they match and sort a range of different objects. This activity has been developed by the teacher into an opportunity to build models, using and naming the shapes used. These demanding and enjoyable problem-solving tasks are common to much of the work.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

61. The school makes very good provision for the development of the children's knowledge and understanding of the world and most of the children are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals on entry to Year 1. Their routine includes discussion about the calendar and the weather. Many of the children remember the day and date accurately, as well as their own birthday. When comparing and contrasting weather conditions, the children explain the consequences of a wet, rainy

or windy day. Opportunities are offered for individuals to share special news. Often, the children discuss where they live, their families and important events in their lives. They talk about baby photographs, comparing physical and mental changes over time. Their understanding of the life cycles of living things is good as they explain change to their bodies, bulbs and the buds on bushes. Their investigative skills are challenged as they make and taste Chinese food and explain the change that occurs when cooking. The children made very good progress in a lesson about 'The Senses' because the teaching was so imaginative. The use of information control technology is developing well. The children know that switches control such machines as the computer, television and video. Attainment for the majority of the children in ICT is better than that expected for their age.

Physical development

62. The school makes very good provision for the children's physical development and most of the children are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals on entry to Year 1. A variety of activities that extend manipulative skills are offered to the children. They gain finer control through cutting, painting and building. Times are set aside to show the children how to use tools, equipment and materials. They use their physical skills as they fix construction apparatus of different sizes to make a range of vehicles and to design with materials, sand and water. The children enthusiastically master basic physical skills in order to play games and design and paint pictures successfully on the computer.
63. The children are learning to move confidently, imaginatively and with increasingly good directional control. At playtimes, they make up rules and join in playground games. They show an understanding of control and balancing as they perform fast, slow, high and low movements. The teachers encourage them to persevere in order to improve their skills further. During a lesson in the hall, the available space is used sensibly and confidently as they follow instructions during a taped broadcast. Very good progress is shown in investigating different ways of travelling, when finding and returning to a given place. Instructions and rules are remembered well by the majority of the children as they find their original starting point. Opportunities outside the classroom to ride and use wheeled toys are good. The outdoor curriculum is developing well.

Creative development

64. The school makes very good provision for the children's creative development and most of the children are likely to achieve or exceed the early learning goals on entry to Year 1. Most of the children are developing a range of creative skills. Opportunities are provided for them to explore colour and texture as they talk about skin tones and different shades of hair and eyes in order to complete portraits of themselves and their families. They colour-wash and shade in order to design and paint sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. When choosing colours they show a growing understanding of how to experiment with pattern and shape. Because the teaching and the curriculum activities are very good, the children develop above average creative skills. For example, the teaching provides them with many opportunities for experimenting and designing using a wide range of media and materials. Creative opportunities are very well planned. The children use pencils, crayons and brushes accurately when they paint, draw and colour. Some of the children show particular flare when drawing with pastels, pencils and when using the mouse to design and paint with the computer. When discussing stories and in role-play situations creativity and imagination are developed fully. They listen carefully to music, sing songs and recite well-known rhymes. A good example was seen when the children sang tunefully and varied the level of their voices in a series of experiments about sound. They confidently appraised the efforts of others as they created sound-rhythms and accompaniments for their ideas.

ENGLISH

65. The pupils make very good progress in the infant school and, by the age of seven, standards are above the national average in reading and in writing. The pupils make good progress overall in the junior school and, by the age of 11, achieve standards above the national average. In both schools the standards in reading are high. In both schools the percentage of the pupils reaching the higher levels in the National Curriculum writing tests was lower than might be expected. The school has identified the need to raise standards in writing and is taking action to improve it. This was reflected in the work the pupils were doing during the inspection, but the focus on improving the pupils' writing is having greater impact in the infant school.
66. Many of the pupils come to school with at least good, some with very good language skills. They have a wide vocabulary and are both confident and articulate. These skills are recognised and developed through effective teaching. The pupils have the opportunity to engage in a wide variety of speaking and listening activities. For example, circle time and role-play in the infant school, and for the older children the drama technique of 'hot seating' and debating. The pupils enjoy words and are inquisitive about their meaning. In both schools the pupils are confident to ask the meaning of words they do not understand. The teachers first give the other pupils the chance to tell the meaning of unknown words. All of the pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and share their ideas with the class. Most classes plan a plenary session for this purpose. During the week of the inspection the Year 5 pupils were studying the poem 'The Highwayman'. During the plenary they debated long and hard about why the central character was the way he was. They were very successful at arguing a point and backing it up with evidence from the text.
67. The pupils in the infant school make very good progress in reading. A range of effective reading strategies is taught in whole-class sessions. These strategies are rehearsed and embedded in small group and individual reading sessions. The pupils are encouraged to become independent readers from an early age. Reading assessments inform the teachers' planning and determine the next steps that pupils need to take to improve their reading. The pupils are encouraged to evaluate their progress in reading and are given consistent, positive encouragement from the teachers and teaching assistants. Those pupils who experience difficulty in reading are well supported in small withdrawal groups led by trained teaching assistants and volunteer adults. During the inspection a range of reading skills were being taught. In Year 5 the difficult skills of inference and deduction were being developed within literacy lessons. Most of the pupils could grasp the subtlety of 'reading between the lines' and the importance of looking beyond the written word for meaning.
68. In both schools the pupils are given many opportunities to read aloud. Most of the pupils are able to do this confidently and they read accurately with good expression, intonation and understanding. For example, during whole-class reading sessions the pupils are asked to read small parts of a text 'in character', using a variety of voices and expressing themselves in different ways. A delightful example of this was observed during the inspection using characters from the story of 'Little Red Riding Hood'.
69. The Year 6 pupils were working on retrieving information using the skills of skimming and scanning. The school recognises the importance of developing these skills and the pupils were given the opportunity to apply their skills in a history lesson later in the day. In Years 3 to 6 the pupils have regular 'quiet' reading lessons during the week. In these lessons the pupils choose their own books and maintain their own reading record books, but there is a lack of consistency in the way these record books are used and some of the pupils do not keep an accurate record of what they have read. The quality of the teaching and learning in the group reading lessons varies. In the most effective lessons the time is used well and groups of pupils receive regular teaching that is tailored to their needs. In the less effective lessons these routines are not well established and much of the time is devoted to silent reading with little intervention by the teacher. By the age of 11 most of the pupils

