

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **SAXMUNDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Saxmundham

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124605

Headteacher: Mrs E Hawes

Reporting inspector: Mr P B McAlpine  
21552

Dates of inspection: 20-23 May 2002

Inspection number: 243451

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Brook Farm Road Saxmundham Suffolk
Postcode:	IP17 1XQ
Telephone number:	01728 602205
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Potter
Date of previous inspection:	12 January 1998

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21552	P B McAlpine	Registered inspector	Mathematics Science Information and communication technology Art and design Foundation Stage Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? What should the school do to improve? The school's results and pupils' standards? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19320	B Attaway	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19774	M Docherty	Team inspector	English Geography History Music Religious education English as an additional language	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
30506	R Bowers	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education Equal opportunities	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? Finance, staffing and accommodation

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## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>10</b>
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>25</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Since the previous inspection, the school has moved to new, purpose built accommodation on a large housing development. The school is only two-thirds full and is expected to increase in size as more houses are built and families move into the area. The 135 full-time pupils are organised into six classes, three of which have pupils from two year-groups. A further 22 part-time pupils attend a nursery class, either morning or afternoon sessions. The nursery class is an addition since the previous inspection. Three pupils are from minority ethnic groups, which is broadly average, their families being Pakistani, Bangladeshi, and Chinese. All three speak English as an additional language, with their first languages being Urdu, Bengali, and Cantonese respectively. Currently, 19 per cent of the pupils are eligible for a free school meal; this is broadly average and half the proportion at the time of the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, 22 per cent, is about average. They mainly have difficulties with literacy; one has a statement of special educational needs. The proportion of pupils moving into and leaving the school at other than the usual time of admission or transfer, 31 per cent, is very high and this led to an extra class having to be formed in April 2002. The proportion of four-year-olds entering the school with typical or high attainment is about average. Staff turnover has been very high and continues to affect the school. The headteacher took up her appointment at the start of the present school year. A new deputy headteacher was appointed to start in January 2002 but has not been able to start work because of illness. The headteacher currently teaches three days each week. Almost half the teachers have been at the school less than a year and a third are on temporary contracts.

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

This is a satisfactory school, with several good features and a few aspects in need of improvement. Children are settled and their pastoral needs well cared for. Standards are variable but mostly in line with national averages. The achievement of the vast majority of pupils, compared to their attainment on entry, is consistent with expectations in writing, mathematics, and science and in these subjects the school is doing as well as others with pupils from similar backgrounds. Achievement in reading, however, is not as high as it should be, particularly for the more able pupils, nor are the more able pupils doing as well as they could in science, and standards are below average in information and communication technology. The teaching is satisfactory overall. The new headteacher has made a good start in circumstances that are challenging, has established an orderly community, and is leading very effectively by example. Considering these factors, together with the cost of educating each pupil, the school provides satisfactory value for money.

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

- Good support is provided for pupils with special educational needs.
- The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- The procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare are good.

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

- Standards in reading, particularly for pupils who are more able.
- Standards in information and communication technology.
- In the nursery and reception classes, the provision for pupils to learn through physical activity outdoors.
- In the teaching, the provision of work for pupils with different levels of attainment and the strategies for sustaining pupils' attention and interest throughout lessons.
- In management, the frequency and the rigour of systems for monitoring, evaluating, and supporting the development of the teaching, and the effectiveness of subject leadership.

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

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

The school was previously inspected in January 1998. Improvement since then has been mixed, with not enough improvement until recently in the important aspects of teaching reading, monitoring, and subject leadership. The pace of development during the current school year is rapid. The characteristics of the school have changed significantly since 1998. The school has moved to a new site. A nursery class has been added. A large housing development is bringing more pupils and leading to changes in the social and economic backgrounds of pupils. The entire senior management and most of the governing body has changed. Staff turnover has been high. During this period, a revised National Curriculum was introduced; the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies implemented; and a new Foundation Stage curriculum for nursery and reception pupils agreed nationally. The move to the new site was successfully accomplished and the school is settled and orderly. Improvements to the curriculum and to teaching strategies, however, have been too slow with most of the policies, schemes and planning systems for the revised curriculum only being put in place during the present school year. Not all aspects of these recent developments are

fully embedded but they show considerable promise.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
reading	E	E	C	B
writing	E	C	A	A
mathematics	E	E	B	A

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

The 2001 results are the most recent that are published. The test results shown in the table apply to seven-year-olds. There are no compulsory national tests for nine-year-olds. The school uses optional tests for that age group instead. In 2001, about 90 per cent of the seven-year-olds attained or exceeded the expected national level in reading, writing, and mathematics and this was in line with the majority of schools. In mathematics, more than a quarter of the pupils exceeded national expectations; this is why the average number of points scored by pupils is above that found typically in other schools. In writing, about one pupil in every eight exceeded expectations and although not as many as in mathematics, it was much better than the average nationally. In reading, however, the proportion exceeding expectations was very small compared to other schools and, given their success in mathematics, showed considerable underachievement among the pupils who were more able. The school is not required to set targets for seven-year-olds but has done so since 1997. The targets for 2001 were met.

Test results have varied annually but not by more than is typical in small schools. The overall trend in test results since 1997, once the variations are smoothed out, has been one of steady improvement at the age of seven, with results in mathematics generally being better than in reading. The current standard of work among seven-year-olds in mathematics and writing is comparable to the 2001 results. In mathematics, about one in four of the pupils are exceeding national expectations. In reading, however, current standards have fallen to below average, with the early indications of the 2002 test results being that no seven-year-old has exceeded the expected national level in this subject. Comprehension skills in reading at the age of seven are lower than they should be and the more able pupils are underachieving. Standards in science are broadly average at the age of seven but very few pupils exceed the expected national level. At the age of nine, only about a third of the pupils are attaining the expected national level for their age in reading, writing, mathematics and science, with a further third not far behind. Such proportions are very low when compared to the average nationally. A large proportion of the nine-year-olds have significant special educational needs and this, together with the generally good standards among those following on in the eight-year-old age group, is why these particular low standards have not been specified as a weakness for improvement. Nearly all of the nine-year-olds, including those with low attainment, have been learning at a satisfactory pace during the current school year and achievement for this age group is broadly consistent with national expectations. In other subjects, standards throughout the school are good in art and design, satisfactory in design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education and religious education. Standards in information and communication technology, however, are low, reflecting underdevelopment in this subject. Most of the pupils with special educational needs are making satisfactory progress in relation to their difficulties. Pupils make satisfactory progress with English as an additional language. The progress of gifted and talented pupils is not as good as it could be.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Typical of the majority of schools. Most of the pupils are interested in lessons and try hard. A few pupils lose attention quickly and sometimes distract others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Nearly all pupils behave well. There is almost no oppressive behaviour and very little bullying but there are instances of minor misbehaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Average. Most pupils show courtesy and respect for others and are willing to take the initiative when helping others. Relationships are typical of most schools.

Attendance	Below average. Nearly all of the pupils attend regularly and arrive at school on time but a small number have poor attendance and are frequently late.
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Behaviour in lessons and when moving around the buildings is often good and most pupils are self-disciplined and considerate of others. Inattentive behaviour and calling out are a problem in a few lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 and 2	Years 3 and 4
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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 teaching varies in quality but is satisfactory in the main. A few lessons, about the same number as in a typical school, are of high quality. They are inspirational in character, provide challenging work for all pupils and lead to rapid learning. Nearly all of the remaining lessons meet the needs of the majority of pupils in a class. About two-fifths of lessons are of good quality, being well organised and managed, enabling almost all pupils to keep up with the work and complete tasks on time; there are not as many of this quality as in the typical school. Most lessons are of satisfactory quality, where learning is successful for a majority of pupils but for a minority, the work is not always well matched to their needs and a few of them find the work either too hard or too easy. A small amount of the teaching is unsatisfactory; here, the attention of too many pupils is allowed to wander and not enough learning occurs in the time available. No teaching is poor or very poor.

The teaching is satisfactory in English and good in mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory in all of the other subjects except information and communication technology, design and technology, and in geography. The evidence in the last two subjects is limited. The teachers do not regularly or consistently provide class lessons in information and communication technology and so only small groups and individuals were seen using computers. In the Foundation Stage, the teaching in personal, social and emotional development and in mathematics is good; teaching is satisfactory in all the other nationally agreed areas of learning. Throughout the school, there is satisfactory teaching of phonics and other basic skills. The pace of learning for the substantial majority of pupils is consistent with national expectations. Pupils with low attainment on entry, and those with special educational needs, are well supported and often catch up. Pupils with high attainment are challenged effectively in mathematics and generally make the progress they should. This is not always the case in English or science, where the more able pupils are underachieving.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum plus religious education are taught. Statutory requirements are met. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are being implemented satisfactorily.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Satisfactory overall, with the contribution made by learning support staff being very good. Relevant statutory requirements are met.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Satisfactory. Assessments show that support from the specialist local service is not necessary at present and the pupils concerned are making steady progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good overall. The pupils are taught effectively about Christianity and other major world religions. Right from wrong, consequences of misbehaviour, reasons for rules and social skills are well promoted through the ethos of the school.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Pupils work in a caring environment. Staff are knowledgeable and caring of pupils' pastoral needs.

The effectiveness with which the National Curriculum is implemented varies between subjects. It is least effective in information and communication technology. In the Foundation Stage, provision for pupils to learn through physical activity outdoors is poor. The nursery pupils have daily access to a secure area but not enough resources are available for this area to be used to the full. In the Reception Year, there is no provision for pupils to learn through physical activity outdoors and this is a significant weakness.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The leadership of the headteacher is good. She is leading strongly by example and has set a clear educational direction to the development of the school. The acting deputy is supporting her well. Management is satisfactory. Subject leadership and other delegated roles are not fully or consistently developed though improvements are being made.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors are involved appropriately in the school, are strongly committed, and have a clear understanding of its strengths and development needs. All relevant statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Underdeveloped. The necessary systems are envisaged and being put in place but full implementation has not yet been achieved.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school lives within its means. Expenditure is appropriately directed towards school improvement. Governors are thinking ahead adequately, planning to meet changing circumstances and to bring about improvement.

The headteacher has made a good start and leads well by example. She has been decisive and acted quickly to bring about improvements. The acting deputy also leads well by example. Subject leadership is mixed and not consistently promoting good and very good practice in teaching. Financial management is satisfactory. Governors have recently reviewed several existing practices to check that these continue to provide value for money; this proper application of best value principles should become more comprehensive. Staffing is satisfactory. The accommodation is satisfactory in the main. The Reception Year pupils, however, are housed in teaching space originally designed for older pupils and do not have daily access to a properly resourced area outdoors. Consequently, a significant part of the nationally agreed Foundation Stage curriculum cannot be taught and this is a serious shortcoming. The teaching space intended for the Reception Year is occupied by a privately run playgroup. The headteacher, rightly, is negotiating to have the playgroup moved. All those with governance of the school should expedite this move as quickly as possible.

