

INSPECTION REPORT

**WICKHAMBROOK COMMUNITY PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Wickhambrook

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124548

Acting Headteacher: Mrs Anne Evans

Reporting inspector: Mrs Eileen Parry
2615

Dates of inspection: 1st – 4th July 2002

Inspection number: 243684

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | First School |
| School category: | Community |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 – 9 |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Cutbush Wickhambrook Newmarket Suffolk |
| Postcode: | CB8 8XN |
| Telephone number: | 01440 820309 |
| Fax number: | 01440 821631 |
| Appropriate authority: | Governing Body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs Susan Blaza |
| Date of previous inspection: | September 1997 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|--------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 2615 | Eileen Parry | Registered inspector | English Art Music Foundation Stage Special educational needs Equal opportunities | What sort of a school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| 14404 | Alan Rolfe | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Partnership with parents. |
| 29262 | Nick Hardy | Team inspector | Mathematics Geography History Religious education | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 2632 | Roger Holmes | Team inspector | Science Information and communication technology Design and technology Physical education | How well does the school care for its pupils? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This small rural school serves seven villages covering quite a large area so many children come by school bus. Currently there are 113 pupils on roll from the ages of four to nine; 48 boys and 65 girls. The children come from a wide range of family backgrounds. Ten per cent are entitled to free school meals, which is a little lower than average proportion. Very few pupils are from other ethnic backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. None of the children have statements of special educational need but 22 per cent of children are on the school's special needs register because they find learning or behaviour difficult. This is about average. Children start the school with a very wide range of attainment, going from those with learning difficulties to the very able. Overall, attainment can vary above or below the average from year to year because of small numbers. At present, it is above average. The school has had difficulties in recruiting teaching staff during this last year. These have been resolved for September 2002.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Overall, the school currently provides a satisfactory education for its pupils although circumstances in the past have led to some significant difficulties that have affected the quality of education and are still working through. These are mainly related to staffing problems in the last year that have had an adverse effect on the children's education in Year 4. Pupils reach satisfactory standards in all year groups, except in Year 4, where they are below average this year. The acting headteacher is providing good leadership in the short term, but leadership and management overall are unsatisfactory. This is because of the temporary nature of the headship and the fact that senior staff have not been given time to develop or undertake their management responsibilities. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English up to and including Year 3 are above the average, as is swimming throughout the school. Many children in the reception class are working beyond the expectations for their age.
- The school has made good provision for those who are particularly able in mathematics, helping them to achieve to their potential.
- Pupils behave well and are interested in learning because teachers manage their classes effectively and establish good relationships.
- Some parents make a significant contribution to work in school, especially to reading and swimming. Many help with homework.
- There are good procedures for identifying pupils who need special help and these pupils progress at similar rates to others.

What could be improved

- Pupils in Year 4 have not made enough progress over the last year as a result of too many changes of teachers.
- Leadership and management have too many weaknesses at present.
- The time given to different subjects does not lead to a good balance, for example there are gaps in what children learn in science at Year 2 and in religious education in Year 4.
- The way that the school assesses children's learning is not always effective.
- The relationships and communications with those parents who are disillusioned because of what has happened in the last year.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in September 1997 when it was set six tasks for improvement. It has made satisfactory progress overall in addressing these, despite the difficulties arising from staff changes. The school's strategic plan for development has more detail but can be improved further. National strategies have improved the curriculum for literacy and numeracy but there are gaps in some other subjects. Planning for lessons is good for literacy and numeracy and satisfactory for other subjects. Permanent teachers who are subject leaders give colleagues good support, although there are still some aspects of their roles that could be improved. Standards in design and technology have improved to be in line with expectations. In addition to those areas which the previous report required to be improved, standards have risen in English. There is better provision for information and communication technology (ICT) and good provision for more able youngsters in mathematics. The school has made significant improvements to the procedures for identifying children who have special educational needs and governors feel better informed because they visit the school more often.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

| Performance in: | compared with | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|------|------|-----------------|
| | all schools | | | similar schools |
| | 1999 | 2000 | 2001 | 2001 |
| Reading | C | C | B | C |
| Writing | A | C | C | E |
| Mathematics | C | A | C | E |

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

The table shows that results in reading were above average in 2001 compared to all schools. They were like those of similar schools based on the take-up of free school meals. In writing and mathematics, results were average but well below those in similar schools. English

results benefit from the added emphasis given to reading through additional time and through parent and other adult help. This year, results are likely to have improved and will probably be well above average in reading, and above average in writing and mathematics. Science, which is judged through assessments and not through tests, appears to be at the same level as last year with good achievement in the strand of natural science and poor achievement in the one about physical science.

By Year 2, children's current work shows good standards in reading and writing. Standards are average in mathematics but below average in science because aspects of the curriculum are not covered in enough depth. Standards in Year 4 are lower than average in English and mathematics but average in science. In most other subjects, children are working at the levels expected for their age and making satisfactory progress. Too little was seen to decide how children are doing in music and physical education throughout the school or in religious education by Year 2. By Year 4, pupils do not know as much as they should about religious education. All pupils do very well in swimming because the school has its own pool and the skills are taught effectively from reception onwards. Children in the reception class make steady progress and most have reached standards that are better than expected for their age at the end of the reception year. Children with special educational needs make good progress up to Year 3 and satisfactory progress in Year 4.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Almost all children enjoy coming to school and are interested in what they do. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Good. Children were well behaved in lessons and at play. Very occasionally, they did not listen as well they should in lessons. |
| Personal development and relationships | Satisfactory overall. There is good provision for pupils to learn with each other and play sociably. They are developing into sensible young people. |
| Attendance | Made average by the number of holiday absences. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils in: | Reception | Years 1 – 2 | Years 3 – 4 |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Quality of teaching | 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.

Overall, teaching is satisfactory. Teachers know their material well and prepare carefully for lessons. They use whole class, individual, paired and group organisation appropriately, according to the content of lessons. Teachers are friendly but firm and this is particularly important in Year 4 where pupils need a stronger structure to bring their attitudes to learning back to a good level. The good lessons were conducted at a lively pace that kept pupils working hard, for example by saying that only five minutes were allowed for a particular task. Teachers asked questions that forced pupils to think deeply and they often developed pupils'

answers through extra questions. Some lessons were more moderately paced and pupils worked more slowly, sometimes not completing their tasks. English is taught well in lessons. Pupils make good progress in reading because of the extra time that is given to it by teachers and the extra support from parents and other adults helping in school. The teaching of mathematics is satisfactory overall. The school is making extra effort to meet the needs of more able pupils in this subject. They benefit from skilled teaching once a week in small groups. Groups of pupils who need more help to read and write are given it through extra literacy lessons in infants and juniors. Teaching assistants contribute well to children's learning, especially in ICT and literacy. In all classes, more attention needs to be given to marking to help pupils to learn from their mistakes. Teachers have not had enough training in assessing National Curriculum levels and their judgements are not always accurate. Reception children are taught the basic skills of reading, writing and number well, but the times when children move from direct teaching to free choice and group activities are not always well organised.

Children throughout the school are easily motivated by good teaching and keen to learn. They also take advantage of lower expectations or lack of consistency. This comes through most strongly in Year 4. These pupils are just beginning to respond to the two teachers who share their class but they still show signs of the disruptions from the last two terms in their slowness to answer questions and their reluctance to settle down to work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory for children in reception. Unsatisfactory for infants and juniors. Parts of science and religious education are not given enough attention. Some subjects are given more time at the expense of others. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good up to Year 3 but satisfactory in Year 4. The school now has good procedures to identify which children need extra support. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | At present there are no children who speak English as an additional language |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development | Satisfactory overall with good opportunities for pupils to learn to work and play together. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school takes good care of its pupils. It is developing ways to assess pupils' learning better but currently these are not good enough. |

Through the parents' meeting, letters and the questionnaires, parents expressed many concerns. Nevertheless, they support children very well in activities such as 'Sports day' and by raising funds. Some make a considerable contribution in school to the standards that children reach in reading and swimming and others help their own children through homework.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Unsatisfactory. The interim arrangements are being well handled by the acting headteacher but the situation is still fragile because of staffing difficulties. The permanent staff take on responsibilities willingly and capably but have too many responsibilities and not enough time to fulfil them. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. Governors are regular visitors to the school and are keen to provide good support. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Unsatisfactory. The school sets too many priorities for improvement, making the targets difficult to achieve. Teachers need more help and time to enable them to review what is happening in their subjects. |
| The strategic use of resources | Satisfactory. Governors ensure that they use money to best advantage to buy goods and services. They are developing ways of consulting pupils more. Their application of the principles of 'best value' is satisfactory. The school is transferring to a new computerised system for financial management which is causing some problems at the moment in establishing balances accurately. |

The school has good accommodation both inside and outdoors, with the added advantage of its own heated swimming pool. There are sufficient materials to teach all of the subjects of the curriculum. Sufficient teachers are employed but, despite their best efforts, governors have been unable to find a longer term solution to staffing problems until the summer term.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

| What pleases parents most | What parents would like to see improved |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable about approaching the school • The school expects children to work hard | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stability of staffing • The range of extra activities • The information that is provided about how well their children are doing • The leadership and management of the school • The amount of work children receive • The school's partnership with parents • Helping children to become more mature • The quality of teaching, and marking in particular |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupils' behaviour in school• Their children's enjoyment of school |
|--|--|

The inspection finds that some of the parents' concerns are justified and others are not. The school provides a range of extra activities that is similar to other small schools. Good information is provided through the end of year reports. There is a special arrangement for parents every first Tuesday of the month to come into school and look at the children's books. However, the teachers could provide more information through the way that they mark and write comments in children's books. The instability of staffing has clearly been a major problem. The standards of work, behaviour and attitudes of children in Year 4 have been particularly badly affected but are improving under the present arrangements. The school expects to start in September with a permanent appointment to Year 4. The previous headteacher had been in post long enough to deal with some important and urgent issues but not long enough to develop the management skills of permanent staff. However, the acting headteacher has given good support during her term at the school and moved the school forward. A new headteacher will start in September.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The school's results in the 2001 tests and assessments for seven year olds were above average in reading, and average in writing and mathematics. They were like those of similar schools in reading and well below in writing and mathematics. The percentage of pupils gaining level 2 or above in reading and mathematics is greater than was reported at the last inspection, but smaller in writing. This year's tests and assessments are likely to be at least comparable in reading, writing and mathematics. At Year 4, the final year in this school, pupils' work has been adversely affected by the staffing problem that has given that class a succession of supply teachers and no continuity until this last term. Overall, the pupils' work is below where it should be in English and mathematics and pupils have not made enough progress because of their disturbed year. Elsewhere, pupils make steady progress from a good beginning.

