

INSPECTION REPORT

ISLEHAM C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Isleham

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110791

Headteacher: Mrs V J Ellerker

Reporting inspector: Paul Dennison
17736

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 4th March 2003

Inspection number: 247050

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and junior
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	5 to 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Malting Lane Isleham Ely
Postcode:	CB7 5RZ
Telephone number:	01638 780336
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs M Jolly
Date of previous inspection:	16 June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Isleham Church of England Primary School is situated near Ely, Cambridgeshire. It serves the villages of Isleham and Chippenham. There is no nursery class but the Isleham Under Five's Association is based on the school site. Currently there are 211 pupils on roll. There is a very wide range of ability on entry to the school, although overall attainment is in line with that expected for the age group. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is in line with the national average. Two pupils have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Very few pupils are from ethnic minority groups and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language. Approximately six per cent of pupils are children of USA service personnel and the school has a significant number of pupils who start or leave school between the Reception class and Year 6.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school with many very good features. Pupils achieve well and by the time they leave school, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above the national average. Standards of attainment in science are well above the national average. The headteacher, governors and staff work well together to improve the school and maintain the high standards. Much of the teaching is very good and this helps pupils to achieve well. Very effective support ensures that all pupils are able to take a full part in all aspects of school life. The pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is very good. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well and standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are good.
- The headteacher provides very effective leadership and manages the school very well. She is well supported by governors and staff who work hard to maintain and improve the high standards.
- The quality of teaching is very good overall. Classroom support staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.
- The curriculum is broad and relevant. A good range of activities is provided to meet pupils' interests and abilities.
- The provision for pupils' personal development is very good.
- Pupils are very well behaved; they have very positive attitudes, work hard and are keen to learn.

What could be improved

- There are no significant areas for improvement. However, the governing body should bear in mind the need to further improve resources to support work in information and communication technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1997. Improvement since then has been good. The school's results in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science for pupils in Year 6 have improved at a rate above the national trend. The quality of teaching has improved with a higher proportion that is very good and none that is unsatisfactory. All the issues from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed as a result of the clear leadership provided by the headteacher. The school has adopted national guidance to support curriculum planning in music and information and communication technology and standards of attainment in these subjects have improved. Effective procedures have been established to monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning. The school has established good systems to assess and monitor pupils' attainment and progress and uses this information well to set targets for improvement. Resources for music and information and communication technology have been improved although the lack of sufficient centrally based computers makes whole-class teaching more difficult.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	A	B	B	C
mathematics	A	A	B	D
science	A*	A	A	B

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

Pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics was above the national average. Their performance in science was well above average. In comparison with schools with a similar intake, performance in the 2002 tests was average in English and above average in science. The results in mathematics showed a slight decline from 2001, although they were above the national average. They were just below average in comparison with schools which had similar numbers of pupils eligible for free school meals. However, the test results between 1998 and 2002 have improved at a higher rate than the national trend. Pupils achieve well. On the evidence of the inspection, their attainment is above the national expectations in English and mathematics and well above average in science.

By the end of the Reception year, attainment is broadly in line with that expected nationally. By the time they start Year 1, the great majority achieve the early learning goals established for the age group.

Pupils' performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils in Year 2 was above the national average in writing and mathematics and in line with the average in reading. Evidence from the inspection indicates that standards in all three subjects are above the national expectation.

The school monitors and analyses progress and has set realistic but challenging targets for achievement at the end of Year 6. In 2002 the target for English was surpassed although the school fell short of its target in mathematics. Evidence from the inspection indicates that the targets for 2003 are likely to be met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very positive attitudes. They work hard, concentrate well and show good levels of interest.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils know what is expected of them and respond in a positive manner. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils co-operate well with each other and their teachers. Pupils are provided with opportunities to exercise responsibility and they respond well.
Attendance	Attendance is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 –6
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Very Good

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

The quality of teaching is very good overall. It has improved since the previous inspection and has a positive effect on the progress and attainment of all pupils. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is particularly effective.

During the inspection, teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good or very good in most of the lessons observed. Lessons are well planned and organised. Work is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities, providing them with a clear challenge and thus supporting their progress. The teaching of English and mathematics is very good overall and the skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Classroom support staff work closely with the teachers to raise standards and ensure that all pupils gain full benefit from their lessons. They make an important contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress.