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

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The children like school.</li> <li>The overall standard of work at the school.</li> <li>Being able to approach the headteacher and her staff with problems and concerns.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A few parents are concerned about standards in reading.</li> <li>Provision for information and communication technology.</li> <li>The inconsistent provision of homework.</li> <li>The limited range of extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree that most children like school. They agree that the school provides a satisfactory overall standard of education but also agree with the few parents who had reservations about reading and about information and communication technology, where standards need to rise. Inspectors agree with parents that the school is approachable. They do not agree with parents about homework, the arrangements are typical of the majority of schools, nor about extra-curricular activities, where again the provision is similar to the majority of schools.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

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

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

1. In the core subjects, the proportion of pupils currently attaining or exceeding the expected national level for their age in Year 4, the oldest age group at the school, is below average in English and science and well below average in mathematics. About half of the pupils in Year 4 are on the register of special educational needs, many with significant difficulties. The below average proportions of pupils at expected or higher levels in Year 4 are not typical of the other year groups, showing that standards in Year 4 are an exception rather than a rule. Current standards in Year 2, the oldest in the infant age group, are average in writing, mathematics and science but below average in reading. In the non-core subjects, current standards throughout the school are good in art and design; average in design and technology, geography, history, music, physical education, and religious education; and below average in information and communication technology. In all of the year groups, the substantial majority of the pupils in nearly all subjects are making the progress that they should in lessons and over time. The exceptions are reading and science, where the more able pupils are underachieving, and information and communication technology, where all pupils are making slower progress than expected. The underachievement in reading, science, and in information and communication technology, reflects a lack of challenge in the teaching and shortages in resources.
2. Improvement since the previous inspection has been mixed. Standards in the Foundation Stage have improved significantly, reflecting the impact of the new nursery, and this impact is beginning to filter through to other year groups in the school. There has been a good improvement in skills of speaking and listening, adequate maintenance of standards in writing, but not enough improvement in reading. Standards in mathematics have improved satisfactorily. In science, standards are broadly the same as the previous inspection but the lack of high attainment means that there has not been enough improvement overall. Improvement in art and design has been good. In all the other subjects, improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory except in information and communication technology, where standards were average and are now below average, and in religious education, where standards were good at the previous inspection and are now satisfactory.
3. In the Foundation Stage, the standard of attainment is good in personal, social and emotional development, and satisfactory in communication, language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development, and creative development. Children make quick progress in personal, social and emotional development in both the nursery and the Reception Year. Progress in communication, language and literacy, is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the Reception Year. Progress in the other nationally agreed areas of learning is broadly satisfactory throughout the Foundation Stage, though knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development, and physical development are slowed somewhat by that restricted provision for learning through physical activity outdoors.
4. The majority of pupils with special educational needs have difficulties with literacy, a few with numeracy. Many have difficulties that can be remedied with extra support given time. They are adequately supported in lessons and well supported when withdrawn from lessons for extra work, especially the early literacy support and the additional literacy support that is provided. Nearly all of these pupils are making satisfactory progress in relation to their difficulties and most are on course to catch up with national expectations by Year 6. Those with English as an additional language make satisfactory progress and are on course to establish good fluency and proficiency with English before they transfer to the middle school. A few pupils with special educational needs have behavioural difficulties; these pupils, too, show signs of improvement. Gifted and talented pupils are not clearly identified nor are they well supported and they underachieve.
5. The results of the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds, the most recent that are published, showed that the typical number of points scored by pupils at the school were average in reading, well above average in writing, and above average in mathematics. The proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected national level was similar to the majority of schools in mathematics and slightly larger in reading and writing, although the difference was not significant. More pupils exceeded expectations in writing than in most schools, which is why the overall result was well above average. The proportion exceeding expectations in mathematics was typical of most schools but the proportion doing so in reading was very low and showed underachievement among the pupils who are more able. These pupils are now in Year 3 and show signs of catching up.
6. The 2002 tests for seven-year-olds had just been completed in reading and mathematics by the time of the inspection and were nearly complete in writing. The early indications of the results for 2002 are that standards in mathematics and writing have been sustained at the age of seven, with the average number of points scored being

similar to 2001, but that the results in reading have fallen. These early indications show that the typical number of points scored is above the 2001 average in mathematics; at least average in writing with more results still to come; but well below average in reading. Caution is necessary when interpreting this early data because national comparative information for 2002 is not yet available. The results are, however, consistent with the inspection findings for this age group. In mathematics, at least a quarter of the seven-year-olds exceeded the expected level whereas no pupil has done so in reading. The inspection finds a small number of seven-year-olds with the phonic skills to read at a higher level but their reading comprehension skills are underdeveloped in comparison and that they are reading texts that lack challenge. The 2002 optional national tests for nine-year-olds show well below average point scores in reading and mathematics. The point scores for these nine-year-olds were also well below average in 2000, when they were aged seven.

7. At the age of seven, the trend in results between 1997 and 2001 was one of improvement in reading, with the typical point scores rising from well below average to average. This improvement was satisfactory overall. Results in writing rose from average to well above average, which was good improvement, although there were hiccups along the way. Results in mathematics dipped between 1997 and 1999 before rising steeply in 2000 and 2001. Overall, the improvement in mathematics was from below average to above average and was satisfactory. The early indications for 2002 are that improvement has been sustained in mathematics and writing but not in reading because of the lack of high attainment. There is not enough data from previous years to comment on trends among the nine-year-olds.
8. Compared to their baseline assessments at the age of four, the seven-year-olds tested in 2001 achieved satisfactorily in writing and mathematics and nearly all of them increased their knowledge between the ages of four and seven by the expected national amounts. This was also the case for the low and typical attaining pupils in reading but a significant number of pupils with relatively high attainment when aged four had not made the progress that they should. These more able seven-year-olds were underachieving in reading compared to their attainment on entry and to their success in mathematics. The picture among the current seven-year-old age group is similar to 2001, with nearly all pupils achieving as they should in writing and mathematics compared to their attainment when aged four and with the high attaining pupils doing well in mathematics but not in reading.
9. Comparisons with schools with pupils from similar backgrounds show that the results for seven-year-olds in 2001 were relatively good in reading and very good in writing and mathematics. This suggests that the educational value added was at least satisfactory and often good in relation to the circumstances of the majority of pupils on entry. However, demographic changes arising from the substantial building of new homes is leading to changes to the average backgrounds of the pupils and to fewer pupils being eligible for a free school meal. These demographic changes are being reflected in the attainment of the pupils on entry, with the overall standard being higher now than at the time of the previous inspection, and can be expected to lead in time to higher standards at the ages of seven and nine. The demographic changes mean that the group of similar schools with which comparisons are made has also changed to a group where expectations by the age of seven are higher. The early indications are that the seven-year-olds' results in 2002 in mathematics and writing are likely to be the same as the majority of similar schools in the new group but not as good in reading, showing satisfactory educational value added in mathematics and writing but not enough in reading.
10. The overall picture at the age of seven in the 2001 tests is of girls outperforming boys in reading, writing, and mathematics. The attainment of current pupils shows a similar picture. In 2001, the gap between the typical boy and girl at the school was almost a year in both reading and writing and this was greater than the gap found nationally. The gap in mathematics was not as significant. In 2001, girls did better than girls nationally in each core subject. Boys were better than were boys nationally in writing and mathematics but not by as much as the girls. In reading, boys in 2001 did not do as well as boys nationally. Overall, the results in 2001 indicate that boys are underachieving compared to girls, especially in reading. A similar picture emerges with the early results for 2002 and with the inspection findings. This shows that the issues in reading from the previous inspection of boys' attainment being low and of insufficient high attainment have not been remedied by as much as they should and improvement since the previous inspection in this aspect is poor.
11. At the age of nine, the 2001 optional tests for Year 4 show that progress for those who were tested at seven and stayed at the school until nine was consistent with or better than national expectations in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, achievement was good in these core subjects and most of the Year 4 pupils in 2001 were catching up with the expected national level for their age. Proportions at or exceeding the level of a typical nine-year-old, however, were well below average. The proportions at this level in 2002 are even smaller, reflecting the higher number of pupils with significant special educational needs. The achievement of nine-year-old girls in reading was much better than that of boys in 2001. In mathematics, the nine-year-old boys achieved better and some of the girls had not made the progress that they should. Standards among the current Year 3, the eight-

year-old pupils, are generally good and these pupils are on course for average or larger proportions at expected and higher levels by the time they reach the end of Year 4.

12. The very high numbers of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual time of admission and transfer is reducing the proportion of pupils at the expected or higher level for their age. Almost all of the nine-year-olds that joined the school after the age of seven did not attain the level of a typical nine-year-old in the optional national tests for that age group. About two-thirds of those who left after the age of seven had attained at least the expected level when aged seven and about one in five had exceeded national expectations in reading and writing. Systems have been put in place to assess quickly those who join later than others and to provide extra support where necessary.
13. In conjunction with the local authority, targets for expected and higher levels have been set for Years 1 to 4 in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and science and this is good practice. The targets for 2002 for Year 2, the seven-year-olds, however, are for smaller proportions at the expected or higher levels and this is inconsistent with the baseline scores for these pupils when they were younger. The targets for 2002 for Year 4 are very low but consistent with earlier attainment.

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

14. The pupils' attitudes are satisfactory and this is similar to the previous inspection. In most lessons the pupils respond with enthusiasm and try hard; for example, in a good Year 4 swimming lesson, the less confident swimmers all exerted themselves and responded well to the high expectations of the teacher, who effectively used praise to improve their self-esteem. In a few lessons, however, the pupils' concentration is reduced by slow pace to learning.
15. Behaviour is satisfactory but not as good as at the previous inspection. Staff and governors have recognised behaviour as an area for improvement. There are many instances of good behaviour, for example in the way in which pupils move around the school and enter assembly. The new playground equipment has helped improve behaviour at break times as pupils have more to keep them occupied constructively. In several lessons, however, pupils were not sufficiently motivated and the standard of behaviour was reduced; too many pupils call out or play with pencils and paper instead of concentrating on the teacher. At the end of the midday break, pupils do not always respond quickly enough and can take too long to come inside, resulting in registration and lessons sometimes beginning up to ten minutes late. There are a few instances of bullying, for example, when a child is less good at games or because they are younger, and some of sexist behaviour, as when girls are sometimes not welcome on the football pitch. Pupils and parents say that bullying is dealt with effectively by the teachers and the inspection evidence supports this. The oldest pupils, when spoken to about racism, said that all pupils should be treated equally, which is a mature view. No racist behaviour was seen. There have been no exclusions.
16. Most children are proud of their school and want to share that pride with visitors, for example the recently installed large play equipment in the playground, which they helped choose; the apparatus is popular and well cared for. Pupils are courteous and readily open doors for adults, pupils, and visitors. Relationships are satisfactory and have been strengthened between different age groups by opportunities for pupils to work together. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory and there are opportunities throughout the school for pupils to undertake responsibility. Even the simplest of tasks, such as scraping plates at lunchtimes, was undertaken with enthusiasm. All pupils in school in January contributed to the revised behaviour policy. They help to draw up class rules each year and understand how responsibilities and expectations change as they mature.
17. Attendance is below the national average and is unsatisfactory; it has an adverse impact on the attainment of some children. The present rate is below that at the previous inspection. The majority of children arrive at school on time but a significant number were seen arriving up to five minutes late, delaying registration and leading to some lessons not beginning on time. This has an adverse effect on learning for all the children. The school acknowledges that a few parents are not supportive enough. The school's present policy of allowing 24 hours to pass before following up the non-arrival of a child when no reason has been given should be reduced to no more than thirty minutes.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