2 The majority of pupils in Year 4 show a good command of language when they talk to adults individually. However, they have a reluctance to answer questions or to listen attentively as a class. This has developed in this last year as a result of too many different teachers. Reading has been least affected by the disturbances. Some pupils read very well and enjoy doing so; others read less fluently and only when asked. Overall, reading is a little above average. Year 4 pupils' written work in English has lost the quality of presentation that is seen in Year 3. Too little is individual enough to reflect their capabilities in writing. The standard of available past work is below where it should be for Year 4 pupils. Elsewhere in the school, pupils talk with confidence and listen sensibly. Their reading develops well from the good start that they are given in reception and, by Year 2, a good many pupils have skills that are beyond the expectations for their age. Pupils learn to join their writing by the end of Year 2 and almost all use a clear and legible script. They write in a variety of styles such as stories and letters. The more able writers in Year 2 achieve satisfactory standards but could write more extensively and present their work better if they were given clearer guidance on this through marking.

3 Standards of mathematics for current pupils in Year 4 are below expectations. Having too many teachers during Year 4 has meant that the mathematics curriculum has not been covered systematically. Because of this, many pupils in the year group have problems with basic mathematical ideas and concepts, have not made sufficient progress during the year and are not achieving as well as they should. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are satisfactory. Here the pupils have a sound knowledge of numbers, measurement and shape. They are less secure about collecting their own data and creating graphs. The additional provision for the more able in Years 1 to 4 means that this group of pupils experience a very good level of teaching that helps them to develop good thinking skills and promote higher than usual levels of understanding.

4 In Year 2, the assessments for science at the end of Year 2 are above average. However, the inspection judges standards to be below where they should be. This is because pupils have not covered all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth during Years 1 and 2 and the teacher assessment of these aspects is inaccurate. Pupils have a good understanding of animals and plants but they know too little about how materials behave and about physical processes such as forces and electricity. Pupils' standards in science are at the expected level by the time they leave the school. Their knowledge and understanding are still strongest in relation to animals and plants, but the other aspects of the subject are covered more effectively in Years 3 and 4. As a result, pupils develop a sound overall grasp of the subject.

5 In art, design and technology, geography, history, and ICT, pupils are working at the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 4 and are making satisfactory progress. There was too little evidence to make secure judgements about standards and progress in music or physical education at either Year 2 or Year 4, nor in religious education by Year 2. Year 4 pupils do not do well enough in religious education. They do not have a satisfactory level of knowledge about topics set for them in the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils do very well in swimming because the school has its own pool and skills are taught effectively from reception onwards.

6 Children in the reception class started the school with skills and knowledge that were better than average as a group. They have maintained steady progress and, overall, they have reached standards that are better than expected for their age in their early reading, writing and mathematical skills and in their knowledge of the world by the end of the reception year. Their personal, creative and physical developments are at expected levels.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7 As at the last inspection, pupils' attitudes to learning, their behaviour and relationships are good. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress in their personal development.

8 In formal and informal discussions, pupils said that they enjoy coming to school. They talk freely about subjects they like and things that they do not like. Many take part in the extra-curricular activities provided by the school. These positive attitudes are reflected in almost all lessons. Pupils co-operate well with their teachers and show good levels of interest and enthusiasm in their work. They listen carefully to their teachers' instructions, concentrate well and are keen and eager to contribute to classroom discussions, as in a Year 2 religious education lesson. However, although things are improving, there are still times when pupils in Year 4 show a reluctance to settle down and work.

9 In many lessons, pupils work well together; for example in a Year 3 design and technology lesson, pupils listened closely to the teacher's instructions and were eager to answer questions. They listened attentively to each other so that they could develop each other's ideas. Most pupils take a pride in their work, and happily talk about what they are doing.

10 The overall standard of behaviour is good in lessons. For example, when Year 4 pupils were making models moved by pneumatics, they were very well behaved throughout the lesson and showed a high level of motivation because they were interested in what they were doing. In only a few lessons were there any instances of pupils being distracted or distracting others. On almost all occasions, this was when teaching lacked pace or challenge and pupils lost interest in the lesson. Around the school, pupils also behave well. They are well aware of the school rules and observe them sensibly, because they understand that the rules are designed to ensure their safety.

11 Pupils say that bullying happens now and then but they know who to talk to and are confident that any instances would be dealt with. However, the school does not have a written anti-bullying policy to ensure a consistent response from staff should an incident be observed. There have not been any pupil exclusions in the current academic year.

12 Pupils from reception to Year 4 make satisfactory progress in their personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are good, so too are relationships between pupils. These help to foster learning. Pupils are eager to contribute to classroom discussions because they know that their views will be listened to and valued as in a

reception class geography lesson. Generally, in lessons, pupils work well in pairs and small groups, taking turns and sharing resources, and they listen to and respect the views of others. For example, pupils worked very well together in pairs in an ICT lesson, agreeing who was to be responsible for particular aspects of the tasks set them. They were able to discuss these tasks together sensibly, correcting mistakes and producing an agreed end result. Therefore, they made good progress during the lesson. Discussions with pupils indicate that their knowledge and understanding of other faiths and cultures are not well developed and they are given few opportunities to discuss their own personal beliefs and opinions. Their understanding of prejudice is quite limited but the way that they learn and play well together does not suggest any problems in this area.

13 Pupils of all ages take on responsibilities such as being classroom monitors, operating audio equipment and the overhead projector in assemblies, helping the teacher to set out equipment before lessons, and tidying away after lessons. The recently introduced school council is giving many pupils, across the age range, the opportunity to tell the staff about their concerns and ideas through formal meetings. Pupils enjoy being members of the school council and feel that they are making a positive contribution to the management of the school, and that their views are valued. However, pupils have limited opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning; mostly this is directed by the teacher.

14 Attendance is satisfactory but is lower than at the last inspection when it was reported to be very good. Records indicate that a significant number of pupils take holidays in school time and this lowers the overall picture. Authorised and unauthorised absences are broadly in line with national averages. Registration is undertaken morning and afternoon and meets statutory requirements.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

15 Taking account of pupils' work and of discussions with pupils, as well as lessons seen, teaching overall is satisfactory. Throughout the school, there was some good teaching observed. Only two lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory. These were from different teachers and for different subjects. This is a better picture than in the previous inspection because the weaknesses that were identified then have been dealt with by the last headteacher.

16 In all classes, relationships are good and pupils respond well to expectations that they will work hard. This is also noticeable in Year 4 where pupils' behaviour and attitude have been affected by the many staff changes this year. There are still some signs of the disruption to their learning, but when the teachers set down clear and decisive expectations about behaviour, pupils respond better.

17 Good lessons are planned carefully and well prepared. In some of these, the teachers gave pupils a clear idea of what they were going to learn so that pupils knew what they had to do, as in a Year 2 English lesson. Lessons flow smoothly because pupils know how much time they have to do their work. Teachers make pupils think by asking probing questions, for example in design and technology in Year 3. Good resources, such as photographs in reception and Year 1 science, help pupils to provide answers through looking at materials in front them. Teaching has a more modest effect when it is less well paced. On occasions, too much is presented for effective learning to take place, as in a Year 3 lesson on personal and social education. The two lessons that were judged unsatisfactory were for different reasons. In one case, lack of knowledge of the subject, music, meant that pupils did not learn enough; in the other, a religious education lesson, the task that pupils were given was unchallenging and the organisation allowed pupils to become too noisy. Swimming is taught very well

throughout the school and all staff have training to enable them to teach it confidently. Teaching assistants make particularly good contributions to literacy and ICT where they work with groups of children.

18 Teachers have secure subject knowledge in English and mathematics and planning for these subjects is better than for others. The pace of most literacy lessons is good and there are many examples of effective questioning skills at the beginnings of lessons, such as a Year 4 lesson about the purpose and use of reference books. Care is taken to provide tasks during group work in both literacy and numeracy lessons that are suitable for all pupils. A good example of this happened in a Year 3 mathematics lesson and this helped all pupils to increase their knowledge. The provision to stretch the most able pupils in mathematics is very good because the teacher has a high degree of confidence in the subject and uses teaching methods that are possible in small group situations very effectively. Discussion is very challenging and she makes the pupils think by giving them complex problems to solve.

19 Pupils know that they should work hard. A few in each class find this difficult but most do so quietly and willingly. Year 4 pupils know that they are supposed to work hard but do not do so consistently. They are just beginning to show some of the willingness of younger classes to work. All Year 4 pupils are individually responsive to teachers and visitors but some are not so keen to answer in whole-class sessions. Quite a few grumble when asked to do written work but settle down to it once they are told firmly but politely to get on. Throughout the school, teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work together in pairs or in groups. Pupils do this calmly and work together well, including Year 4, for instance in a music lesson.