talk enthusiastically about the works of authors that they enjoy reading. They freely use ‘technical’ language such as ‘plot’, ‘narrative’ and ‘characters’ when discussing books. They can compare authors and read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction. Book resources in the classrooms are good, enabling the pupils to choose from a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction.

70. The junior school library is well resourced with a wide range of both fiction and non-fiction books as well as taped stories. The room is most attractive and well laid out. Classes are timetabled to use it on a regular basis. The system of borrowing books is well organised. Research skills are developed systematically throughout the school and by the age of 11 most of the pupils are able to independently research a given topic. All of the pupils have regular opportunities to use computers and the Internet to aid their research.
71. The quality of the pupils’ handwriting and the presentation of their work varies. The work in the infant school is usually presented well. Class books in the junior school are sometimes untidy, with examples of unfinished work and careless presentation. In the infant school most pupils make good progress in handwriting. At the end of Year 1 letters are well formed and there are clear spaces between words. Some of the pupils, by the end of Year 2, can join their writing. The teaching of handwriting in the junior school is less consistent. Although there is a handwriting scheme, handwriting is not taught regularly in all classes. This results in some of the children in the junior school only semi-joining their handwriting and a few still print their work. The left-handed pupils do not always sit in the most comfortable or appropriate place when writing.
72. Standards in writing show improvement in the infant school and most of the pupils are able to express themselves well in writing. They have opportunities to write for a good range of purposes and audiences. By the age of seven the most able pupils are able to write a simple story with a beginning, middle and end. The pupils of lower ability write in sentences, but their use of punctuation is not always correct. Most of the pupils spell common words correctly, but they do not readily apply a knowledge of spelling rules and letter strings when spelling less familiar words.
73. The pupils in the junior school make satisfactory progress in developing their writing skills. By the age of 11 most of the pupils have a good grasp of how to punctuate sentences and the most able pupils use a variety of punctuation to create tension and atmosphere for the reader. The pupils construct their writing well using metaphors and similes to good effect. They select the vocabulary they use carefully to create the desired impact on the reader. Overall, however, in both schools there is room for improvement in the number of pupils who are consistently working at the higher levels.
74. The schools effectively support the pupils with special educational needs. The recent purchase of the Alphasmart computers has greatly benefited those pupils who find the physical process of writing difficult. The teaching assistants support the pupils well and help them to achieve a high degree of success in their work and in gaining confidence. The schools make good use of the additional intervention strategies, particularly the early literacy support in Year 1 and the additional literacy groups in Years 3 and 4 to support the children who have learning difficulties.
75. The quality of the teaching is very good in the infant school and satisfactory in the junior school. In the most successful lessons the teachers have considered carefully what it is they want the pupils to learn and the work is well matched to the needs of all of the pupils. In these lessons the teachers set an appropriate pace and encourage the pupils to listen carefully and to apply themselves quickly. The teachers’ questioning skills are very good. The questions are frequently used to move the pupils’ thinking forward and to encourage closer observation of the text. The teachers use questions as a way of assessing what the pupils have learnt. The questions are targeted to specific groups and individual pupils and demand careful thought. The imaginative way writing tasks are planned in the infant school is impressive. A pupil was heard to exclaim as she walked into the classroom, “Wow, this looks like fun!”

76. The less successful lessons, mostly in the junior school, had too much 'teacher talk' and the independent activities were not always as demanding as they could be, particularly for the more able pupils.
77. In addition, the complex teaching arrangements in the junior school do not encourage consistency of approach or high enough expectations of many of the pupils. Standards in writing are improving more quickly in the infant school because the direct teaching of these skills is a feature of most literacy lessons and there is much greater clarity about, for example, the opportunities for teaching extended non-narrative writing in subjects such as science and history. The schools have introduced a system of setting individual targets to improve the pupils' writing skills. However, whilst pupils are aware of their targets in some classes, not all of the teachers review the targets regularly enough to ensure that a good rate of progress is maintained.
78. The management of English is satisfactory overall. The co-ordinators work hard to provide support to colleagues and the analysis of test results has rightly focused the school on making improvements in writing and the standards achieved by the more able pupils. Overall, however, the English curriculum in the junior school lacks a coherent approach. The school's resources for English are very good.