18. The teaching is satisfactory overall although effectiveness varies between classes and subjects; 97 per cent is satisfactory or better, including 41 per cent that is good and a further nine per cent that is very good. One lesson was unsatisfactory. The range and quality of the teaching is similar to the previous inspection. While that was consistent with the typical school at that time, the quality of teaching nationally has improved considerably since 1998 and improvements at the school have not kept pace. This is particularly so with the amount of teaching that is good or better, which is a third less than is usually found.
19. The teaching in English, including literacy, is satisfactory. Phonic skills are mostly well taught. The introduction this school year of early literacy support has been very effective in meeting the needs of pupils who find aspects of phonics difficult. The teaching in mathematics, including numeracy, is good. Basic skills are mostly clearly taught although not enough emphasis is placed consistently on mental mathematics and on quick recall of basic number facts. Some of the class assistants are currently being trained in springboard mathematics, a nationally prepared programme that is designed to help pupils who find aspects of mathematics difficult. The teaching is good in art and design and satisfactory in science, music, physical education, religious education, and history, though insufficient focus is placed on historical enquiry. The evidence is limited in design and technology and in geography. No direct teaching was seen in information and communication technology.
20. Where teaching is very good, the questions and explanations of the teacher are highly motivating and all pupils gain something worthwhile from the lesson. In a very good mathematics lesson in Year 4, this motivation stemmed from well targeted questions, aimed in turn at pupils with low, average and high attainment, and very clear explanations that communicated relatively complex ideas in a simple and easily understood form. The only resource used was a white board, but the diagrams were skilfully drawn and explicit. In a short but very good quality lesson in the nursery, the teacher cleverly used a bag containing objects to create an air of mystery and suspense. This sustained the interest of the nursery children and focused their minds on the initial sounds of words. They were looking for objects whose name began with 'd', which was then extended to recognising the shape of the letter 'd' in print and when attempting to write it for themselves. Learning in those few minutes was rapid and effective.
21. Where teaching is good, nearly all of the pupils make the expected amount of progress and the learning objectives are achieved. Work in lessons of this quality is generally well matched to the range of attainment within the class so that all pupils are challenged appropriately. Resources are used well and enough is done using resources to make the subject come alive for the pupils. In a good mathematics lesson in Year 1, three levels of work were provided, which enabled all pupils to work independently and complete the task on time. In a good science lesson in Year 3, pupils had the opportunity to handle and observe plants and learn about the capillary action of water rising in the stems. In a good religious education lesson in Year 1, the use of a shepherd's crook increased the relevance of the parable about the lost sheep.
22. Almost half the teaching is of satisfactory quality. Such teaching is successful and leads to most of the pupils in a class making sufficient progress for the lesson to be worthwhile but has aspects for improvement. The successful characteristics generally include questioning and explanation skills, which are usually of good quality, effective class management skills and constructive relationships with the pupils. Aspects for improvement vary with the teacher but are generally related to the teacher's knowledge and expertise when teaching a particular subject rather than all subjects. This lack of subject expertise leads to a narrow range of challenging work, which is appropriate for the majority but is sometimes too easy for the more able pupils, and to a failure to use resources that are relevant and make the subject come alive. Too often, not enough emphasis is placed on matching the difficulty of work to pupils' level of attainment. In several satisfactory lessons, clear exposition in the introductory phase of the lesson was followed by independent work based in large measure on undemanding worksheets that only required pupils to do little more than colour, cut and paste.
23. The management of the pupils' attentiveness and the strategies to include all of them in the main teaching are sometimes not as effective as they should be, reflecting in part the inconsistent implementation of the behaviour management policy. In some lessons, the attention of pupils is allowed to wander and the unhelpful interjections of others is tolerated or ignored for too long. The lengthy tolerance by teachers is often well intended, forming part of a strategy to keep a few pupils with special needs from disrupting the pace of the lesson and include them in the learning; the strategy is not working. Expectations of good behaviour are displayed in writing in classrooms, which is good, but are not promoted enough through the rigorous and frequent use of praise when pupils demonstrate appropriate behaviour or through the consistent application of reasonable sanctions when they do not.
24. One lesson was unsatisfactory. Here, the pace of the lesson was too slow and the content too narrow in range to

include a large proportion of the pupils. Levels of interest were low and a number of pupils were inattentive for lengthy periods of the lesson.

25. The teaching for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory. The extra support provided by learning assistants is of very good quality. In class lessons of good quality, the learning requirements of pupils with special educational needs are generally well met by teachers through careful explanations, targeted questions and work that is matched to their attainment level. In these lessons, the teachers monitor the pupils' work and provide extra explanations and clarification of ideas where these are found necessary. This does not always happen in lessons that are of satisfactory quality, where occasionally the work is too demanding or not based on sufficiently tangible resources for it to be easily comprehended by pupils with low attainment. The quality of early literacy support and of additional literacy support provided by the assistants is very good. The learning support assistants have been very well trained and have a good understanding of the various nationally prepared programmes to provide extra support in literacy and they implement them with great effectiveness, dedication, and enthusiasm. Training to provide a programme of extra support in mathematics is being completed by the assistants and this will be offered to pupils in the next school year.
26. In broad terms, the pace of learning is satisfactory throughout the school. Currently, the pace is quickest in the nursery and Years 1 and 4 but the difference between these and the other year groups is not significant. The substantial majority of pupils in all classes are acquiring new knowledge and skills steadily over time and in a manner that is consistent with the typical child nationally in all subjects except information and communication technology. For the average child, and those with low attainment, the work in all but the latter subject is sufficiently challenging and generally suited to their individual learning needs. Pupils with potential for high attainment in the core subjects are making progress but could achieve much more than they do in reading and science. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress overall.
27. The arrangements for homework are satisfactory. They are typical of the majority of schools and are generally consistent with national recommendations. In several lessons, work done at home was incorporated into the main teaching, showing that it is related appropriately to the work done in school.

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

28. The school provides a suitably broad and balanced curriculum in which subjects, in the main, are taught in accordance with the requirements of the National Curriculum and the Local Agreed Syllabus for religious education. Acts of worship meet statutory requirements both in terms of frequency and content. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been adopted and are being implemented satisfactorily. The nationally agreed curriculum for the Foundation Stage is being taught in the nursery and the Reception Year. Satisfactory provision is made for sex education and drugs education. Since the previous inspection, the quality of the planning has shown improvement with present planning being detailed in all subjects including history, physical education and English.
29. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is based upon the nationally agreed areas of learning and is satisfactory overall. There are, however, significant shortcomings in the provision for learning through physical activity outdoors, but in all other respects, the curriculum is broad and balanced in the nursery and reception classes.
30. In recent years, the school has concentrated upon raising standards in English and mathematics through planning for continuity and progression and through the implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The teachers are using both national strategies with satisfactory effectiveness overall although there is some unevenness in implementation between classes. The basic structure of the literacy hour and the daily mathematics lesson are consistently followed. Shared work in literacy and plenary sessions in both subjects are effectively managed. Guided work in literacy and mental mathematics, however, vary in quality and are not always as effective as they should be. In recent months, the guidance given to teachers to improve upon their medium term planning has been centred upon all subjects. The medium term planning structure is now good and details the general learning objectives to be covered by each year group in each half term. This medium term planning is based upon nationally and locally prepared schemes of work and is overall of good quality. From this general level of planning, however, the objectives for the term need to be broken down into small, specific stages of learning for each lesson if adequate progression in skills is to be achieved. Currently this does not happen rigorously in every class.
31. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. These include football and recorder clubs that are organised by the school and French and gymnastics that are organised jointly with local schools. A wide range of visitors extends pupils' experiences and enriches the curriculum. Visitors include

representatives from the county council who work with pupils on road safety, visits from the local police to talk about their role, visits from local clergy who take assemblies and encourage the pupils to take part in the church-led activities. The school works with the NSPCC to raise money for the charity and this provides good opportunities to enrich pupils' social and moral development. Although the school has some links with the community through, for example, distribution of harvest produce and carol singing, not enough use is made of the locality to extend the geography fieldwork.

32. Apart from the joint extra-curricular activities, there are several links with the partner schools. Teachers from the middle school have visited the school and have taken lessons. This is good and helps to provide curriculum continuity as well as allowing teachers and prospective pupils to work together.
33. The curriculum is socially inclusive and there is broad equality of access and opportunity for all pupils. A policy of withdrawing pupils from lessons so that they can be taught individually and in small groups still operates but is managed more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection; this is a satisfactory improvement. Nationally prepared programmes to provide early literacy support and teach the additional literacy scheme have been implemented recently and this involves withdrawing pupils from other lessons. The withdrawal is timed so that it does not interfere with shared work in literacy, which is good practice. A nationally prepared mathematics programme of extra support is to be implemented in the next school year. The provision aims to treat boys and girls equally and all the evidence points to this happening effectively in practice. The school does not yet have an anti-racist policy document but is preparing one. The school is anti-racist in practice though more could be done to prepare pupils for life in a multiracial society.
34. The pupils with special educational needs do not experience a curriculum that is significantly different from the other pupils. Their individual education plans are of satisfactory quality and are mainly implemented effectively by the learning support assistants. Occasionally, teachers are insufficiently mindful of the contents of these plans and provide general class work that is inappropriate, given the difficulties faced by these pupils. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational needs is good and consistent with the requirements in their statements. Statutory requirements in relation to pupils with special educational needs are met. In practice, the teachers do not rigorously identify pupils who are gifted or talented and the provision is insufficient for their needs.
35. The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good, particularly in the arts curriculum and the assembly programme. Throughout the school, displays of closely observed drawings and paintings indicate that pupils are given the opportunity to make a personal response to the beauty of flowers and plants. They are also inspired by artists' work in a way that enriches their spiritual awareness beyond the quality of the painters' skill. In assemblies, too, pupils are encouraged to reflect on inspirational ideas, for example, in the week of inspection, on personal endeavour and teamwork. A thought for the week sets a context for pupils' learning and their own triumphs and best efforts are recorded on a chart which builds up over a term, and which pupils talk about with pride. Religious education work on Buddha, and his influence on world religion, allows pupils an opportunity to consider the possibility of a life of spiritual reflection, rather than one focused more usually on material worth. In a music assembly, pupils sang holding the final notes in a chorus to create a moment of stillness that affected them all with its spirituality so that when a prayer followed this there was a real sense of awe. The hymns sung in assembly are carefully chosen and add to the spiritual dimension of the school's curriculum.
36. The school makes good provision for pupils' moral development. Expectations of good behaviour are clear and pupils are involved in the process of creating the rules; these both give them understanding and a sense of ownership. There are satisfactory systems for communicating to pupils the potential impact of misbehaviour on their own and others' opportunity to learn. A yellow and red card system is used to help pupils reflect on their own misbehaviour and to make positive decisions to "get back on track". These procedures generally help children develop self-discipline, knowing what is right and wrong; this is a positive aspect of their learning. Pupils' exceptional efforts are recorded in the "glossy book", and everyone understands that this is a special commendation which has been earned with particular effort. Adults are good role models, checking that pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and the impact of poor behaviour on other pupils' work.
37. There is good provision for pupils' social development. The importance of teamwork and of collective effort is well demonstrated. This is particularly evident in singing where pupils understand that the quality of the choral work is dependent on every pupil's effort. In class, teachers emphasise the importance of communicating well and encourage pupils to build on each other's ideas. A sense of social responsibility was recently promoted through a playground planning group for pupils, which, with representatives from each class, helped make playtime a positive experience. They produced playground rules in consultation with their classes, and designed and built resources to encourage active play, for example wall-targets for ball practice. They suggested using playhouses and climbing frames, which were duly bought, and subsequently understood the importance of a rota so that every class could benefit from these additional resources.

38. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory overall, though not enough is done to ensure that pupils are properly prepared to become informed citizens of a multicultural, multiethnic society. While pupils are given opportunity to draw on their own family and community experience to enrich their learning, there is little evidence that they are shown the contribution that ethnic minority communities have made to all aspects of learning, including music, science and literature. In class assemblies, pupils demonstrate knowledge about the natural world of Suffolk. Pupils are learning English country dancing and classic songs from the English musical theatre and this is good provision. A good introduction to different faiths is made through religious education. In art and design, although one class learned about the aborigines' art traditions through studying an artefact brought into school after a member of staff's visit to Australia, there are few other examples of non-European art or music being studied. This gap in the provision is unfortunate in a school where there are few ethnic minority pupils. Recent purchases of books will help with this, since many reflect diversity in society. For example, in an English lesson a letter written from a village in Mali was used as the text to be studied. There are few opportunities for pupils to participate in cultural events and visits. Spiritual leaders from local Christian churches have been invited into the school and this is a good initiative, which now needs to be built upon.