Pupils respond well. They are keen to learn and work hard, showing good levels of concentration and developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum provides a wide range of interesting and relevant learning opportunities to support pupils' academic and personal development. Activities are well matched to the needs and abilities of the pupils. The curriculum is enhanced by the good use of visits and visitors.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported and make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good provision is made for personal development. The positive values promoted in assemblies and lessons help to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a good level of care for its pupils and is successful in ensuring their welfare, health and safety.

The school provides a broad and well-planned curriculum. It emphasises the development of relevant skills within the context of interesting and challenging activities, which motivate pupils.

Pupils' academic performance and personal development is monitored well. There are good systems in place to analyse the results of assessments and to track pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and has established a positive climate for learning in the school. She is well supported by senior staff. The school is managed very effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors support the headteacher very well. They are aware of the needs and priorities facing the school and contribute effectively to its success. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are very effective systems in place to monitor the work of the school. Teaching, learning and standards of attainment are regularly reviewed and evaluated. This evaluation is used to inform the planning of further improvements.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the school budget and additional grants for the benefit of pupils' learning. Financial planning is good and resources are used well to support the school's educational priorities.

The headteacher, staff and governors contribute very effectively to the quality of education provided and to the standards achieved by the pupils. The school improvement plan has been produced in consultation with staff and governors. This is based on an analysis of the school's needs. It clearly identifies the school's priorities and is reviewed regularly to evaluate progress. The school makes good use of the principles of best value to make effective use of the financial resources available. These are used well to support the priorities identified in the school improvement plan.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children make good progress. • The behaviour in school is good. • The teaching is good. • The staff are approachable. • Children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school helps their children to become mature. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities outside lessons. • The information they receive about their children's progress.

Parents expressed much satisfaction with the school's provision. The inspection team agrees with their positive comments. Some parents have reservations about the information provided about pupils' progress but the inspectors consider the school's arrangements for these matters to be both adequate and appropriate. Some parents would like to see a wider range of activities outside lessons. However, evidence from the inspection indicates that there is a good range of activities available at lunchtimes and after school. The school also provides opportunities for a wide range of visits, including residential visits and makes effective use of visitors to the school to extend the experiences offered to pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

Pupils achieve well and standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science are good.

1. There is a very wide range of attainment on entry to the school, although overall, attainment is in line with that expected for the age group. Pupils achieve well and make good progress as they move through the school. Their performance in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for Year 6 pupils in English and mathematics was above the national average. Their performance in science was well above average. The work observed during the inspection confirms these good standards in all three subjects. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and they make good progress in relation to their prior attainment and the targets set in individual education plans.
2. Since the last inspection the school has adopted the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in good improvement in the quality of planning, assessment and teaching and is having a positive effect on standards. The test results between 1998 and 2002 have improved at a higher rate than the national trend. The good progress made is a result of clear planning, good teaching and a very positive response from pupils, who work hard and show good levels of interest and concentration.
3. Standards of literacy and numeracy are good and the school ensures that skills are not taught in isolation but are used to support learning in other subjects. For example, they make effective use of mathematical skills when measuring in subjects such as science and design and technology and also use their skills in data handling to present information in science and geography. Literacy skills are used very effectively as they carry out research in history and geography. A good example was observed in a Year 4 history lesson about the lives of sailors in Tudor times. Pupils worked well in groups using a variety of books, pictures and the Internet. They quickly collected an impressive range of key facts which they recorded and then shared with the class. In a Year 2 geography lesson about St Lucia they used photographs and written material about schools in St Lucia to make comparisons with their own school.
4. Teachers provide a good range of opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills in a variety of settings, both in class and in the wider school context, such as assemblies. They are sensitive in building up each individual's self-esteem and independence and have high expectations of achievement. From the earliest age the pupils communicate freely with their peers in imaginative role-play situations, take part confidently in large and small group discussions, and exchange relevant ideas in pairs. By the end of Year 2 the vast majority of the pupils are confident and articulate. These skills are further developed in Years 3 to 6, where pupils demonstrate the ability to listen attentively and contribute well to class discussions. Higher attaining pupils supply articulate and complex contributions which reflect standards above the national average.
5. Great importance is attached to the use of reading as a tool for learning, as well as to the enjoyment of books. Pupils make good progress in reading, extending their interest and enjoyment of books as they develop confidence in their reading skills.