MATHEMATICS

79. At the last inspection the standards in mathematics were judged to be well above average in both schools. The results of the 2001 national tests indicate that standards at age seven are above average when compared with all schools and average at age 11. The inspection evidence confirms this picture and points to some underachievement by the most able pupils, particularly in Year 6.
80. Throughout the infant school, the teachers' careful planning and preparation of resources, combined with the very good use that is made of the learning support assistants and other adults, ensures that the pupils enjoy mathematics. They know what they are expected to do and most approach their work with confidence. This was particularly evident in a Year 1 class in their mental maths session. The teacher had high expectations and, consequently, the pupils responded eagerly to her questions by applying their knowledge of place value to identifying 'hidden' numbers. When consolidating adding 10, much fun was introduced by an imaginary bus journey where people got on and off in 10's. The teacher encouraged the pupils by her tone of voice and varied facial expression indicating her own enjoyment. Similarly, in a Year 2 class the teacher's soft voice nurtured the pupils' self confidence so that they were attentive, alert and began to make rapid responses counting forwards and backwards in 2's, 5's and 10's. The speed of their answers indicated that many were working at a level well above expectation. In all of the lessons the group work was carefully thought out to ensure maximum challenge for the pupils at all levels of ability. By the age of seven almost all of the pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers to 100. They are aware of simple 2D and 3D shapes and approach simple money problems with confidence. They estimate lengths and then measure for accuracy. The more able pupils begin to partition numbers, follow instructions to solve problems and extract information from given data such as calendars.
81. In the junior school the pupils enjoy mental mathematics sessions and, though they vary in pace, most include appropriate games and strategies to improve the pupils' knowledge of multiplication tables, factors and number bonds. Consequently, by the time they are 11 the pupils have a wide mathematical vocabulary and are able to use a range of mental strategies to calculate an answer. During the inspection, in the main activity part of the lessons, the pupils in Year 5 were looking at data handling and were able to use the vocabulary 'mode', 'median' and 'range'. They were aware of the wide variety of information that can be gleaned from charts and tables and interrogated them effectively. The work was made interesting and fun and included good opportunities to use information technology to create spreadsheets and collate detailed information. In an adjacent group

the pupils concentrated on the range of temperature over the year in specific resorts finding the mode and then median temperature. From this information they then decided on the best place to spend the summer. Others, using similar strategies, found the most commonly used word on a page in their reading book.

82. In Year 6, the pupils are rediscovering prime numbers. They are able to find the factors of prime numbers and some can identify squared numbers. In the lessons seen the pupils were investigating prime numbers to 100 and, although they were able to look for patterns, many found this difficult. Because of the complicated setting arrangements in Year 6, where pupils are split into five ability groups for two days, three ability groups for two days and have one day with their own class teacher, the pupils' work is frequently incomplete. This curtailment of time limits opportunities for the pupils to consolidate knowledge or to continue and test theories with their own independent investigations. Moreover, even in the 'high ability groups' the more able pupils are not presented with sufficient work that requires a deeper level of thought or higher level of knowledge. The teachers' expectations vary in the amount of work they require the pupils to complete. Consequently, some of the pupils' work deteriorates in quality, quantity and presentation over the year. Peer marking has been introduced in Year 6. Although it has a place, there were several instances where work was marked incorrectly or miscalculations overlooked. Teacher comments did not identify problems or give suitable mathematical support to move the pupils on. Consequently, an air of complacency was detected in some pupils identified as 'more able', not only in the presentation and quantity of their work but also in their attitudes to lessons. This leads to them not achieving their high potential.
83. In the infant school the quality of teaching ranged from good to excellent. All of the teachers are well prepared for lessons and know their pupils well, quickly identifying what they know and what they need to do next. Lessons are interesting and often fun. The learning support assistants are well briefed and work hard with their groups. Targets for individuals and groups are clear and appropriate. Assessment is detailed, written at the end of sessions and collated weekly. Records are regularly kept and consistent across the key stage.
84. In the junior school the quality of teaching ranged from unsatisfactory to good. There were instances where the pace of lessons was slow and instructions lacked clarity. The system of setting is in its early stages and close teamwork and co-operative planning among staff to make sure that expectations for all pupils are suitably high are not yet soundly established. Evidence indicates that there is only limited differentiation of the work within some set groups. In some lessons the teacher talk became unproductive and took time away from the pupil activity. In the good lessons the teachers differentiated the tasks well and made good use of question and answer sessions and the plenary. The use of assessment to inform planning in the junior classes is inconsistent. Some teachers keep copious detailed notes of their pupils' progress, others do not. Although attainment levels are recorded at the end of each year, firm predictions for the following year are not always made and this fact, together with the lack of systematic recording of work, means that the pupils' ongoing progress cannot be securely assessed.
85. The co-ordinators have produced detailed action plans for the subjects. They have introduced many sound ideas, including assessment procedures, and have led training for staff to introduce these. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented in both schools. The teaching is more challenging in the infant school, but both schools need to consider how they can provide more demanding work for the most able pupils. This needs to be reflected in more challenging targets for individual pupils, groups and at the end of each key stage. There are good opportunities for the pupils to apply their mathematical skills to other areas of the curriculum such as science and design technology.