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

39. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health, and safety are good. Quality in this aspect has been maintained since the previous inspection. Pupils work in a caring environment. They know that staff will listen to their problems and take appropriate action. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare, including child protection, are good and the staff are knowledgeable and caring. There is good liaison with external agencies and other schools, enabling effective exchange of information when necessary. Good use is being made of the health and safety expertise of a new governor, resulting in minor problems being identified early and corrected. Some risk assessments have been undertaken, for example in swimming, but training is awaited and assessments at present are informal. Training in health and safety should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.
40. Pupils are participating in the national Healthy School project. They have played a significant part in a local project to improve safety when travelling to school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, together with three classes from the middle school, made a model of the town that was then shown to the local community, who were asked for their comments on safety issues. This project has enabled pupils to gain a greater understanding of what constitutes dangers in their community as well as developing team skills. First aid support is good with almost every member of staff being trained. The school meals offer very limited choices; while the quality is fine the lack of choice means that those with specific dietary requirements, Muslims, for example, or vegetarians, cannot be properly catered for.
41. The induction of nursery pupils is satisfactory. The playgroup's present use of the school premises enables the school to know children and parents beforehand, benefiting these pupils as they move into the nursery. There is a higher than normal inwards movement of new pupils into Years 1 to 4. Information from the previous school, together with parents sharing information, enables the induction of these pupils to be smooth.
42. Good behaviour is promoted satisfactorily and there is appropriate emphasis on self-control. Behaviour is monitored weekly through the yellow and red books in which the names of pupils who are shown a yellow or red card are recorded. Bullying and harassment are talked about in assembly, religious education lessons, and in personal, social and health lessons. The revised behaviour policy, which was formulated after wide consultation, is a very good base from which to raise behavioural expectations but the policy is not yet consistently or rigorously implemented.
43. The arrangements for monitoring and improving attendance have been improved in the present year and are satisfactory. Senior management and governors recognise that the below average level of attendance needs to improve. The importance of attendance is properly communicated to parents through regular news bulletins. The headteacher has made considerable effort to liaise directly with the small number of families whose children have poor attendance. The school is exploring with the education welfare officer all the available options to ensure no child is excluded from education through lack of attendance. A new computer package is being introduced to increase the speed and extent to which data on attendance can be analysed.
44. The arrangements for assessing and monitoring pupils' academic performance are satisfactory and broadly typical of the majority of schools. The nationally agreed early learning goals are used as a basis for assessing pupils' attainment in the Foundation Stage and adequate checks on progress are made in both the nursery and the Reception Year. In Year 1, assessments are made in phonics, word recognition, spelling, and mathematics. In addition to the statutory tests in reading, writing and mathematics at the age of seven, optional national tests are

used in Years 3 and 4 in reading and mathematics, and nationally prepared tests in the same subjects are used in the six plus and eight plus age groups. These provide a comprehensive picture of attainment and progress in literacy and numeracy. More detailed assessments of literacy skills are made when newcomers join the school and when special educational needs are being considered; these are good practices. Statutory assessments at the age of seven are made in science but other than this, no assessments are routinely made in any of the other subjects. The lack of basic, annual teacher assessment in the non-core subjects is preventing coordinators from having a clear picture of standards and has potential for decisions about development priorities being inappropriate. Setting specific targets for individuals and groups is a recent introduction and is not yet fully established.

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

45. The partnership with parents is satisfactory but could be stronger. The response to the questionnaire and attendance at the pre-inspection meeting were relatively low. The school reports low attendance at meetings, including consultation evenings, and this indicates a higher than usual degree of non-involvement by parents. The majority of parents in the questionnaire said that the school works closely with them but the strength of this view is only moderate. The links with parents and their expressions of support are not as strong as they were at the time of the previous inspection. This mainly reflects demographic changes within the local community, particularly the influx of new families who need time to forge links with the school.
46. The quality of information for parents is good and the prospectus provides useful information for new parents. The weekly bulletin provides an effective link between school and home and is praised by parents. A few parents would benefit from having information in other than written form. Consideration is being given to this problem but effective ways acceptable to all parties have yet to be identified. All parents have signed the home-school agreement. Parents are satisfied with the annual reports, which are informative, easy to read and give parents a good flavour of their child's work during the year. There are some instances where areas for improvement are identified but reports would be enhanced further if these areas were consistently identified and if greater use was made of comparative information.
47. The school operates an open door policy. Parents whose views are known consider the staff very accessible and willing to listen to their concerns. Information is provided to encourage parents to help children at home and courses for parents that last for seven weeks are held on the strategies for literacy and numeracy and have attracted a few parents. Consultation evenings are held twice a year, which is more than the requirements, but attendance at 75 per cent is lower than typically found. A small number of parents are disaffected and are said by senior management never to be seen in school. The school could do more to contact these parents and to follow up their non-attendance at consultation evenings. Each term the school shares with parents the pupils' work for the coming weeks and this good practice is praised by parents. The school reports that a substantial number of pupils are not supported at home; these pupils would benefit from a homework club. The school is to review the impact of homework on learning and possible modifications of its policy, and a questionnaire is to be used to ascertain parents' views on homework. Help in class is provided not only by parents but also by governors and local people and this was seen during the inspection to be beneficial and effective. An active friends association is providing useful additional funds and helping to bring in support from local companies.

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

48. The leadership of the headteacher is good. In the short period since her appointment she has united the staff, created a good team spirit, embarked upon an ambitious but manageable programme of reform, and is managing well the unexpected and challenging circumstances caused by staff absences. She is leading the school very effectively through the example of her willingness to take responsibility and the example of her own very good teaching. The educational direction of the school is very clear and the priorities for development are relevant.
49. The governing body is fulfilling its statutory responsibilities effectively. There have been a number of changes within the governing body since the previous inspection and about half the members are very new indeed. All of the governors are committed to helping and to improving the school and are bringing enthusiasm and useful expertise from different walks of life. The minutes of the governing body show appropriate involvement in all aspects of school life, including the curriculum and special educational needs, and that the business of the governing body is properly conducted. Good support and careful practices are followed when staff appointments are made. Governors are properly involved in performance management and in the setting of targets for the headteacher. All relevant statutory requirements are met.

50. The aims of the school are explicit, rightly intending that the school be organised for the benefit of all the pupils. The aims are being implemented but are not yet fully achieved. A happy, caring orderly community has been created where pupils can develop confidence and enjoy learning. Many pupils are achieving to their potential, effective support is provided for those who struggle with low attainment, but more needs to be done to ensure that those with potential for high attainment can truly excel.
51. The headteacher is loyally supported by the acting deputy headteacher, who is competently working to improve the use of assessment data. The effectiveness of leadership delegated to subject managers, however, is mixed and not all managers have a clear perception of what constitutes good practice in their subjects or how this can be communicated and achieved in the school. Leadership in science and in information and communication technology is not strong enough and the direction of development in these subjects is not clearly mapped out. There is, nevertheless, a shared commitment to improvement among all of the staff and, overall, a capacity to succeed.
52. The headteacher has quickly set in place good systems for management, although there has not been enough time for them to become embedded in the culture of the school or for their impact to be felt in full. In part, this is because the headteacher has spent much of her time teaching Year 4 to cover the staff absences and to preserve the quality of education for these pupils in difficult circumstances. This has meant that she has not been able to monitor the implementation of new policies, support developments in other classes, and achieve the consistency necessary for standards to rise quickly.
53. Performance management has been established, all teachers have been involved in a review of their work, established pupil progress strategies, and set professional practice objectives; this is good. Some observation of teaching has followed the establishment of performance management but the amount and frequency is not enough. The headteacher has initiated a programme of staff training, including training in self-evaluation and has set aside time for teachers with management responsibilities to carry out monitoring in their subjects. She has established procedures to involve governors and teachers in school development planning and to raise awareness of standards and the need to improve them. Although these will take time, the headteacher has not waited where decisive action has been necessary. She has, for example, replenished very outdated and inadequate book resources, particularly those necessary for guided reading methods, purchased a new mathematics scheme for Years 3 and 4, and increased the number of classes to manage the growth in pupil numbers in the Reception Year and Year 1.
54. The school development priorities are relevant to the needs of the school. The school development plan for 2002-2003 is a satisfactory document. It lists a number of current strengths and weaknesses, which is a good starting point, but does not say enough about current standards, particularly in the junior year groups, or about how these might be raised. Several of the priorities relate to issues from the previous inspection, confirming the initial slowness in responding to them at that time. Within the plan there is a clear aspiration to raise standards, with specified numerical targets for Year 2 but none for Year 4.
55. Appropriate procedures for self-evaluation are being developed. Systems for monitoring and evaluating standards and progress of pupils and year groups are established and being used, though such practices are relatively new to the school. All of the teachers are in the process of being trained in self-review and have attended a nationally prepared three-day course during the present school year; this is good practice. The lack of reference to standards other than in Year 2 implies that limited use is made of school-developed performance indicators, suggesting in turn that self-evaluation systems are not fully developed.
56. Financial management is satisfactory. The cost of educating a pupil is higher than the majority of schools, reflecting its small size. The pattern of expenditure is very similar to the typical school nationally except for supply teacher costs, which are high, and expenditure on learning resources, which is relatively low. A relatively large financial surplus accumulated during the 2001-2002 financial year, which is planned to more than halve during the present year. The governing body has satisfactory oversight of the budget although more could be done to compare alternative providers of major services to see whether best value for money is being obtained. Day-to-day administration of orders, invoices, and payments is good. The governing body has systems in place to project forward the likely income and expenditure and is forming a satisfactory strategic view of the budget and how it can be used to develop the school.
57. Staffing is satisfactory though the school has been affected by staff absences. Senior management and the governing body have acted effectively to reduce the impact of absences on pupils' learning. Supply and temporary staff have been appointed with care and the headteacher has increased her teaching time to ensure consistency and continuity for the pupils involved most. Induction is satisfactory and teachers new to the school feel part of a team from the outset.

58. The accommodation is satisfactory. It is new and pupils benefit from working in these surroundings compared to the previous Victorian building. The atrium, which required a replacement roof due to leakage, is beginning to be developed as an additional resource area. The cloakroom area in each class is small and this has been identified by the governors' recent health and safety assessment. Resources are satisfactory in quality, quantity, and range in all subjects except information and communication technology, where there are insufficient resources to teach the subject efficiently. In the Foundation Stage, the resources for pupils to learn through physical activity outdoors are poor.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. The school has successfully completed its move to new buildings and managed effectively a number of unforeseen problems. It must now concentrate on implementing its aims, in particular, in raising standards in areas where they are not as high as they should be so that all pupils can fulfil their potential. The headteacher and her staff, with the support of the governing body, should:
- ❑ raise standards in reading to at least the national average, especially for pupils who are more able, by:
    - increasing the effectiveness of shared and guided reading methods throughout the school;
    - providing relevant training for teachers;
    - providing a full range of books to motivate and challenge all pupils, especially the more able;
    - ensuring that reading homework has sufficient challenge and rigour for all pupils, increasing as pupils get older;
    - setting relevant, measurable targets for improvement in all year groups and then reporting regularly to the governing body on progress towards achieving the targets;  
(Paragraphs 75-86)
  - ❑ raise standards in information and communication technology, initially to a standard where at least three-quarters of the pupils in each year group attain the expected national level for their age by:
    - ensuring that the programme of study is taught in full in all year groups;
    - ensuring that the time that each pupil spends using computers, or being taught the subject directly, is at least consistent with national recommendations;
    - rigorously sharing good practice in the subject and providing relevant training for teachers where necessary, so that the teaching methods used are both effective and efficient;
    - increasing the quantity, quality and range of resources, as funds allow, so that the programme of study can be taught in full;  
(Paragraphs 112-114)
  - ❑ improve, as a matter of urgency, the provision in the nursery and the Reception Year so that pupils in these age groups can learn effectively through physical activity outdoors and the nationally agreed curriculum for the Foundation Stage can be taught in full by:
    - ensuring that pupils in the Reception Year have daily access to appropriate outdoor facilities;
    - writing and implementing a strategic plan for purchasing and improving the quantity, quality and range of resources over time;
    - providing relevant training for teachers of children in the Foundation Stage so that there is good, effective practice when using the outdoor facilities;
    - improving the planning so that the range of outdoor activities and their learning objectives are clearly identified;  
(Paragraphs 29 and 61-74)
  - ❑ increase the amount of good and very good teaching to a level that is at least in line with the national picture by:
    - ensuring that the planning and the teaching make appropriate provision for pupils with different levels of attainment, especially for pupils with potential for high attainment;
    - ensuring that the pace, content and use of resources in lessons is sufficient to sustain pupils' attention and interest;
    - increasing the consistency with which the pupils' behaviour is managed and the school's policy for behaviour management is implemented;  
(Paragraphs 18-27)
  - ❑ improve management by:
    - increasing the frequency and the rigour of systems for monitoring, evaluating, and supporting the development of teaching;
    - improving the effectiveness of subject leadership.  
(Paragraphs 48-58)
60. In addition to the key issues, the governing body should consider including the following minor issues in their action plan:
- implementing rigorously the policy for gifted and talented pupils (paragraph 34);
  - training in health and safety for staff and governors (paragraph 39);
  - increase the choice of food at lunch time so that the dietary requirements of groups such as Muslims and vegetarians can be met (paragraph 40).