Good teaching supports their progress and the school ensures that pupils systematically develop their knowledge and understanding of letters and sounds, thus providing them with the necessary skills and strategies to tackle new words. By the end of Year 2 the majority of pupils read accurately and with growing confidence across a range of books. Most pupils have a good understanding of the text and can explain clearly what they have read. By the end of Year 6 most pupils read fluently and with good expression from a range of texts. When asked about their reading they show good comprehension skills. They enjoy reading for pleasure and are able to discuss books and authors, indicating their personal preferences.

6. Pupils make good progress in writing. Their work shows clear progression in their knowledge of parts of speech, use of speech marks, different tenses and different writing styles matched to the needs of the audience. By the end of Year 2 the pupils write in complete sentences, which are generally correctly punctuated. Standards of spelling are good. The pupils write for a number of different purposes including creative, descriptive and poetry writing. They also make good use of their writing skills to record science experiments and work in subjects such as history and geography. They are familiar with parts of speech such as adjectives and choose words to good effect. They achieve a high standard in their written work. By the end of Year 6, pupils use punctuation with increasing accuracy and are developing skills in planning and redrafting to produce a final copy. Pupils extend their range of writing across the curriculum in a number of subjects as they write descriptions, instructions and reports. Higher attaining pupils are able to compose sustained, well-organised pieces, which demonstrate accurate sentence construction, punctuation and grammar. They write complex sentences with consistent accuracy. They choose words carefully to persuade or describe, and their extended writing is well organised and imaginative. Paragraphs are used to good effect, and punctuation and spelling are usually correct. The pupils respond well to the teachers' high expectation that they present their work well. They write clearly and legibly in neat joined script. There is evidence of high quality written work in a variety of forms, which includes poetry, letters, advertising features, newspaper reports and book reviews.
7. Pupils make good progress in mathematics. They show gains in knowledge and understanding and in their ability to use mathematical skills. By Year 2, pupils carry out simple calculations accurately and have a very good knowledge and understanding of number facts. They have a secure understanding of shape and can name and discuss the properties of a variety of shapes and solids. They develop skills of simple data handling and can construct and interpret graphs. They understand simple fractions and can calculate halves and quarters of numbers. They measure using metres and centimetres and calculate money using decimal notation. They are aware of the value of coins and have an understanding of the need for standard measures.
8. By Year 6, the majority of pupils of all abilities have a good knowledge of the number system. Their skills in mental arithmetic are very good. They use a variety of methods to collate and represent data they have collected. The higher attaining pupils have a very good understanding of percentages and probability and use fractions and decimals accurately. The lower attaining pupils apply the four rules of number effectively, use a wide range of units of measure competently and construct simple graphs to illustrate data they have collected.
9. Pupils throughout the school make good progress in science. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed good levels of scientific knowledge and understanding in all

aspects of the subject. They are able to find answers to scientific questions by systematic investigation. They develop their factual knowledge and understanding of science topics within the National Curriculum programmes of study and also develop early scientific skills such as the ability to devise their own experiments and conduct a fair test. Pupils are very confident in their understanding of life processes related to plants, animals and humans. Most show a good understanding of the differences between solids, liquids and gases and can explain reversible changes such as evaporation and condensation as well as some which are irreversible. Their understanding of physical concepts related to, for example, sound and forces is good. By Year 6, pupils make good use of accurate scientific vocabulary to describe what they know or observe. Higher attaining pupils provide clear explanations of their findings. They present their results in a clear and methodical form, often making use of independent research, reflecting standards well above national expectations. The quality and organisation of the work seen in science books reflects good overall attitudes to the subject throughout the school and a clear interest and involvement in lessons.

The headteacher provides very effective leadership and manages the school very well. She is well supported by governors and staff who work hard to maintain and improve the high standards.