20 Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. In Year 3, there is a mixture of praise, criticism and points for improvement but in other classes the marking lacks this balance. Teachers do not advise pupils how to improve their work often enough. Teachers are beginning to give pupils a specific 'target' to work on, for example target sheets are put into children's literacy books and a smiling face records when the target is reached. However, there is some way to go before this good practice makes it clear enough to pupils and their parents what needs to be learned next.

21 The teaching in the reception class is satisfactory overall. Some imaginative approaches make children excited and enthusiastic to take part, as in the outside mathematics lesson. Specific skills such as reading, writing and number work are taught well. Parent and adult helpers regularly listen to children read so that most children quickly become competent. Sometimes the start of lessons is too long for some children. The children try very hard to keep their attention on the teacher during these times but for some it is too much. They stop listening although they sit quietly. The transfer from the structured work for the whole class to the individual, group or free choice activities is not managed well enough to ensure a smooth transition. Children can get a bit noisy and argumentative at these times. Some activities need to provide more challenge.

22 Teachers write clear individual education plans for children with special educational needs to ensure that children's learning is appropriate for them. There are also extra sessions which focus on literacy work. These are well conducted and help pupils to improve their reading and writing. Pupils also benefit from extra help for reading. As a result of the quality of support, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Year 4 but good progress elsewhere.

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

23 The curriculum for both the infants and juniors contains all the subjects of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. A high percentage of time is spent on the teaching of English and mathematics and results in the amount of time spent on other subjects not always being appropriate. Although all subjects are taught, elements of their programmes of study are not taught in full or to the depth necessary. These are the physical properties aspect of science and the study of faiths in religious education. The amount of time spent on the teaching of each subject is not rigorously checked. The recommended minimum amount of teaching time is not completed for pupils in the juniors, although is satisfactory for pupils in the infants. In response to concerns about an appropriate challenge for more able pupils, additional teaching has been arranged for higher attaining pupils in mathematics. This is proving very successful in raising the attainment of these pupils. Pupils with special educational needs are also well supported and make good progress in lessons.

24 Both the National Literacy and National Numeracy Strategies have been satisfactorily introduced and are beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards, especially in reading. Improvements in writing skills have taken place but more is needed. Currently there are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects such as history and geography. Most teachers use the three-part structure provided by the Numeracy Strategy to aid lesson planning and follow the framework for teaching closely. Coverage is checked by the subject co-ordinator. Because of staffing problems, the work provided for pupils in Year 4 has not always been well matched to their needs in either subject and has resulted in many pupils' achievement being unsatisfactory during this year.

25 Despite concerns expressed by parents, the inspection finds that the school provides a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities. Many activities take place at lunchtimes because children go home by bus but some are after school. All activities are well attended and are seen as valuable and enjoyable by pupils. Many parents make a valuable contribution to these activities, providing coaching and tuition in activities as varied as swimming and cycling proficiency. Other adults teach French and provide tennis lessons in summer and football in winter. Educational visits to museums such as that for East Anglian Life, as well as visits from theatre groups and sculptors, help to extend and enliven pupils' learning.

26 Not all pupils have had an equal access to the curriculum during this school year. In Year 4, work that is suitable for the needs of all the pupils has not been provided throughout the year in either English or mathematics and this has resulted in unsatisfactory progress for many pupils. In other classes, there are examples of pupils copying work regardless of their ability or need.

27 The curriculum for children in the reception class is satisfactory. Given that this is the summer term, children have a reasonable balance between learning from their special curriculum (Foundation Stage) and subjects of the National Curriculum. However, there are some children who would benefit from a timetable that better reflects the Foundation Stage guidance and contains more play-based learning.

28 Provision for pupils' personal education is satisfactory. Time is given for pupils to discuss issues that concern them, such as bullying and friendship, and the themes in assembly are used satisfactorily to explore these. Pupils are provided with opportunities to take part in friendly competition to improve their sporting and social skills. There is no formal method in place to record pupils' personal development. Pupils' social and health education is satisfactory. Health education is provided through science, where they study the need for a healthy diet and exercise. Sex education and drug awareness education are tackled sensitively and the school ensures that parents are consulted on these issues.

29 The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is good. A dedicated group of parents regularly help with school activities and extra-curricular activities, as well as providing support in school. Members of the local clergy visit school regularly to take assemblies but also enrich pupils' wider educational experiences through the coaching of tennis. The school and pupils benefit from visits by theatre groups, Indian and Chinese visitors and a sculptor, who all add to pupils' knowledge of the wider world. Relationships with other local schools are satisfactory. Pupils make visits to their receiving middle school prior to moving. Teaching staff from some of these schools make visits to the school in the summer term. Relationships with other primary schools provide useful social and sporting contacts with children from other schools.

30 Provision for the spiritual, moral and cultural development is satisfactory with social development being good. Daily assemblies provide structured opportunities for pupils to listen to and discuss issues that are of concern to them. Teachers provide good role models when dealing with problems through their calm and conciliatory manner. In lessons and in their involvement with each other during lessons and in the playground, pupils show respect for others and most listen carefully when others are speaking. In lessons, pupils are listened to and their questions are answered sensitively. Many pupils ask sensible questions and are not afraid to ask when they do not understand.

31 The school uses a sound range of methods to improve pupils' moral understanding. Classes have rules and pupils have been involved in drawing these up. On the rare occasions when standards of behaviour fall below agreed levels, teachers do not always remind pupils of the standards outlined in these agreed rules. Strategies to ensure that behaviour remains good include the home/school agreement, reward systems for good behaviour and agreed sanctions where improvements do not happen. Pupils particularly enjoy receiving superstar certificates that not only acknowledge good work but also good behaviour.

32 Structures to improve social development are good. Pupils attend sporting events with other local schools. They raise funds for a wide range of charities with pupils initiating many of these fund-raising efforts. Pupils contribute their artwork to the local village carnival and also enter the choral speaking competition with other local schools. The school arranges visits from artists, the theatre and from members of the ethnic minorities to enhance pupils' social understanding.

33 The school ensures that pupils respect and develop a sound understanding of the dance, music and art of other cultures in preparation for life in a multi-cultural society. The religious education curriculum includes the study of world faiths. While these are covered satisfactorily with younger pupils, there is limited understanding of these by pupils in Year 4. The school has a sound range of fiction and non-fiction books containing stories and information on other faiths and cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

34 The school takes good care of its pupils, but although procedures for assessing their academic performance and helping them make progress are better than at the time of the last inspections, they are still unsatisfactory.

35 The school provides a safe and secure environment for the pupils. They are happy to come to school and parents are satisfied with the level of general care that they receive.

Sound procedures for child protection are in place. These are based on the local education authority's advice and have not been personalised to the school. However, staff know what action they should take, if the need arises. Minor accidents that happen in the playground are dealt with effectively and there are procedures for coping with more serious events. Parents are informed appropriately. Risk assessments have been carried out for visits. Procedures for using the swimming pool have been very well thought out and are followed scrupulously for lessons and after school.

36 Teachers know the pupils well and have good relationships with them. They notice changes in pupils' usual behaviour and investigate the causes when appropriate. Pupils' behaviour is monitored carefully, largely because it has appeared as a problem in the Year 4 class which has had many temporary teachers during the year. The procedures have been successful and behaviour is now at least satisfactory with the more regular teaching arrangement.

37 Attendance is recorded correctly and pupils generally attend regularly. The school knows which pupils are more likely to miss school and class teachers watch their attendance more closely, but the school does not have a formal system for monitoring attendance or for looking for patterns of absence. The school's education welfare officer visits regularly and reviews the registers but the school's own systems are not strong enough in this area.

38 Since the last inspection, the school has developed considerably its procedures for assessing pupils' performance in order to help them make progress but there are still weaknesses. Staff have adopted the local authority's system so that they can use a range of information to measure performance and track progress. At the moment, this relies heavily on information from tests and formal assessment and is being used to make predictions of how pupils should perform in the future. Pupils with special educational needs are identified effectively on the basis of their performance but otherwise the assessment system is not yet being used effectively enough to identify pupils' individual strengths and weaknesses and to set them appropriate targets for development. The school has begun to collect examples of pupils' work which indicate particular levels of attainment but this is still at an early stage of development. Some teachers' assessments are not accurate enough, usually too generous, and this masks the need for extra teaching or a revised curriculum in these areas.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

39 Parents' views of the school have been affected by the uncertainties in the last year and many are unhappy with the provision. Of the 48 questionnaires returned, 14 had additional parental comments; 11 of these were critical of the school and three were supportive. A small number of parents attended the meeting.

40 The results of the questionnaire give a mixed picture. Whilst the majority of parents support the school, there is also some dissatisfaction evident in the responses. The primary reasons for parental concerns centre around the high turnover of staff, changes in leadership, extended staff sickness and the subsequent extensive use of supply teachers resulting in children not making enough progress, especially in Year 4. Inspectors consider that whilst many of parents' concerns about the effects of staffing changes on children's progress are justified, the school took every action possible to address the problems. Clearly, however, there has not been enough consultation and discussion with parents to satisfy their concerns, and as a result a significant number are disaffected. The school has resolved the staffing problems. The acting headteacher has stabilised the supply cover in Year 4 and that is likely to provide continuity of teaching in this class in the short term. A new headteacher and a teacher for Year 4 have been appointed for the beginning of the next academic year.