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	32
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	26

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	3	13	15	1	0	0
Percentage	0	9	41	47	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	11	135
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	26

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR-Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	30

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	6.0	School data	0.2
National comparative data	5.6	National comparative data	0.5

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	12	11	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	11
	Girls	10	11	10
	Total	20	21	21
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (76)	91 (92)	91 (92)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	10	10	10
	Girls	10	10	10
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	87 (80)	87 (88)	87 (88)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

### **Ethnic background of pupils**

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	107
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. Pupils in Year R are not included.*

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

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

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

### **Teachers and classes**

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR-Y4**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	6.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	23

#### **Education support staff: YR-Y4**

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	91

#### **Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	11
Total number of education support staff	0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	0
Number of pupils per FTE adult	11

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### **Financial information**

Financial year	2001-2002
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	£
Total income	395850
Total expenditure	387879
Expenditure per pupil (based on 157 pupils)	2471
Balance brought forward from previous year	13188
Balance carried forward to next year	21159

### **Recruitment of teachers**

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4.0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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	157
Number of questionnaires returned	29

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	42	48	0	10	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	45	17	3	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	17	59	14	0	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	38	28	34	0	0
The teaching is good.	48	31	17	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	21	55	17	7	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	31	7	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	35	0	7	3
The school works closely with parents.	24	62	4	10	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	38	7	10	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	42	10	0	10
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	14	18	14	11	43

### Other issues raised by parents

Parents raised no issues other than those identified in the summary.

## **PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES**

### **AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE**

61. The provision is in a nursery and in two classes with Reception Year pupils. The nursery is new since the previous inspection. Satisfactory standards and quality in the Reception Year have been sustained since the previous inspection. The nursery has part-time placements, morning and afternoon. The Reception Year has full-time placements; one class is entirely of Reception Year pupils and the other with mixed Reception Year and Year 1 pupils. Admission is at the beginning of each term. The mixed Reception Year and Year 1 class was formed at Easter 2002, following an unexpectedly large number of applicants for places; the teacher of this class was appointed at Easter. Two teachers, both appointed during the present school year, share the teaching of the other Reception class. A privately run playgroup, which is inspected separately, occupies teaching space in the main school originally designed for the Reception Year. The growth in pupil numbers means that the space currently used by the playgroup is needed for pupils at the school and the headteacher is negotiating with the owners of the playgroup and with the local authority to have the playgroup moved to other accommodation. All those with governance of the school should expedite this move as quickly as possible. Currently, pupils in the Reception Year do not have daily access to a properly resourced area outdoors and this means that a significant part of the nationally agreed curriculum for the Foundation Stage cannot be taught; this is a serious shortcoming.
62. The vast majority of children entering the nursery have typical attainment for their age, including about one in every five whose attainment is higher than expected. A few pupils have difficulty communicating with others and their speech and language development has been delayed but the proportion with such difficulties is not significantly larger than other schools. All pupils in the nursery are making the progress that they should and some are doing better. The overall standard on entry to the present Reception Year is average; in broad terms, about 80 per cent of the children have typical or better attainment, including about 20 per cent who exceed expectations, though there are slight variations between the areas of learning. Standards on entry to the Reception Year in the previous two years were not significantly different and reflect the positive effect of the nursery on standards in this age group. The vast majority of children in the Reception Year are on course to attain or exceed the nationally agreed early learning goals by the end of that year in personal, social and emotional development. Not quite as many but still a substantial majority are on course to attain the early learning goals in language, literacy and communication and in mathematical development. Progress in the remaining areas of learning is adequate but slower than the other three because of the limited provision for learning through physical activity outdoors.

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

63. Standards are good; nearly all of the pupils are on course to attain or exceed the nationally agreed early learning goals, with about half likely to exceed them. The nursery is effective in helping pupils to settle into school routine and in helping them to become secure and confident. All of them have a sense of belonging. Most of them are confident to initiate conversations during activities and to work independently. They are beginning to respect the rights of others, which about three-quarters do very well for their age. In the Reception Year, nearly all of the children accept the need to take turns and to share. They abide by the general class rules regarding behaviour and understand the difference between right and wrong. They are very orderly, will line up when asked, for example, and are independent when getting ready for physical education activities in the hall or when going out to play. When another child is upset, or hurt, nearly all of them show care and concern.
64. The teaching and provision for this area of learning is good in the nursery, with an appropriate mix of formal activities, such as eating fruit and drinking milk together, and opportunities for independent choices. The teacher is very alert to potential misbehaviour and antisocial behaviour and uses such occasions as opportunities for learning. The provision is generally good in the Reception Year although there is less opportunity for development through independent activity.

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

65. Standards are good in the nursery, satisfactory in the Reception Year, and satisfactory overall. The proportion of pupils in the nursery with typical or better attainment for their age is above average, reflecting the good progress made by these pupils since admission. The teaching in the nursery is effective and all of the pupils are making expected or quicker progress. In the Reception Year, about three-quarters of the children listen, speak, engage with stories and books, and have early writing skills that are typical for their age. Overall, the substantial majority of children in the Foundation Stage are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception

Year.

66. In the nursery, most of the pupils can make simple statements and comments that are clear, can ask simple questions, and are beginning occasionally to use sentences that are more complex. They readily get involved in stories and make predictions about what might happen next. They can recognise and name the different sounds at the beginnings of words and the letters that represent them in print. In the Reception Year, the substantial majority of the children readily use spoken language in their play and when working together. They listen and respond well to stories and to older children in assembly and use a satisfactory vocabulary when talking. They can identify different sounds and letters, know several words by sight, and are forming the shape of letters with reasonable accuracy when writing. A small number of pupils in both the nursery and the Reception Year are reluctant to speak and to communicate with others and have very few early literacy skills.
67. The teaching is good in the nursery, satisfactory in the Reception Year, and satisfactory overall. In the nursery, the teaching adapts methods from the National Literacy Strategy and is often very effective. In a very good, short lesson in the nursery, the pupils quickly learnt to hear the sound 'd' at the beginning of a small number of carefully chosen words. The teacher held the attention of the pupils by using a 'mystery bag' with objects that mostly began with 'd'. The children had to dip their hands into the mystery bag, withdraw, and name an object. The sound of the letter was linked to text and to pupils drawing the shape in the air. By the end of the lesson, every child had learnt to hear and recognise 'd'. In the Reception Year, the methods from the National Literacy Strategy are being adapted in the same way as in the nursery and are equally effective. In the nursery, the child-initiated and independent activities are well planned and provide good opportunities for pupils to extend speaking, listening, reading and writing skills, for example, through role-play and through listening to taped stories. Such activities are less well planned and resourced in the Reception Year and this is the main reason why progress, although satisfactory, is not so quick as in the nursery.

### **Mathematical development**

68. Standards are satisfactory, with the substantial majority of pupils on course to attain or exceed the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. Nearly all of the children in the nursery can count to about five and recognise groups with two or three objects. The more able nursery children can count and recognise numerals to six. In the Reception Year, the substantial majority can count and recognise numerals to nine, with the more able doing so to about 15 and beginning to understand pairing and counting in twos. Reception year children are familiar with the vocabulary of adding and subtracting numbers and the more able can confidently and quickly add  $3+2$ , for example.
69. The teaching is generally good. In a lesson in the Reception Year that captured the attention of the children, the teacher dropped plastic toys into a large tin container, getting the children to count the drumbeats as they hit the bottom. Having heard the first set of beats, the teacher dropped in several more toys and got the children to count on so that they learnt how to complete additions such as  $5+2=7$  by counting on. A number line and written forms of simple addition were then introduced, extending knowledge appropriately. In another good lesson in a different reception class, the teacher gave the children a pile of socks and asked them to pair them up and hang them on a washing line, effectively extending knowledge of counting, the term 'pair', and of counting in twos.

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

70. Standards are satisfactory in the nursery and in the Reception Year although the proportion of children on course to attain or exceed the early learning goals is slightly smaller than in some of the other areas of learning. In the nursery, children are able to use a simple computer program by manoeuvring the cursor with the mouse and one boy, at least, can adjust the volume of the sound on the monitor. In the Reception Year, the pupils demonstrate an appropriate understanding of the roles different people have and knowledge of everyday features in a high street, shops, and hospitals. They show appropriate skill when using construction toys and are able to handle wood and explore methods of joining pieces together. Nearly all of the Reception Year pupils are developing appropriate observational skills and, through observation, to know which things might be living and which are non-living.
71. The teaching is good in the nursery where the provision is well planned, with activities carefully selected and matched to learning needs. In the nursery, there is a good balance between teacher-directed and child self-chosen activities; pupils are fully engaged in the activities throughout the session and the teacher constantly engages with them to help maintain the pace of learning. In the Reception Year, teaching is satisfactory, especially the whole-class teacher directed elements, but not enough self-chosen and independent activities are provided and those that are, sometimes lack a clear learning purpose. The provision of independent activities for pupils in the Reception Year is hampered by the accommodation, which is designed for older pupils and does not

have the space necessary, either indoors or out, for a full range of independent, self-select activities to be provided.

### **Physical development**

72. Standards are only just satisfactory. The evidence is restricted because of shortcomings in the provision. Nearly all of the children in the Foundation Stage handle pencils, scissors, brushes and other small tools and equipment with a dexterity that is typical for their age. In the nursery, pupils have access to a self-contained outdoor area but the resources available are very narrow in range. They can use the limited equipment with the level of control and coordination expected of three-year-olds, though their awareness of others when riding bikes, for example, is not always as good as it should be. In the Reception Year, in a lesson in the hall, the children showed that they can, for example, explore different ways of jumping, skipping and hopping when directed by the teacher and have levels of control and coordination that are consistent with the expectations for four-year-olds. These pupils have the opportunity to use sit-on-and-ride toys outdoors on the main playground while the rest of the school is also at play but this is inadequate for their needs. When using equipment independently in this way they showed relatively limited awareness of space and of other children and lacked the control necessary to use the equipment safely all of the time.
73. The teaching is hampered by a lack of appropriate facilities and resources. Teaching in the nursery is satisfactory and regular but constrained provision is made for pupils to learn through physical activity outdoors. The outdoor space for nursery pupils is enclosed and of adequate size but has not been developed sufficiently and lacks many resources and items of equipment. In the Reception Year, direct teaching in the hall is of satisfactory quality but the whole class methods are more suited to older pupils. In all other respects in this area of learning, provision for the Reception Year is poor because of the lack of resources. The Reception Year does not have access to any suitable outdoor facility and is seriously under-resourced; this is unsatisfactory.

### **Creative development**

74. Standards are satisfactory and the substantial majority of pupils are on course to attain the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. In the nursery, the children are able with confidence to explore mixing colours and show good control and accuracy when applying paint. When acting out dramas in role-play and when playing with small toys, most of them show typical levels of imagination and creativity. In the Reception Year, the children can sing with enthusiasm; recognise and name instruments being used in examples of Japanese music; and different rhythms and repeated sounds. They handle paints, for example, with enthusiasm and confidence, and show good knowledge of colours and colour mixing when doing so. In role-play, such as doctors and nurses, they are appropriately creative and show good imagination. The teaching is satisfactory. It is well focused in the nursery and provides an appropriate range of directed and self-chosen activities. Directed work in the Reception Year is satisfactory but the independent and self-chosen activities sometimes lack clear purpose.