10. The school is given strong direction by the leadership of the headteacher, who is well supported by the deputy and senior staff. The headteacher sets clear expectations, which are well communicated to the staff. One result of this is that initiatives such as the school's systems for promoting good behaviour and personal development are consistently applied by all staff. A key feature of leadership is the attention given to issues that are central to the success of the school such as the quality of teaching and learning and the standards that pupils attain. The headteacher has established a system of monitoring lessons to check their quality and to highlight any aspects of an individual teacher's work that need attention. This provides teachers with useful feedback and has helped to improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher's management skills are very good. She delegates effectively, empowering key staff and co-ordinators to fulfil their roles, and manages her own time effectively.
11. Governors, teachers and non-teaching staff have clearly defined roles and responsibilities and work well together to support the headteacher in promoting the school's aims. The very positive atmosphere and the sense of commitment displayed by all who work in the school reflect the effectiveness of the leadership. There are high expectations of pupils' standards of achievement and behaviour, very good relationships and equality of opportunity for all.
12. Arrangements for staff development are good, and the development of teachers and support staff is linked to the school improvement plan as well as their own identified needs. Good performance management procedures are embedded in the practice of the school. The school has good procedures for the induction and training of new staff. This has been recognised by the award of Investors in People status.
13. All staff have curriculum responsibilities. Subject co-ordinators make a very positive contribution to the management of the school. They are responsible for managing their subject and providing curriculum guidance. They have developed useful policies to support teachers' planning and they are involved in monitoring the quality of pupils' work and the quality of teaching and learning. This includes close scrutiny of

test results to seek out areas of weakness, so that the next planning cycle can be used to remedy any gaps in the pupils' knowledge or skills. As pupils pass through the school, their progress is tracked so that any under achievement can be spotted and if necessary, action can be taken to support them.

14. The governing body plays a very effective and supportive role. The governors are aware of their responsibilities and ensure that statutory requirements are met. They ensure that they are sufficiently informed to make useful contributions to deciding the school's development priorities. They are regular visitors to the school and have a good awareness of the issues to be addressed. They meet with staff to exchange views on what the school should be working towards next. This openness in development planning enables all key players to contribute views on forthcoming priorities and the result is a comprehensive improvement plan. This document sets out what the immediate and long-term priorities are, how much they will cost to put into place and how the effectiveness of the school's actions will be measured. It is a useful and effective management tool.
15. Financial planning to support educational initiatives is good. The finance committee and the headteacher use the budget well to achieve educational targets. For example, the budget surplus from 2001/02 has been clearly identified to pay for planned improvements in the school grounds. The school improvement plan has been produced in consultation with staff and governors. This clearly identifies the school's priorities and is a useful and effective management tool. It is linked to the school budget and is reviewed regularly. The school has established a climate of continuous improvement.
16. Efficient day-to-day management and administration by the school secretary and financial assistant, particularly of financial matters, and the ordering and control of equipment ensures minimum disruption to teaching and learning and makes a positive contribution to the smooth running of the school. The secretary's office provides a welcoming and friendly introduction to the school for parents and visitors, typifying the very good relationships that exist in the school.
17. Parents are very supportive of the aims and values promoted by the school. The school has high expectations of the pupils in terms of their personal and academic development. There is a clear sense of shared values and a unity of purpose. Consequently, the school is well placed to make further progress.

The quality of teaching is very good overall. Classroom support staff make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning.

18. The quality of teaching is very good overall and effectively promotes the pupils' learning. During the inspection, teaching was never less than satisfactory and was good or very good in most of the lessons observed. The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection with a greater proportion that is very good and none that is less than satisfactory. Teaching in Years 3 to 6 is particularly effective.
19. Teachers plan lessons carefully. They identify what they wish pupils to learn and share these objectives with the class. Pupils are successfully encouraged to be responsible about their work, and are given a good range of opportunities to work independently and in pairs or groups. Relationships are very positive and pupils respond well to

teachers' expectations of good behaviour and show good levels of concentration. Good use is made of the resources available to provide interesting tasks which motivate pupils. Group work is skilfully organised to enable some groups to work independently thus enabling the teacher to give more intensive support to others.