Regular newsletters keep parents well informed of what is happening and the acting headteacher is responding to parents' concerns promptly. This quality of response must continue in order to regain parents' trust and confidence. Inspectors consider the quality and range of activities that are provided by the school are satisfactory, and are consistent with what is provided by most schools of this type and size. Almost all of these activities take place at lunch time, primarily because of the number of pupils who come to school by bus; they include ocarina, computer, tennis, swimming clubs and cycling proficiency. Most pupils do work hard and those in Year 4 are settling down again.

41 Parents' involvement in their children's learning is good. A significant number of parents help in classrooms on a regular basis. They assist in a variety of ways that include listening to pupils read, overseeing group work under the supervision of teachers, supporting art and computer studies, assisting the supervision of pupils when using the outdoor swimming pool and accompanying pupils on school trips. Many parents support their children's learning at home by listening to them read, playing mathematics games and practising spellings for weekly tests. The Parent Teachers Association (PTA) is very active in organising social and fund-raising events. These have been used to provide additional learning resources. The current project is to enhance the outdoor play area.

42 The quality and range of information to parents are good. The school prospectus and governors' annual report are well presented and provide a wide range of information about the school and its activities; however, a small number of minor omissions relating to statutory information was brought to the attention of the acting headteacher during the inspection. Parents receive regular and detailed newsletters that ensure that they are aware of current school issues, as well as a letter that outlines what their children will be studying in the next term. The school operates an 'open door' policy and in addition parents are invited to come to school and see their children's work every first Tuesday of each month, and many parents do this. Attendance at parents' evenings is described as good. Parents have the opportunity to look at their children's work, as well as to discuss their children's progress with teachers. Parents of children in Year 4 are concerned about who will write their children's reports this year because their children have been taught by a series of supply teachers. The acting headteacher is aware of these concerns and is committed to ensuring that parents receive appropriate information on their children's progress. The pupils' reports seen are satisfactory. They give good quality information about what pupils understand and can do, but do not relate their knowledge and understanding to National Curriculum levels, or whether or not pupils are working at, above or below age-related levels. A number of parents said that they would like to know this. Not all reports give sufficient information about what pupils should do to improve. The school has good arrangements to involve parents of pupils with special educational needs in the development of their children's individual educational plans; parents are fully involved in termly reviews.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

43 At the time of this inspection, the school was led by an acting headteacher who provided the staff with good support and managed the process of inspection well. The regular newsletters she is providing are helping to restore parents' confidence, as is her promptness in dealing with parents' concerns. However, the school's leadership and management were judged unsatisfactory overall. This is largely because there is too little stability in the school at present. The previous headteacher had been in post long enough to deal with some important and urgent issues, such as recognising when pupils have special educational

needs, but not long enough to develop the management skills of the current permanent staff to their full effectiveness.

44 There has been close monitoring of some teaching by the previous headteacher which resolved the issues related to teaching identified in the last inspection. The newly qualified teacher received the appropriate support which included classroom reviews. Monitoring of other teachers has not been undertaken by subject leaders and that done by the headteacher has not been recorded formally. Other aspects of monitoring teaching and learning are behind where they should be. Issues that might have been identified given time and attention by subject leaders, such as variation in marking and weak assessment practices, have not been found. Policies such as child protection need to be made personal to the school and others, namely anti-bullying and race equality, should be written. These areas of the school's work are unsatisfactory.

45 The three permanent teachers take on more responsibilities than they would have to do if all the teaching staff were permanent. They do so willingly and are keen to help each other. However, neither as subject leaders nor as deputy headteacher have they had any time given to them in the last two years to help them with developments. The situation has been exacerbated by the fact that governors have been unable to find a full time appointment until the coming September. As the new appointment is a newly qualified teacher who cannot take on additional responsibilities in her first year, it will be some time before a balance can be achieved. Only the special needs co-ordinator has been given time and this has undoubtedly helped in completing the review of the policy and identifying which pupils have special educational needs which were started by the previous headteacher. As a result of good assessment procedures, the school has been able to attract more funding to support pupils with special educational needs next year.

46 The governing body receive regular financial updates and are appropriately involved in the development and monitoring of the school improvement plan and budget. The school improvement plan is now more detailed than at the time of the previous inspection and is satisfactory. All the targets are suitable but there are too many to be dealt with in the present circumstances and clearer priority needs to be stated. The plan is limited to the current financial year. Strategic planning, such as the impact of the small number of pupils over the next year, has been covered through discussion rather than by written planning. Almost all recommendations from the latest audit report have been, or will be, addressed when the new computer system is fully functional. Grants for specific purposes, such as special educational needs, are used appropriately.

47 The school's budget is managed by the headteacher with the support of the school's clerical assistant and the local authority's finance section. However, the current budget had been set prior to the acting headteacher taking up her appointment and, therefore, she is not totally aware of the rationale behind it. Both the acting headteacher and the school's clerical assistant are working hard to ensure effective financial procedures are in place. However, the introduction of a new computer system, which is not yet fully functional, has led to difficulties in clearly establishing some elements of the budget. It is not possible to establish with any degree of certainty the overall income and expenditure levels for the current financial year and the balances to be carried forward to the next financial year. This is unsatisfactory. Governors take care to find the best value for their spending. They have established a school council which is starting to take account of pupils' views. Their use of parents' opinions and consultation with them is only just starting. Overall, their application of the principles of best value is satisfactory.

48 The school's administrative systems work smoothly. The school's clerical assistant provides a good level of support to teaching staff that allows teaching staff to concentrate on their teaching and management roles.

49 Governors are keen to support the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities satisfactorily. They know about the school's strengths and weaknesses because they visit it regularly, and receive regular reports at their meetings. The exception to this is the depth of parent feelings. Governors knew that there was some disquiet but not the extent of it. It is not possible for governors to stop teachers leaving the school for promotion or personal circumstances. However, the alternatives do not appear to have been thought through sufficiently by the headteacher with governors. Parents have not been properly consulted about the alternatives. This is a major cause of parent disillusion and it is likely that better communication could have reduced the level of anxiety.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

50 In order to improve the standards that pupils reach and improve the quality of education further, the headteacher and governors should address the following points.

- (1) Ensure that, should there be any further disturbances in staffing, priority is given to achieving the best possible level of stability, especially for Year 4 pupils who are the oldest and about to leave the school.

Paragraphs 1-3; 16; 67; 73; 76.

- (2) Improve leadership and management by:

- ensuring that the computerised financial systems are operating efficiently and that information is fully up to date;
- giving the school improvement plan clearer definition about what the school's priorities are over the next three years;
- planning a programme for the headteacher to monitor teaching and record the outcomes formally;
- establishing a programme for subject leaders to manage their responsibilities. This should include looking at pupils' work as well as helping colleagues by watching them teach and supporting them with advice. This should match the subject priorities decided in the school improvement plan.

Paragraphs 43-49; 72; 77; 84; 123.

- (3) Review the time allocated to different subjects and improve the standards that pupils reach in science in Year 2 and religious education in Year 4. This should link with issues numbered 2 and 4 above as part of the subject leaders' roles and can be achieved by:

- looking at weekly timetables to see how a better a balance of time for all subjects can be achieved;
- ensuring that full programmes of study are offered for science and religious education;
- providing more play-based learning to balance the formal aspects of the curriculum for children in reception.

Paragraphs 23; 27; 66; 84; 120; 123.

- (4) Improve the quality of assessment by:

- providing staff with training on assessing pupils' learning and using information from tests and assessments;
- continuing with the establishment of curriculum files;
- using examples of pupils' work to establish what is agreed and expected within each NC level;
- improving the quality of marking to give pupils direction about how they can improve, and help pupils to improve their reading and writing

Paragraphs 20; 27; 38; 70/1; 76; 84.

- (5) Work to restore parents' confidence through measures such as:

- the headteacher being seen and available to talk to parents, for example at the start and end of the day or through a regular drop-in session;
- responding quickly to parents' concerns;
- keeping a good flow of information through regular newsletters;
- Asking parents what kinds of information sessions they would like, for example on literacy, numeracy, the curriculum for early years or National Curriculum levels, and providing them.

Paragraphs 39-42.

There are a number of minor issues that can be found throughout the report. The most important of these that governors should consider in their action plan are:

- Increasing the school day to the minimum recommended time in juniors; *paragraph 23.*
- Establishing more effective ways to monitor attendance; *paragraph 37.*
- Preparing policies for child protection, race equality and anti-bullying. *paragraph 44.*

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 | 23 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 1 | 2 | 12 | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Percentage | 4 | 7 | 43 | 39 | 7 | 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

* numbers of lessons do not necessarily match as some were not given grades because they were too short.

Information about the school's pupils

| | |
|--|--------------|
| Pupils on the school's roll | YR – Y4 |
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 113 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 11 |
| <i>FTE means full-time equivalent.</i> | |
| Special educational needs | YR – Y4 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 0 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 25 |
| English as an additional language | No of pupils |
| Number of pupils with English as an additional language | 0 |
| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 4 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 8 |

Attendance

Authorised absence

| |
|---|
| % |
|---|

Unauthorised absence

| |
|---|
| % |
|---|

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 5.4 |
| National comparative data | 5.6 |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 0.2 |
| 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)

| | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year | 2001 | 8 | 13 | 21 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|----------|---------|-------------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | 21 | 18 | 21 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 100 (88) | 86 (88) | 100 (100) |
| | National | 84 (83) | 86 (84) | 91 (90) |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|----------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above | Boys | * | * | * |
| | Girls | * | * | * |
| | Total | 15 | 21 | 21 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above | School | 71 (88) | 100 (96) | 100 (96) |
| | National | 85 (84) | 89 (88) | 89 (88) |

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

* These numbers are not included because there are fewer than 10 boys. Small numbers make test results too unreliable to report.