## **ENGLISH**

75. The proportion of pupils in Year 4 attaining or exceeding the level of a typical nine-year-old is below average in all aspects of the subject. Nearly half of the pupils in this year group are on the special educational needs register. Their progress during the present school year has been consistent with national expectations. Standards in Year 2 are good in speaking and listening, average in writing, but below average in reading because of a lack of high attainment; very few pupils exceed the expected level for their age. This is a less favourable picture than the last inspection in reading, a similar one in writing, and a better one in speaking and listening, where standards have improved. The broadly satisfactory standards in other year groups show that the current standards in Year 4 are a blip rather than a trend, though this reassuring comment should not diminish concerns about the lack of high attainment in reading. The results of the 2001 national tests for seven-year-olds showed that the proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected level was slightly larger than the average school in reading and writing. The proportion attaining or exceeding the expected level in 2002 is slightly smaller, with almost no pupil exceeding expectations in reading, and as such the modest trend of improvement in test results between 1997 and 2001 has not been maintained.
76. Not enough pupils are achieving the higher standards in reading. The same pupils' performance in mathematics, for example and more importantly their baseline assessments indicate that many are capable of doing so; the underachievement of the more able pupils in reading is significant. The school is aware of this and has recently purchased resources for guided reading which, when used to best effect, will help pupils attain higher standards. Until the present school year, guided reading methods had not been used extensively because of the lack of resources. Teachers are supporting higher attaining pupils in writing by focusing strongly on strategies for

spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

77. On entry to Year 1, pupils' spoken language development is typical of the national picture. Effective teaching builds on this in Years 1 and 2 and pupils make good progress. One group in Year 2, for example, discussed the power failure they had experienced the night before, bringing great drama to their accounts of how their families dealt with the emergency. Nearly all of them showed the appropriate level of confidence when talking in this class group, providing the extra detail that demonstrated awareness of the listeners' needs, and listening to and responding to the comments of others, both relatively advanced skills for their age. This good attainment is also well demonstrated when pupils talk about the books that they are reading and speculate about likely outcomes of the plot. In a Year 2 lesson about authors, children discussed how writers got their ideas, realising that the author, who was once a postman, thought about the things he saw on his post route and wrote down his ideas in a book like "The Jolly Postman". Skills of speaking and listening develop steadily in Years 3 and 4, where appropriate provision is made across the curriculum. Older children, for example, talked with great interest about the books they were reading. One story, about the birth of puppies, led to discussion about breeding, with pupils happily using terms like "whelping box" and "pets going into labour". This demonstrated how they understood the main points in the discussion, were starting to adapt speech to listeners' needs and to fit the vocabulary to the context of the discussion. One child explained that his cat stalked the bats that were found near his home, again bringing great drama to his telling.
78. Standards in reading are unsatisfactory because the proportion of pupils at expected or higher levels are below average and because the more able pupils are underachieving. In Year 2, the poor behaviour of a few pupils sometimes reduces the opportunity for more challenging work for higher attaining pupils during shared work. By the time that they are seven, a smaller than average majority of pupils are reading with accuracy and fluency, giving good attention to punctuation, which often supports their understanding of the text. They use a good range of strategies when reading unfamiliar words, confidently using letter sounds, words within words and breaking words into "chunks". Most pupils are not yet able to understand the more literary, figurative and idiomatic language of texts associated with higher attainment, nor without a good deal of support are they able to come to the deeper meanings of the text and beyond a literal reading. For example, a very confident seven-year-old reader knew from experience that a character in the story had a good chance of getting his own dinosaur by magic because the character knew a wizard, but needed a good deal of support to unpack some of the particular meanings of the text. Year 2 pupils understand that information texts are laid out in particular ways with particular conventions, for example information reduced to its bare minimum and listed with an enlarged spot or "bullet point". They are aware that information is organised with headings, sub-headings and annotated diagrams and can use such techniques in preparing their own information texts. They read instructions with confidence and again demonstrate their awareness of the conventions for writing such texts, for example in their workbooks, writing instructions for making butterfly cakes.
79. In Year 4, about a third of the nine-year-olds are able to read with confidence at the level expected for their age. They can reflect on the detail of the text; for example, in a story about a dinosaur, a pupil was trying to imagine the size of the dinosaur's foot by comparing it to the height of his father. Others recognise the literary conventions of story telling; for example, when the text reads "nothing ever happens round here", there is a strong likelihood that something exciting is about to happen. They demonstrate an awareness of language study work covered in class, recognising compound words and words with multiple endings which build on a single word to change the meaning, as in "hope", "hopeful", "hopefully." A further third of the nine-year-olds are not far behind in their phonic skills but do not make predictions or inferences confidently from the text. The absence of high attaining readers at the ages of both seven and nine indicates a lack of progress when compared to their ability when speaking and listening. Pupils with special educational need make satisfactory progress in reading, particularly in phonics and other word level skills, when supported by the effective team of teaching assistants, whose mastery and implementation of the nationally prepared early literacy support and additional literacy support programmes are very good.
80. Standards in writing among the seven-year-olds are average but with too few of the pupils achieving levels beyond those expected for their age. Pupils are given many opportunities to write, with particular focus on sentence structure and word level work, derived from the learning objectives and the National Literacy Strategy. This has a satisfactory impact on writing overall and particularly on spelling standards. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to demonstrate their writing competence in more open-ended, personal and more creative writing activities. There is little opportunity to reflect on their personal experiences, which they are very keen and interested to talk about, nor is there sufficient opportunity for them to argue a case or pursue their own line of interest in writing.
81. Standards are average in Year 3 but below average in Year 4, with about a third of the pupils attaining the expected level and very few pupils exceeding expectations. Work in books indicates that pupils are writing for a broad range of purposes but with few examples of pupils writing imaginatively, creatively, or persuasively. There is

a small amount of writing to argue a case for zoos, which indicates that pupils are able to write from different perspectives, but there is not enough opportunity of this kind of writing to show that pupils are able to use writing to learn. One good example in Year 4 of more advanced levels was when children rewrote the story of the three pigs with a contemporary setting and wrote about the pigs' (named Jim, Chelsea, and Hannah) deviousness in thwarting the wolf. Occasionally, writing across the curriculum helps develop relevant skills, for example when they wrote about a visit to Stowmarket, when they rewrote the story "Not Now, Bernard" as a play script, and when they wrote from a heading "If I Ruled the World" in religious education. Pupils write letters for a range of purposes such as responding to a letter from a writer in Mali and sending a letter of apology from Goldilocks to the Three Bears. Each half term, the pupils complete a piece of unaided writing as part of the assessment procedures, which is good practice.

82. Handwriting skills are satisfactory overall and the oldest pupils are beginning to develop a free-flowing joined writing style, which will allow them to record their ideas without being hampered by a hesitant and fragmented handwriting style. Nine-year-olds use simple punctuation with accuracy and are beginning to bring more meaning to their text by speech punctuation and literary devices. For example, they use marks of exclamation and questioning and the writer's technique of bold, capitalised words and hesitation marks to build up tension in their writing. The higher attaining pupils are beginning to lay out their texts in paragraphs, understanding their function and importance for readers. Few nine-year-olds have learned to communicate more directly with an implied reader using humour, direct questioning (with personal asides) which are evident in higher writing standards. Pupils in Year 4 are able to summarise the information in a paragraph. This will help them in the more scholarly skills of scanning and note taking, which are crucial as they develop their study skills.
83. Teaching and learning in classes are satisfactory overall and very good in Year 1. No lessons were unsatisfactory though only one English lesson was better than satisfactory. The National Literacy Strategy's teaching Framework supports teachers and enables them to develop knowledge, understanding, and skills progressively. Learning objectives are shared effectively with pupils at the outset of each lesson and teachers generally review learning at the end to assess pupils' progress. Teachers use whiteboards, overhead projectors and enlarged texts to ensure that every pupil can access the textual detail needed to understand the lesson. Behaviour management is fully satisfactory in only half of the lessons observed. Misbehaviour in Years 2 and 4 sometimes disturbs teaching and inhibits overall achievement.
84. A strong emphasis is placed on phonics and on letter blends. For older pupils, emphasis is placed on suffixes and prefixes that may alter the fundamental meaning and function of a word. Common spelling patterns are stressed and strategies for spelling are well taught; for example, words within words and the breaking up of compound words into their different elements to achieve spelling accuracy. In too many lessons, however, there is not enough work set at different levels to challenge different abilities; this is also apparent from work in books. From work in books across the curriculum, the satisfactory writing standards achieved in English lessons are not always transferred to their other subjects. Pupils often fail to demarcate sentences with the appropriate punctuation, to use capitals for proper names and to draw on their spelling strategies. In some books pupils are not demonstrating pride in their work, which suggests that teacher expectation is not high enough; and marking is inconsistently applied to acknowledge progress or give pointers to next steps. This does not show compliance with the school's own marking policy and its intention to use marking to assess and to set targets for improvement.
85. Since the last inspection the range and quality of books has improved. This has resulted in pupils reading and working from books which are a better fit for their current reading standards. Teachers need to check that the books pupils are reading will allow them to make appropriate progress, however, as several pupils were reading from books that were unchallenging and well below their capability. The school needs to check that the banding system, which sets the books for pupils to read, is looked at routinely and that the pupils are reading texts that will motivate and help them make progress. In one very good lesson on phonemes, focusing on the impact of the silent 'e', the teacher lifted the challenge progressively as the lesson proceeded, helping all pupils make good progress and better than expected attainment. This was exceptional and should be typical in all lessons.
86. The management of the subject is satisfactory. The coordinator has been trained in school evaluation practices and has begun to monitor all aspects of English work. The school improvement plan indicates that the school is aware of what needs to be done to raise standards. Resources have been bought and examples of pupils' writing are collected each term to help the school assess pupils' progress and inform planning. Systems for monitoring teaching and learning are planned, though staffing difficulties have delayed this work so far. The procedures for assessing pupils' work will help all teachers raise expectation and allow pupils to make the progress of which they are capable. The library is well stocked and offers a real invitation to read. The sets of books in the atrium are well chosen and extensive, banded to allow pupils to work through them progressively as reading competence develops.

## MATHEMATICS

87. The proportion of pupils attaining or exceeding the expected national level in Year 4 is currently well below average but the substantial majority of pupils in that year group are making progress at a typical pace. About a third of these nine-year-olds are at the expected national level for their age, a further third are not far behind and could achieve the expected level by the end of Year 4; the remainder are significantly behind expectations. Almost half of the Year 4 pupils are on the register for special educational needs and several have difficulties with learning that are significant. The majority of the nine-year-olds have made expected or better progress during the present school year but those with low attainment struggled in the autumn term and, although back on track now, have not made the progress that they should in the year as a whole. The Year 4 pupils had well below average standards in 2000 when they were aged seven and so, in the two intervening years, have made the amount of progress that is expected nationally overall. The standard of current work in Year 3 is above average. The pace of learning in lessons and the long-term achievement of pupils in Year 3 are consistent with expectations and they are on course to attain above average standards by the end of Year 4. Standards and achievement are at least satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and so the current significant weakness in standards among the oldest pupils is likely to be remedied from autumn 2002 onwards. Compared to the previous inspection, standards in Year 2 are higher and improvement has been satisfactory. Standards in Year 4 are not as high as the previous inspection but this is a blip.
88. In Year 4, almost all of the pupils are aware that they can use different strategies to arrive at the correct answer but that some methods are more efficient. When adding several numbers, for example, they know that it is often sensible to look for pairs that make 10 and can apply this knowledge when adding tens and units. During mental work, most pupils are able to add  $80+20+90$  quickly and accurately by adapting this strategy. Those with the highest attainment in the year group can add three-digit numbers on paper using columns and can add decimal numbers to two places. The substantial majority of nine-year-olds know the  $\times 2$ ,  $\times 3$ ,  $\times 4$  and  $\times 5$  multiplication facts and can use these facts when completing division calculations mentally, such as  $21 \div 3$ . They have a working knowledge of simple fractions and a well-developed knowledge of shape, space, and measures.
89. The standard of current work in Year 2 is average and pupils are making satisfactory progress. About 90 per cent of the seven-year-olds are attaining or exceeding the expected national level for their age, including about a quarter who exceed expectations. They are beginning to understand place value and methods for adding or subtracting numbers with tens and units, for example  $38+25$ , including methods to do this mentally. Most of them are confident when adding such numbers but only the highest attaining are confident with subtraction at this level. The speed of recall of basic number facts to 10 for many seven-year-olds is slow and this aspect needs further teaching. The early indications of the 2002 tests for the Year 2 pupils are that the proportion attaining or exceeding expectations is broadly average.
90. The teaching is good overall. Nearly all of the teaching is good or better including some that is very good; one lesson was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is very good, questions, explanations and tasks are targeted at pupils with different levels of attainment so that everyone is involved throughout the lesson and work is well matched to learning needs. The pace of teaching and the level of challenge are highly motivating; pupils sustain interest and produce maximum effort until the work is complete. In a very good lesson in Year 4, the mental warm up began with adding an array of numbers less than 10. The different methods used by pupils, such as starting with the biggest and looking for pairs of numbers that make 10 were discussed. Arrays of numbers were provided and the level of difficulty increased. By the end of the mental warm up, the level of challenge was very high and all pupils had been able to compare methods and learn which were the most efficient. The main teaching concentrated on written methods of adding large numbers using columns and independent work was provided for groups of pupils at different levels of difficulty.
91. The National Numeracy Strategy has been implemented effectively in the main but there are inconsistencies between the classes reflecting variations in teacher knowledge and expertise. Mental number work is usually a priority in the early stages of each lesson but is not always conducted at a brisk enough pace or organised to incorporate questions at various levels of difficulty so that pupils of all ability are included, except in lessons of the highest quality. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the range and challenge of questions during mental warm up is insufficient to hold the attention of the pupils or ensure that they are all included; work at the same level is provided for all pupils, which is unsatisfactory, and is ill-matched to individual learning needs.
92. The yearly and termly planning for the curriculum is good and largely reflects the National Numeracy Strategy. The work for each year group and the time available for the subject is clearly allocated to classes and the broad objectives for learning for each term are identified. The basic structure of the weekly planning is good but the way