SCIENCE

86. The standards achieved by the pupils at the age of seven are above the national average. By the time the pupils leave the junior school at age 11 they are well above average. A similar judgement was made at the last inspection. These high standards are a reflection of the good specialist teaching in Year 2, Year 5 and Year 6 and the effective use of the high quality resources. As the pupils move through the schools, most achieve well and make good progress. There are, however, some occasions when the lack of challenging work for the most able pupils limits their progress. The pupils with special educational needs receive good support from the learning support assistants and make good progress.
87. By the time they are seven the pupils can build a simple electrical circuit and explain why a bulb lights up. Many can add switches and buzzers and record their work in clear diagrammatic form. They understand how gradient affects motion and some can compare the forces of gravity and upthrust. The Year 1 pupils improve their scientific vocabulary related to the behaviour of materials. They can use and understand the words 'rigid' and 'flexible'. The pupils in Year 2 can understand the basic conditions animals and plants need to survive and many can provide explanations for changes in living things. All of the pupils enjoy investigative work and this is very beneficial to those pupils with special educational needs who are integrated well with their peer colleagues.
88. In the junior school each year group is taught a wide range of scientific topics and the scrutiny of the pupils' work shows a clear progression in their knowledge and understanding. The pupils in Year 3 learn which substances are soluble in water. They record their work scientifically and understand the need to establish a fair test when conducting their experiments. Many of the Year 4 pupils understand the concept of thermal insulation and conduction. They can use a database on the computer to group and classify these differences. The Year 5 pupils understand gravity and can compare the earth's gravitational force with that of the moon. Many of the Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of soluble and insoluble materials. They understand filtration and can devise their own experiments to separate salt and sand. Many pupils can evaluate their work and suggest ways to improve it.
89. A specialist teacher is employed to teach science to all Year 6 pupils. In Year 2 one of the class teachers is responsible for teaching science to each of the classes. This specialist teaching has a positive impact on the standards achieved and the pupils' progress in these year groups. The quality of teaching is good throughout the school. Of the six lessons observed the teaching was good or better in five of them. There were no lessons in which the teaching was unsatisfactory although there is a need for some teachers to ensure that the work is sufficiently challenging for the more able pupils. The teaching has a number of strengths: the teachers plan lessons well, have clear learning objectives for the pupils to follow, use explanation and discussion effectively, show good scientific knowledge, and establish good relations with the pupils from whom they demand high standards of behaviour. The work prepared for the pupils is interesting and varied. It includes discussion work, clear explanations and tasks suited to all abilities. All these features were present in a Year 6 lesson on separating a mixture of salt and sand by filtration. The pupils enjoyed the lesson and were kept on task by the clear and enthusiastic explanations provided by the teacher. They were asked to continually review their work and to suggest ways of accurately recording their findings. The pupils wasted no time and worked very sensibly in groups.
90. There is an effective scheme of work to guide the teachers' planning. The co-ordinators have a clearly defined role in organising resources, monitoring planning and managing a budget. In the infant school the pupils are assessed informally. Records are kept and this works effectively in influencing what they do next. In order to further raise the achievement of the more able pupils, more rigorous targets need to be set for pupils at the end of Year 2. In the junior school the pupils are assessed after each unit of work. However, the results of these tests are not being used by all teachers to plan for the different abilities of their pupils. Resources for science are very good and used well by the teachers. The exciting wildlife area and pond are being further developed by the staff and parents

and they provide a stimulating teaching aid for science. Information technology is increasingly being used to support the teaching in science.

ART AND DESIGN

91. Only two lessons of art were observed during the inspection period, one in each school. Other evidence was gained from looking at displays and photographic evidence, talking to the pupils and the teachers and looking at the teachers' planning. At the end of the infant school standards are well above average and the pupils make good progress. At the end of the junior school standards are, overall, above average, with some examples of outstanding pattern work. The quality of the pupils' work in the infant school is similar to that at the last inspection. There was insufficient evidence of 3D work or illustrative work presented or displayed for a similar judgement to be made about the work in the junior school.
92. Throughout the schools the pupils have opportunities to work with a wide variety of media including charcoal, pencil, wax, pastel and oil crayons, paint, inks and dyes. Art is a vehicle for the whole curriculum and its inclusion in areas such as English, mathematics, science, religious education, information technology and history enhance learning. Because their work is purposeful and interesting, the pupils enjoy art and during the inspection period many volunteered information and comments about wall displays and their personal contributions to them. Work to develop art techniques is well planned and, by following the scheme of work, the teachers have ensured that techniques are correctly and progressively taught year on year. This was particularly well exemplified in the development of the understanding of pattern.
93. In the infant school the pupils have studied the work of Paul Klee and Mondrian and have cut and stuck line montages in their styles. Others have used ICT to make line patterns and infill with colour. Some have looked at how Andy Goldsworthy has used natural objects for patterning and have then created their own works, which have been recorded on digital camera. They have experimented carefully with pencil to make different line designs to decorate monsters. Bright, colourful patterned dragons, adorned with a variety of shiny and sparkling textures remind them of the Chinese New Year. Carefully cut shapes within shapes consolidate the properties of squares, circles, oblongs and triangles.
94. Early in the junior school the work on pattern is developed by looking at pattern in the school environment. Some of the pupils have researched patterns in their homes and they have noted the value of patterning on socks, lamps, materials and crockery. In school they have made detailed sketches of patterns outside. These have been developed into simple motifs and prints and then sketch and print have been carefully displayed together. Others have looked at the work of William Morris, replicating motifs from his work in simple and then repetitive form. Towards the end of the key stage, pupils have revisited the work of Cézanne and have then looked at everyday items from unusual angles drawing them in his abstract style. At the end of the key stage, the pupils have used viewfinders to look at the patterning in leaves and other objects and then reproduced sections carefully with good detail, in varied media. Their work is unusual and of high quality. Because of their experiences through the school, pupils show a clear understanding of the intricacies of nature and how it has influenced artists in patterning and design.
95. In the infant school the teachers introduce colour well. At the time of the inspection the department had many very effective displays consolidating learning on cold and hot colours and their uses. Foil and sparkle is used liberally for extra effect. The pupils are encouraged to study colour in the background to their pictures and good quality materials are put at their disposal. Some of the children remember techniques of artists, for example Monet's 'Poppy Field' and copy his style to illustrate cherry trees. In collages of Noah's Ark, paper cutting and careful layout depicts heavily fringed lions and brightly feathered birds. The whole of the infant department is a wonderland of colour with work depicting numerous, effective cross curricula activities to consolidate learning.