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 111 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 2 |

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y4

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 6 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 16.5 |
| Average class size | 21.5 |

Education support staff: YR – Y4

| | |
|---|------|
| Total number of education support staff | 4 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 55.5 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|---|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 8 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 7 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 2 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 2 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 1 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

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.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|-----------|
| Financial year | 2001-2002 |
|----------------|-----------|

| | £ |
|--|---------|
| Total income | 272,787 |
| Total expenditure | 269,707 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 2,430 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 18,623 |
| Balance carried forward to the next year | 21,703 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

114

Number of questionnaires returned

48

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 50 | 35 | 13 | 2 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 42 | 33 | 13 | 4 | 8 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 21 | 56 | 15 | 2 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 25 | 40 | 23 | 8 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 23 | 52 | 13 | 6 | 6 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 19 | 46 | 25 | 10 | 0 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 46 | 46 | 6 | 2 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 25 | 56 | 6 | 4 | 8 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 15 | 56 | 17 | 8 | 4 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 10 | 44 | 27 | 8 | 10 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 23 | 48 | 13 | 8 | 8 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 8 | 33 | 31 | 15 | 30 |

Other issues raised by parents

Parents also raised concerns about the effects of too many supply teachers on their children's education. They also commented that teachers' marking did not help pupils to learn.

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

51 Children are admitted to the reception class in the term in which they have their fifth birthday. Overall, by the time they reach the end of the reception year, they are likely to reach at least the national standards set for them in all areas of learning and better than that in their knowledge and understanding of the world, mathematics and communication, language and literacy skills. However, their attainment is quite wide, and ranges from some who are likely to exceed the expectations to others who have special educational needs and may not.

Personal, social and emotional development

52 Provision and teaching for children's development in this area are satisfactory overall with some significant strengths balanced by some weaknesses. Children's personal and social skills are in line with what is expected for a reception class. Children respond equally well to the teacher, to parents or other adults who help in the classroom and to visitors. Their behaviour is usually good and they get along with each other well. A good example of care and thought for others happened in a science lesson when one child brought another a book about dolphins to help and encourage him. Occasionally there are little disputes or moments when the children's behaviour deteriorates, as when they move from listening as a class to other activities and there is not enough direction from the teacher. Children know the school routines and follow them happily, for example going to assemblies, having school meals and at playtimes. They show a good degree of personal independence as they get ready to go home or look after their own belongings.

Communication, language and literacy

53 Overall, the children are reaching standards that are above those usually found in a reception class and are making steady progress. Teaching in this area is sound. The children in reception are nearly all confident talkers with a wide vocabulary. Almost all speak clearly and audibly although a few are sometimes reluctant to offer their ideas to visitors or in class situations. Good vocabulary and confidence shows, for example, in the current work on animals, where children can name quite a number of unusual wild animals and talk happily about where they can be found. The teacher pays good attention to encouraging the children to listen at the beginnings of many lessons, including the geography session referred to later. As a result, many children listen well to adults and know about the courtesy of listening to other children.

54 Children enjoy stories and look at the pictures with interest. They can talk about what has happened, ask questions about the pictures and say what might happen on the next page. Strong emphasis is given to listening to children read, and children display a wide range of skills. The most able readers are already very fluent, reading with good expression and enjoyment. A problem that occurs with some of these fluent readers is that they have read all the books that the school has at the simpler levels but are not ready to go on to the next. Most children in the middle ability band are reading simple sentences, whilst lower achievers enjoy looking at pictures and talking about them but have only just started to recognise their own names and some letters. The teacher uses the National Literacy Strategy at this time of the year. Most children do well to sit and listen for almost half an hour but this is too long for quite a few children who do not listen as well towards the end as they do at the beginning. In one lesson, the more able children were given quite a challenging task of finding out information from books. Some showed a sophisticated understanding of how to use contents pages and alphabetical order to find out about elephants. However, some of the

books provided were too difficult and children struggled to know which part of the page to use. As a result, they concentrated on the colouring in part of the task and not on the research.

55 All of the children know the difference between letters and numbers, and that marks on the paper have meaning. The highest attainers are able to write sentences without help. Other children are not so independent and ask adults to write down their ideas so that they can copy over or under the adult's writing.

Mathematical development

56 Children are developing good skills and knowledge in mathematics and are making steady progress, especially in number, because of sound teaching overall. A strength of the teaching in mathematics is the imaginative approaches that are used. For example, in an entertaining opening to a mathematics lesson, the teacher used a puppet to model writing numbers. Sometimes she wrote them incorrectly and the children were delighted to point out when this happened. The range of children's knowledge is so wide that it is difficult to cater for all their different needs at one time. The organisation of teaching and learning is not always fully effective. More use could be made of adult helpers to support groups on different activities whilst the teacher concentrates on group teaching at different levels or giving extra time to those who are ready to learn more.

57 In one lesson, the outside yard was used effectively to reinforce learning about shapes. Children's responses revealed a good knowledge of the names of triangles, squares, rectangles and circles. It was easy for those who stood in straight-sided shapes to count the 'sides and points' but the children who chose circles found it much harder to answer. By persisting with questions, the teacher was able to persuade the children that a circle does have a side that goes all the way round instead of sticking to their first answer, none, which was based on an understanding of a side as a straight line. Some understanding of mathematical language was promoted well when children were asked to stand inside or outside their shape but other words, such as 'in front of' or 'behind', caused more hesitation because the idea was not so clear with this activity.

58 Children's books show evidence of progress that is sometimes rapid. For example, a child who, in September, wrote numbers such as 2, 7, 7, 7, 8, 1 with some the wrong way round, completed a hundred square accurately in February. Some become confident with numbers to 20, as shown in their work books when they filled in missing number lines to 20. Others make more modest progress and are still learning how to write the numbers and count objects accurately.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

59 Teaching and provision in this area are good. Generally, children achieve well. They have a good experience of using computers which they handle with confidence. They know how to move on to the next page by using the mouse and how to choose a new program from a menu. Children often demonstrate good general knowledge about the world around them, prompted by probing questions from the teacher. They can name a wide range of wild animals and say where they live; for example, a kangaroo comes from Australia and a crab lives in the sea. Sometimes they come up with surprising bits of information. Whilst they were looking at a book about an elephant, one said that this was not the biggest animal in the world. When the teacher asked if anyone knew what was the biggest animal, someone said that it was a blue whale; another knew that elephants in India "get dressed up for special parades".

60 Children can talk about simple maps, their school and about where they live with confidence. A short session looking at photographs of their teddy bear in different village locations was well led by the teacher to get children to talk about what they could see and to make comparisons between two villages. They named features such as postboxes, shops, swings and climbing frames. One recognised containers for recycling in a picture and knew exactly what these were for.

61 When they use construction equipment, children do so sensibly, showing some good building skills such as using overlapping bricks to give strength to a structure.

Physical development

62 Overall provision in this area is satisfactory. There was too little evidence to make an overall judgement on teaching. An unusual feature of this school is that all children swim in the summer months, including those in reception. The swimming sessions were not observed so that no judgement can be made on the quality of teaching. However, by the end of their first summer, most children have gained the confidence to splash about, duck their heads below water and leave their arm bands off. This provision means, however, that there is relatively little other type of physical activity at this time of the year. The teacher uses the area immediately outside of the classroom for activities such as sand and water on a daily basis. Given the age of the children and the fact that some of them still need quite a lot of physical activity, more could be done to use the outside area and climbing resources, especially when there is other experienced adult help for supervision.

63 Most children do well when handling small tools, such as brushes or scissors. They are quite skilful in joining construction equipment. Some show considerable skill in using pencils and paint brushes but a few do not have a good grip and lack confidence because of this. Children move about the classroom and school, both indoors and outdoors, safely, sensibly and confidently. The school has delightful surroundings which provide good opportunities for outdoor exploration.

Creative development

64 Provision for creative development is satisfactory. Work on display and the examples of creative play seen suggest that the children are reaching an appropriate standard because of sound teaching. The classroom is of a good size and has a separate area for role-play. Children are given role-play tasks during literacy lessons that develop their creative skills well. One group at a time is asked to construct a play to perform to the class. Children enjoy using animal masks and perform with confidence. The teacher led the class to consider whether or not the play had a beginning, middle and end, ensuring that there were good links with literacy.

65 There is an area outside the classroom that is used for sand and water activities when the weather is fine. Children's skills in using these are satisfactory and the time to play together helps to develop their social skills. However, there is not a clear enough purpose to the activity to ensure that play is of a high quality. Children often draw and illustrate their work so that they develop competency in using pencils and crayons. The range of attainment is wide. For example, their illustrations of people ranged from simple round shapes with sticks for arms and legs to detailed drawings with facial features and clothing. Children's past work includes examples of the use of different materials and textures.

66 Teaching is sound overall. Planning for this group of children is a good mixture of the curriculum for the early years and of the first level of the National Curriculum. In practice, there is a satisfactory balance for this time of the year between the more academic approach

and learning through play. One would expect to see a different balance with more play-based learning at the start of the reception class than at the end. The strengths are in the direct teaching of skills and knowledge; the weakness is in how to manage the change from one type of activity to another. At these points, time is lost when too many children choose the same activity. A similar problem occurs when children finish what they are doing and there are not enough activities ready for them to move on to. The teacher uses the local educational authority baseline and also records of all the strands of the early learning goals and links into the National Curriculum for each pupil. This is a thorough record, but is time consuming and could be effectively reduced.