20. The main strengths of teaching in the Reception class are the very good relationships between adults and children, combined with a very good understanding of the curriculum for the age group and of how young children learn. The children are respected and valued. Activities are planned carefully to enable children of all abilities to build on their previous knowledge and understanding. Children are provided with many interesting practical activities and they respond very positively, making good progress. Staff work closely together as a very competent and effective team. The nursery nurse provides good support to the teacher in the running of the class and this has a very positive effect on children's learning.
21. Teachers throughout the school have high expectations and take great trouble to present learning in ways which challenge and motivate pupils, as when setting problems in mathematics, encouraging pupils to undertake scientific investigations, or providing a wide range of experiences in English. Lessons proceed at a good pace and are well organised. Teachers are good at making pupils think for themselves about the tasks set. A very good example was observed in a Year 6 science investigation on which surfaces best reflect light. Pupils were given a selection of materials and then challenged to suggest ways in which the investigation should proceed. They discussed their findings and had to identify their initial conclusions. The lesson provided a good challenge for higher attainers whilst the teacher and the teaching assistant provided support through questioning, which enabled lower attainers to make good progress.
22. Teaching of English and mathematics is very good overall. Teachers have high expectations and provide work that is well matched to pupils' needs and abilities. Pupils respond well and make good progress. Good use is made of the frameworks provided by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. This good quality teaching has a very positive impact on maintaining and raising the standards of attainment. Mental and oral activities are used very effectively in mathematics lessons to provide appropriate challenge. Pupils in Year 6 for example, responded very well during an oral session which involved them mentally calculating fractions of whole numbers. The session moved at a lively pace and provided effective mental practice. Very effective use is made of review sessions at the end of lessons to consolidate learning and assess any difficulties which may have been experienced. In a Year 2 lesson on data handling, for example, pupils were challenged about the work they had been doing and were asked to explain the graphs they had created and also to create their own questions to share with partners. This reinforced their understanding and also helped classmates to learn.
23. Good use is made of the resources available to provide interesting tasks which motivate pupils. In Year 1, the teacher introduced 'Bob Bear' and pupils had the opportunity to look at a selection of photographs showing him in a variety of locations. This activity immediately grabbed pupils' interest and the teacher used this to generate a class discussion which helped develop speaking and listening skills before pupils created their own sentences about the bear.
24. Classroom support staff and volunteer helpers are used very effectively to support pupils' learning. A very good example was observed in a Year 5 mathematics lesson

on area when the teaching assistant and a volunteer helper supported pupils not only in their group activities but also during whole-class sessions. This support ensured that all pupils were able to play a full part in the lesson. The lesson was well organised and lively. Work was well matched to the pupils' needs and abilities and provided a good challenge for the higher attaining pupils who used their knowledge and understanding well in order to solve practical problems.

25. Teachers have good subject knowledge and their own enthusiasm for the work leads to pupils responding well to the teacher's high expectations. For example, in a Year 4 English lesson on descriptive language, very good questioning helped pupils to review earlier work on the subject and to develop their understanding of adjectives and similes. A very well structured lesson provided a variety of activities which maintained pupils' interest and which were also very well matched to their needs and abilities.
26. The teaching of music has improved considerably since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory overall due to the teachers' lack of confidence and expertise. This problem has been addressed very successfully. The school has made a significant investment in the employment of specialist music teachers and staff training has improved teachers' expertise and confidence. In a Year 3 music lesson, pupils had the opportunity to develop their own compositions and to record these using notation. Very good questioning from the teacher ensured that pupils had a clear understanding of their tasks and the lesson was very well structured, resulting in very good progress.

The curriculum is broad and relevant. A good range of activities is provided to meet pupils' interests and abilities.

27. The school provides a broad curriculum which is relevant to the needs of the pupils. This curriculum is enriched with a range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors which enhance many areas of pupils' experience. The teachers have high expectations of pupils' attitudes and attainment not only in English and mathematics but across the whole curriculum. This provides pupils with opportunities to achieve good standards of work in a wide range of activities. There is much evidence of good quality art work displayed around the school. Teachers' planning and work on display indicates a range of media including drawing materials, paint, printing, clay, collage and textiles is provided. Pupils also have opportunities to study the work of other artists and apply this to their own work. Their accuracy in representing what they observe is developing well as demonstrated by the observational drawings of fruit produced by pupils in Years 2 and 6. Pupils also have opportunities to express their thoughts and feelings in an imaginative way. Year 4 pupils thought carefully about their favourite journey and used the images very successfully to create very effective abstract designs. Year 5 pupils looked closely at a range of containers, producing good observational drawings before creating their own containers using clay. Provision for music is also good. Many pupils play musical instruments and some have the opportunity to play in the school brass band or sing in the choir.
28. The provision for children in the Reception class is securely based on the six areas of learning appropriate for this age group. It reflects the teacher's good knowledge and understanding of the ways in which young children learn, and provides a range of well organised experiences which are closely matched to the children's level of development, and successfully challenge them to make progress. Particular emphasis is rightly given to personal, social and emotional development, as well as

to communication, language and literacy and to mathematical development. Appropriate elements of the National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy are incorporated into lessons. The children are encouraged to enjoy learning and to take part in a wide range of lively practical activities, which support their progress effectively in all areas.