96. In the junior school, although colour is examined well through pattern work, there are limited examples of the use of a wide enough use of media to develop understanding of composition and technique in pictorial work. However, in this key stage, the pupils assess their own work well. In the lesson observed a good plenary session enabled them to voice opinions and ideas and to clearly identify what problems they had encountered and what they might do to improve their work.
97. The quality of teaching seen in the infant school was very good and in the junior school it was good and this is indicative of the standards across the schools. The pupils are encouraged to observe closely and record what they see. The tasks are appropriate and the instructions are clear. The pupils are given positive support and are encouraged to appraise their work. The teachers recognise the great value art has in the curriculum and the possibilities and strategies it offers to enrich the pupils' learning in other subjects.
98. The co-ordinators have a good overview of the subject and ensure that good quality materials are available. Opportunities are provided for the pupils to visit galleries and museums to further their knowledge. The co-ordinators keep a portfolio of work that enables them to monitor standards across the schools.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. Only two lessons were observed during the inspection. However, from the scrutiny of the pupils' past and present work and the discussions with the staff and pupils, it is possible to judge that standards in both schools are in line with those expected. This was not the case in the last inspection when standards were judged to be well above national expectations. All of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve satisfactory standards. The opportunities to design and assemble products are strengths of the subject. There are, however, weaknesses in the provision for making mechanisms that can be controlled in different ways and in food technology work in the junior school.
100. By the end of the infant school the pupils have the ability to use simple tools to cut and shape materials such as paper, card and re-cycled materials. They use textiles to make leaves and have opportunities to join different materials together. The Year 1 pupils make simple musical instruments out of a variety of materials. The Year 2 pupils make puppets; they draw designs and select materials from buttons, wool, wood and beads. The younger pupils gain knowledge and skills in cooking when they make apple crumble and muffins. In the junior school, the Year 4 pupils produce good designs for purses and other money containers. They use the computer very well to illustrate these designs. The Year 6 pupils investigate the design of slippers and create their own ideas for the most comfortable, safe and attractive style. Some of the older pupils have opportunities for making wheeled toys using cams, but across the school there is little evidence of work involving moving mechanisms. Rose bud clay flowers are produced by Year 6, but there is little evidence of work in clay and similar media in other year groups.
101. The quality of the teaching is good overall. The teachers work effectively with the pupils as a class and as individuals. In a good Year 2 lesson the pupils were encouraged to think and talk thoughtfully about their Little Red Riding Hood puppet designs. They had opportunities to list their assembly of materials and evaluate their work. In a good Year 4 lesson the teacher asked probing questions to establish the most suitable ideas for designing purses. There are occasions when more could be expected from the most able pupils to enable them to achieve higher standards.
102. There is a subject policy and scheme of work that gives good guidance to teachers. Resources are very good and the curriculum offers opportunity for pupils to work with a suitable range of materials. Information and communication technology is used well to support the curriculum in Year 4.

However, its use across the whole school is limited. The co-ordinators work hard to develop the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

103. By the age of 11, the pupils attain levels in this subject that are much higher than those expected in most schools. Most of the pupils achieve well because the teaching ensures that they gain a good knowledge of people, places and environments whilst learning how and where to find information. The high standards attained are similar to the findings of the previous inspection.
104. When studying the immediate locality of the school, the pupils successfully describe the position of landmarks in appropriate geographical terms. They read and draw simple maps and plans of the area. By the age of seven, they understand how to compare and contrast their own locality with places further away. For example, they are able to find cities familiar to them on a map of Great Britain. Throughout the infant school the pupils show an ability to translate their thoughts into recorded work by designing simple routes to show how to get from home to the school playground. This is developed in Year 2 as the pupils draw and use symbols and a computer program to identify Red Riding Hood's route from home to Grandma's house. They use a computerised remote controlled vehicle to design routes and plot directions. Whilst finding out where a letter goes, discussion about the location of different countries leads to research into different climatic conditions and the effect on people and animals. When learning about the travels of RAB Bear, the pupils learn about changes that take place in hot and cold countries and how a different climate affects people's choice of clothes and an animal's skin.
105. The younger pupils in the junior school compile fact files in order to compare living and working conditions in St. Lucia and Chembakolli in India with the lifestyle they are familiar with at home. In doing so, they become familiar with atlases and the range of information provided by them on climate, population, agriculture and industry. The pupils use detailed maps and plans with a high level of accuracy when they study facts and features of different locations in order to identify the effects of water on the landscape. They know what causes a river to flood and the devastating effects of drought. Their study of the many uses of water enables them to analyse the causes and effects of pollution and how disease can be carried.
106. The pupils develop a good awareness of the importance of caring for the environment as they progress through school. They take a particular pride in their playground. They know how to look after their school grounds and suggest ways to keep the school and playground tidy. Older pupils in the junior school explain how the environment can be damaged and how and why litter causes pollution. When considering features of their immediate locality and where they live, they compare their lifestyle with living conditions in the Greece, Egypt and India. The pupils successfully use precise geographical vocabulary when communicating their ideas clearly and enthusiastically. In both schools, the good quality well-chosen photographs and resources aid research in this subject.
107. Only a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection because of the present topic cycle, however discussion with pupils and scrutiny of their previous topic work indicates that the quality of the teaching is often good and that the pupils make good progress. The teachers manage discussions well and offer good opportunities for individual and group research. The pupils are introduced systematically to use information technology both to record and present their work as well as a research tool. They are beginning to use the Internet extremely effectively and confidently.
108. One of the major strengths of the teaching is the effective use of fieldwork and the value placed on first-hand experience. This offers the pupils very good opportunities to draw on observations and experiences. As a result, they make very good links between different aspects of the topics they study. The pupils develop their skills by interpreting evidence from pictures and maps. Both

residential trips and educational visits are used effectively to develop and extend the pupils' knowledge and skills to the full.