in which teachers complete the weekly plans varies from class to class and sometimes the plans have insufficient provision for the less able pupils. Regular and appropriate assessments of attainment are conducted and these are being collated and used to monitor individual progress; this is good practice. Leadership of the subject has been affected by staff changes and is currently in the hands of the headteacher and a very competent but temporary member of staff. A new commercial scheme was introduced into Years 3 and 4 during the spring term 2002. The scheme is the same as that used at the middle school to which the pupils will transfer at the end of Year 4 and this shows good liaison with partner institutions to promote curricular continuity between the stages of education. Resources are satisfactory in quality, quantity, and range.

## SCIENCE

93. The proportion of nine-year-olds currently working at or above the expected national level is below average; standards in this year group are low. The proportion doing so at the age of seven is average and standards are average in Years 1 and 3. In all classes, the substantial majority of the pupils have increased their attainment during the present school year by the expected national amount. Achievement over time is satisfactory for the average and low attaining pupils but the more able pupils are underachieving. Standards could be higher and there is not enough emphasis on challenging the more able pupils and on increasing the proportion in each year group with higher than expected attainment for their age. Compared to the previous inspection, standards within the school as a whole are broadly the same but those in Year 4 are lower and improvement overall has been insufficient. Pupils with special educational needs mostly make satisfactory progress in relation to the difficulties that they face. There are no significant differences in attainment or achievement between pupils of different gender or background.
94. When visiting the school wild life garden, the pupils in Year 4 responded very well to the teacher's suggestions to find different forms of plant, animal and insect life and were very willing to comment on what they found. They were able to make simple classifications to sort what had been observed into various groups and recognised that different living things are found in various habitats. They know, for example, that frogs, newts and pond skaters need water and that butterflies and ladybirds live near to plants. Knowledge of habitats, however, is limited and very few could give examples of ways that different creatures have adapted to their environment. All of the nine-year-olds have some knowledge of human body parts; materials and their properties; and physical processes. Only about a third of them, however, have levels that are consistent with the national expectations for their age. The seven-year-olds are able to observe the movement of different animals and classify the movement under various headings. They willingly collected data about newts, for example, and readily turned to reference books to find out more.
95. The teaching is satisfactory; all of it is satisfactory or better, including half that is good. This range and quality, however, is not as good as the typical national picture and there is room for improvement. In a good lesson in Year 3, the strong emphasis was placed on experimentation. The pupils were involved in a series of investigations with plants. They had, for example, discovered that the stems of plants channel water upward from the roots. They had placed celery and daffodil stalks into a jar of water mixed with food dye and then observed over a day or so how the water reached the top of the stalks, changing their colour and the colour of the daffodil flowers. In a separate investigation, they measured the growth of a sunflower plant and studied the conditions most favourable to growth. During discussions about their discoveries, the teacher emphasised appropriate terminology, such as "control" and "experiment" and carefully demonstrated correct experimental methodology. The pupils sustained interest in this lesson primarily because the investigations involved natural and tangible materials and the recording stemmed appropriately from those investigations. In satisfactory lessons, the direct teaching is adequate but there is less use of tangible resources and too much reliance on worksheets, resulting in weaker interest among the pupils, knowledge that is relatively shallow, and learning that is less efficient.
96. Subject leadership is not as effective as it should be in communicating a clear vision of good practice in the teaching or in helping to raise the quality of teaching from satisfactory to very good and excellent levels. There has been no audit of teachers' subject expertise or training needs and no monitoring of teaching in the subject has been carried out; this is unsatisfactory. The curriculum planning has been reorganised during the present school year and nationally prepared schemes of work have been adopted; this is good. The schemes provide adequate guidance on the curriculum content to be taught to each year group. What has not yet been fully achieved in practice, however, is clear progression to the skills that are taught so that they become more demanding and complex as pupils get older or their attainment higher. All of the classes, for example, had initiated experiments into plant growth using sunflower seeds but there was little to separate the skills, knowledge, or expectations of pupils in Year 2 from those in Year 4. Basic assessment arrangements have been implemented; this is satisfactory. The range of resources is sufficient to teach the curriculum, they are satisfactory in quality and range but are not always used to best effect.

## ART AND DESIGN

97. Standards are good throughout the school and have improved since the previous inspection. The subject is strongly taught and a broad range of experiences is provided. Almost all pupils are attaining or exceeding the expected national level for their age and the differences in standards between each year group show that achievement over time is good. Nine-year-olds have a good knowledge of artists such as Van Gogh and can emulate his work, on sunflowers for example, with considerable success. Their paintings show good accuracy and attention to detail, they have recognisable shape and the beginnings of form. Colour is well used, with appropriate attention to composition, including foreground, middle and background. Seven-year-old pupils can draw with confidence from observation and memory and are very willing to explore different techniques with pencils of different softness. In one lesson, they experimented with hard and soft lines and with different shading and smudging techniques, absorbed and obviously enjoying what they were doing.
98. The teaching is good. In a good lesson in Year 1, the teacher used a picture by Rubens to talk about the characteristics of a self-portrait. Good use was made of correct terminology and the essential artistic features were clearly explained. The teacher's good questioning technique led to all pupils being involved and by the end of the shared part of the lesson, all pupils were well motivated and eager to explore what they had learnt using pastels, chalks and crayons. Much of the provision in the school is through small group and independent activity, often supported by a class assistant or an interested parent. This allows pupils sufficient time to explore and develop their skills. Appropriate emphasis is placed on techniques and on improving skills through practical application and this is good practice. The subject is satisfactorily led and managed. The yearly and termly curriculum planning gives adequate guidance for teachers and, in practice, provides for progression in learning. The assessment arrangements are undeveloped however and the introduction of a manageable system of annual assessment should be explored. Resources are sufficient in quality, quantity, and range.

## DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

99. The standard of work in Year 2 and in Year 4 is average. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both design and making. This is the same as standards found at the time of the last inspection. The evidence is limited. During this inspection, it was not possible to observe any lessons. Evidence is based upon discussions with pupils and teachers, together with analysis of pupils' work and teachers' planning.
100. The basic skills of cutting with scissors, bending and folding different materials skills are developed in Year 1, where pupils make good progress in a variety of activities that enhance both their design and making skills. These pupils explore types of hinges and make their own from paper. They use construction materials to find out how they can make their structures stable. Pupils also extend their knowledge of levers and linkages through cutting and joining pieces of card to make flowers in their pots and teddy bears with moving parts. As part of their pre-Christmas work, these Year 1 pupils designed and made angels, Christmas trees, and stars using card and a variety of other materials. During these activities, pupils' fine physical control is improved through the handling of small pieces of material and through stitching. This work was of good quality and helped pupils to understand how to design, choose materials and how to make a finished product which is aesthetically pleasing and of good quality. At this stage, pupils also develop their skills of evaluation through deciding how their products can be improved upon.
101. Progress slows in Year 2. Pupils make puppets out of paper and card and have experience of weaving. They also make books designed to stimulate the interest of young readers. The activities undertaken, however, do not significantly broaden their skills in design or making. Pupils' evaluation skills are limited. As pupils transfer through Years 3 and 4, their progress increases. They investigate types of bread and make sandwiches using different breads and fillings to find out which are the most popular. They design and make a bag for their calculators. This activity is good, engaging pupils in the full design and making process and allowing them to develop their skills of stitching and decorating materials. The designs and products are of good quality. Pupils also learn how energy may be stored then released to make movement through making model animals that are capable of moving on their wheels. Pneumatics is explored and pupils' skills of sawing and joining wood are enhanced through designing and making a 'Jack in the Box'.
102. Pupils enjoy their tasks of designing and making, and apply intellectual and creative effort. Overall however, their experiences are limited to a relatively small number of activities, with few opportunities to investigate and evaluate a range of products, mechanisms, or materials to any depth of understanding.

103. There is no permanent coordinator for the subject and there is no one in the school who possesses good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This lack of expertise means that teachers cannot gain access to immediate advice concerning how the subject skills and concepts can be most effectively taught. There is no monitoring of the subject, which would help to ensure greater consistency across all year groups. The activities undertaken are based upon the county scheme. This is very good, but teachers still need advice and training in knowledge of the subject and how to improve upon pupils' skills of design and making. The resources are generally adequate to allow for some improvement in standards and are organised and accessible.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

104. Standards are broadly average by the end of Years 2 and 4. This is a similar picture to the last inspection. Progress is generally satisfactory except in the key skills of field-study work. The curriculum is shared with history on the year plan, and since history is the focus this term, only one lesson of geography was observed. Judgement on the subject was based on work in books and discussion with pupils. These show that there is satisfactory coverage of the various strands of the programme of study and satisfactory use of the two-year cycle of topics. There is insufficient opportunity for pupils to compare different localities and for field study work, particularly in Years 3 and 4.

105. In Years 1 and 2, pupils learn about the local streets, shops, and school grounds and begin to understand that a map is an aerial view. Good use is made of photographs to enable pupils to revisit the journeys they make in their local environment. By the time pupils are nine, they have begun to understand the importance of mapping and are able to show that a map is not the same as an aerial photograph or a diagrammatic representation. This is at the level that might be expected. Higher levels of understanding about why people live in a particular locality have not been covered. In Year 4, the pupils broaden their study to include a local town but this study is constrained by a lack of first hand experience and not all of the pupils have visited the town. Insufficient opportunities for field-study work or for map studies are provided.

106. Only one full lesson was seen, which is insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching for the subject. In that lesson, which was satisfactory, the pupils focused on culling information from brochures and tourist material and reproducing it in a different form. However, the range of subject specific skills that were utilised was not broad enough. In other subjects, children's attention is insufficiently drawn to different localities as these are highlighted in their studies. The school has adopted national guidelines for the subject in order to support planning but the coordination of the subject is under-developed because of staffing constraints. Resources are only just adequate and opportunities for field-study work are limited.

## **HISTORY**

107. Standards are satisfactory; this is a similar picture to the last inspection. In Year 2, the attainment of the majority of pupils is in line with the national expectation but few exceed expectations. Not enough emphasis is put on acquiring the very specific skills of historical enquiry, interpretation, and explanation that would bring the subject to life and raise standards further. Work in books indicates that there is satisfactory coverage at a factual level of the two-year cycle of history topics outlined in the school's curriculum plan.