29. In Years 1 to 6, the school provides a good curriculum which reflects the school's aims and provides equal opportunity for all pupils to learn and make progress and provides effectively for sex education and drugs awareness as part of the wider curriculum of personal, social and health education. The timetable is well balanced, giving appropriate allocations of time to subjects. The school promotes pupils' intellectual development well, especially through the encouragement and opportunities given to them in most lessons to question and investigate aspects of the curriculum. This is particularly evident in mathematics and science.
30. The school makes good use of national guidance to ensure that there is a well-structured programme for all subjects. Weaknesses in the curriculum at the time of the last inspection have been addressed well. There has been a clear improvement in the provision for information and communication technology and music since the last inspection. As a result pupils now make good progress in these subjects.
31. The school has very good links with Soham Village College (the secondary school to which its pupils transfer). The provision for science and information and communication technology has benefited considerably from this partnership as a result of staff training and links with specialist teachers.
32. There are appropriate policies in place for all subjects, and the very effective long term and medium term plans ensure a continuous, progressive and systematic approach as pupils move through the school. A strength of the teachers' planning is the way in which pupils of all abilities receive work that matches their learning needs. This was evident in lessons throughout the inspection. Sometimes tasks are different; at other times pupils are given the same task but with extra support to help them learn.
33. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress in relation to their ability. The co-ordinator manages this area very well. All pupils, including those pupils with special educational needs, enjoy equal access to the curriculum.
34. Specialist teaching is available for a variety of instruments and particular strengths are brass instruments, recorders and the school choir. All Year 4 pupils have recorder lessons and many continue with this tuition in Years 5 and 6. Many pupils are learning brass instruments and the school has a very proficient brass band. Smaller groups of pupils play in assemblies. The school also takes part in a number of musical performances.
35. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of activities at lunchtime or after school. These include sport, music, drama, computers and a homework club. A design and technology activity 'Scantec' is very well led and organised by a teaching assistant. It provides pupils in Year 6 with very challenging activities relating to science and technology. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have a science club which enables them to take part in a national award scheme.

36. Visitors to the school are used effectively to enliven the curriculum, and a wide range of visits is arranged for pupils, including a residential visit for older pupils. These experiences are particularly effective in helping to build confidence and social skills as well as developing pupils' awareness of the wider community.

The provision for pupils' personal development is very good.

37. The school provides pupils with a secure, caring environment in which to work and play. Good procedures are established for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare. Parents report that their children are happy and enjoy coming to school. This has a beneficial influence on pupils' attitudes to their work. It also helps to develop pupils' self-esteem and supports their progress. The children make a positive start when they enter the Reception class, and they settle quickly and happily into school. The school makes good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. Teachers and support staff know their pupils and their families well, are sensitive to pupils' needs and thus are able to provide good personal support and guidance.
38. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are effectively promoted through all areas of school life. Praise and rewards are used appropriately to encourage effort, and significant achievements are celebrated. High expectations of behaviour and good classroom management are in place from the time pupils enter the school.
39. The school has a very effective programme of personal, social and health education. This provides pupils with regular opportunities to discuss issues related to health, relationships, the environment and citizenship. In a Year 1/2 lesson pupils were encouraged to offer positive comments about that day's 'special day' child who is chosen at random. The comments were recorded on a Special Day certificate. This well planned and organised activity promoted very good relationships and the pupils' self-esteem.
40. Opportunities for spiritual development are good. Pupils study different faiths in religious education. Assemblies contribute appropriately to spiritual development by offering chances to pray and reflect quietly. The school has very strong links with local churches and ministers visit on a regular basis to lead assemblies.
41. Moral development is promoted very well. Pupils are given a clear sense of right and wrong and are expected to consider their intentions thoughtfully and to make decisions about actions on the basis of this understanding. The promotion of social development is very good. This is reflected not only in lessons, but in the school's general ethos and attitudes to the wider community. Pupils are always encouraged to relate positively to each other, to be considerate and courteous and to play together. All adults in the school set a good example in this area. In class there are many opportunities to work together, valuing different ideas, working responsibly together to achieve a particular goal and sharing resources fairly. Pupils also learn to work effectively as a team through residential visits, opportunities to compete for the school at sport and through participation in musical events and school productions. Older pupils are encouraged to look after younger ones and the Year 6 pupils have developed this role very effectively at lunchtime when they look after their 'partners' from the Reception class.
42. Cultural development is promoted well, both within the curriculum and through extra-curricular opportunities. Through religious education, history, art, literature and music