HISTORY

109. By the age of 11, the pupils attain standards that are much higher than expected in most schools. The pupils achieve well because they are given many opportunities to gain a good knowledge of people, places and environments in the past, and a chance to compare what they have found out with what they know about the present day. The pupils' research skills are developed systematically as they learn how and where to find information. The standards attained are the same as at the time of the last inspection.
110. In the infant school the pupils show a good understanding of the past when they describe change in their lives and compare it with how people lived long ago. They guess the function of Victorian household items and toys, comparing them with toys and implements that they have at home. They successfully explain differences between being cared for as a baby and gradually looking after themselves as they get older. They compare the size of clothes that fitted them when newly born with their school clothes now. Their awareness of the right clothes for different situations and climates is heightened when they discuss how fashions have changed since their parents and grandparents were small. They focus on similarities and differences in the home, using old furniture as clues to decide which room it belongs to. When discussing the Great Fire of London, Year 2 pupils are clear about how it started and spread and suggest logical reasons why it was more likely to happen in Victorian times than today.
111. The teachers in the junior school build on this very good work. As a result, the pupils show increasing awareness of the difference between the past and present when they study Invaders and Settlers. They understand the difficulties of living in Roman times and appreciate both the protection but also the weight of armour in battle times. They explain how lifestyles and living conditions have improved over time. They are helped to bring the past to life as they research the Tudors and investigate the social and political conflicts during the life of King Henry VIII. They research the Victorian era, the causes of World War 2 and brainstorm the events of the last fifty years. Their knowledge increases significantly because of the number of fact-finding tasks and in-depth discussions offered to them. The pupils' study is enriched by their participation in a wide range of trips and visits as well as by the many visitors to school. Those with special educational needs are well supported in their learning.
112. The teaching is consistently good and often it is very good. The teachers make very good use of educational visits to help the pupils develop the skills they need. The pupils in both schools make good progress and achieve well because they are given many opportunities to research, collate information and discuss their findings. Their homework project about 'Ever changing Saffron Walden' enabled them to trace the original use of present day buildings. They investigated when their houses were built and traced the history of some of their homes. This work formed an impressive display of high quality extended research. In both schools the teaching makes good use of well-chosen resources, photographs and artefacts to deepen the pupils' knowledge and strengthen and extend their research skills. As a result, the pupils have extremely positive attitudes. They are developing a strong awareness of the importance of history in their environment as they progress through school. The good choice and use of reference materials to aid investigations means the pupils easily identify the most significant changes in lifestyles over time. Information Technology is used well to research topics in the upper junior school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. By the ages of seven and eleven the standards of attainment in information and communication technology (ICT) are above average when compared with national expectations. At the time of the last inspection standards were judged to be well above average by the age of seven and above average by the age of 11. The schools have worked hard to maintain standards and all of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are making good progress as they move through the schools.
114. By the end of the infant school most of the pupils have good mouse and keyboard skills. They know basic word processing functions and are able to print out and save their work. The pupils learn to change the font and size of the text and many can rearrange the text when re-drafting their writing. Many of the Year 1 pupils can use a paint program on a computer to draw simple patterns and pictures representing their literacy work on 'Billy Goats Gruff'. The older pupils in Year 2 can find information from CD ROMS. They can use the Internet to send and receive Christmas messages. Many of the Year 2 pupils can program a moving robot and record their data in chart form. Computer programs are used well to support work in literacy and in mathematics to consolidate work on number. The Year 2 pupils use the computer to research the life of Grace Darling.
115. The younger pupils in the junior school use an art program effectively to make book labels. They can change style, font and colour to produce different typefaces. The Year 4 pupils can use drop down menus to use a graphics program. They can save and retrieve pictures of Queen Victoria and produce Roman mosaics to support their history work. The pupils in Years 4 and 5 can create a database spreadsheet and produce graphs to record their information. Some of the Year 5 pupils use an excel spreadsheet to total amounts of money in their mathematics work. By the time they leave the school most of the pupils can use powerpoint to create multimedia presentations that include graphics, art, sound and movement. They can retrieve text and pictures from the Internet and other software and integrate it into their own work. Overall, the pupil's progress in the use of ICT to research and communicate information and to support their work in other subjects is well developed by the time they leave the school. Some of the pupils can successfully use a computer to set up control experiments but this is an area for further development in the junior school.
116. The quality of teaching in both schools is good. It is most effective when the teachers make good use of demonstration so that all of the pupils know what to do. In a Year 1 lesson the teacher skilfully and clearly explained the functions of the Colour Magic program which enabled the pupils to use the tools to good effect. The teachers invariably make good use of the projector to display on a white board the image of the program being used. This helped the pupils to quickly acquire the skills they needed to use the program successfully. For example in a Year 3/4 lesson most of the pupils made good progress in understanding work on branching databases; in a Year 6 class the pupils gained skills to help them in their powerpoint presentations. Occasionally, the pupils' progress is affected by the teaching being over-directed and a reluctance on the part of some teaching and non-teaching staff to allow the pupils to work independently.
117. The two co-ordinators have good subject expertise. The scheme of work ensures that the teachers plan for progress and continuity and are able to make the best use of the good quality resources that are available to them. The co-ordinators are well supported in both key stages by good quality technical assistants who provide expertise in developing both staff and pupil expertise. Staff training is intensive and, by December 2002, it is anticipated that all of the teaching staff will have completed the basic ICT training. The schools recognise the need for the future monitoring of teaching and learning throughout the schools to raise standards even further.