108. In Years 1 and 2, pupils are developing a sense of chronology by studying the lives of famous people such as Beatrix Potter and Queen Elizabeth II and placing them on a history timeline. They know about their own family tree and important historical figures such as Grace Darling. Good understanding of historical sequence has been achieved through studies of the invention and development of Lego. Pupils are coming to understand how life has changed over time, for example through the study of Norman history the development of hospitals from the time of Florence Nightingale, and from studying the seaside a hundred years ago and in modern times. In one lesson, pupils showed great interest in the story of a shipwreck and Grace Darling's efforts to save the crew. They see clearly the reasons for the development of the modern lifeboat service, recognising its function as exactly the same as Grace's rowing boat.

109. In Year 4, pupils use a range of sources, including a video programme, to investigate Vikings and specifically to consider longboats as a source of evidence when learning about Viking lifestyle. They understand that Vikings were skilled craftspeople and sailors and discover that longboats were used for exploring, fighting, fishing, and trading. From this work, pupils are beginning to understand that historical evidence, both archaeological and documentary, can give pointers to the way communities lived. They are fascinated by the way plant dye and cowry shells found in Viking remains indicate the extent of Viking travels. Pupils learnt that a type of cowry shell,

which was not native to Scandinavia, was found in Viking remains and indicated that they traded in faraway places. From this work, pupils are developing a satisfactory understanding of the importance of historical evidence.

110. Teaching is satisfactory but not enough focus is given to historical enquiry or the use of primary and secondary sources of evidence. For example, in Year 2, pupils were asked to write a newspaper article about a stormy night, which became a creative writing exercise without proper reference to key vocabulary or the historical detail of Grace Darling's endeavour. In Year 4, the open-ended task of designing their own Viking longboat did not require pupils to study the resources available in the classroom, particularly the project loan books on Viking life. This allowed pupils too free a hand in the drawing, rather than behaving as young historians, checking the detail of design, dimension and decoration from historical evidence in the history books. In one project in Year 3, pupils were offered good opportunities of focusing on historical evidence when working on an Anglo-Saxon project. Here pupils constructed Anglo-Saxon huts of original design and experimented with wattle and daub to create the material the roofs would have been made from. Such first-hand experience in the investigation gave children a real sense of Anglo-Saxon accommodation. Through work in books, it is evident that the nine-year-olds are becoming aware that primary sources, while being essential evidence, are limited in what they reveal about the daily lives of the Anglo-Saxons. This is a very important lesson for young historians.
111. The curriculum is satisfactorily broad and balanced. Work in books indicates an appropriate range of study. The school has adopted a nationally prepared scheme of work and this is helping to secure continuity and progression through the programme of study. The newly appointed coordinator is building up resources to meet the needs of the particular topics studied by each year-group. Currently, however, these are rather limited. Good use is made of loans from a local museum. Too few trips are made to places of historical interest. This is unfortunate, as the pupils are not benefiting enough from first-hand observation and enquiry at historical sites.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

112. Standards are below average and have fallen relative to other schools since the previous inspection. The subject is, rightly, a priority for development; not enough improvement has been made since the previous inspection. Almost no direct teaching of groups or classes is timetabled; all of the provision is through individual opportunities in lessons in other subjects and very little of this happened during the inspection. The evidence was gathered from discussions with pupils in Year 2 and Year 4, with the pupils chosen by the teachers.
113. The seven-year-olds have very limited knowledge and skills. Some of them have written stories using word-processing programs but these had been written on paper first and then copied onto the computer, which is inefficient, inappropriate, and misses opportunities for learning. With adult support, the pupils have used graphics programs to draw pictures, encyclopaedia programs to access information and data programs to produce graphs but cannot explain how these tasks were accomplished. This shows insufficient opportunity to consolidate learning. The nine-year-olds can save and retrieve work and have some of the basic word-processing skills. They have copied their hand written stories onto the computer but are unable to use editing facilities such as cut and paste, showing little development of skills since the age of seven. They have tabulated information into a database and produced pie charts using the data but can recollect doing this only once. With adult help, they have accessed the Internet and sent an e-mail but do not have the knowledge or skills to attempt this independently. The nine-year-olds have used a simple control program and could, eventually, write instructions for a 'robot' to follow a pathway in the shape of a square, though they took some time remembering how this was done. They showed considerable enthusiasm when doing this and were very willing to explore the use of the program and quick to learn by experimentation, a key requisite with this technology. Overall, the nine-year-olds are attaining levels significantly behind expectations for their age, reflecting a lack of opportunity rather than an unwillingness or inability to learn.
114. The provision is poor. The ratio of pupils to computers is higher than is typically found and there are insufficient resources for the programme of study to be taught efficiently or effectively. Not enough use is made of the available resources. An audit of staff skills has been conducted and relevant training provided through the national initiatives currently available; this is good. The yearly and termly curriculum planning is based on nationally prepared schemes and units of work, which is satisfactory, though these have not then been used to chart clearly a progression to the development of skills and this should be remedied quickly. Some of the classes are keeping records of the pupils' computer experiences during the term but are not assessing the attainment of the pupils; a manageable system of assessing attainment annually should be developed. The leadership of the subject is not doing enough to communicate a clear vision of good practice in teaching the subject and the management arrangements do not include observation of teachers or monitoring of standards; this is unsatisfactory.

## MUSIC

115. Very few lessons were seen due to timetable arrangements. In the lessons seen, standards were generally satisfactory and singing in assembly was of a good standard. The overall picture is similar to the last inspection, though an improvement in singing.
116. The substantial majority of pupils in Year 2 attain standards in line with expectations in controlling sounds through playing musical instruments and using their voices expressively. They are able to create musical patterns with untuned instruments by scraping, tapping, blowing and shaking, and draw on musical elements of pitch (higher and lower sounds), dynamics (louder and quieter), and tempo (faster and slower). They respond well to leads from taped music; for example, they sang a modern version of "Singing in the Rain" with enthusiasm and good control, contrasting the melody with the repeated pulse of the chorus. In a lesson in Year 4, pupils achieved good standards in singing. The teacher had high expectations and pupils responded well.
117. Teaching is satisfactory in Year 2, good in Year 4, and satisfactory overall. The whole-school hymn practice, led by the headteacher, was good. In Year 2, planning and teaching are ambitious and allow pupils to utilise what they know about the musical elements when performing using instruments. In one lesson, higher standards might have been achieved had the overall behaviour in the class allowed more progress. In Year 4, pupils bring a great deal of understanding to their singing through good expression. They sing tunefully with good pitch and great enthusiasm and are able to change tempo, holding a pause at the end of a line to create a moment of stillness. Such moments contributed to the spiritual development of pupils. The nine-year-olds sing with a great sense of the overall shape of the melody and recognise that sounds can be combined and used expressively to good effect; for example, they sang about Noah and his floating zoo with clear change of tempo, demonstrating that they understand this very well.
118. Pupils do not have enough opportunity to listen and appraise music. A good range of music accompanies entry to assembly but it is not referred to at the opening of these sessions nor is time given for extra listening. Pupils are sometimes able to evaluate their own work, for example having achieved a long note and perfect stillness during singing assembly they clapped spontaneously, demonstrating self-evaluation and great judgement. Hymn practice allows the children an opportunity to sing a range of songs of a spiritual nature. The headteacher presents these whole-school singing assemblies very well. She shows great expertise in helping the whole school achieve good standards in singing and her high expectations help pupils rise to the challenge and achieve better than expected standards. The curriculum follows a nationally prepared scheme of work, which was introduced during the present school year and needs more time to be fully implemented. Arrangements for assessment are under-developed. Resources are satisfactory.

## PHYSICAL EDUCATION

119. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and, at the end of Year 2 and Year 4, the substantial majority of them attain standards in line with those expected nationally for those age groups. This is the same as standards found at the previous inspection. The evidence is limited. It was only possible to observe one lesson in the infants and one in the juniors. Evidence has also come from discussions with pupils and teachers, scrutiny of teachers' planning and observations of pupils during clubs and playing on the yard.
120. Pupils in Year 1 develop their basic skills of running and throwing, and show increasing control over their bodies as they run with change of pace and direction. They are able to evaluate their own movement and that of others and show an understanding of some of the main issues concerned with good running style. Pupils throw beanbags with an increasing emphasis upon the skills needed to achieve distance and accuracy. Pupils of Year 2 and Year 3 develop their abilities to manoeuvre a ball with increasing control and accuracy. Using their rackets, most pupils are able to hit a moving ball over a barrier to land in a defined area. Some of the balls, however, do not bounce well and a few of the pupils find difficulty in trying to hit the ball. Pupils are generally well behaved and respond enthusiastically to the activities undertaken.
121. Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers know the advantages of pupils warming up and cooling down, though these aspects were underdeveloped, with the warm up not being sufficiently extensive and the cooling down time being too short. Lessons lack vigorous activity, which would increase pupils' heart rate and strengthen muscles. Teachers' own demonstrations and those given by pupils are used to show how skills should be performed correctly; this is good practice. When the demonstrations show accurate performance of the skills to be learned, pupils acquire the skills quickly. On a few occasions, however, the demonstrations show skills that are performed

incorrectly and this has an adverse effect upon learning.

122. The resources are well organised, accessible and are adequate for teachers to teach effectively. The number of good quality balls of different sizes, however, limits the effectiveness of teaching of ball skills. The coordinator is enthusiastic to develop the subject and has attended some training courses. Further training, designed to extend her own knowledge and understanding of the subject would allow her greater opportunity to raise standards in the school. The planning is based upon the Suffolk scheme of work, which is detailed and is an extremely helpful guide when used by the teachers. Those teachers who lack specialist expertise in the subject need guidance on how the activities set out in the scheme may be broken down into the small steps of learning for each lesson. There is no monitoring of the teaching or planning. No emphasis has been placed upon the development of the staff. This, together with the lack of monitoring, accounts for the school not making progress since the previous inspection. The school provides football, organised by two volunteer helpers, as a lunchtime club. This is on offer for the girls and boys of Years 2, 3, and 4. In cooperation with the local primary school, the pupils also have the opportunity to attend a gymnastics club.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

123. Standards are average throughout the school. At the previous inspection, standards in Year 2 were good in comparison with other schools. Standards have remained broadly at the same level in the years since then whereas those found nationally have improved. By the time they are seven, the pupils understand that religious symbols convey deep meanings for believers. They learn about non-religious symbols such as road-signs before moving on to the study of the importance of religious symbols such as the cross for Christians. They are aware that world religions have rules for followers which are found in their sacred books, for example the Bible and the Holy Q'ran. They understand the importance of the commandments for Christians and investigate how the more archaic language can be made more accessible for modern readers. They are learning about parables, which are stories with meanings beyond the literal and, for example, that the story of the lost sheep is symbolic of Christ's love for everyone.

124. Standards of work seen in Years 3 and 4 shows that pupils are covering an appropriate syllabus in line with the Suffolk scheme and the Locally Agreed Syllabus. They study world religions beyond Christianity and focus on the family lives of Jews, Muslims, and Sikhs. Pupils are learning important messages about friendship, for example, that friends can fall out and make up, can recognise each other's strengths and skills and that friendship does not need to be exclusive. They are aware that people with different religions have important and exclusive dates in their religious calendars, for example Easter for Christians. This is reinforced in assemblies when, for example, as part of a project on Buddhism, pupils learned that in the week of the inspection Buddhist families around the world were celebrating the anniversary of Buddha's Enlightenment.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and there was some good teaching seen. Teachers' subject knowledge is secure and well supported by the local scheme. Teachers make appropriate links between different world religions, for example in terms of rules for living, symbols, and prayer. In one good lesson on the parables, the lesson plan introduced the story and then encouraged the pupils to go beyond the literal meaning to explore matters of Christian faith. The teacher recognised that the subject involves abstract ideas and drew on pupils' own experiences of friendship to help them understand.

126. The curriculum is broad, balanced, and relevant for young people. It makes a good contribution to the spiritual, social and cultural curriculum. The curriculum places an important emphasis on people working in harmony. There are links to other areas of the curriculum, for example when Year 3 pupils wrote about what they would do for the common good. Pupils are encouraged to pray at particular moments of the day, for example grace before meals, and in assembly, when they are offered opportunities to reflect on the meaning of the session.