ENGLISH

67 The test and assessment results for Year 2 this year are likely to be above the average. If so, these will be an improvement from the previous year and better than at the previous inspection. Girls have usually reached higher levels than boys. However, the boys' results have been better than boys achieved nationally in writing and close to the national picture in reading. Pupils start the infants with skills that are better than the national expectations and complete it with above average results so that they are making steady progress. With the exception of Year 4, standards are better than at the time of the previous inspection. The Year 4 pupils, the oldest in the school, have had a disturbed time with several teachers and little continuity of experience until recently. This shows in the standards that they achieve, which are lower than they should be. A few pupils have made satisfactory progress but the majority have not, remaining at much the same level as in the previous year. In a few cases, pupils have lost ground in reading and writing. This variation in progress is across all ability groups in Year 4 and is not confined to one particular set of pupils; for example, some higher attainers have continued to make progress, some have stayed much the same and some have lost ground.

68 Pupils throughout the school, including Year 4, are confident speakers. They talk happily in social settings as well as in lessons. There are one or two pupils in each class who find it hard to concentrate and listen for any length of time but the majority are attentive listeners. Even in Year 4, where pupils' attention is more erratic, pupils are capable of listening well and do so when the teaching gives out calm but decisive messages about expectations, as in a literacy lesson and with a different teacher for music.

69 Pupils get off to a good start in reading because of the extra time that is given to this and the extra help from parents and other adults. In each class, there is a group of pupils who are reading well above the level for their age and some who are not so advanced. In Year 2, pupils in the middle ranges of reading skills read at levels that are expected for their age. They know how to break down words into smaller sections and how to use the sound of letters to help them. They do not always do so when they are stuck on difficult words, however, unless they are encouraged to. This may well be because there is so much adult help and this is not consistent. Not everyone helps children to use all the strategies for tackling unknown words. In the infants, the extra literacy lessons taken by an assistant with small groups provides good support to help pupils with reading and spelling. Pupils learn to use the sounds that letters make in reading and writing. They are also given some words to learn to read by sight and to learn to spell without thinking too hard. A disadvantage of this time is that it happens during the literacy lesson. This has a negative effect as, when the pupils return, they cannot take part in the ends of the lessons because they have missed some significant part whilst doing their special work. Clearly the timing of these events needs to be looked at again.

70 The results of the assessments for writing that are done nationally in Year 2 are likely to be high this year. However, the results are better than pupils' daily work reflects. Higher attaining pupils often start writing well as in this example, "one blustery day, roger and bob were reading a book...", but the quality is not sustained throughout and punctuation is often forgotten. Their achievement is satisfactory but would be better if more was expected of them. Most pupils write competently and make steady progress. Simple words are spelt correctly and pupils make a good attempt at others. Stories have clear beginnings, middles and ends. A few pupils are still at the early stages of writing. They obviously find it difficult because they rarely write much. Nevertheless, these pupils are making a good attempt. They know about small and capital letters but use them incorrectly, for instance, "Then the dog Bit The Boye". In Year 3, pupils build on the sound start they have had in infants. Stories often have a good structure because pupils have been given story planners to guide their thinking. Some good improvements can be seen within the year. For example, a pupil who, at the beginning of the year, showed awareness of speech marks has extended these skills considerably by the end of the year by putting each character's speech on a new line, organising writing into paragraphs and using a wider range of punctuation. Pupils' written work in Year 4 is poorly presented. There are many worksheets but few examples of their own, independent writing. Under the current staffing arrangements, things are beginning to change but the two teachers have too little time to bring pupils up to the level they are capable of reaching. Pupils are taught to write in a joined up, legible style in Year 2 and continue to do so in Year 3. In Year 4, the lack of continuity of teaching shows in handwriting as in other areas because many pupils revert to print or do not write as carefully as they are able to.

71 Taking account of all the evidence, the current teaching in English is satisfactory. Within the lessons, however, it was good. Teachers plan carefully using a common framework for literacy. The co-ordinator monitors planning regularly to ensure that a balance of activities is prepared. Teachers choose appropriate books and resources and make good use of adults to help them. Good relationships permeate lessons and teachers give a lot of praise and encouragement. There are some good examples of the marking of pupils' work where teachers have not only praised the work but also said how it could be improved. However, the majority of marking does not do this. On occasion, some of the comments are inappropriate, such as when the teacher writes "Well Done" when the work is not as good as it might be. Assessments of pieces of writing by Year 2 pupils tend to be a little generous when deciding whether the work is of National Curriculum level 2, the expected level for seven year olds, or level 3, the higher standard. For example, pupils awarded a level 3 because of a balance of attainment in the formal assessment do not show such good work in their daily writing.

72 The co-ordinator has given as strong a lead as possible within the limitations of the time available to her. She keeps a close eye on planning, and monitors reading tests and other assessment information. As she has been given no time during the day in the last two years, she has not been able to watch colleagues teaching or provide them with advice based on what she has seen. Other forms of monitoring, such as collecting samples of work, are just being introduced and have not yet been analysed in a way that would pick up some of the issues mentioned above.

MATHEMATICS

73 Current standards of mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 4 are below expectations. This represents a fall from those reported in the last inspection. Staffing problems at the school have resulted in the class being taught by a variety of teachers during Year 4 leading to difficulties in continuity and the systematic coverage of the mathematics curriculum. Many pupils in the year group have problems with basic mathematical ideas and

concepts, have not made sufficient progress during the year and are not achieving as well as they should. Standards for pupils in Year 2 are satisfactory. Results of the national tests taken in 2001 show that while all pupils achieved the average level 2, a below average number achieved the more difficult level 3. Results for 2002 reveal that, in response to the concerns about higher attaining pupils, the number achieving level 3 has now risen to average national levels. For this age group, there is little difference in the performance of girls and boys in mathematics. Taken over the previous four years, mathematics results have remained at average levels showing improvement at a similar level to those made nationally. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

74 Most Year 2 pupils have a sound understanding of numbers to 50. They demonstrate an increasingly good understanding of the value of numbers with many more able pupils using tens and units confidently. They use this knowledge accurately when following a number pattern, for example counting in 10s from a given number – 4, 14, 24. Mathematical vocabulary is developed satisfactorily so that pupils acquire a clear understanding of ideas like shorter, taller and longer. They understand and recognise odd and even numbers and the idea of doubling and halving. This has led to some more able pupils developing skills in simple multiplication and division. Other areas of mathematics are developed satisfactorily with many pupils recognising two- and three-dimensional shapes, and understanding the terms face, edge and corner. There is limited evidence of pupils collecting their own data and creating graphs although there are some computer-generated graphs in Year 2. An appropriate time is spent on ensuring that pupils apply their skills so that most pupils can accurately recognise the value of coins, add and subtract money and give change when required.

75 By Year 4, many pupils understand basic metric measurement; for example, they use litres and millilitres accurately when measuring liquids. More able pupils multiply accurately by tens and units and understand the inverse action. Other pupils are much less secure and accurate. Recent good teaching has ensured that all pupils recognise right angles and degrees with many pupils being able to measure angles with a protractor accurately. More able pupils have benefited from weekly extension lessons in which they carry out mathematical investigations. These sessions have also extended pupils' basic number skills so that they can now complete mental calculations quickly and accurately. Pupils in Year 3 have increased their mathematical vocabulary, for instance, using the terms vertices, face and edge when talking about shape. They can tell the time but do not always record it accurately. The basic skills of multiplication and division are taught satisfactorily and pupils understand rounding numbers to the nearest 10. A good link is made with geography with pupils finding a location through the use of co-ordinates.

76 The standard of teaching is satisfactory overall but the quality ranges from excellent to satisfactory. The teaching in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and pupils make sound progress although expectations of what pupils could achieve are sometimes too low. In 2001 too few pupils achieved the more difficult level 3 in national tests. This was recognised by the school and resulted in the establishment of a higher attaining group in each of the classes from Year 1 to Year 4 to provide a greater challenge and to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of mathematics. The teaching in these groups for both infant and junior age pupils is of a very high quality. The satisfactory progress made in the infants and in Year 3 has not been maintained in Year 4 during this current year. Only recently have standards improved for these pupils. Taken over the whole year, pupils have made insufficient progress and achieved too little. Where teachers plan well in all classes, pupils have a clear idea of what is expected of them in both behaviour and quality of work and receive a good level of challenge. Some teachers are not sufficiently rigorous in their use of time in lessons, resulting in a lack of pace and time to complete work. Evidence from pupils' work throughout the school reveals an often unsatisfactory quality of presentation, work that is unfinished and corrections not

completed. Marking of a pupil's work is usually completed but rarely includes comments designed to help to improve the quality of the pupil's work.

77 The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced within the last 18 months and is providing a planning structure for teachers to follow. Initial mental and oral sessions are included at the beginning of lessons but these are not always sufficiently well planned or purposeful. What pupils are to learn in lessons is usually shared with them and this helps to focus their attention. A check is kept on what mathematics has been planned for each class but this process is not yet sufficiently rigorous. The subject co-ordinator has not yet been given time to observe colleagues teaching.

78 Mathematical skills are used in some other subjects, such as design and technology, history and geography. The use of ICT to improve mathematical skills is at an early stage of development. Some good examples of graph work using data collected by pupils in the higher attaining groups are on display but data handling is not covered extensively.

79 Pupils' attainment is assessed and some analysis of the results is carried out. This provides useful information on where the curriculum needs to be strengthened. This now needs to be extended. Targets are set for pupils to improve their work but this has not been in place for sufficient time to have had a marked affect. Rigorous targets have not been set in Year 4.

SCIENCE

80 Pupils' standards in science are at the expected level for their age by the time they leave the school, but are lower at the end of Year 2. This is because they have not covered all aspects of the subject in sufficient depth during Years 1 and 2. While they have a good understanding of the aspects of the subject relating to animals and plants and a sound grasp of investigation, they know too little about how materials behave and about physical processes such as forces and electricity. These deficiencies are addressed in Years 3 and 4. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are still strongest in relation to animals and plants but the other aspects of the subject are covered much more effectively and pupils develop a sound overall grasp of the subject. This is much as it was at the time of the last inspection, although at that time, standards at the end of Year 2 were judged to be satisfactory.