MUSIC

118. Six lessons of music were observed during the inspection period, two in the infant school and four in the junior school. Other evidence was gained from listening to singing in assemblies, scrutinising

displays, talking to pupils and teachers and looking at teachers' planning. Although there was limited evidence of some components, overall standards are above the expected levels by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.

119. In both schools the pupils enjoy singing and do so with obvious pleasure. Their singing in assemblies is happy, with good attention to musical elements. The young pupils learn new tunes quickly. They sing in unison following the teacher's directions and join in choruses with gusto. They are able to add appropriate hand movements and clap out correct rhythms. Diction is clear and they read from a guide sheet with appropriate expression. The older pupils master difficult rhythms well. They add texture by observing quieter or more buoyant moods and when asked to include gestures do so in a disciplined way.
120. During the inspection the pupils in the infant school were learning about pitch. They quickly identified high and low notes and those in-between and were able to indicate by hand movements the one that they hear. They enjoy musical games and identify the donkey music in the Saint Saëns' 'The Carnival of the Animals' because of its high/low bray. They follow a simple diagrammatic 'score' rising and falling, for example 'blast off and count down', 'hump bridge' and 'switch back'. At the end of the infant school they are beginning to master musically, climbing and descending stairs. Although there was only a brief instance of pupils using percussion during the inspection, the displays of their work indicate that they know of and use the instruments. They are able to identify instruments with a high or low tone and are preparing an adaptation of the musical adaptation of 'The Three Bears'. In class work the pupils in Year 3 are enjoying a cross-curricular activity rehearsing a musical performance of Roman Britain. They have learned the tunes well and enjoy their work tremendously, but the teaching had little attempt to improve the quality of their singing by paying closer attention to diction or dynamics.
121. Early in the junior school the pupils are introduced to composition. They use 'Music Explorer' to create their own tunes. They select the length of notes, the speed, and how high or low they will be. They then use the 'copy' button to repeat their tune. Once they are satisfied they play the tune and add percussion for a full 'orchestra'. So that they are aware of the full range of instruments available, they use 'Encarta 97' to find musical instruments and play their sound. In Year 4 the pupils begin to write their own graphic scores using lines and symbols to depict a firework display. By the end of the junior school many of the pupils benefit from peripatetic tuition in violin, flute, clarinet, saxophone and trumpet. Whenever possible these instrumentalists are integrated into lessons. Across the year pupils are introduced to a wide variety of music. One class, with a predominance of instrumentalists was learning about musical loops and realised how this music was repetitive. It was effectively portrayed as the teacher added each musical section to give a full orchestral feel. Those who did not play a tuned instrument added percussion and voice. There was much fun in this lesson as the pupils learned to play together to give a whole-class performance. They were able to vary the tempo timbre and texture. In a following exercise they were able to recognise a major/minor chord by the sound. For example, they learned that a major key has a happy sound, whilst a minor is more sombre and mournful. They were given further challenge by being set the task of fitting words to the rhythm they had created.
122. Another class in this year group had created graphic scores and the pupils were practising 'playing' these with body sounds and then noises. All of the pupils understood the necessity to keep a regular beat to make their music 'gel'. At the request of the class teacher, one group deviated from their normal routine to experience Tudor music. The teacher improvised well to set the scene for a court banquet introducing the kind of sounds and rhythms that would have been prevalent at that time. However, the pupils found it difficult to move to these rhythms and, even after initial jollifications, did not settle in a disciplined enough way to take full advantage of the experience offered to them.
123. The teachers provide opportunities to listen to a wide variety of music. The young pupils have learned about Strauss and Beethoven and in religious education enjoy music from 'Joseph and his

Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat'. Throughout the school, in assemblies, the pupils listen to music from all over the world. During the inspection period they were listening to a Chinese orchestra playing erhu music composed by Chen Dacan. They learn that the erhu is the oldest instrument known. Music is an integral part of the curriculum and enhances many areas of learning.

124. The quality of the teaching seen was good. The lessons were well prepared to give maximum knowledge, understanding and enjoyment and only excited tiredness at the end of the day hindered learning. In the junior school the quality of the teaching was good with one lesson being very good. However, teaching strategies vary from year to year. Currently there is one specialist teacher for the upper age group bringing in a wealth of expertise and ideas. The younger pupils are taught by their class teacher. There is a co-ordinator for each school. In the infant school the routines are well established. Planning is monitored to ensure progression and continuity. A new scheme of work is in place. The pupils are given rich musical experiences, for example, Year 1 have recently heard the London Symphony Orchestra give a performance of 'The Pied Piper'. There is detailed assessment at the end of each unit when the pupils' thoughts and responses are recorded together with the pupils' knowledge and ability.
125. In each school, assembly music is planned to cover different genres. One term is classical, one has world music and one music from the shows. Interactive wall displays engender thought and learning and inform both pupils and adults. Resources are of good quality and contain a variety of instruments from other lands.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