pupils gain understanding of their own culture and the cultural traditions of other countries. There are regular visits to places of educational interest. These include museums, galleries and the theatre. Visitors are also used well to support the curriculum and enrich pupils' experience.

Pupils are very well behaved; they have very positive attitudes, work hard and are keen to learn.

43. Pupils show very good attitudes to learning and this has a positive effect on their progress. They are interested in their work, well motivated and enthusiastic. Most concentrate and listen well. They speak about their ideas with confidence and are prepared to share their thoughts with their teachers and classmates. They are well motivated and respond well to encouragement and praise. They treat resources with care, tidy away efficiently after lessons and are sensible when engaged in practical tasks. They follow instructions well and respond with enthusiasm to questioning and discussion.
44. The behaviour of the pupils in lessons, around the school and on the playground is very good, and enables them to make the most of all the opportunities provided for them. They move about the school in an orderly way, play amicably and sensibly on the playground and are responsive to instructions given by adults.
45. Relationships amongst pupils and between adults and pupils are very good. At assemblies, during lessons, at lunch breaks and at playtimes, there is a strong rapport between pupils. Friendliness, caring attitudes and simple acts of kindness are evident. At lunchtimes and breaks, pupils play together well with older pupils frequently helping to look after younger members of the school community.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

There are no significant areas for improvement. However, the governing body should bear in mind the need to further improve resources to support work in information and communication technology.

46. Provision for information and communication technology has improved significantly since the last inspection. Since then, more computers have been acquired and in addition to the computers in classrooms, there are also computers in the library. Teachers are now using computers very effectively for the development of computer skills. There is a clear scheme of work in place and pupils are making good use of computers to support their learning in other subjects. However, the teaching of new skills to the whole class creates difficulties of organisation. There are insufficient computers in one place for whole-class teaching. Consequently, teachers have to introduce new work using one computer to demonstrate and pupils are then split around the school to use computers in other classes in order to practice their skills. One very effective lesson was observed when the teacher made very good use of teaching assistants and a voluntary helper to support groups working in other rooms but this is not always possible. Teachers therefore have difficulty in always ensuring that they can provide the necessary support for pupils. Information and communication technology is a priority in the school improvement plan and there are additional computers on order.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. There are no significant areas for improvement. However, the governing body should bear in mind the need to further improve resources to support work in information and communication technology.

(paragraph 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	18
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	10	7	1	0	0	0
Percentage	0	56	39	6	0	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 five percentage points.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	N/a	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	N/a	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	N/a	31

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	15

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0

National comparative data	5.4
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National comparative data	0.5
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Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	12	12

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	11	12
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	23	24
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (80)	96 (93)	100 (90)
	National	84 (84)	86 (86)	90 (91)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	11	12	10
	Girls	12	12	12
	Total	23	24	22
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	96 (93)	100 (90)	92 (97)
	National	85 (85)	89 (89)	89 (89)

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

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

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2002	13	17

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	10	12
	Girls	14	12	17
	Total	26	22	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	87 (82)	73 (82)	97 (100)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	13	11	13
	Girls	14	14	17
	Total	27	25	30
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	90 (82)	83 (88)	100 (100)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	151	1	0
White – Irish	3	0	0
White – any other White background	6	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	21	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21
Average class size	26.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	145

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	N/a
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	N/a
Total number of education support staff	N/a
Total aggregate hours worked per week	N/a

Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	467,156
Total expenditure	446,189
Expenditure per pupil	2,222
Balance brought forward from previous year	10,606
Balance carried forward to next year	31,573

Number of pupils per FTE adult	N/a
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2.2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	211
Number of questionnaires returned	101

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	45	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	4	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	50	45	5	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	33	60	3	1	3
The teaching is good.	46	53	1	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	36	46	16	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	30	7	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	50	49	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	40	44	16	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	45	41	7	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	49	5	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	38	20	7	9