81 Pupils in Year 2 are currently learning about flowering plants. They already have a good understanding of the role of the root, stem and leaves. Their work has been firmly based on direct observation and first-hand experience. As a result of this they appreciate the importance of looking closely, for example, noting the patterns on a petal which draw bees towards the flower's pollen. They record their observations satisfactorily, often using diagrams and sometimes adding notes. The records they have kept of how cress germinates and grows into a fully developed plant are particularly accurate and detailed, emphasising the early appearance of the cotyledons and their later replacement by full leaves, but otherwise the work they record in their books does not do justice to the understanding they can demonstrate of this part of the subject through discussion. Other aspects of science have been covered in far less detail; for example, pupils know that many appliances work by electricity and have some generalised idea that electricity can be dangerous. They have not followed this up with the usual work on batteries and bulbs and so have not developed a concept of how electricity flows and the need for the complete circuit to light a bulb. Similarly, work on sound and hearing and on the way materials change with temperature has been covered at a simple level so that, for example, pupils do not appreciate that chocolate melting is a temporary change, compared to a permanent change that occurs when something burns.

82 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have had a more balanced coverage of the subject. They have explained the idea of forces in a number of different contexts and are grasping the difficult concepts of how forces act together, for example when friction slows down the movement of an object sliding down a slope. They link the work they have done in magnetism to the pushes and pulls they have met in other contexts and know that forces are measured in newtons. From investigations they have carried out, they know that only some metals are attracted to magnets, naming aluminium as not being attracted and linking this to testing food and drinks cans for recycling. Their knowledge of plants and animals is still better than other aspects of science; for example, pupils understand the role of leaves as 'little factories' producing food for the plant and know that this involves taking in carbon dioxide and giving out oxygen, and relate this to the dangers of cutting down the rain forests.

83 The science lessons seen were all taught well. Teachers had clear objectives for the lessons, knew the material they were teaching and made it interesting for the pupils. As a result, pupils responded well, working enthusiastically and often asking searching questions. Teachers place a strong emphasis on investigative work and this helps pupils to remember the work they have covered, as well as helping them to develop a firm grasp of the importance of observations and enquiry to the subject. Pupils are also encouraged to ask questions, rather than just remember facts. This helps make them keen to explore new ideas and to look for links in what they already know.

84 The science curriculum is supported by an effective scheme of work which is based on national guidelines for the subject. This specifies appropriate coverage for each year group. Unfortunately, although it has been followed in Years 3 and 4, there have been gaps in coverage in Year 2 which have not been identified by monitoring procedures. There has not been a subject co-ordinator for the full year, the role having been taken up by the acting headteacher when she started at Easter. Assessment procedures are also unsatisfactory. Teachers' assessments are accurate for the older pupils but inaccurate in Year 2, showing pupils to be at much higher standards than they are.

ART AND DESIGN

85 Only one art lesson was seen during the inspection which is not enough to make judgements about the quality of teaching. There is plenty of pupils' work on the walls. This suggests that standards at the end of Years 2 and 4 are at the expected levels throughout the school and the same as at the last inspection.

86 Throughout the school, pupils use sketchbooks satisfactorily to collect ideas or to experiment with techniques such as shading. Pupils' work in Year 1 shows satisfactory skills in mixing shades of colours such as orange. Year 2 pupils have produced some very effective work based on the paintings of Monet. They have experimented with different brush strokes to see how well they can mirror the way that the artist depicted topics as diverse as a lily pond, a Japanese lady or the famous poppy fields. Year 3 pupils have sketched and painted endangered animals as part of their topic on caring for the world and their work is of an average standard. Work from Year 4 includes cartoon characters and paintings about a dream world.

87 The one lesson seen was with a Year 4 class. They took some time to settle down and were slow in responding to the teacher's questions during the introduction. However, once the children began to work on their own projects, they worked steadily. Their sketches of themes for bedrooms were quite imaginative. They had ideas such as glass walls for fish to swim behind, ocean floors with furniture forming some of the wreckage and two-tier rooms

with hydraulic chairs to raise and lower between floors. The skills with which they represented their ideas were at a level suitable for their age. Very few had got to the stage of making the rooms so it was not possible to judge their use of different materials.

88 The corridors and classrooms are brightly decorated with examples of children's work and reproductions of art. These show that a good range of themes is being covered, mainly from European traditions with other world cultures much less in evidence. Overall, art makes a sound contribution to pupils' moral and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

89 It was possible during the inspection to see only two lessons in design and technology. Further evidence was gathered by talking to pupils, examining their work, discussions with teachers and a review of the school's plans for the subject.

90 Standards are at the expected levels at the end of Years 2 and 4, although pupils do not have enough direct experience of working with resistant materials. This is much better than at the time of the last inspection.

91 By the end of Year 2, pupils have designed and made things using mainly textiles, paper and card. On special occasions, such as Easter, they have made cakes. Their work is often finished well, such as models of playground equipment in Year 1, where the pupils have used paint and other decorations to make their work more realistic. Pupils are beginning to appreciate the importance of designing what they are going to make and, for example, have sketched their ideas for the different vehicles that they have made in Year 2. These models include wooden frames, which have provided the pupils with valuable experience of how the rigidity of the material strengthens their models and how it can be stuck to itself and other materials. Unfortunately, they were given the wood already cut to size and so have not developed skills of measuring, cutting and smoothing it.

92 Pupils develop their skills and understanding of design and technology in Years 3 and 4 satisfactorily. Their design work becomes more detailed and they often include extra notes to explain particular features more clearly. By Year 4, they are tackling challenging projects, such as their current work using plastic syringes to investigate the way pneumatic systems work. The models they are making in this project are imaginative and often well made. Pupils have designed them and then carried out modifications appropriately as their ideas have developed when new opportunities appeared as the model progressed. In making the models, the pupils have drawn on their knowledge and experience in using materials. Their lack of opportunities to work with wood or other resistant materials is restricting the range of choices they can make. They would be able to realise their ideas more successfully if they had learnt how to work with more materials and use a wider range of tools.

93 Teaching is satisfactory and was good in the lessons seen. Teachers understand the nature of the subject and place strong emphasis on encouraging pupils' creativity. At the moment, they feel more confident in channelling this through work in textiles, paper and card. They are not confident in helping pupils develop skills for working with harder materials such as wood or for introducing ideas such as electrical circuits for bulbs or buzzers into their models.

94 Pupils respond well to design and technology lessons. They work very well together in small groups, discussing ideas, dividing tasks and sharing tools. From the youngest age, they talk confidently and clearly about what they have made and older pupils particularly are

able to explain the difficulties they had to overcome and how they might make improvements to their work.

95 The school is making effective use of national guidance for the subject so that there is a good progression of general skills as pupils get older. There is no overall co-ordination of the subject at the moment so that the cumulative effect of each teacher's decision to avoid work with resistant materials has not been properly appreciated or addressed through appropriate support.

GEOGRAPHY

96 Standards in geography are satisfactory at the end of Years 2 and 4 and at similar levels to those seen during the previous inspection. Two lessons were seen, pupils' previous work examined and pupils were interviewed. This reveals that they have a sound knowledge of the world around them. Recorded evidence is limited in some classes but the observation of lessons shows that pupils know and can use an appropriate range of geographical vocabulary and understand that other places in the world are different to their own locality.

97 Pupils in Year 1 are developing a suitable range of geographical skills. In an interesting lesson built around different foods, pupils located the country of origin using a globe and an atlas. Writing skills were then extended well as pupils wrote a card home using the correct school address stating what they had found out about the country. By Year 2, pupils are beginning to develop their understanding of land use and compare the fictional island of Struay, from the stories about Katie Morag, with Wickhambrook. Their descriptions are detailed and they use geographical vocabulary correctly and with understanding. Older pupils study local large scale maps and are able to plot a route between villages accurately providing instructions, for example, on how to get from Wickhambrook to Cowlinge. They understand directions using a compass and many older pupils can use co-ordinates to locate geographical features. In a good link with history, pupils compare modern crops and farm machinery with those from the Victorian era. Interviews with older pupils reveal that they have a sound knowledge of physical features and the continents, countries, oceans and mountains of the world. This helps them to understand differing locations around the world and, for example, compare their own lives with those of people living in an Indian village.

98 Teaching in the two lessons seen was satisfactory with pupils extending their knowledge appropriately. Questioning was used well to engage pupils and to obtain thoughtful responses. The lessons were well prepared and successful, particularly in interesting pupils in the differing foods from other countries.

99 An appropriate scheme of work is in place to guide teachers' planning in geography. Sound provision is made for field work and use is made of the local area to extend pupils' vocabulary and understanding of the countryside. The school does not undertake residential visits although visits to museums and other places of interest help to increase pupils' geographical knowledge. There is no regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and, although teachers' planning is checked, there is no rigorous monitoring of the coverage of the geography curriculum or the time spent on the subject. Formal systems to record what pupils know and can do are not yet in place.

HISTORY

100 By the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils are achieving standards that are satisfactory for their age. These are similar to those reported in the last inspection. The school has adopted

and follows a published scheme of work and this provides a suitable structure to aid planning and to ensure that the required areas of study are visited.