126. Standards in physical education are above average throughout the school. This is a similar judgement to that made at the time of the last inspection. All of the pupils are provided with a broad and balanced physical education curriculum that includes dance, gymnastics, games and swimming. Most of the pupils make good progress, including those with special educational needs, and all are given equal opportunity to take part in all aspects of the curriculum.
127. The pupils in the infant school work enthusiastically in gymnastics. They find different ways of moving around the hall and use the space well. They show increasing control when balancing and holding their position and create good sequences of movements. They thoroughly enjoy all their work and co-operate with each other very well. In the junior school the younger pupils use apparatus confidently. They learn to transfer their weight through different body parts and show increasing confidence in performing different types of rolls. The Year 4 pupils gain good skills of how to control a hockey stick when dribbling and tackling. They evaluate their performance and suggest ways to improve it. The older pupils have opportunities to express themselves through dance and movement.
128. The quality of teaching is generally good and never less than satisfactory. In the most successful lessons teachers have high expectations of the pupils. For example, in a Year 4 lesson the clear instructions and crisp pace set by the teacher enabled the pupils to learn new hockey team game skills effectively and quickly. In a Year 2 lesson the teaching was also good and the warm up exercises were used effectively, along with good demonstration and praise, to encourage the pupils. Groups of pupils with special educational needs are effectively taught motor co-ordination skills by the special educational needs teacher at the beginning of the school day. Where the teaching is less successful, the pupils sometimes run out of ideas and are unsure what they should do to get better. Occasionally some of the teachers lack subject knowledge to move the pupils forward and, as a result, the more able pupils do not reach their full potential.
129. In the infant school the pupils learn to swim in the school's pool and in the junior school a rolling programme gives the pupils opportunities to further develop their confidence at a nearby Leisure Centre. They respond well to specialised teaching and instruction that enables them to be confident and safe in the water. By the time they leave the school all of the pupils can swim a minimum of 25

metres and many do much more, gaining distance and personal survival certificates. Standards in swimming are well above average.

130. The school has excellent resources for physical education activities. The large playgrounds and field provide good opportunities for the development of games and athletics. Resources for gymnastics within the school are used well by the teachers. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities such as football, cricket, netball, athletics and swimming. The two co-ordinators are both new to the post. They ensure that the scheme of work is effectively delivered to all year groups.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

131. Four lessons of religious education were observed during the inspection period, two in each key stage. A limited amount of the pupils' work was presented for scrutiny. Other evidence was gained from looking at wall displays, talking to the teachers and pupils and looking at the teachers' planning. The standard of work in both schools was above expectation.
132. The pupils in the infant school enjoy their religious education lessons and consolidate their knowledge through music, art and literature. They enjoy listening to stories told by the teacher and ask pertinent questions about why people acted as they did. The pupils in Year 1 listened to the tale 'The boy who cried wolf' and quickly understood that people who tell lies are eventually not believed. They began to appreciate that we must be responsible for our own actions. Moving on to discuss telling the truth, they were able to distinguish between kind and unkind thoughts. In Year 2 the pupils listened to the story of Joseph and his brothers and were able to explain the meaning of jealousy. They discussed the story sensibly with the teacher often pre-empting the sequence of events. Thinking about the story, they began to realise that it is sometimes very difficult to forgive people who act unkindly. They were able to relate this to their own lives and to tell of instances where they had had to forgive someone. Religious education and PSHE are closely linked in the infant school and the pupils have thought about their own identities, what makes them proud and their wishes and aspirations. They can describe the special people in their lives and have given reasons for their choices. For example, "Granny, because she is ill", "Granddad, because he made me a dolls' house" and "Bookie, my dog, because he loves me."
133. The pupils in the junior school study other religions. In the lessons observed in Year 4, the pupils were discussing Hinduism. They remembered the Gods that Hindus worship and the symbolism attached to each, for example three faces to look to the past, present and future and four arms to reach in all directions. They were learning about Ganesha, the Elephant God. Because of the splendid photographs that the teacher provided, the pupils were quickly able to discern facts and qualities about elephants and relate these to Ganesha. They knew that his large ears could hear all and listen well and that his eyes were soft and gentle, that he was wise and loved and cared for the young protecting them from harm. Earlier in the year they studied Judaism. Following a visit from a Jew they recorded in pictorial form everything they could remember that he told them about the Shabbat meal and the rules and regulations by which Jews abide. At the end of the key stage the pupils were able to discuss both Christianity and Judaism in some detail. They knew that Jesus was the key figure in Christianity. They discussed his life and were aware of key events, for example his baptism by John and his betrayal by Judas. They knew several stories that he told and related well-known miracles that he performed. They were aware of the importance of the local church and its role in the community. They were aware that Moses was the key figure for Jews. They gave a clear account of his birth and discovery in the rushes. With relish they told about the plagues, and remembered some of the events of the journey to the Promised Land.

134. The quality of all the teaching seen was good. The teachers were well informed and made every effort to make the lessons interesting for the pupils. Questions probed for predictions and explanations and the pupils were encouraged to share their thoughts and feelings.
135. The co-ordinators for both the infant and junior schools are new to the post. Neither has yet been afforded the opportunity for any in-service training to guide them in their new roles. Planning is monitored but there is limited opportunity for them to monitor teaching and learning. They have made every effort to further their own understanding but, as yet, have limited criteria by which they can judge the standards of work within the schools. Both invite visitors into school to talk about various religious aspects. The pupils visit local churches and school assemblies celebrate religious festivals such as Divali.