101 Pupils are developing a sound understanding of the past and about how people lived in different times. Year 2 pupils, for example, know something of the events of the great fire of London and know the outline of the story of the Gunpowder Plot. They have also examined how things change over time through looking at transport and understand that life is very different to that of people living in the countryside two hundred years ago. Pupils have explored the lives of a selection of famous people from history, for example Florence Nightingale, but have also included the lives of people from art such as Monet and Van Gogh, and from science such as Thomas Edison. Pupils in Year 3 are beginning to understand the value of evidence and have compared a census document from the 19th century to one containing evidence on their own homes. They are familiar with occupations such as wheelwright, peddler and maltster and understand the roles of these people. The school building and local environment have been used well to raise pupils' awareness of the recent past and to provide evidence of important events in the life of the village, for example the plaque in the school hall. The use of ICT in history is limited and opportunities to write at length using history as a focus are not well developed. Evidence of history is more limited in Year 4. Interviews with pupils do, however, reveal that they have an understanding of the passing of time and of change and that some of the work they have done has not been recorded. Pupils' knowledge of the life of people in Victorian times is satisfactory, as is their understanding of the Roman and Anglo-Saxon periods.

102 Only one history lesson was seen during the inspection. The teaching in this lesson was well planned and helped pupils to appreciate the differences between life in Victorian times and the 1950s. Resources were well organised and pictorial evidence helped pupils to recognise the developments in kitchen appliances from mid-Victorian times. Pupils are able to relate events to a timeline, a good link with mathematics, and this helps them to reinforce their understanding of change and the passing of time.

103 Subject management is satisfactory. A scheme of work is in place that leads to a sound and relevant provision. The time allocated to the subject is appropriate in most classes but is not yet monitored with enough rigour. The monitoring of teaching is limited. There is no system of formal assessment of the quality of pupils' learning.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

104 Standards of attainment are at the appropriate levels for Year 2 and 4 pupils, as they were at the last inspection.

105 By the end of Year 2, pupils use the computer confidently and enter text through the keyboard reasonably quickly. They understand the conventions of using a menu to choose a program and then selecting actions to make the program work. They handle the mouse effectively to select items from the menu, and within drawing programs, to create shapes on the screen. Much of their work has been linked to word processing and they can change the style of what they have written, using different fonts and sizes of texts and introducing colours and layouts through programs such as *WordArt*. They also understand that computers can handle data and have used spreadsheets to record the different ways that children travel to school and to produce graphs of the results.

106 Older pupils continue to develop these skills appropriately. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 4, they produce attractive pieces of written work on the computer, having made wide and intelligent use of layout, style and colour to achieve different effects, for example in advertisements and other persuasive writing. They have experimented with a

wide range of ideas for notices that they have produced and explain clearly why they have chosen to use one, rather than another. Similarly, when they have used spreadsheets to produce graphs, they have thought about whether it would be better to use a pie chart or block graph to show their results. Some pupils have also met line graphs as part of the extension work they do in mathematics and appreciate how these are different from block graphs. Pupils have searched CD-ROMs and also used the Internet to find information, for example, to research different animals for work in science. They appreciate that computers carry out a sequence of instructions and, earlier in the school, have programmed a Roamer to carry out a particular set of instructions.

107 The school has recently established a small suite of computers to supplement the individual computers in each classroom. During the summer term, this suite is used to teach ICT to half of each class at a time whilst the other half are swimming. These sessions are taken by teaching assistants, following the school's well-planned scheme for the subject. These lessons are effective and pupils make appropriate progress, but it will be important to include all class teachers in ICT work at other times of the year so that, for example, they can integrate the pupils' ICT expertise into the class lessons more effectively. Pupils respond well to work on the computer. They work well together in pairs and small groups discussing ideas and taking turns with the tasks. Pupils often help each other very effectively when one knows how to make something happen and another does not.

108 The subject is co-ordinated well. Teaching is supported by a well-produced scheme of work, based on national guidelines for the subject. The co-ordinator knows the subject for this age range very well and has ensured that all staff teach the subject effectively by providing training and support. Pupils' progress is monitored effectively to ensure that they all cover the work planned for their year group. Resources are much better than at the time of the last inspection, although the addition of an extra one or two computers to the suite would make it even more effective in coping with half classes. Overall, there has been good progress since the last inspection and the school is well placed to keep moving forward.

MUSIC

109 Only two lessons were seen during the inspection. Some evidence was obtained from teachers' planning and a little from other sources. This is too little to make conclusions about the standards that pupils reach by the end of either Year 2 or Year 4, but in Year 4 the activities seen were at an appropriate level.

110 Year 4 pupils responded well to the teacher's firm and calm approach, listening with good attention at the start of the lesson and learning about making rhythms based on a combination of crotchets and quavers. There was a good degree of accuracy in following the teacher in clapping and reading short sequences from the board or from cards. The teacher described clearly the tasks that the pupils were to do in pairs so that they knew what was expected and got on with it well. Whilst most were accurate, one or two were making mistakes in where they placed E and G on the staff. This was because the teacher's example on the white board was not distinct enough for those at the back. Pupils have also performed and recorded some accompaniments to poetry which show satisfactory skills.

111 A lesson in the infants was not so successful. The teacher intended pupils to learn a new song but their response to the tape lacked enthusiasm. Pupils were asked to sing in a round before they were confident with the words and tune. It did not, therefore, improve the quality of the pupils' singing and resulted in standards for the lesson that were unsatisfactory.

112 Some pupils from throughout the school are learning to play ocarinas. This gives them early confidence in performance, since they play tunes that they know and use pictures of finger positions which are less difficult to read than conventional notation.

113 The two lessons seen provided conflicting evidence for teaching so that no overall judgement has been reached. One was well taught because the teacher's subject knowledge was equal to the tasks; the other was unsatisfactory because the lesson did not ensure pupils' skills were secure before moving on to the next task.

114 The school is following national guidance and is in the process of buying a scheme of work that will provide a good additional framework to help teachers to teach music. Resources are satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

115 The physical education programme is given over to swimming during the summer term, so it was not possible to observe the normal range of the physical education curriculum in action. No judgements have been reached about standards overall in any year group.

116 From discussions with pupils and teachers and a review of planning, the curriculum is appropriately balanced across the year, although there is less work done on dance than in many schools. The current concentration on swimming enables pupils to reach a considerably higher standard in this aspect of physical education than usual and allows the school to make very effective use of its outdoor pool.

117 Discussions with Year 4 pupils reveal that, by the time they leave the school, the pupils understand the importance of warming up before vigorous activities and the place of exercise in a healthy lifestyle. They describe using a good range of different apparatus in gymnastics and have experimented with different ways of moving through, under and over the apparatus. They are used to watching each other work and suggesting ideas for improvement. They use correct technical language to describe different ways of moving and balancing, as a result of the teachers' work. They have been taught to throw and catch a ball and to dribble a football. From observations at playtime, these skills are at the usual level for this age group.

118 With such a narrow range of the subject seen, it is not possible to make an overall judgement on the teaching of physical education, but in the swimming seen, teaching was very good. Teachers are following a very well planned programme which helps them to develop the pupils' confidence in water and their swimming skills very effectively. By the time the pupils leave the school, virtually all of them are swimming at least five metres and many swim much further, often with a well-developed crawl stroke. Teachers have very clear objectives for each session in the pool. Very little time is taken up with changing, lessons have a brisk pace and considerable progress is made, particularly with older pupils. Teachers provide very effective individual coaching, observing the pupils carefully and suggesting how, for example, a change of body shape in the water or an arm action would improve their stroke.

119 Pupils enjoy physical education generally and are very keen to swim. This contributes well to the pace of lessons and the good progress they make. Physical education is organised effectively in the school. Work is successfully based on national guidance, adapted to accommodate the special arrangements for swimming. The swimming programme makes very effective use of parents' support. Several help regularly at sessions and also run an after-school swimming club, which contributes strongly to the high standard achieved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

120 Standards in religious education are below the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of Year 4. This represents a fall from the standards reported following the previous inspection. Interviews with pupils, taken together with an examination of pupils' previous work, indicate that they have an unsatisfactory recall of stories from Christian teaching or from other major world faiths. Recorded work is limited but does include sections on some of the stories that Jesus told, for example the story of the lost sheep, but pupils show little understanding of the detail and meaning of these stories. Work from Year 3 includes aspects of the Jewish faith and the similarities and differences between the Hindu and Christian faiths. Although pupils know that several gods are worshipped in the Hindu faith, they cannot recall their names and were unable, for example, to retell the story of Rama and Sita. Pupils' knowledge is weak and this limits their achievement in religious education. One reason for this is that religious education lessons are often cancelled, especially when temporary teachers are teaching pupils. There is too little evidence to record a judgement about standards by Year 2.

121 Three lessons were seen during the inspection. The quality of the teaching was satisfactory overall but ranged from good to unsatisfactory. Where teaching is good, the lesson is well planned, questioning is thorough and thoughtful and there are opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas and to put their point of view. Where the challenge is at an appropriate level and the needs of all pupils are met, pupils are well motivated, reflecting the positive and encouraging approach used by the teacher. Appropriate links are made with other subjects, especially English, but even here there are not enough opportunities to write extended stories. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, the work provided for pupils is too easy, progress is very limited and pupils do not work sufficiently hard.

122 School assemblies are used satisfactorily to increase pupils' idea of religion. Visitors are used well to introduce pupils to new ideas and stories from the Bible, for example the story of Jesus walking on water. Pupils participate in these assemblies and find them interesting and enlivening. Ideas, such as friendship, love and thinking about others not as fortunate as ourselves, provide additional opportunities for pupils to listen to, and take part in, discussion. Celebration is an important part of these services and pupils develop positive views and respect for the efforts of others.

123 The development of religious education does not have a high priority within the school's development plan. Time given to the subject is variable from class to class. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and the recording of pupils' knowledge and understanding is at a very early stage of development.